Ghani wants Pakistan, Taliban to clarify their ties

President Ashraf Ghani and US Special Representative Zalmay Khalilzad have conferred on a wide range of issues around the Afghan peace process.

KABUL - The Presidential Palace said on Monday Ghani told the visiting US diplomat that more action was needed to achieve lasting peace in the country.

Members of the Political Consultative Council, the government’s negotiating team, politicians, representatives of political parties attended the overnight meeting.

Also in attendance were religious scholars, representatives of civil society, youth, women and high ranking senior government officials.

Ghani said that peace in Afghanistan would be of “benefit” to the entire region, including Saudi Arabia.

He also accused Iran of providing arms to terrorist groups and interfering in other countries’ affairs as well as “harbouring” terrorists of Al Qaeda, “including Osama bin Laden’s son”.

He also accused Israel of giving “safe haven” to the terrorists and “mobilizing” them to Israel, leading to the ongoing conflict.

He also praised the United Arab Emirates for “facilitating an agreement between the Taliban and Afghan government” in order “to restore Afghanistan to peace”.

Another Taliban source told Ariana News that in the second round of intra-Afghan dialogue, Taliban were expected to share the outcomes of their due meeting with the US special envoy Zalmay Khalilzad in Qatar.

It comes a day after the Taliban in a statement said that the meeting between the US officials and the group’s representatives in Islamabad was postponed.

Another Taliban official said that some of the officials of the Afghan government likely to participate in this round of Taliban-Afghan politicians meeting.

A source close to the Taliban said that some officials of the Afghan government would hold next month in Doha, the capital of Qatar.

The Taliban sources told Aftab News on Monday that the second round of Taliban-Afghan politicians meeting will take place in March, following the end of two-day talks between the US and Taliban representatives in Qatar on February 25-26.

A source close to the Taliban said that some officials of the Afghan government would participate in this round of Taliban-Afghan politicians peace talks.

In the Moscow talks it was decided that the next round of talks will take place in Qatar after the US-Taliban meeting, the source said.

The preparation has kicked off for the meeting and possibly some figures of the government will also be part of this round of talks.

Another Taliban source told Aftab News that in the second round of intra-Afghan dialogue, Taliban are expected to share the outcomes of their due meeting with the US special envoy Zalmay Khalilzad in Qatar.

Ghani was quoted as saying: “We want the Taliban to clarify their relationship with Pakistan. At the same time, we ask Pakistan to explain its relationship with the Taliban.”

Some Wolesi Jirga Members Call for Re-election

KABUL - Some Wolesi Jirga members have welcomed the removal of members of the election commissions and demanded re-election of the lower house simultaneously with presidential election this year.

Addressing reports, over one hundred Wolesi Jirga members warned against the worst consequences after the announcement of final result of all provinces for the October 20 election and demand halt of the ongoing election process and conduct of fresh lower house poll together with the presidential election in July this year.

They claimed of holding enough evidence to prove that the Wolesi Jirga polls were rigged and fraudulent asked the Attorney General Office, the country’s top prosecuting body, to launch investigation into alleged rigging and punish individual involved in fraud and illegal practices.

They also demanded to the president to invalidate the final result of some province election process resulted in massive rigging and fraud.

“The masses participated in election with zeal and enthusiasm, but election officials in Kabul and province committed fraud to favour particular individuals against receiving massive bribe,” he said.

Naimatullah Ghafari, another lawmaker from Helmand province, welcomed the presidential decision to remove the members of election body and asked the Attorney General Office to investigate alleged criminals impartially.

On Tuesday, President Ashraf Ghani signed the dismissal of the election commissioners. The president said: “Heads and other members of the Independent Election Commission (IEC) and Independent Electional Complaints Commission (IECC) are dismissed after amendments to the electoral law are ratified and approved.”

The presidential decree provided no further details.

KABUL - Around one million Afghan refugees living in Pakistan have been registered recently while 4.4 million Afghans repatriated to their homeland.

This was stated by United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) spokesperson Quaiser Khan Afridi here at a press conference on Monday.

He said at present 1.4 million registered Afghans refugees were living in Pakistan. He said the UNHCR provided cash support of US$ 200 to each Afghan at the time of their repatriation to their homeland.

Peace in Afghanatar Vital for Regional Stability: Al-Jubeir

Saudi Arabia Foreign Minister Adel bin Ahmed Al-Jubeir on Monday said that peace in Afghanistan was beneficial for the entire region.

According to the sources, members of the Taliban and government officials have been meeting in Qatar for the past two weeks.

However, the Taliban announced on Sunday that they had made no progress in talks with the government.

Old traditions and customs have discouraged women from working at government offices, they said.

Ali Akbar Saleh Mohammad, a lawmaker from Herat, said improper administration of the education and women affairs department which badly affected employees in most government departments.

He also accused Iran of providing arms to terrorist groups and interfering in other countries’ affairs as well as “harbouring” terrorists of Al Qaeda, “including Osama bin Laden’s son”.

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