



**Dear Readers,**

I have the pleasure of announcing the relaunch of the newsletter of the Embassy of Afghanistan in Oslo. The newsletter will be one among the various tools through which we will keep the public informed and engaged in Embassy's activities. Afghanistan and Norway have, for close to six decades, enjoyed friendly and cordial relations. In recent years, the bilateral relationship between our two countries has grown closer and deeper and Norway's dedicated support of our national efforts have helped lay the foundation for a more prosperous society. Norway remains a key and trusted partner of Afghanistan and an important contributor in security, development, human rights and other fields. Since the beginning of my tenure as Ambassador to Oslo in November 2019, my colleagues at the Embassy and I have had the pleasure of working to set a new foundation to further enhance the scope and level of Afghanistan-Norway relations and cooperation. As part of this objective, we have been engaged in a number of initiatives. The same applies to our relations and cooperation with our other partners Denmark and Iceland, where this embassy is accredited with non-resident status. In this regard, the monthly newsletter will primarily cover activities across the areas of public, peace, economic and cultural diplomacy, as well as our work in relation to security and defense cooperation, migration and the Afghan diaspora. Furthermore, Oslo is home to a large diplomatic milieu. We interact closely with other embassies, an important work that will also be featured in our monthly publication. This edition of this newsletter captures some of the Embassy's activities since the start of my tenure as Ambassador to Norway in November 2019. We invite you to follow our newsletter and other social media outlets, including the Embassy's twitter account and website to stay informed of our activities.

**Ambassador,  
Youssof Ghafoorzai**

**Ambassador Youssof Ghafoorzai presented Credentials to His Majesty King Harald V, King of Norway**



Ambassador Youssof Ghafoorzai presented his credentials to His Majesty King Harald V at a ceremony held in the Royal Palace of Oslo, Norway. After presenting his official letter of credence, Ambassador Ghafoorzai conveyed the personal greetings of the H.E. President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani, to His Majesty the King.



Ambassador Ghafoorzai elaborated to His Majesty about the current situation in Afghanistan and Norway's important role in the country, and affirmed the longstanding friendly and cooperative relationship between Afghanistan and Norway. After the ceremony, an official reception hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway was held at the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Ambassador Ghafoorzai and several senior officials of the Foreign Ministry and the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps attended the reception.

**Ambassador Ghafoorzai Presented Credentials to Her Majesty Queen Margreth II of Denmark**

Ambassador Youssof Ghafoorzai, visited Copenhagen, Denmark to present his credentials to Her Majesty Queen Margrethe II of Denmark as non-resident Ambassador. During the ceremony Ambassador Ghafoorzai has presented an overview of the overall situation in Afghanistan, including the consolidation of democracy, On-going efforts for a dignified and sustainable



peace which preserves the consolidates of the democratic gains of the past nineteen years. The governments of Denmark's continued engagement and partnership with Afghanistan is a strategic investment for security and stability in Afghanistan.



Her Majesty Queen Margrethe recalled her pleasant visit to Afghanistan in 2011 to meet the contingent of Danish forces serving in Helmand province.



She expressed her sentiments of solidarity with the people of Afghanistan and expressed the hope for peace and prosperity in the country.

**Afghanistan Embassy and Nordic Women Mediators held a Joint Discussion on “Role of Afghan Women in Peace Process”**

The Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in Oslo, in a joint initiative with the Nordic Women Mediators (NWM) Network, held a virtual discussion on the role of Afghan women in the peace process.



Ambassador Youssof Ghafoorzai in his opening remarks gave an overview of the new opportunity that had emerged in the peace process, the government’s commitment and the efforts to move towards the desired outcome of the people of Afghanistan, while ensuring the important role of Afghan women in all stages of the process.



Ms. Fawzia Koofi and Dr. Habiba Sarabi discussed various aspects of the process, including preparations for peace talks and the common position of Afghan women in the Peace Process. The members of the Nordic Women Mediators Network from Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Finland spoke about the activities and experience of NWM in empowering women in the area of peace and conflict resolution. NWM network members pledged their cooperation and commitment to sustaining peace and sustainability through the inclusive and meaningful participation of women in all phases of the peace processes in Afghanistan.

**Ambassador Youssof Ghafoorzai Briefed the Diplomatic Community in Oslo on Efforts to Achieve Peace**



Ambassador Ghafoorzai gave a briefing to Ambassadors and other representatives of Embassies based in Oslo and senior officials of the Norwegian Foreign Ministry on the current state of Afghan-led, owned peace efforts for a durable and lasting peace in Afghanistan. Ambassador Ghafoorzai, underlined the principled position of the people and Government of Afghanistan in regard to the ongoing peace efforts. “Peace building is not an easy task in any environment. It requires confidence building in different phases and levels – through various initiatives and measures. We are approaching the process in a step by step and phase by phase manner and with a great degree of responsibility and focus for efficiency in order to achieve the desired outcome,” said Ambassador Ghafoorzai.



It was also mentioned by Ambassador Youssof Ghafoorzai that core principles and values that are embedded in Afghan society such as preservation of the Republic, consolidation of democracy, protection and promotion of human rights, women’s rights in particular, as well as the advancement of the pluralistic society would in no way be compromised in any potential peace agreement.

**Ambassador Youssof Ghafoorzai, Visited Haakonsvern Naval Base in Bergen, Norway**

Ambassador Youssof Ghafoorzai, visited Haakonsvern Naval Base in Bergen, Norway to take part in the medal ceremony for Norwegian soldiers who recently returned from deployment in Afghanistan, as part of the NATO-led Resolute Support Mission’s (RSM) “train, advice and



assist mission” in support of Afghan national security forces. The event brought together Norwegian soldiers whose rotation in Afghanistan recently concluded and were replaced a by a new group of soldiers for the RSM Mission. Also in attendance were the families of Norwegian soldiers and senior officials of the Norwegian government, including State Secretary of the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Defense, Ms. Tone Skogen, along-side other senior Norwegian military officials. Ambassador Ghafoorzai stated that the service of Norwegian soldiers is an important part of the broader international effort which has helped enable Afghan national security forces to assume the lead role for the security and defense of their country. It has helped the Afghan security forces to apply pressure and inflict setbacks on the Taliban to accept the reality that they can never gain any influence nor achieve political objectives through violence and destruction. Ambassador Ghafoorzai, emphasized the importance of the continued partnership and collaboration between Afghanistan and Norway, and the broader international community for security, stability, and prosperity in Afghanistan and beyond.

## Ambassador Youssof Ghafoorzai met Norwegian Foreign Minister Ine Marie Eriksen Søreide



Afghanistan-Norway bilateral relations and cooperation, the overall situation in Afghanistan, including security, ongoing efforts in support of an Afghan-led peace efforts and Afghanistan's multi-sectoral gains, and prevailing challenges were the main focus of Ambassador Ghafoorzai's meeting with Foreign Minister Ine Marie Eriksen Søreide, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway. During the meeting, Ambassador Ghafoorzai stated that Norway's multi-sectoral support has been key part of the emergence of a new Afghanistan, in which democratic values and principles had taken root in society and where the younger generation is steadily taking charge of the country's future. Ambassador Ghafoorzai emphasized the importance of the enduring Afghanistan-Norway Strategic Partnership, as an imperative for achieving shared goals and objectives between the two countries. He also highlighted important Norwegian contributions in the areas of security, development, governance, human rights and women's empowerment. Foreign Minister Søreide reaffirmed Norway's support for peace, stability and development in Afghanistan as part of the international community's continued engagement in the country. Norway's assistance and contributions are an important pillar of the international community's engagement in Afghanistan.

## Ambassador Youssof Ghafoorzai Met with the Norwegian Defense Minister, Bakke-Jensen

Ambassador Ghafoorzai and Norwegian defense minister, Frank Bakke-Jensen discussed the security situation in Afghanistan, including the scope and nature of the security challenges, and the continued important progress of the Afghan national defense and security forces (ANDSF) in combatting terrorism and extremist groups. Defense Minister Bakke-Jensen welcomed the continued progress of the ANDSF in the fight against terrorism and extremism and reaffirmed that Norway would remain an enduring partner of Afghanistan in the way forward.



In that regard, Norwegian support in various fields would continue as part of the enduring partnership. Ambassador Ghafoorzai highlighted Afghanistan-Norway partnership as an important part of the many achievements that had taken place in Afghanistan in various areas. The people and Government of Afghanistan greatly value Norway's many contributions in various fields for Afghanistan.



## The Fourth Review Conference of Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention was held in Oslo

Ambassador Ghafoorzai addressed the Fourth Review Conference of Anti-personnel Mine Ban Convention. He stressed various aspects of Afghanistan's mine-clearance activities, including clearance operations, the proactive role of women in the progress, support for victims and the way forward. Ambassador Ghafoorzai reaffirmed Afghanistan's commitment against Anti-Personnel mines. In June 2019,



a dedicated team of women, began mine clearance activities in Bamyán province which is the first province to become mine-free in Afghanistan. Ambassador Ghafoorzai emphasized that integration of women in humanitarian mine action in Afghanistan remains a work in progress and pointed out that



Afghanistan has been working to assist women's involvement in various demining tasks and will enhance progress in this area. Afghanistan is a country that has been and remains a prime victim of land mines and has been combating landmines in the last three decades.

## Ambassador Youssof Ghafoorzai presented Credentials to the President of Iceland



Ambassador Youssof Ghafoorzai presented his credentials to Guðni Thorlacius Jóhannesson President of Iceland as the non-resident Ambassador of Islamic of Afghanistan. During the meeting Ambassador Ghafoorzai has mentioned for further cooperation on economic, cultural and bilateral relations.



Mr. Jóhannesson mentioned the rich history and culture of Afghanistan and said that although Iceland does not have a military force in Afghanistan, it has assisted and cooperated with Afghanistan in various fields to the best of its ability. Ambassador Ghafoorzai appreciated that Iceland has been involved and had an active role in Afghanistan in various spectrums within the framework of ISAF and reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan.

## The third Round of China - Afghanistan-Pakistan Trilateral Strategic Dialogue

On 7 July 2020, in the 3rd round of China-Afghanistan-Pakistan Trilateral Strategic dialogue, the Deputy Foreign Ministers agreed to further cooperation against COVID-19, the Afghan peace and reconciliation process and trilateral cooperation.



Chinese Deputy Foreign Minister Luo Zhaohui, Afghan Deputy Foreign Minister Mirwais Nab and Pakistan's Foreign Secretary Sohail Mahmood co-chaired the dialogue. China and Pakistan appreciated the efforts by the Afghanistan government and relevant parties in expediting the exchange of the prisoners to pave the way for the start of the Intra-Afghan Negotiations and call for violence reduction and humanitarian ceasefire. The three sides agreed that the return of Afghan refugees should be part of peace and reconciliation process and agreed to continue to strengthen counter-terrorism and security cooperation. The three sides expressed readiness to carry out trilateral practical cooperation in flexible manners, and keep exploring new fields of cooperation, with a view to accumulating outcomes for the 4th China-Afghanistan-Pakistan Foreign Ministers' Dialogue.

## International Consultations on Strengthening Consensus for Peace in Afghanistan



The second meeting of the strengthening consensus for peace in Afghanistan was held on 9<sup>th</sup> July 2020. The meeting was hosted by Acting Foreign Minister Mohammad Haneef Atmar. The meeting was opened by H.E President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani and included participation from representatives of fifteen nations, four international organizations, members of the Afghan parliament and negotiation team. Representatives from the EU NATO, the SRS of the UN were also present at the meeting. Participants called on the Taliban to reduce violence and adhere to UNSC Resolution 1232, which calls for a global humanitarian ceasefire. They condemned the recent increase in violence and the loss of lives including the attacks on human rights activists, Ulema, minorities and healthcare facilities. The active participation of women for a more inclusive peace talks was highlighted as well. The participants also underscored the importance of the proactive engagement of women in all stages of the peace process. The release of Taliban prisoners by the government of Afghanistan was also appreciated as an important step towards peace. Participants also called on the Taliban to reciprocate in good faith. The Afghan government has so far released over 4,000 Taliban prisoners.



The Embassy of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in Oslo  
Accredited to Norway, Denmark and Iceland

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