



**Dear Readers,**

I convey my condolences to the families of the victims of last night's barbaric terrorist attack in Logar. It occurred during Ramadan & just before iftar & represents barbarity and cowardice in its extreme form. May the Almighty bestow eternal peace on the souls of the victims & I wish a speedy recovery for the wounded. This month, the US & NATO partners took a decision for withdrawal of int. forces from Afghanistan. This reflects another phase of the security transition that commenced in 2011 with Afghan national security forces taking lead in security operations nationwide. By the same token, we're pleased that support for Afghan security forces will sustain & continue. Thus, this marks the start of a new phase of international partnership with Afghanistan. This enduring partnership remains a strategic asset for the common goals of Afghanistan & our international partners. Norway, Denmark & Iceland have made important contributions in Afghanistan, which have helped to secure important gains in the security, political & social sectors. These gains have come with enormous & joint effort & sacrifice by the people of Afghanistan & international partners alike. We're grateful for the contribution of the Norwegian, Danish and Icelandic forces & personnel, and that of all other NATO partners who have supported the development, training & other support of Afghan security forces through the NATO's ISAF & RSM Missions. This contribution is part of their broader efforts in different fields that have helped impact profound positive change in the country. We look forward to this next phase of partnership to secure, build and consolidate peace & enhance past gains in various fields. We're now in the process of renewing our Strategic Partnership Agreements with Norway & Denmark for our future cooperation and my colleagues & I at the Embassy are pleased to be working on initiatives in various areas to further enhance our bilateral relations and cooperation.

**Youssof Ghafoorzai**  
**Ambassador**

**Ambassador Ghafoorzai met with Mr. Mattis Raustøl, Head of Section for South Asia and Afghanistan**



On April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021, Ambassador Ghafoorzai had a virtual meeting with Mr. Mattis Raustøl, Director of Afghanistan and South Asia Dept. at the Norwegian Foreign Ministry in which they discussed the recent US and NATO decision for withdrawal from Afghanistan, the Afghan peace process, including the forth-coming Istanbul Conference and the international community's role in the process of achieving a peaceful, dignified, independent and democratic Afghanistan. Ambassador Ghafoorzai hailed the important partnership between Afghanistan and Norway. Norway's contributions in various sectors, including security for which Norwegian forces courageously served and sacrificed as part of the former NATO-ISAF and current Resolute Support Mission. The decision for withdrawal of international forces from Afghanistan would mark the start of a new phase of cooperation between Afghanistan, the US and other NATO partners. On the peace process, Ambassador Ghafoorzai noted that the Istanbul Conference was another opportunity for the Taliban to demonstrate genuine commitment to peace. Mr. Raustøl reaffirmed Norway's strong support to the peace process and underlined the need to work for an outcome that leads to a sustainable and lasting peace. Mr. Raustøl emphasized that Norway will continue to stand with Afghanistan and its people going forward. Mrs. Lisa Golden, Director of Section for Peace and Reconciliation and Mr. Carsten Hveem Carlsen, Policy Director at the Section for South Asia and Afghanistan also attended the meeting.

**Ambassador Ghafoorzai met with Mr. Kai Eide, Former UN Envoy to Afghanistan**

On April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021, Ambassador Ghafoorzai met with Mr. Kai Eide, Former UN Envoy to Afghanistan and Norwegian Ambassador to NATO. Ambassador Ghafoorzai hailed Mr. Eide's work during his time in Afghanistan as former UN Special Envoy for Afghanistan and saluted Norway's important role in Afghanistan in the past two decades.



They discussed recent developments in the peace process, which has long been supported by Norway. Ambassador Ghafoorzai underscored the important role of the international community in helping achieve the end-state of the peace process that results in a lasting and dignified peace which meets the expectations of the people of Afghanistan – a verifiable peace that preserves Afghanistan's democratic system, based on the constitution, and which defends and promotes democratic gains, women's rights, role of civil society and all segments of society. He gave an overview of President Ghani's three-phased peace plan which was shared with international partners and was centered on a responsible and practical approach for ensuring a lasting peace. He stated that the government of Afghanistan was fully prepared to take part in the Istanbul Conference, which offers an opportunity for important progress in the peace process. Mr. Eide gave his assessment of the situation and expressed hope and confidence about a successful outcome in the process and thanked Ambassador Ghafoorzai for his overview of the peace process.

### **Ambassador Ghafoorzai met with Head of the Afghanistan Women Chamber of Commerce, Ms. Manizha Wafeq**

On April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2021, Ambassador Ghafoorzai met with Mrs. Manizha Wafeq, head of the Afghanistan Women Chamber of Commerce (AWCCI). Ms. Wafeq presented details of the Women's National Business Agenda (WNBA), a recently adopted "road-map" for advancement of further progress in women's economic empowerment. The "road map" is based on a detailed analysis of progress and challenges related to businesses led by Afghan women throughout the country. Ambassador Ghafoorzai hailed the WNBA as an important initiative for enhancing women's economic empowerment and discussed ways in which the Embassy



could foster collaboration between various business-related entities based in Norway and Denmark in the areas of capacity-building, advocacy and finding adequate markets for goods and products produced by Afghan women. Such initiatives included the hosting of exhibition of "Made by Afghan Women" in Oslo which was previously planned but postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic as well as facilitating dialogue between entrepreneurs based in Norway, aimed at exchange of experience for capacity building in support of newly established women-led start-up businesses. Ambassador Ghafoorzai and Mrs. Wafeq committed to work closely on different initiatives in the way forward. Also taking part in the discussion was Mr. Nasir Andisha, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Afghanistan to the UN in Geneva who spoke about ways in which the Mission in Geneva could collaborate with the AWCCI.

### **Ambassador Ghafoorzai met with Danish Ambassador to Afghanistan, Nathalia Feinberg**

On April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021, Ambassador Ghafoorzai met virtually with Danish Ambassador to Afghanistan, Nathalia Feinberg. Ambassador Ghafoorzai congratulated Mrs. Feinberg on her new appointment as Danish Ambassador to Afghanistan and highlighted that he & his colleagues at the Afghan Embassy were looking forward to working closely with colleagues in Copenhagen & Kabul on enhancing the bilateral relationship between



Denmark & Afghanistan. The two Ambassadors discussed Afghanistan-Denmark bilateral collaboration, Denmark's engagement in Afghanistan, the Afghan peace process & the start of inter-parliamentary cooperation between women parliamentarians of both countries. Ambassador Ghafoorzai gave an overview of the government's three-pillared road-map for peace. He saluted Denmark's engagement in Afghanistan, which have been a key factor to the positive changes in the country. Denmark's contributions included support in the areas of democracy, development, governance, human rights, and empowerment of civil society. In that regard, Ambassador Ghafoorzai highlighted the government's commitment to an inclusive process, with input and participation from civil society, women and youth groups, and victims of conflict. The two Ambassadors also discussed the renewal of the Afghanistan-Denmark Strategic Partnership Agreement in the near future & commitment to maintain close collaboration on development of initiatives between the two countries.

### **Ambassador Ghafoorzai met Danish Member of Parliament, Samira Nawa**



On April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021, Ambassador Ghafoorzai met virtually with Afghan-Danish parliamentarian, Samira Nawa. They discussed Afghan-Danish relations, Denmark's engagement in Afghanistan and the start of inter-parliamentary cooperation between Afghan and Danish women parliamentarians. They also discussed the importance of women's proactive engagement in different fields, including the economic and social sectors and the ongoing peace process. Ambassador Ghafoorzai highlighted her membership in Folketinget (The Danish Parliament) as a symbol of the great talent, commitment and determination of Afghanistan's youth who are striving for and achieving success under difficult circumstances. He discussed the Embassy's initiatives in various fields, among which he proposed the start of dialogue and partnership between the Afghan and Danish parliaments, especially collaboration between women parliamentarians on different issues. Ambassador Ghafoorzai hailed Denmark's important contributions for Afghanistan in the security, governance, human rights and education sectors, under the Afghanistan-Denmark bilateral strategic partnership. MP Samira Nawa welcomed the proposed initiative for the start of collaboration between women parliamentarians from Afghanistan and Denmark. MP Samira Nawa and Ambassador Ghafoorzai would follow-up on the initiatives discussed.

### Parliament's Annual Reception for the Diplomatic Corps in Norway

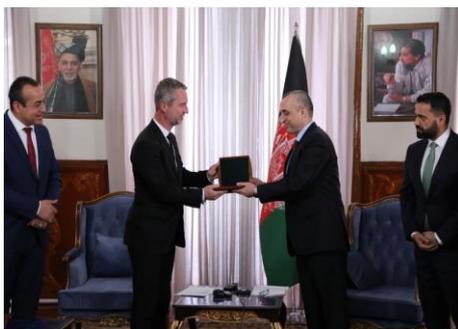
On April 22, Ambassador Ghafoorzai joined Stortinget's online Annual Reception for the Heads of Embassies, hosted by Ms. Tone Trøen, President of Stortinget. She welcomed the diplomatic corps to the reception and stressed the importance of the international community standing together in a close dialogue & cooperation to overcome common challenges. She then spoke in detail about the forth-coming parliamentary elections, scheduled for September this year and Parliament's role in democracy during the Covid-19 pandemic.



This discussion was moderated by Finish Ambassador to Norway, who posed questions on behalf of the diplomatic corps in Norway. In the second part of event, Ms. Anniken Huitfeldt, Chair of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defense, gave a presentation and overview of Norway's foreign policy priorities and discussions. Earlier in the week, Foreign Minister Ine Eriksen Soreide addressed the plenary debate of the Parliament on Norway's foreign policy priorities for the coming year. In her remarks, Foreign Minister Soreide referred to the decision of the US and NATO to withdraw international forces from Afghanistan, while reaffirming Norway's continued support in various sectors, including the development and other fields. On the peace process, she asserted that Norway would remain a committed partner in the international community's efforts to secure a lasting peace. In that regard, she also highlighted the importance of having to preserve the important achievements from the past 20 years, including on human rights, and women's rights in particular.

### The First Vice President, Awarded the State Medal of Honor of Ahmad Shah Massoud, to Mayor Ann Hidalgo

At the ceremony which took place at the Sedarat-e-uzma Palace, the First Vice President, H.E. Amerullah Saleh awarded the Mayor of Paris, Ann Hidalgo, the "Order of the National Hero of Afghanistan, Commander Ahmad Shah Massoud." The award was given as a token of appreciation for the Paris City Council's initiative to name an alley in the 8<sup>th</sup> district of Paris after the late Commander Massoud.



The First Vice President hailed the late Ahmad Shah Massoud as a symbol of resistance and moderation who stood against radicalism and fundamentalism during a difficult era in Afghanistan's modern history. At the event, he stated that the vision and goal which Commander Massoud strived to achieve was one that Afghanistan is striving to achieve – "An Afghanistan that is at peace with itself and the outside world." The First Vice-President also highlighted the importance of the historic bilateral relations between Afghanistan & France which spanned 99 years as well as French contributions in various areas, including security, democracy, human rights, gender equality and women's empowerment in various fields of society. Mayor Hidalgo expressed her sincere gratitude for being honored with the state medal of national hero of Afghanistan and stated that Paris was proud to name a beautiful place after Commander Massoud who stood against fundamentalism and gave his life for the cause of freedom in Afghanistan. With Mayor Hidalgo taking part in the event virtually, the French Ambassador to Afghanistan, David Martinon received the award on her behalf.

### President Ghani Addressed the 77th Session of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific



On April 27th, President Ghani addressed the 77th Session of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. H.E. Ghani mentioned how the pandemic's effects on societies should create a sense of urgency to achieve social protection, strengthen supply chain and focus on climate change - areas deemed imperatives for societies to build up better, greener, more equal and connected. The President stressed the importance of vaccination as a source of global public good. He also expressed Afghanistan's gratitude for the generous support of international community in helping Afghanistan recover from the pandemic. H.E. Ghani expressed special gratitude for the Asian Development Bank, the European Union, World Bank and bilateral donors for all the support during the pandemic. President Ghani highlighted the importance of social protection systems to eradicate poverty and promote economic growth. H.E. Ghani mentioned that conflicts have had a very high cost for all involved parts, and that peace is therefore a national imperative. He reaffirmed the govt's commitment to an Afghan led & owned inclusive peace process for a political settlement that results in a dignified and lasting peace in a united, democratic, sovereign, neutral and connected Afghanistan. The President mentioned that Afghanistan is ready to be a stakeholder of governance and economic development, that will result in integration of systems of state building, region connectivity, market building and peace building.

## Trilateral Meeting of FM's of Afghanistan, Pakistan and Turkey Held in Istanbul

On April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2021, the Foreign Ministers of Afghanistan, Turkey, and Pakistan held a trilateral meeting in Istanbul. The meeting was part of a series of recent measures at the regional and international level to strengthen consensus and coordination in the support of the peace process. At the conclusion of the meeting, a joint declaration was adopted, which highlighted a number of important issues for the start and steady progress of peace talks as well measures for increased trilateral cooperation on issues of mutual interest, including enhanced economic cooperation and other shared objectives. The joint statement reiterated a shared commitment to



support a peaceful, sovereign, independent, democratic, and united Afghanistan. It also recognized that a sustainable peace can be achieved only through an inclusive Afghan-led and Afghan-owned political process aimed at a permanent and comprehensive ceasefire. The declaration also deplored the high level of violence and attacks and condemned, to that end, attacks targeting civil service employees, civil society activists, human rights defenders, journalists, and media workers. The declaration further underscored the urgent need for an immediate ceasefire to end attacks, improve security and provide a conducive atmosphere for the success of the peace talks. The declaration also emphasized enhanced cooperation on regional connectivity in transport, trade, energy, people-to-people contact, education, social and cultural exchange and tourism.

## Water and Electricity Management Week Commenced with Event at the Presidential Palace



The last week of April was marked with the announcement of the launch of various water and electricity projects in Afghanistan. The Afghan government announced during the Water and Electricity Management Week at the Presidential Palace the launch of several water and electricity projects in twenty-one provinces in the country. President Ghani announced that the Archi Canal in Takhar Province and Shahrwan Canal in Kunduz Province, water supply projects in Farah and Khost Provinces and the installation of the fifth substation transformer in Nangarhar province and 122 water irrigation projects in 21 provinces would soon be completed. In March, the Kamal Khan Dam project's was inaugurated in Nimruz. The event marked the completion of a milestone project which was under work for several years aimed at increasing water supply. It is noteworthy to mention that the past year had seen important investment and progress in the agriculture sector, which is estimated to have grown to 5,3% in 2020, up from 2.3% in 2019. The various water supply initiatives announced are promising when it comes to increase this percentage even more during 2021. The completion of these historic projects is a source of pride for the people of Afghanistan and a positive indication of the government's efforts on investing in water-saving and irrigation projects, and with that, ensuring the population safe access to water on a long-term basis.

## Members of the Robotic Team were included in Forbes 30 under 30 Asia 2021 list

On April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021, Forbes announced that five girls from The Afghan Girls Robotic Team were included in Forbes 30 under 30 Asia list. The all-female robotics team was formed with help from New York-based nonprofit Digital Citizen Fund in 2017. Over the past several years, the team has advocated awareness about the importance of women's education in Afghanistan. In 2018, their team captain, at the time, Fatemah Qaderyan attended the Oslo



Freedom Forum, a series of international conferences run by the New York based non-profit Human Rights Foundation. The forum brings together prominent personalities in order to network and exchange ideas about human rights. At the occasion, she spoke about the journey of the Robotics Team in achieving their success and their commitment to help build a better future for Afghanistan. The members of the Robotic team - all aged between fifteen and nineteen - are among the youngest members on this year's Forbes 30 under 30 Asia list. Their nomination is due to the development of a low-cost and lightweight ventilator that helps treat patients diagnosed with Covid-19 in Afghanistan. The Robotics Team challenged themselves to drive positive change in their community during the height of the pandemic, so they used spare parts from old cars to develop a prototype ventilator. Their inclusion in the Forbes under 30 list is recognition of the overall talent and commitment of Afghan women and their contribution to advancement of society.



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

**NYHETSREVY**  
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