

(1) Atmar Offers...

that all their moves will be made within the law.

"My last message to Mr. President and his respected colleagues is that your tenure has ended. The continuation of your work will prove your 'illegitimacy'. Your illegitimacy will affect the honor of the presidency and this will pave the way for a crisis (in the country)," he added.

Atmar said to reach their demands, the presidential candidates will continue their political pressure on the government.

The country will face a "political instability" if President Ghani continues to pressurize the Supreme Court to extend his term.

Atmar said the incumbent government is not committed to peace and that it is trying to postpone peace until the elections to earn another five years.

"The failure of the intra-Afghan talks in Doha was a big failure for the peace process and we see the government's wrong policy behind this failure," he said.

The presidential candidates have consulted lawyers on the decision of the Supreme Court to extend President Ghani's term, he said, adding that that according to lawyers, the Supreme Court "cannot interpret the Constitution".

He said there is no guarantee that the incumbent government will announce another delay in the presidential elections which has been postponed two times.

According to Atmar, the incumbent government has no will to bring transparency to the elections. He says the parliamentary elections were a "scandal". (Tolo news)

(2) UN Stresses on...

Afghan institutions, along with every segment of society, must persevere in their efforts to advance integrity, accountability and transparency in the country."

UNAMA's third anti-corruption report, titled 'Afghanistan's Fight against Corruption: Groundwork for Peace and Prosperity,' reviews the progress Afghanistan has made in anti-corruption reform and provides analysis and recommendations to support Afghanistan's institutions in combatting corruption to improve the lives of all citizens who must grapple with this challenging issue each day.

The report describes how corruption continues to affect all aspects of life in Afghanistan, eroding public trust and confidence in government institutions and hindering efforts to bring lasting peace and prosperity to the country.

"Corruption undermines rule of law and opens the door to more crime, creating a vicious cycle that fosters a culture of impunity," said the UN envoy, who is also head of UNAMA. "Even more importantly, corruption puts at risk prospects for peace, as a negotiated settlement for Afghanistan's future must be based on integrity and justice."

The report makes several recommendations, recognizing that the government's ongoing anti-corruption efforts have yet to impact the lives of most Afghans, and concludes that, notwithstanding the many legal and policy reforms that have been undertaken, corruption remains a substantial obstacle to Afghanistan's long-term peace and prosperity.

A key recommendation in the report is for Afghanistan to develop a long-term strategy to build on the gains of past reform efforts and leverage the growing public will to fight corruption.

"The United Nations appreciates the government trying to set up many institutional reform measures this year and last, and we encourage pursuing further reform," said Yamamoto. "The upcoming elections are a test case for implementing lessons learned."

The United Nations remains committed to supporting Afghanistan in further implementing its obligations under the UN Convention against Corruption, which Afghanistan ratified in 2008.

The United Nations Convention against Corruption is the only legally binding universal anti-corruption instrument. The Convention's far-reaching approach and the mandatory character of many of its provisions make it a unique tool for developing

a comprehensive response to a global problem. The majority of United Nations Member States are parties to the Convention. (PR)

(3) Opinion Divided...

restoring the iconic Darul Aman Palace.

Over the last 40 years of conflict, the building went from a symbol of modern Afghanistan that King Amanullah Khan wanted to create when he ordered its construction in the 1920s, to a physical embodiment of the ravages of war.

For decades, the once magnificent neoclassical structure laid in ruins. Riddled with bullet holes and covered in English, Dari and Pashto language tags and intricate graffiti designs of turbaned men and dogs, people began referring to the European-style palace as a "dirty sieve". What was once seen as an architectural triumph had become a phantom evoking memories of the Soviet occupation of the 1980s, the civil war of the 1990s and Washington's 18 years, and counting, incursion in the country.

In 2016, President Ashraf Ghani, said to be a longtime admirer of Amanullah, who once referred to Darul Aman as the "palace of abandoned dreams", officially ordered its reconstruction. Addressing media from inside the building, where entire sections of the roof were held up by steel nets, Ghani said the restoration was a "return to the past to begin laying the foundation for the future".

From the moment the project was first reported, the news was met with stark and conflicted reactions.

While many were pleased to see the president banish a "ghost" that haunted the city's skyline, others feared that the reconstruction would cover up a much-needed reminder of the costs of a decades-long series of wars. For the 1,000 people who have been employed by the project so far, including 27 female engineers in a team of 105 - the restoration is both a boon to a struggling economy and a chance to transform the layout of the capital.

At 23, engineer Abdul Wahid, a site manager, is too young to remember the palace before the wars led its stairways to crumble and the roof to fall to pieces. Still, he feels the project was long overdue. Addressing concerns that the reconstructed building will mask the realities of war, Wahid said: "We've lived our whole lives with bombs and fighting, we know nothing good comes from war."

The labour force comprises Afghans from nearly every region of the country, including areas where the war is most intense.

The materials - marble from Herat province, wood from Kunar province - are all Afghan products.

Wahid said the restored building will be a monument to Afghan endurance and creativity.

Rather than covering up past wars, "this site will serve as a constant, physical reminder of the difference between war and peace," said Wahid. For the hundreds of workers on the site, the reconstruction is not only a point of pride, but also a much-needed economic opportunity at a time when the Kabul government has been unable to address the 40 percent unemployment rate and the precipitous fall in the value of the Afghani.

Gholam Ali travelled along one of the nation's most dangerous roads to arrive in Kabul from his native Maidan Wardak province.

"We need to rebuild," he said, referring to both Kabul and the personal financial needs of the workers in the background hammering, painting and soldering while they fast during the month of Ramadan.

"Everyone in this country knows what war brings, no one needs a building to remind them of that. It's all around. Instead, let people have a beautiful, green space to bring our families," he told Al Jazeera. Upon completion, the building will host a museum containing artefacts from the Presidential Palace's archive, which goes back to the time of Amanullah's father, King Habibullah, and a fully-landscaped park.

But not everyone is in favour of the restoration project.

Some say the cost of what will be lost will be too great compared to what will be gained in return.

Nilofar Ibrahim, an MP from the

northern province, has lived in Kabul since she was six.

She says there are entire generations of Afghans who did not live through the conflicts to know how and why the palace was destroyed in the first place. "When they drive through the streets of Kabul," she said, using her own children, who are currently in Australia, as an example, "I want them to be able to see that there was a war here, and that it was war that destroyed our city."

Most importantly, Ibrahim wants everyone to know that the "destruction came from outsiders and ourselves." Her statement is a reference to the fact that the palace was used by invading armies during the Soviet and US wars and by Afghan commanders during the civil war of the 1990s. Still, others want the site to be remembered by future generations as a site of Afghan triumph.

Qorban, from the central province of Daikondi, has been working on the restoration for more than a month.

To him, the completed palace will be a testament to the Afghan people and nation, who have survived so many different conflicts.

"It's putting Afghans to work. The entire labour force here is all Afghan and we're using all Afghan materials, why wouldn't this be a good thing for the Afghan nation?" (Aljazeera)

(4) Afghanistan...

way I wanted them to prepare barring the (captaincy) change."

Afghanistan will open their World Cup campaign against five-time champions Australia on June 1. (Agencies)

(5) IEC Rejects...

an expert; proposed by a political official, however, has a different message."

This comes as IEC has assured to hold all the three elections concurrently on September 28. (ATN)

(6) People Want...

women rights activists, civil society and common people regarding the peace process in a written format.

He was happy about the emerging regional and international consensus on the Afghan peace process and hoped the efforts would be made to grab the opportunity.

He said the Taliban never listen to the demands of the people of Afghanistan during the peace process and hoped the group would ultimately reached to the conclusion to listen to Afghans. AIHRC head Syed Mohammad Samai said every individual played a key role in war and peace. AIHRC policy was clear regarding the ongoing peace process, he added.

"We want durable, just peace in Afghanistan to ensure the preservation of everyone's rights, guarantee protection of the achievement of the past 17 years and basic rights of the citizens," he remarked.

He said the commission was not directly involved in the current peace parleys but it always supported such moves. The panel organised programmes regarding the negative impact of violence and importance of peace and stability to the public, he explained.

Women rights activist Farzana Rahimi complained the role of the people was marginal in the ongoing peace talks. She demanded a greater say for women in all peace-related events and conferences.

She asked President Ashraf Ghani to give women 30 percent representation in the Peace Jirga and a proactive role in direct talks with the Taliban. (Pajhwok)

(7) Qatar, Kuwait...

the bombing in Herat.

In a condolence message to President Ashraf Ghani, Sheikh Sabah expressed Kuwait's strong condemnation of the criminal act claiming innocent lives. He slammed the blast as an act against all human values and wished speedy recovery to the injured, according to Xinhua. (Pajhwok)

(8) Afghan Working...

officials said Mangal's family had filed a case against four men, including her ex-husband. "These four people are on the run but the police are trying to arrest them," said Kabul police spokesman Firdaws Faramarz.

Mangal's mother believes it was her dedication to home and career that

got her killed. She accuses her daughter's ex-husband of involvement in the murder because Mangal would not give up her job and continued to appear on television.

Reuters was unable to contact Mangal's former husband. Calls to family members went unanswered.

The brazen attack on Mangal has drawn widespread condemnation - including from U.S. officials and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau - and highlighted what activists say is the continuing plight of Afghan women, who still suffer high levels of sexual and domestic violence and discrimination.

Educated Afghan women, the torch-bearer's of a drive to improve women's rights since the overthrow of the Taliban in 2001, say they still face hostility, be it from conservative family members or hardline Islamist groups, for pursuing professional and financial independence.

Earlier this month, for example, the Taliban, launched a deadly attack on the head office of U.S.-funded aid group Counterpart International in Kabul, citing the "intermixing" of women and men working at the site and its promotion of "western activities". At least nine people were killed and 20 were wounded in a siege that lasted for more than seven hours.

"The Taliban want to kill women who work with men. If I die, there will be no one to feed my parents and siblings," said an Afghan woman who has worked at Counterpart for more than three years, speaking on condition of anonymity.

"If I sit at home will the Taliban come to pay the bills?"

Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said its fighters targeted Counterpart because it was funded by U.S. aid agencies.

Women could study and work, he said, but the intermingling of the genders ought to be kept in check in Afghanistan.

PRICE OF FREEDOM

Though many hardships remain, access to public life has improved for Afghan women since U.S.-backed forces ousted the Taliban, especially in cities such as Kabul, where tens of thousands now work outside the home.

But for many, concerns about the hazards of going out to a job extend beyond their own safety.

Until April, thousands of Afghan women now working for the government were happy to bring their children to the office. The daycare center attached to every government building provided reassurance their children were close by and safe.

The centers were originally established in 1945 to encourage women into the workforce, but closed under the Taliban, who ruled from 1996 to 2001 and did not allow women to go to school or work, nor walk on the street without being accompanied by a male relative and wearing the all-enveloping burqa. Now reopened, the government runs more than 370 creches where around 17,000 children aged from 3 months to 5 years are provided with milk, food, cots, toys and education at subsidized rates.

"Having a daycare center next to my office is a blessing. I feed my child after every two hours and get back to work without any stress," said Sadia Seddiqi, an HR official at a government ministry.

But this sense of security changed in April, after a suicide bomber and gunmen belonging to the Islamic State group attacked the Afghan communications ministry in central Kabul.

About a dozen people were killed during the attack. Police evacuated about 100 children along with 2,800 employees from the complex.

Harrowing TV pictures of children, teachers, and mothers screaming for hours after every gunshot inside the ministry building has forced hundreds of mothers to re-think their childcare. Meena Ahmadi, who works at the communications ministry, said several of her colleagues do not bring their kids to daycare after the attack and some of them had chosen to resign.

"I am afraid of coming to the office," she said. "I get upset when I remember my colleagues who were killed. The attack has impacted my child too." (Reuters)

(9) 5 Wolesi Jirg...

who received the highest numbers of

votes, were candidates for the speaker's position in the second round of voting on Saturday.

Atta Mohammad Dehqanpoor, provisional speaker, said there were 247 lawmakers present in the house and a candidate was required to win 124 votes to win the seat.

Based on the results announced after the voting, Rahmani received 123 votes and Isuli 55. None was able to win the required number of votes.

On that day a number of lawmakers said Rahmani had met the 50-plus-one vote threshold and was winner but others insisted the winner must get 50 percent-plus one vote.

Finally, Dehqanpoor created a team of five lawmakers comprised of Osuli, Nazir Ahmad Hanafi, Seddiq Ahmad Osmani and Abdul Qader Zazai to help him make a decision on the regard.

After an hour of discussion with the mentioned lawmakers, Dehqanpoor announced Mir Rahman Rahmani as winner of the speaker post.

He said 244 lawmakers had cast their votes and the candidate who received 123 votes was winner.

However, a number of lawmakers opposed announcing Rahmani as winner for the speaker seat. The Wolesi Jirga session was concluded after Rahmani was announced winner.

Dehqanpoor later introduced Rahmani to the speaker office and said there was no legal problem in the voting process.

Women members on Sunday barred the disputed nominees from taking the speaker's seat. At the beginning of yesterday session, a 15-member parliamentary committee has been formed to resolve the controversy over the speaker's election.

Omar Nasir Mujaddedi, a lawmaker from Herat province, said on Monday the panel's work had yielded no result as five impartial MPs had left the team and claimed the two sides were trying to cut a deal. (Pajhwok)

(10) Gunmen Rape...

and Hamidullah who were previously our neighbors."

Mother of the victims said they had shared the issue with Taliban leaders and had named the two men recognized by their daughters.

She said the Taliban had talked with their daughters and said they would investigate. However, there was no progress, she said.

She said after the incident they received death threats from the same armed men and as a result they left everything behind and migrated to Jwzjan province.

She urged rights organizations to help them seek justice and arrest of the rapists.

Meanwhile, Abdullah Zakizada, a security official in Andkhai district, confirmed the incident and said efforts were underway to arrest the alleged rapists.

He said those who committed the crime belonged to illegal militia commanders Mohammadullah and Mullah Amin who operated against government in the area.

He said after the family complained to the Taliban, then one the perpetrators confessed to his crime and said he proposed one of the two sisters, but the family rejected his proposal.

However, Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said the issue was being investigated and the offenders would see their punishment. He rejected their fighters' involvement in the case.

Meanwhile, Maghfirat Samimi, Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) head for Jwzjan, Sar-i-Pul and Faryab provinces, expressed her deep concern over the incident and said if the issue was not addressed, the family of the victims would experience more oppression. She urged the international community put pressure on Taliban militants to prevent such incidents in areas of their control in future. (Pajhwok)

(11) 5 Civilians Killed...

hand, Taliban spokesman Qari Yousaf Ahmadi said that foreign troops conducted air raids on civilian homes in the Sayedan area of Greshk district. He said six people were killed and 10 others wounded, Children and women were among the casualties, Ahmadi claimed. (Pajhwok)