



Dear Readers,

It is with sadness that this past month we witnessed the tragic flash floods in Afghanistan, which took many innocent lives. The flash floods in Afghanistan, which hit the province of Parwan the hardest, have costed at least 180 lives, as many wounded and the loss of over 1500 houses and dwellings. In these lines, we remember the many victims of the tragedy and pray for eternal peace on their soul. We wish to also recognize the workers and our Afghan National Defence and Security Forces for their swift response and unyielding commitment to saving as many lives as possible and helping meet immediate needs. I also like to convey my deepest feelings to the victims of the flood and the families of the deceased, and to those in the Afghan diaspora with ties to the areas affected by the floods. Also this month, the government took a major step announcing the remaining cabinet members for the government as well as the composition of the High Council for Peace and Reconciliation. The High Council is led by Dr. Abdullah Abdullah and so far comprised of 48 members, including other prominent national personalities and representatives of other segments of society as well. The High Council for Peace has as its main purpose to advise the 21-person negotiating team in their talks with the Taliban and to facilitate and guide direct-talks aimed at a lasting peace that preserves Afghanistan's foundational gains and avoids a relapse to conflict. The formation of the High Council is yet another step towards the start of direct talks, to which the government remains fully ready to embark on. That and the completion of release of prisoners were the last in a series of steps taken by the Government, in accordance with its commitment, to start direct peace talks as soon as possible with the aim of achieving the desired end-state, demanded by the Afghan people. The people of Afghanistan are approaching the process with hope and confidence that the joint and collective efforts on their part, the Government, and the international community will bring about a durable end to the four-decade long conflict that has plagued the country and sets the country on a new path of peace and prosperity.

**Yousof Ghafoorzai**  
Ambassador

### Consultative Peace Jirga held on August 7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup>



A Consultative Peace Jirga was held in Kabul on August 7th-9th to discuss the way forward in the Afghan peace process and reach a decision regarding the release of the 400 Taliban prisoners, who have been implicated in serious crimes, and other various issues on the peace process. More than 3,000 representatives from across the country and from different segments of society, including senior officials, representatives of the civil society, members of the parliament and women and youth groups took part in the Jirga. The national gathering recommended the release of the last 400 Taliban prisoners as the final obstacle for the immediate start of direct peace talks between the government of Afghanistan and the Taliban, aimed at achieving a lasting, dignified and inclusive peace in the country. The release of the remaining Taliban prisoners was deemed conditional on them not returning to the battlefield. The Jirga demanded the Taliban guarantee this point, and to respond by starting direct negotiations on an immediate basis and enforcing a reduction of violence, leading to a permanent and comprehensive ceasefire. The Jirga called on the support of the international community, first and foremost to ensure the preservation and continuity of the Islamic Republic, its Constitution and its fundamental democratic values. They also sought the international community to ensure that the Taliban meet the demands mentioned above and to help secure the desired end-result that meets the aspirations and expectations of the people of Afghanistan, such as preserving the foundational gains and achievements made possible by the joint efforts and sacrifices of the all Afghans and the international community.

### Acting Foreign Minister H.E. Mohammad Haneef Atmar led a delegation to Uzbekistan

Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Mohammad Haneef Atmar, led a high-level delegation to Uzbekistan. H.E. Mr. Atmar met with several high representatives of Uzbekistan, including the Prime Minister, H.E. Mr. Abdullah Aripov and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, H.E. Mr. Abdulaziz Kamilov. H.E. Mr. Aripov welcomed The Afghan delegation to Tashkent and expressed that Uzbekistan was ready to develop and expand relations with Afghanistan in various fields, including economic development, security, transport and electricity.



H.E. Mr. Mohammad Haneef Atmar appreciated Uzbek support for the Government of Afghanistan during the peace process. Electricity cooperation was discussed in detail by H.E. Mr. Atmar and his Uzbek counterpart, H.E. Mr. Abdulaziz Kamilov. During the meeting the two sides agreed on signing a power transmission agreement between Breshna Shirkat and the Uzbek Ministry of Energy, as well as expanding cooperation in trade and transport. Besides, the two sides discussed the importance of reconciliation in Afghanistan and the role of Uzbekistan in promoting peace and building regional consensus. Mr. Kamilov discussed Afghanistan's important position in Uzbekistan's foreign policy and Uzbekistan's support for an Afghan- led and owned peace process. H.E. Mohammad Haneef Atmar thanked H.E. Mr. Kamilov for his warm welcome and congratulated him on the anniversary of Uzbekistan's independence. He also thanked Uzbekistan for its support in the process. H.E. Mr. Atmar assured his Uzbek counterpart that the leadership of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan looks forward to strengthen and expand relations with Uzbekistan. Both sides also agreed on a roadmap aimed at developing and expanding long-term relations and cooperation.

**Ambassador Ghafoorzai hosted Ambassadors and other representatives in Oslo to discuss the Afghan peace process**



Ambassador Ghafoorzai hosted a group of Ambassadors and other representatives in Oslo to discuss the Afghan-led and owned peace efforts and the overall position of the Government in the process. Ambassador Ghafoorzai gave an overview of the two meetings held last month on strengthening regional and international consensus for peace, as well as the Consultative Peace Jirga. He highlighted the meetings' major points, including the Jirga's approval for the release of the remaining 400 Taliban prisoners who had been involved in serious crimes, to foster an immediate start of direct talks between the government of Afghanistan and the Taliban. He noted that the Consultative Peace Jirga also called the Taliban to ensure that the released prisoners renounce and avoid reverting to violence and attacks, meet the expressed commitment of releasing prisoners of the Afghan national security forces, initiate a reduction of violence and a permanent ceasefire and engage in direct negotiations with the government of Afghanistan. He also emphasized that the Government of Afghanistan's commitment to ensuring an outcome to peace efforts that meet the demands of the Afghan people, including the preservation of the Republic, the national institutions and the democratic achievements of the last twenty years. Ambassador Ghafoorzai expressed his gratitude to the international community and their representatives present for their continued support for the Afghan-led peace process, pivotal in the many foundational gains achieved, and highlighted the importance of sustained support in the future, including in the post-peace development phase.

**Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs H.E. Mr. Mohammad Haneef Atmar met Pakistani delegation in Kabul**

On 31<sup>st</sup> August, Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs H.E. Mr. Mohammad Haneef Atmar received a Pakistani delegation in Kabul, led by the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan, Mr. Sohail Mahmood. The delegation included 40 high-level members of various governmental institutions and came to attend the 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the Afghanistan-Pakistan Action Plan for Peace and Solidarity (APAPPS). Foreign Minister Atmar welcomed the delegation and emphasized the strong will of the Afghan government to expand bilateral relations with Pakistan in various areas, including security cooperation.



H.E. Mr. Atmar raised some concerns regarding the construction of infrastructure and the shelling of Afghan territory along the Durand Line. H.E. Mr. Atmar also shared his views with the Pakistani delegation on regional connectivity, trade and transport development, and the extension the railway lines between Pakistan and Afghanistan. H.E. Mr. Atmar expressed his gratitude to Pakistan for hosting Afghan refugees, saying that the Afghan government is working on long-term plans to facilitate their voluntary and dignified return. Mr. Mahmood highlighted the will of the Pakistani leadership to strengthen and expand bilateral relations, and Pakistan's full support for the Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process and the immediate start of peace talks. The second meeting of the APAPPS assessed commitments of the previous meeting of the APAPPS, focusing on five separate areas of politics and diplomacy, defense, security, economy and refugees.

**President Ashraf Ghani appoints Members of the High Council for National Reconciliation.**



On 31<sup>st</sup> August President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani appointed the members of the High Council for National Reconciliation. The High Council for National Reconciliation is composed of 48 people with leading positions in all areas of society and led by Dr. Abdullah Abdullah. The Council is expected to design and set the strategy of the government's negotiating team and advise them in their talks with the Taliban. The High Council for National Reconciliation will have an important role in facilitating and guiding peace talks for a successful conclusion.

**Ambassador Ghafoorzai to Speak at GPAJ Event on the Role of the UN in Afghanistan**

At the invitation of the Global Peace-Building Association in Japan, Ambassador Ghafoorzai will speak at an event of the Association about the role of the UN in the stabilization of Afghanistan later this month.



Global Peacebuilding Association

特定非営利活動法人 日本国際平和構築協会

The GPAJ aims to contribute to peacebuilding efforts of the international community, by deepening the general public's understanding of the agenda related to international peace, national security, development and poverty.

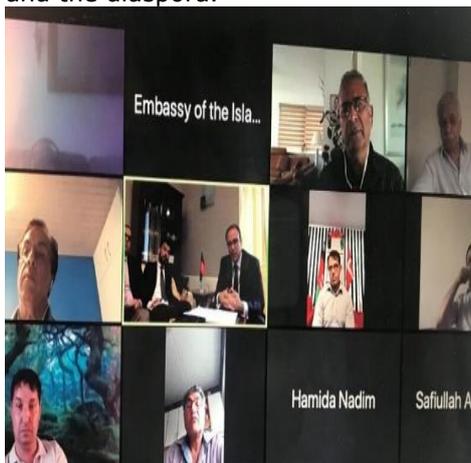
## Ambassador Ghafoorzai met with Mr. Amund Bjorsnes & Mr. Jens Braarvig, Executive Director and Director of the Norwegian Institute of Philology (PHI)



On 24 August 2020, Ambassador Ghafoorzai met with Mr. Amund Bjorsnes and Mr. Jens Braarvig, Executive Director and Director of the Norwegian Institute of Philology (PHI). The Norwegian Institute of Philology is leading the Language, Legacy and Landey Project, launched at the Embassy of Afghanistan in Oslo on February 8th, 2018. Ambassador Ghafoorzai welcomed Mr. Braarvig and Mr. Bjorsnes and highlighted the importance of protecting, restoring and preserving historical and cultural traditions. Ambassador Ghafoorzai also stressed that Afghanistan has historically been a crossroad of cultures and hub for the flow of innovative ideas in its wider region, benefiting prosperity for peoples of different countries and region. Today's Afghanistan was gradually reasserting its historical flow of innovative ideas in its wider region. Preserving Afghanistan's rich cultural heritage is a priority by the Government of Afghanistan. During the meeting Mr. Braarvig, highlighted various aspects of the work of the PHI, including the conclusion of the translation of Landey poems into Norwegian. Ambassador Ghafoorzai expressed his gratitude for the PHI's work towards Afghan history and culture and his readiness for a future cooperation on specific projects and initiatives, between the Embassy of Afghanistan in Oslo and the PHI. Both sides agreed on cooperation in the areas of history and culture in the way forward.

## Ambassador Ghafoorzai held a VTC Discussion with the Afghan Diaspora in Denmark

Ambassador Ghafoorzai and the Embassy staff held a VTC meeting with a group of the Afghan diaspora in Denmark, including heads of cultural and educational associations. The discussion was part of the periodic interactions with the Afghan community in Denmark aimed at collaborating in culture and other fields, in line with the Embassy's strategic objectives. Ambassador Ghafoorzai gave an overview of the Embassy's activities over the past six months, and developments in Afghanistan with a particular focus on the peace process, measures taken by the Embassy to meet the Consular needs of the Afghan community in Denmark and also areas of collaboration between the Embassy and the diaspora.



Ambassador Ghafoorzai praised the work being done by the Afghan diaspora in Denmark, within various associations organizations. He also noted how the diaspora could be effective in the areas and public and peace diplomacy, especially at a time when the peace efforts were reaching an important phase. Ambassador Ghafoorzai noted that he looks forward to meeting the diaspora in his next working visit to Copenhagen, once travel is permitted, in light of the Covid-19 pandemic. The group of Afghan diaspora members thanked the Embassy for this initiative and its commitment and efforts to meet the Consular needs of Afghan community in Denmark. Also attending the meeting were Counselor Zahibuallah Haidary, Second Secretary Zahir Mohammad and the Head of the Consular Division, Bashir Ahmad Nayel.

## General Eirik Kristoffersen named New Chief of Defence of Norway



General Eirik Kristoffersen was named new Chief of Defence of Norway on 17<sup>th</sup> August, substituting General Haakon Bruun-Hansen. General Kristoffersen has more than 30 years of military experience in the Army, the Special Forces and the Home Guard. General Kristoffersen is also one of Norway's most decorated officers. Among his distinctions and medals it is included the War Cross with Sword for his bravery and extreme efforts during operations in Afghanistan.



General Kristoffersen has served in several tours in Afghanistan. In 2002 he participated in the task force KBAR, for which he was awarded the Navy Presidential Unit Citation. In 2005 he led operations in the province of Paktia, for which he was awarded the Medal for Defence Service Abroad with Rossete. For his leadership in battle in Afghanistan during the period 2007-2008, General Kristoffersen was awarded the War Cross with Sword.

## Ambassador Ghafoorzai met with the Special Representative for Afghanistan Mr. Per Ilsaas

On 14<sup>th</sup> August Ambassador Ghafoorzai met with Norway's Special Representative for Afghanistan, Mr. Per Ilsaas. Ambassador Ghafoorzai and Mr. Ilsaas discussed the recent developments in the Afghan-led and owned peace process and the expectations for the near future. Ambassador Ghafoorzai underscored the importance of the recent Consultative Peace Jirga, the initiatives taken and the consensus reached for an outcome that meets the demands of the Afghan people.



Ambassador Ghafoorzai highlighted the decision of the Consultative Peace in relation to different aspects of the process, including measures to be taken for a conducive environment for start of talks, aimed at a viable outcome that ensures a lasting and dignified peace. He also highlighted Norway's continued support for the peace process and expressed his gratitude for Norway's important contributions in that endeavor and more broadly in various sectors. Ambassador Ghafoorzai ended by thanking Mr. Ilsaas for his continued support and collaboration with Afghanistan. Mr. Ilsaas reaffirmed Norway's commitment with the peace process and commented on their engagement and activities in support of an Afghan-led process.

## President Ghani Attended Ashura Ceremony



On 30 August 2020, H.E. President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani attended the Ashura ceremony held in western Kabul to commemorate the martyrdom of Imam Hussain, Prophet Mohammad's grandson.



The ceremony was also attended by First and Second Vice-Presidents, Amrullah Saleh and Mohammad Sarwar Danish and Amrullah Saleh.

## AFGHANISTAN COVID UPDATE



As of today, Afghanistan has 38,243 confirmed cases of coronavirus, with 1,401 deaths and 29,315 recoveries. There are isolation guards in the Hospitals of Herat (80 beds) and Kabul (100). People arriving to Afghanistan from other countries are advised to self-quarantine for 14 days. Otherwise, the recommendations of the WHO regarding hand hygiene and social distancing should be followed at all times.

## Acting Foreign Minister H.E. Mr. Mohammad Haneef Atmar Farewells outgoing Danish Ambassador to Kabul, H.E. Mr. Michael Lund Jeppesen

Acting Foreign Minister Mohammad Haneef Atmar met with H.E. Mr. Michael Lund Jeppesen, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Denmark to Kabul. During the meeting, minister Atmar expressed his appreciation for the outgoing Ambassador's efforts in strengthening ties between Afghanistan and Denmark and wished him success for the future.



Both sides deliberated on the latest developments in the Afghan peace process, the Consultative Peace Jirga and the need for an immediate start to peace talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban. Furthermore, both sides agreed that a reduction in violence and the further strengthening of regional and international consensus on the peace process is necessary and vital for its success.



Ambassador Jeppesen thanked the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for its close cooperation with the Danish Embassy during his tenure in Kabul and assured the Minister that he would continue to support the Afghan peace process during his new mission in Brussels.



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

**NYHETSBRÆV**  
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