



Dear Readers,

Afghanistan's preparation for the next phase of partnership with the international community are moving heading steadily. This new phase of partnership will be underpinned by a collective national effort to seize the opportunity available to end the 4-decades conflict, restore a lasting and dignified peace in Afghanistan & realizes Afghanistan's full potential for advancing development & economic growth in Afghanistan & the region. In the past several months, a comprehensive national discourse conducted with all segments of society, has led to a stronger than ever consensus on the overall framework, & manner through which peace should be secured. This unity of purpose & approach presents new hopes for a successful outcome to this vitally important national endeavor for securing the peace that is desired by the people of Afghanistan. This imperative comes amidst the important decision of the international community to continue its engagement in & partnership with Afghanistan in support of Afghan national defense & security forces (ANDSF), as well as help consolidate past gains in the security, social & economic fields & overcome challenges that remain. This affirmation of support from NATO, its member-states and other partners, is most welcomed & appreciated by the people & government of Afghanistan & reflects the continued recognition of the evident reality that a peaceful, stable & prosperous Afghanistan is still inextricably linked to broader security & stability in the region and beyond. My colleagues & I at the Embassy of Afghanistan look forward to facilitating further initiatives of bilateral cooperation in various fields, as part of our enduring strategic partnerships & important cooperation with Norway, Denmark & Iceland.

Youssof Ghafoorzai
Ambassador

Virtual meeting between the Afghan Embassy in Oslo, Kabul Medical University and Oslo Metropolitan University



On May 26th, Ambassador Ghafoorzai hosted a joint meeting between the Embassy, the Oslo Metropolitan University and Kabul Medical University. The purpose of the meeting was the start of long-term collaboration between the OsloMet's Faculty of Health Science, Orthopedics and Orthotics and Kabul Medical University in the area of research on and production of prosthetics. The significantly high number of disabled persons in Afghanistan is the result of the four-decades conflict, which has left millions of civilians maimed and wounded with physical disabilities from landmines, attacks, including IED's, other explosive devices and disease. The proposed initiative for joint collaboration between the two universities seeks to strengthen national programs and capacity for the production of prosthetics and orthotics in Afghanistan. Dr. Curt Rice, Rector of OsloMet University, Prof. Mona Dahl, Head of Faculty of Health Sciences, at the Department of Occupational Therapy and Orthopedics Engineering, Dr. Wahidullah Mohamand, Head of Kabul Medical University, and Mr. Najibullah Amarkhail, Head of Faculty of Orthopedics and Orthotics, spoke about various assistance needs pertaining to the programs at Kabul Medical University. Participants agreed on the start of partnership between the two Universities, with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in the coming weeks for collaboration, which will include online and in-person teaching programs, course creations, & joint research and capacity-building. In February this year, the Embassy collaborated with OsloMet University for the signing of a separate MOU between OsloMet University and Kabul University for the start of academic cooperation.

President Ghani Congratulates H.M. King Harald V and PM Erna Solberg on Norway's National Day



May 17th marked Norway's Constitution Day. On the occasion, in separate letter addressed to His Majesty King Harald the V and Prime Minister Erna Solberg of Norway, President Ghani extended his cordial greetings and felicitations to the government and people of Norway. President Ghani stated that Afghanistan greatly appreciates Norway's long-standing solidarity, friendship and partnership with Afghanistan, and expressed gratitude and pleasure for the friendly relations and cooperation having grown and elevated to higher levels in recent years. President Ghani also reaffirmed Afghanistan's firm commitment to continue further expansion of bilateral relations, cooperation and partnership with Norway in the way forward. On the same occasion, Foreign Minister Mohammed Haneef Atmar, also extended congratulations and best wishes to his Norwegian counterpart, Foreign Minister Ine Eriksen Søreide. He conveyed gratitude for Norway's important contributions in various fields. On the same occasion, Ambassador Ghafoorzai has also conveyed his warmest congratulations to the people and government Norway. He stated that Norway is one of Afghanistan's closest strategic partners with whom Afghanistan shares common values and objectives and whose solidarity and support dates back to the period of the 1980's when Norwegian civil society was proactively engaged in Afghanistan, with Norwegian NGOs maintaining a presence in Afghanistan despite the difficult conditions at the time. Such support continued in the decade of internal conflict in the country.

"In 2001, our bilateral relations took on a new form and scope on a broad set of goals: combating international terrorism and advancing democracy, peace and stability. Thousands of Norwegian soldiers have served in Afghanistan and supported the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces to develop into a more capable force, now leading all security operations in the country," he said. Norway's role in helping establish the elite Crisis Response Unit (CRU-222) is also one of the important hallmarks of its contributions in the security sector. Afghanistan is also greatly appreciative of Norway's important role and support of peace efforts to end the four decades of conflict and fulfill the people's long search for a truly lasting and dignified peace that preserves and advance our past social, political, and developmental gains in a united, stable, sovereign and democratic country. He went on to say that Afghanistan took great pleasure in seeing Afghanistan-Norway bilateral relations and cooperation continue to evolve and grow stronger as we approach the start of a new phase of partnership with the international community, following the withdrawal of international forces from Afghanistan. Norway reaffirmed its enduring partnership with Afghanistan at the International Conference on Afghanistan in Geneva, and Afghanistan very much looked forward to the new phase of its close bilateral cooperation under the soon-to-be renewed Afghanistan-Norway Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA).

Ambassador Ghafoorzai Met with Norwegian Special Representative for Afghanistan, Per Albert Ilsaas



On May 5th, 2021, Ambassador Ghafoorzai met with Mr. Per Albert Ilsaas, Special Representative of Norway for Afghanistan. They discussed the Afghan peace process, the new chapter of partnership and cooperation between Afghanistan and Norway, the support of other international partners on the peace process, and recent activities of the UNSC on Afghanistan, under the joint penholdership of Norway and Estonia of the Afghanistan file in the Security Council. Ambassador Ghafoorzai hailed the long-term partnership between Afghanistan and Norway and highlighted the important role during he past decades as part of the NATO mission in Afghanistan in support of Afghan National Defense and Security Forces. This support was an important part of international efforts that helped enable ANDSF to assume security responsibility nationwide. He gave an overview of the government's comprehensive peace plan, aimed at ensuring a practical and responsible approach for ending the conflict and ensuring a lasting and dignified peace in Afghanistan. The Ambassador mentioned the importance of Norway's support on human rights and women's inclusion, a partnership that will remain strategic in order to ensure success within humanitarian and development fields in Afghanistan. Mr. Ilsaas spoke about recent international activities on the peace process, including Norway's perspective in its capacity as a member of the host-group supporting countries. He also reaffirmed Norway's continued engagement and partnership with Afghanistan in the way forward.

Inter-Parliamentary Meeting between Afghanistan and Norway on the Role of Afghan Women in the Afghan Peace Process



On May 27th, the Afghan Embassy in Oslo facilitated a joint meeting between women parliamentarians of the Afghan National Assembly & the members of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defense of the Norwegian Parliament (Stortinget) to discuss the important role of Afghan women in the peace talks and the support of the Norwegian parliament for women's rights & gains. Ambassador Ghafoorzai gave an overview of the various gains made thus far, including on women's empowerment & their important role in the peace process. He hailed Norway's contributions in Afghanistan during the past decades, that had a profound impact on some of Afghanistan's most important gains. Mrs. Anniken Huitfeldt, Chair of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defense at the Storting, stated that plans to continue support in Afghanistan was high on the agenda of the Storting. The delegation from Kabul was led by H.E. Mrs. Hasina Safi, Acting Min. of Women's Affairs, Mrs. Naheed Fareed, Head of the Women's Affairs and Human Rights Committee, Lower House of National Assembly, Mrs. Shinkia Karokhel, Chair of the Parliamentary Caucus, and Mrs. Shokria Esakhil, Rep. of Baghlan Province in the Afghan Parliament. They highlighted the importance of continued support from international partners and of women's inclusion in all stages of the process for achieving a lasting & dignified peace that preserves Afghanistan democratic gains. Participants expressed support on continuing the dialogue in the way forward.



Collaboration Between the Afghan Embassy in Oslo, the Oslo Center & Youth Activists



On May 7th, the Embassy of Afghanistan and Oslo Center initiated a joint discussion with young activists, with the purpose of hearing their perspectives and identifying areas of future collaboration between the Oslo Center and youth groups. Ambassador Ghafoorzai highlighted the youth's important role on various national areas of responsibilities as part of their issues, including the peace process, development and prosperity. Mr. Finn Jarle Rode, Executive Director of the Oslo Center, thanked all participants for joining the meeting and emphasized that the Oslo Center is committed to support joint initiatives between different youth groups in order to help them exchange experiences and knowledge. The Senior Advisor at the Oslo Center, Ms. Bjarte Tørå, has also joined the meeting and presented the Center's experience in working with youth in different countries. Following his remarks, Ms. Halima Chizi Mohammed – Deputy President at the Kwale Youth Assembly in Kenya – highlighted the functionality of the youth assemblies in Kwale and spoke about their achievements. Ms. Pashtana Durrani, Activist and Youth Ambassador; Mr. Rafiullah Baktiar, Co-founder and Program Director of Voice of Peace Afghanistan; and Mr. Jan Mohamad Jahid, Activist and Youth Ambassador; shared their experiences from working with youth and women, as well as the goals and major projects of the organizations they were representing. The Embassy, the Oslo Center and youth activists would continue collaboration on various issues and the Oslo Center expressed readiness to open its office in Kabul.

Ambassador Ghafoorzai met with Secretary General of NAC & Head of Department of Int. Environment and Development Studies at NMBU



On April 30th, Ambassador Ghafoorzai met virtually with Ms. Liv Kjølseth and Ms. Gry Synnevåg, Secretary General of the Norwegian Afghanistan Committee (NAC) and Head of Department of International Environment and Development Studies at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU) and Chairperson of NAC's Board of Directors. Ambassador Ghafoorzai hailed Norway's contributions in Afghanistan in various sectors, and highlighted the important work of Norwegian NGO's, including NAC's work in the areas of rural development and education of female health workers. They discussed possible areas of collaboration, including academic collaboration between NMBU and the Kabul University within resource management, agriculture, food security and other initiatives that could benefit further enhancement of Afghanistan's agricultural sector for economic development. Ms. Kjølseth spoke about the NAC's recent activities in Afghanistan and mentioned the recent graduation of fifty-nine men and women amongst community healthcare workers, midwives, nurses and medical doctors, through training supported by NAC. Ms. Synnevåg, gave an overview of the master programs within conflict peace and development studies that NMBU developed in partnership with universities in Sri Lanka and Pakistan, and suggested programs that can be adapted to conditions in Afghanistan. Ambassador Ghafoorzai, Ms. Liv Kjølseth and Ms. Gry Synnevåg agreed on maintaining a close dialogue in the way forward and work on the start of partnerships in the near future.

Ambassador Ghafoorzai received H.E. Amal Al Moalimi, newly appointed Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to Norway



On May 21st, Ambassador Ghafoorzai received H.E. Amal Al Moalimi, newly appointed Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to Norway. They discussed bilateral relations and cooperation in the political, economic and other fields; the Afghan peace process, and the role of Saudi Arabia and other international partners in the process. Ghafoorzai hailed the historic and brotherly relations between Afghanistan and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and referred to important humanitarian and other support provided by Saudi Arabia for Afghanistan during various stages of Afghanistan's modern history. He gave an overview of developments in peace process and the way forward, as well as the government's plan to end the four decades conflict in the country and achieve a lasting peace. In that regard, he referred to the vitally important role of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in support of the peace process, and also expressed appreciation for Saudi Arabia's important role in helping galvanize condemnation by the Islamic world of terrorist attacks in Afghanistan. He also highlighted that the recent decision of withdrawal of international forces will mark the starting point of a new phase of cooperation between Afghanistan and the international community. Ambassador Amal Al Moalimi reiterated the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's support for the people and government of Afghanistan in different fields, including continued support for lasting peace and stability in Afghanistan.

Prime Minister Erna Solberg's Address to the Storting on end of NATO's operations in Afghanistan



On May 18th, 2021, Prime Minister Erna Solberg addressed the Norwegian Parliament – Storting – on the end of NATO's operation in Afghanistan. She gave an overview of the withdrawal process, the role, mandate and impact of Norwegian forces on the increased capacity of Afghan National Security Forces and expectations for humanitarian and development support in the near future. Mrs. Solberg hailed all Norwegian soldiers who sacrificed their lives in Afghanistan and stated that Norway has learned a lot from the experience – that gave many soldiers training that can be used further in the development of the Norwegian forces. Solberg mentioned Norway's other contributions in Afghanistan during the past decades, that have been central in order to help the country strengthen its social and economic development. Among the contributions and Afghanistan's gains, Mrs. Solberg highlighted the building of schools, significant reduction in child and maternal mortality rates and the important role Norway has played in order to increase inclusion of women and other minorities in the peace talks and in Afghan society. Mrs. Solberg mentioned that it's important that the Afghan people and government have ownership to their peace process and expressed confidence that the training provided by Norwegian forces will be useful for Afghan forces to continue their operations. Solberg urged the international community to keep supporting Afghanistan and ensured that Norway will continue its support within various areas.

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg remarks on further support to Afghanistan after their forces' withdrawal



On May 21st, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg gave his remarks on NATO's continued support for Afghanistan following the withdrawal of international forces, which represents the opening of a new chapter in their relationship with Afghanistan, and that NATO's future support to the country will be based on three main pillars. First and foremost, NATO was planning to provide advice and capacity-building initiatives to Afghan security institutions and keep supporting the Afghan Security Forces (ANSDF) with financial assistance. Secondly, NATO is committed to support Afghanistan with military education and training outside Afghanistan, which will focus on Special Operation Forces. The third pillar is funding provision of services, including support for the functioning of projects a Kabul airport. Mr. Stoltenberg stated that these are initiatives that will enable both NATO allies and the broader international community to keep helping Afghanistan and contribute to the development of the peace efforts. for its pledges to Afghanistan. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan welcomed the statement of NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, emphasizing continued support to Afghanistan following the withdrawal of international forces from Afghanistan and considered the decision to be "a practical step at the beginning of a new chapter of cooperation between NATO and Afghanistan in the capacity development of the ANDSF to fight against terrorism, and violent extremism in Afghanistan, the region and beyond..."

Afghan Embassy holds Prayer Services for Victims of the Recent Terrorist Attacks in Kabul and Logar



On May 11th, the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in Oslo held prayer services for the victims of the recent terrorist attacks on Sayed Ul-Shohada school in Kabul and in Logar, which took the lives of over one-hundred innocent civilians, mostly schoolgirls, and left over three-hundred wounded. The prayer services were attended by the Embassy staff and members of the Afghan community based in Norway, including representatives of various associations. The attendees prayed for the souls of those who perished in these and other terrorist attacks in the country and wished a speedy recovery for all who were left wounded. Ambassador Ghafoorzai declared that the recent attacks and other such acts were a crime against humanity and violation of Islamic principles. He and the participants also emphasized that throughout history, the people of Afghanistan have overcome the most difficult of challenges through a strong sense of national unity. Unity and solidarity among all Afghans would again prevail to overcome existing challenges and to achieve a peaceful, stable and prosperous Afghanistan. The attendees further called for an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Afghanistan and prayed for a lasting and dignified peace in the country. The prayer service was followed by an Iftar dinner in which Ambassador Ghafoorzai and attendees discussed the situation in Afghanistan and collaboration between the diaspora and the Embassy.



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

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