

## (1) Corruption...

a strong political will to combat corruption and which government entity they considered to be the most corrupt.

Of the 668 respondents, 506 called financial corruption as the major issue and half of them were concerned about the increase in corruption. Some listed the judiciary, customs departments, municipalities as respectively first, second and third most corrupt government entities. "Fortunately, the president has also clearly stated that he is aware of the problem and he wants to do something about it. So what we need to see now are specific actions," Franz-Michael Skjold Mellbin said. He said the international community and donors should help the Afghan government place mechanisms uncovering and preventing corruption. Ambassador Mellbin also said the Afghans had realized that corruption undermined the credibility of government institutions and the anti-corruption effort mainly depended on a political will. "It is a huge challenge and needs to be addressed by prosecution of corruption cases and stopping the culture of impunity," the ambassador said.

Mellbin expressed concern over widespread financial corruption in Afghanistan and said that the fact the international community is looking to reaffirm its commitments calls for strong focus from the Government:

"The International Community sends a clear message to the political leadership of Afghanistan, the political opposition and parliament members: it is the time to realize their responsibilities with regard to the anti-corruption fight," he said. He said that the International Community does not expect a miracle about corruption, but are looking forward to seeing the situation improving. (Pajhwok)

## (2) Al Qaeda ...

considers terrorist organizations. That could influence his assessment of plans to cut U.S. troop numbers next year, because if al Qaeda, which carried out the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks on the United States, can operate in Afghanistan with increasing freedom, it may pose a greater security threat inside the country and beyond.

That was the very reason NATO forces went into Afghanistan in the first place: to prevent al Qaeda functioning freely while the Taliban, which ruled the country until its ouster at the end of 2001, looked on. "You see a more overt cooperation between the Taliban and these designated terrorist organizations," Nicholson said.

"Our concern is that if the Taliban were to return, that because of their close relationships with these groups, that they would offer sanctuary to these groups."

Nicholson is about half way through a review of plans that would see U.S. troop numbers nearly halved to 5,500 by 2017 and an end to much of the training and advice the NATO-led coalition currently provides Afghan forces fighting the Taliban. Some U.S. politicians and Afghan commanders are urging Washington to reconsider its drawdown plans, worried that the Islamist Taliban movement poses a growing threat to security.

Public appetite for an even more prolonged deployment of U.S. forces in Afghanistan is low, partly because the conflict is seen as limited to the country itself with little risk of international spillover.

Nicholson declined to comment on the review, which will be presented in Washington by June.

But he highlighted a "greater linkage" between the Taliban and U.S.-designated terrorist group al Qaeda since the death of Taliban founder Mullah Mohammad Omar and his replacement by current leader Mullah Akhtar Mansour.

Prompted by the need to win support in a leadership battle that broke out after Omar's death was announced last year, Nicholson said Mansour had been forced closer to groups like al Qaeda and the Haqqani network, blamed for a series of high-profile suicide attacks in Kabul. "When Mullah Omar was alive, he maintained a public distance from al Qaeda that his successor Mullah Mansour has not," he said. "I think this is in part because Mansour lacks the legitimacy of Omar."

U.S.-ONLY OPERATIONS "LESS FREQUENT"

Al Qaeda, which U.S. officials have estimated has between 100-300 fighters in Afghanistan, has returned as one of the main focuses of the U.S. counter-terrorism mission in Afghanistan. Some independent assessments say that estimate is too low.

The group has been less prominent in recent years as the Taliban, numbering thousands of fighters, seized territory in a series of intense battles including, briefly, the northern city of Kunduz and, more recently, swaths of Helmand in the south. (Tolnews)

## (3) Militant Groups ...

young is an example of support to the Afghan National Security Forces. Gen. Murad further added that the sign of unity further strengthens the Afghan security forces who are fighting the terrorist groups. He also added that the anti-government armed militant groups have no justification for their ongoing insurgency but the Afghan forces have national and religious basis to defend the country against the militants' aggression.

The remarks by Gen. Murad comes as the Taliban militants group announced their spring offensive earlier this week and vowed to carry out more insurgency activities. (KP)

## (4) Iran Always...

for Afghanistan during the difficult days, adding that Kabul is committed to expanding all-out ties with Iran.

He expressed hope that by activating Iran-Afghanistan Joint Commission, the process of cooperation between Tehran and Kabul will be accelerated. (IRNA)

## (5) Obama...

murderous organization," she said. The group's beleaguered leader, Ayman al-Zawahiri, was in hiding and exercises little influence over remaining al Qaeda affiliates in Syria, Yemen, Africa, and South Asia. And, while these affiliates continue to pose threats, the US are working with our partners relentlessly to target and diminish their capabilities," Rice said. (Pajhwok)

## (6) AAF Flew 83 ...

were wounded in the airstrikes carried out in the areas falling under the control of 209th Shaheen Corps of the Afghan National Army.

The 209th Shaheen Corps are mainly in charge of the security in northern zones of the country, including Balkh province.

According to Waziri, a commander of the militants identified as Abdul Qahar was among those killed in the raids.

Waziri further added that the militants were looking to carry out insurgency activities in Dand-e-Ghori, Dand-e-Shahabuddin areas of Baghlan and Dasht-e-Archi district of Kunduz province.

He said airstrikes were also carried out in Lalpur district of Nangarhar where a vehicle of the militants was destroyed and two of them were killed. (KP)

## (7) Govt. Rejects ...

Kerry, the report said the most significant problems were widespread violence, including attacks on civilians by insurgent groups, killings of people affiliated with the government, torture of detainees by security forces and targeted violence against women.

The Presidential Palace highlighted following points in the US report.

The report covers human rights situation in Afghanistan between 2013 and 2014. The Afghan government always makes efforts to stand against human rights abuses mostly committed by Taliban and other illegal armed groups.

The Afghan government has taken decisive steps to decrease violence and human rights abuses. It also brought reforms to the judiciary organs in order to decisively follow cases of human rights violators. For example, the Supreme Court sacked more than 100 judges from appeal courts in all provinces and implemented reforms for 500 cadres in other judiciary affairs.

The government developed the National Action Programme for the elimination of any kind of tortures. The programme would be implemented by judicial organs particularly by the attorney's offices. The government is committed to upholding the Constitution to prevent tortures and chase their perpetrators. Observation of international humanitarian rules is the main principle the

Afghan security forces consider in their operations. There is no record that proves Afghan forces are involved in an arbitrary killing or actions without justice in the past one year. The government would decisively investigate about any kind of arbitrary actions. Based on the assessments of international organizations, particularly UNAMA, the Afghan forces had carefully observed human rights rules in their combat operations. (Pajhwok)

## (8) Pakistan Can ...

spring offensive as propaganda and said the government had launched "Operation Shafaq" to deal with insurgent attacks.

The fifth meeting of the four-nation group called the Quadrilateral Coordination Group (QCG) on Afghanistan is expected to take place in Islamabad this month.

The Afghan ambassador said date for the upcoming QCG meeting had not been fixed yet. He said it seemed the Taliban were not interested in the peace talks because if they were serious about the peace process, they would have reduced violence. (Pajhwok)

## (9) UN Survey ...

Movement Bulletin looks at the motivation for migration, among other issues including that of return refugees.

This bulletin also "focuses in part on changing patterns of population movements as well as some of the motivations and factors underlying the often difficult decisions to uproot families and seek safety and better futures elsewhere."

Meanwhile, the report stated that the fast-changing political climate in destination countries has a profound impact on the migration/flight decisions among Afghans. Understanding the flow of critical information regarding risks and opportunities, as well as credibility (or lack thereof) of various intermediaries, is essential to understanding past and future mobility trends, either within Afghanistan or to destinations further afield.

"Research suggests that these are rarely individual decisions but involve the extended family and a pooling of their resources. The option to move is often part of a broader coping strategy, and a response to either economic or physical insecurity or both. Families make tactical choices about who to send and what routes to take in response to the changing external environment," read the report.

"Understanding the basis on which families make these decisions is key to developing effective responses that address the underlying causes of flight and create the conditions which may facilitate the eventual return of people in conditions of safety and dignity," it read.

The UN said that recently the UNHCR found evidence suggesting that families may increasingly decide to depart, based on a perception that single young men are less likely to be granted asylum in destination countries.

The report also stated that incentives for Afghan refugees to return to Afghanistan are diminishing.

The UN stated that within Afghanistan, urban areas were seen to offer greater potential employment opportunities, security and public services but that rural areas are attractive to those with family ties and friends, or for the availability of cheaper accommodation, dependent on security. (Tolnews)

## (10) Karzai Lashes ...

understanding is as a mandate for five years," Kerry said on Saturday during a joint press conference with Ghani. He was referring to the political agreement he brokered after the 2014 presidential elections hit a crisis amid large scale fraud and electoral rigging accusations.

Amid speculations over Kerry's remarks on the NUG's tenure, Karzai said that the Afghan people never endorsed a government which is forced on them by foreigners, calling for a constitutional Loya Jirga to be convened in line with the political agreement signed between Ghani and Abdullah.

"As I have read and seen the agreement, there is a need for a Jirga to be convened in the agreement which is signed between our two brothers President Ghani and CEO Abdullah. The people of Afghanistan hope that the Jirga is convened so that it can issue its provisions on the constitution of Afghanistan, amendments to the constitution of Afghanistan. And

this is the right of the people of Afghanistan," he said.

When asked about ways on how to bring an end to the ongoing conflict in Afghanistan, the former president lashed out at the U.S saying that peace cannot be restored in the country unless the U.S is willing to help. He said Washington retains enough influence over Islamabad to convince Pakistani officials to stop meddling in Afghan affairs.

"The war in Afghanistan is in the hands of the U.S and Pakistan, if the U.S decides, Pakistan will not be able to fight here," he said.

He said that no Afghan wants the government to collapse, however the people have the right to a legal government.

"Every Afghan wants to have a legal government, a government which is in line with the constitution of Afghanistan, but not under foreign pressure and that the foreigners do not determine the tenure of our government," Karzai said.

"If the U.S talks to us like a friend and deals with us like a player on the ground, we will run alongside the U.S according to our potential. But for that the U.S must be an honest partner and shouldn't exploit these things. We are prepared to make partnerships with the U.S," Karzai said. (Tolnews)

## (11) KSH to...

artists. The festival will be held from 6:30 pm to 10:00 pm.

Café Zarnegar overlooks the landscaped gardens and central courtyard of Kabul Serena Hotel. The Café's relaxed and welcoming atmosphere is a favorite with customer's looking for a place to enjoy sumptuous cuisines from around the world. Inspired by the depth and color of traditional Afghani decorative work, the restaurant typically serves lavish breakfast, lunch and dinner buffets. The café offers both indoor and outdoor seating and serves Afghan, South East Asian and international cuisines. (PR)

## (12) Slain Policemen...

concern over the increase in security forces' casualties and blamed it on the lack of military installation and standard buildings for security forces.

Italian ambassador Luciano Pezzotti said the distribution of houses would not compensate the precious lives lost, but would somehow facilitate the bereaved families.

He said his country was committed to continuously supporting Afghanistan in different areas. (Pajhwok)

## (13) Only Interim ...

not name anyone.

The former governor said the central government alone could not prevent the conflict in the north. Hamdard said he arrived in the north to defend people's rights and end injustices meted out to them. He warned of widespread protests if people were denied their rights.

"In the past, I defended my people with tanks. Now if someone denies them their rights, I will fill all the roads in the north with people...so many people that they will not be removed with tanks."

Hamdard said had the Hezb-i-Islami and the Taliban been invited to the Bonn conference, Afghanistan would not have been in its current crisis. "After the Bonn conference, most government officials belonged to the same village and due to that injustice, the Hezb-i-Islami and many Afghans rose in opposition of the government."

He said the Hezb-i-Islami had been in contact with the Afghan government regarding peace over the past few years, but the government had no clear stance. He said an interim government should be installed to end the conflict and bring peace, adding without such a set up, peace would continue to elude Afghanistan. (Pajhwok)

## (14) Taliban Launch ...

Kunduz province, a crucial northern stronghold close to the Tajikistan border, as well as around the provincial capital, with Afghan security forces battling militants through the night.

"There is heavy fighting going on but the militants have failed to capture any areas and we are pushing them back," Kunduz police chief Mohammad Qasim Jangalbagh told Reuters. Taliban fighters briefly captured Kunduz city last year in a major blow to President Ashraf Ghani's government. They also threatened to take Helmand province in the southern heartland of the insurgency after

overrunning several districts.

With those memories still fresh, officials took to the airwaves to try to head off panic among the public.

"We will assure our people that the situation is under control and we will never allow the catastrophe that happened last year," Jangalbagh said. (Reuters)

## (15) 'Lack of...

evacuated their base without resistance due to the lack of equipment, while another unit staid in the province did not provided support promptly.

Meanwhile, the Taliban Spokesman Claimed 31 security policemen surrendered to the group in Dand-i-Ghori.

Earlier, Heavy clashes erupted overnight between security forces and Taliban militants on the outskirts of the provincial capital of northern Baghlan province, with the rebels capturing some areas, officials and residents said on Thursday.

The clashes broke out in Dand-i-Shahabuddin and Dand-i-Ghori localities of Pul-i-Khumri, the capital city, after the insurgents stormed security forces posts on Wednesday night, an official said. (Pajhwok)

## (16) At Least 40 ...

were collected by the local villagers and handed over to the Islamic State group, which has gained a foothold in Nangarhar.

Nangarhar has seen heavy fighting between IS jihadis, many of whom are disgruntled former Taliban members weary of the insurgency's failure to overthrow the Kabul government, and rival Taliban. (AP)

## (17) Border Controls ...

the border controls for Afghan nationals, especially patients and businessmen, according to Umarzai.

The Pakistanis asked their Afghan counterparts to set up a desk on their side for the verification of travel documents of their citizens before crossed the Durand Line. The move is designed to discourage illegal crossings.

At least two Afghans died and a dozen others fell unconscious as Pakistani guards refused entry to thousands of people on Tuesday. One ailing Afghan woman and a girl died waiting in scorching heat.

Landikotal resident Nadeem Afridi said only a small number of Afghans were allowed to cross into Pakistan after the meeting. Many others including women and children were turned back, he alleged.

Similarly, Jalalabad inhabitant Shafiq Nasiri blamed the Pakistani border guards for refusing entry to thousands of his compatriots. Only a limited number of Afghans were let into Pakistan, he added. (Pajhwok)

## (18) 21 Militants,...

civilians, including women and children, suffering injuries. Separately, 21 insurgents and two policemen were killed during an overnight clash in Kanj Abad village of Bala Buluk district, Mohammad Nasir Mehri, the governor's spokesman, said. (Pajhwok)

## (19) Women

example. "Products are being imported on a large scale from abroad, the trend has damaged the local markets," another farmer Fawzia Bakhschi said. Meanwhile, officials from the ministry of agriculture have pledged that the ministry is planning to provide technical and financial assistance to at least 41,000 farmers across the country in an attempt to help them cultivate produce of higher quality. (Tolnews)

## (20) Afghan Forces ...

curity forces over the past years. The militants tried to use the weapons to conduct attacks in provincial capital Pul-e-alsam, 60 km south of Afghan capital, according to the statement. (Xinhua)

## (21) Book on ...

stop poppy cultivation, usually with mixed results, throughout the "theatre of counter-narcotics" of the previous two decades by various parties including the Taliban at different times.

Often these attempts came in the form of outright bans, including a nearly country-wide one by the Taliban in 2000-2001. In a statement, AREU said the book was the culmination of extensive experience with the policy community and long-term fieldwork in rural Afghanistan, including 11 years of research supported by AREU and the European Union. (Pajhwok)

## (22) Disabled Young...

a professional artist and teacher in the future as she is practicing the art at home using her teeth to grab the pencil.

The young girl says she is also interested to learn English language and attend classes in school similar as other children.

She was born disabled but Rubaba says she has learnt a lot by studying at home and looking at her brothers and sisters.

Rubaba is now able to write and is hopeful to have more achievements in the future as she believes disability is not a barrier to stop someone from reading, writing and participating in social affairs. (KP)

## (23) Sugar, Flour ...

week's. But wholesale prices varied from retail rates in some parts of the city. Haroon also sold a 24-kg sack of rice for 1,800afs, a 50-kg sack of flour for 1,300afs, a 16-kg tin of Momin ghee for 1,100afs, a kilo of black African team for 260afs and the same quantity of Indonesian green tea for 250afs.

Abdul Hadi, a fuel station worker in Kabul, sold a liter of petrol for 41afs and the same quantity of diesel for 34afs, the same prices as last week's. (Pajhwok)

## (24) ISI Blamed...

operative were killed. Hammam Khalil Mohammed, a double agent (Jordanian citizen) who was invited to the base to help CIA track down senior Al Qaeda leaders, blew himself up during a meeting with American intelligence officials.

The National Security Archive at George Washington University published the cable, which was part of a trove of documents received under a Freedom of Information Act request. (Pajhwok)

## (25) Kunduz-Takhar...

killings of policemen in the area. Police Spokesman Col. Khalil Ahmad Aser said officials had been dispatched to the area to investigate the incident. He did not give more details. (Pajhwok)

## (26) Afghan Man ...

a resident of Ghor province and was keeping the girl in Injil district of Herat province.

Turkey is host to millions of refugees who have fled civil war from Syria as well as Afghan migrants who have left the country during growing instability. (KP)

## (27) S. Africa...

promote South Africa's defence military industry and to strengthen cooperation in the field of defence procurement partnership with Saudi Arabia, said Majola. (Xinhua)

## (28) Migrant ...

arrived in the past three days after its last report on arrival figures on Tuesday.

According to the latest IOM figure, so far this year, 732 people have died attempting to cross the Mediterranean Sea, compared to 1,733 deaths for the first four months of last year. (Xinhua)

## (29) Japan, Russia

and a planned trip to Japan by Putin postponed. But in October 2015 high-level talks resumed between Tokyo and Moscow, particularly related to the ongoing territorial spat. (Xinhua)

## (30) Battles ...

However, the fighting around Syria's second city Aleppo cast a shadow over international efforts to end the five-year war, which has left more than 270,000 people dead and forced millions to flee their homes. (AFP)

## (31) Probe Reveals...

confirmed that the used Israeli measures of arrests "are illegal and violate the human laws in terms of circumstances of arrests, places where the prisoners are held and methods of interrogations used against them. (Xinhua)

## (32) Car Bomb...

forced dozens of al-Qaida militants to flee their locations in Lahj after the arrival of newly trained pro-government forces in Lahj, according to local sources. (Xinhua)

## (33) Pro-Gov't ...

He said that more than 50 al-Qaida members were caught by pro-government forces after the armed confrontations that left unknown number of killed and injured people from the both sides. (Xinhua)