

### (1) ESG Encourage...

The Ambassadors noted the concerns expressed by several candidates about the level playing field and improper use of state resources to influence and/or co-opt voters, which erode public confidence in the fairness of the process. In this regard, they reiterated their previous call for all candidates to respect the Election Law and the Code of Conduct they signed, and refrain from any actions that undermine the process. The Independent Election Commission (IEC) and the Electoral Complaints Commission (ECC) have an obligation to keep the public informed of steps being taken to curb such violations including egregious instances of abuse of public resources to enable voters to make an informed choice. The Ambassadors noted their support for non-partisan domestic electoral observers to provide an additional check both on candidates and electoral institutions, and their right to call out abuses on Election Day and in the days that follow.

The Ambassadors reiterated that the credibility of the election is the collective responsibility of not just the electoral institutions, but all Afghan stakeholders including candidates. They called upon candidates and their supporters to actively support the remaining phases of the process. Candidates must refrain from unsubstantiated public accusations or allegations, avoid interference in the voting, counting, results tabulation and complaints adjudication processes, and submit immediately any evidence-based grievances they may have through the established institutional complaints mechanism, the ECC. We will hold all candidates accountable to the code of conduct they signed. Candidates must not dispute results through extra-legal means or civil disorder. The Ambassadors urged all candidates to strongly and publicly condemn all forms of election-related violence and threats of violence. The Ambassadors underlined the importance of all stakeholders ensuring the full participation of Afghan women in the election.

The ESG also highlighted the important role of the IEC and the ECC as the custodians of the votes of the Afghan people, and the need for them to shoulder this great responsibility independently, professionally, and with impartiality in the days ahead. We commend the steps they have taken so far to ensure the elections are as credible and transparent as possible. Afghan voters who risk their lives to participate in elections deserve to know the outcome accurately reflects their choice. (PR)

### (2) Pakistan Supports ...

New York Khalilzad shared with Khan how far his negotiations with the Taliban had gone and what expectations he had in the future.

Khan said peace in Afghanistan was critical to stability in South Asia and economic development of the entire region. He asked all parties to play their role in restoring peace to that country.

"Peace in Afghanistan is vital to advancing my government's vision for a peaceful neighborhood, economic development and regional stability," Khan told the US diplomat.

Khalilzad talked about the joint efforts Afghanistan, Pakistan and the United States were making for bringing peace to the conflict-devastated country.

Khan acknowledged Khalilzad's efforts for promoting a peaceful political settlement in Afghanistan. Pakistan always believed there was no military solution to the conflict, he said. "Pakistan would, therefore, continue to support all initiatives towards achieving a sustainable peace in Afghanistan and hoped for an early resumption of the peace process," he promised.

Khalilzad commended Khan's support for the Afghan peace process, and said he would continue working with Pakistan for stability in Afghanistan.

The premier also met George Soros, the philanthropist behind the Open Society Foundation. They discussed OSF's efforts to provide quality education in Afghanistan. (Pajhwok)

### (3) Experts Spurn ...

Some candidates have held out imaginary and unworkable promises while addressing campaign gatherings. Their statements are apparently meant for public consumption and strengthening their vote bank.

The runners have addressed a few campaign gatherings, in which they mostly criticised their rivals instead of outlining their future programmes.

President Ashraf Ghani and Chief Executive Officer Abdullah were subjected to a lot of criticism by their opponents.

Some of the hard-to-keep promises made on the hustings are: Umari Justice -- referring to the era of Hazrat Umar, achieving self-economic reliance in a year, increasing the annual revenue to \$20 billion and supply of electricity to all districts of Afghanistan.

Others vows include the purchase of agro products at a rate 50 percent higher than their market value, generation of job opportunities for one million people in a month, converting districts into provinces and raising salaries of teachers from 7,000 afghanis to 70,000 afis.

In addition, President Ghani and CEO Abdullah have pledged nation-wide security, creation of a youth and sports ministry, generation of jobs, electricity supply, economic stability and development.

Deceptive vows:

Although promises attract the public but according to some experts, their implementation is difficult, even impossible in some instances. Experts believe hollow promises are made to fox the masses.

An investigative report by Pajhwok shows Ghani, leader of the State Maker Team, pledged in his first election speech supplying electricity to all districts of Afghanistan in two years if he wins a second

He said: "In the next two years, every district of Afghanistan will have electricity and in three to four years, all villages on the other side of the Durand Line will also have electricity."

But political commentators rejected such statements as incorrect. They asked the unsuspecting people not to take such promises at their face value.

Ghani also claimed weakening the grip of tyranny and persecution in the past five years. He asked the people to hand him another term so that he could enforce law and justice in the country. He ruled out any compromise with powerful individuals.

At another election gathering, Ghani promised "Umari justice" in society in case of his re-election. Umari Justice refers to the social order in Hazrat Umar's era. In this system, the ruler strengthened Islamic principles of justice and equality.

While speaking to a public meeting, he vowed to end Afghanistan's reliance on foreigners in five years and exploit internal resources for equipping the security forces. Currently, more than 50 percent of Afghanistan's annual budget and expenses of its security forces are funded by the US-led international community.

Some political experts spurned Ghani's promise as an inapplicable slogan aimed to deceive the people. They said injustice had been the talk of the town over the past five years. How the president would be able to improve things if he wins another term, they asked. This is not only the State Maker team that has made inapplicable promises; the Stability and Partnership team, led by Abdullah, also made similar promises to the masses.

Abdullah told a recent campaign gathering: "In the past five years, thousands of innocent citizens have been killed. One prime public demand is peace. If our team emerges victorious, we will establish durable peace in the country."

But experts dismissed this statement of Abdullah as a shibboleth for public consumption. Over the past five years, they say, Abdullah has been part of the government. The Ministry of Interior has been under Abdullah's loyalists. But with each passing day, the security situation has been deteriorating.

The creation of a youth ministry is another old pledge made by Abdullah's team during its election campaign five years ago. It was reiterated recently.

Abdullah, at his first campaign meeting, acknowledged his inability to honour the promises made to youth in the past five years. He, however, once again assured the participants of keeping promise to set up a youth and sport ministry in the first days of his government.

Some youth say they can no longer be duped with false promises.

Anwar-ul-Haq Ahadi, a senior member of the Abdullah team, has affirmed his commitment to combating corruption and curbing the menace by 50 percent, in the event of winning the vote.

But some experts question if the fight against corruption was really possible, why it did not happen in the past five years when Abdullah was part of the unity government.

Expert termed the Stability and Partnership team pledge to eradicate corruption and bring it down by 50 percent another whacking lie and deceiving promise.

The Mother Watan Team leader Syed Noorullah Jalili is no exception. Addressing an election gathering on August 4, Jalili said: "I have a deep understanding of our society and know well how a teacher makes ends meet in a monthly salary of 7,000 afis."

On the other hand, he noted, a minister's son travelled in vehicle worth 200,000. "What type of justice is this? In case of victory, I will increase the teacher salary from 7,000 to 70,000afis and raise the pay of other employees."

According to an investigative report by Pajhwok, Jalili made the promise without considering the country's resources. As such, it cannot be implemented.

He also vowed to upgrade districts to the level of provinces and formally recognise the government of the Islamic Emirate.

Led by Noor Rahman Liwal, the Responsibility and Justice Team has also made unrealistic promises to the people. Liwal told a rally he, if voted into power, would generate one million jobs in the first month of his government, two million more in three months and another 10 million in five years. His rivals have also pledge to create jobs in case of success at the polls. Faramarz Tamanna, for instance, has promised purchasing agriculture products from farmers at a rate 50 percent higher than their market value.

Views on candidate promises: Hashmatullah, a high school graduate who is currently work in a garment store, told Pajhwok: "I have listened to speeches by the presidential. No one has a viable plan and most of their promises are plain lies and they cannot be kept in five years..."

"For example, (CEO) Dr. Abdullah has promised to create a ministry for youth affairs. It's a lie, because he held out the same vow five years ago as well in a campaign speech," he argued

He went on: "President Ashraf Ghani told a gathering he would dispense justice like Hazrat Umar (RA). What has the president done over the last four years? Injustice has reached its climax. I think such promises cannot be fulfilled in the next 20 years."

Salima Sidiqi, a civil activist in Kabul, said she had also heard speeches of many candidates but none of them is interesting because they trade allegations instead of presenting their priorities.

"As it is campaign time, all runners are striving to muster public support and influence people's minds with high-sounding promises. Most of the candidates have been inactive in Afghan society," she claimed.

According to Salima, most of the presidential hopefuls had come up with impracticable plans to steer the country out of the situation it has been in for decades.

She said: "President Ghani says he has not obliged strongmen but a number of powerful individuals, like Gen. Almas, his brother, Mullah Tarakhel, Muslimyar and several others, are part of his government.

"Noorullah Jalili says anyone who misbehaves with his wife will be punished publicly. Again, this is a patently unpractical promise," she continued.

She called on all wannabes, especially Ghani and Abdullah, not to hold out deceptive promises, as people no longer trusted them.

Zarghona Roshan, a Salam Watandar Radio worker, also hit out at unrealistic vows of candidates and said such unconvincing statements had undermined people's confidence in the election.

She said: "Latif Pedram announced at a campaign gathering that he will form a federal government if he wins the election. Pedram should know his plan is impossible to implement because a federal government would divide the country, she explained.

Shapoor Bakhtiar, writer and journalist, said: "As a journalist, I have listened to speeches by candidates on the campaign trail but found no actionable plans. What they are saying are empty words and imaginary programmes."

Referring to President Ghani's campaign speech, he said: "One of the candidates says he will supply electricity to all districts of Afghanistan, even to areas across the Durand Line. Another one says he would increase teachers' salaries from 7,000 to 70,000 afghanis. Several districts remain under Taliban's control."

Bakhtiar believed people had lost trust in candidates' credibility, something that might affect their participation in the election, slated for Sept. 28. Zabihullah Farhang, a political observer, says the events have been lackluster, as none of the candidates has so far participated in a national debate, where rivals could be defeated with creative ideas and plans for bringing prosperity to the country.

"One of the runners said during his campaign: We want to have mutually beneficial relations with all nations of the world. This he said in response to a query about his plan for water management. What does mutual respect mean here?" he asked.

"Another example: Some candidates say they will ensure neutrality on relations between India and Pakistan or among Iran, Saudi Arabia, Russian and the US. These slogans are imaginary and cannot be realised because Afghanistan can't handle such things," Farhang continued.

He said President Ashraf Ghani's plans were somehow satisfactory. In the past five years, some work had been done in the economic sector and development of infrastructure. These sectors will improve over the next five years.

"Though President Ghani has been facing problems in implementing his plans over the past five years, yet I think he will do better, if re-elected. He has a better understanding of the

Ahmad Saeedi, another political analyst, said: "None of the candidates has so far presented any interesting plan. I have been following campaign activities and speeches; they are only trying to deceive the public.

"President Ghani says he will reconstruct the Chahar Chata Bazaar of Kabul. Everyone knows this is a misleading promise. Abdullah has also made similar promises." Saeedi recalled Ghani and Abdullah had also made foxy promises during their 2014 campaign to provide millions of jobs, bring food to people's tables and happiness to the nation

Such promises had made voters distrustful of candidates, elections and even the government, he added.

Taj Mohammad Akbar, an economist, also mocked the candidates' plans and promises, saying most of them did not have workable ideas.

"Most of their promises sound unrealistic, as one of the candidate said he will increase the teachers' salaries from 7,000 afghanis to 70,000 afis. And another boasted of dragging all corrupt individuals to court on his first day in office.

"He also promised peace and stability to the country, but we have seen security could not be ensured in the past 18 years. All these promises are intended to mislead the public."

Shahla Farid, a Political Science teacher at the Kabul University, said Dr. Abdullah

had promised peace and stability but he could not deliver on it. His aim was just to win votes and promote his personal interest.

She said: "Dr. Abdullah has been CEO for the last five years but we have seen the security situation has been on a nosedive."

Candidates' response: In interviews with Pajhwok, most of the people assailed the 'State Maker, Stability and Partnership, Responsibility and Justice, Motherland, and Plan and Advice teams.

Syed Baqir Kazimi, State Maker spokesman, told Pajhwok his team had never made deceptive promises. All promises the team has made would be implemented, he said.

Asked about the supply of electricity to all districts in two years, action against strongmen dispensation of Hazrat Omar-style justice, he said: "I won't go into details but I should say all promises would be implemented and Ghani has committed to translate his plans into a reality."

Reminded that a number of strongmen could still be seen around the State Maker team, he said: "Fist Vice President Gen. Abdul Rashid Dostum calls himself a strongman but you have seen how the president has curbed his arbitrary style."

Dr. Mohammad Yaha, running mate of the Noor Rahman Liwal team, said all of their promises and plans would be implemented. Dr. Mohammad Yaha, running mate of the Noor Rahman Liwal team, said all of their promises and plans would be implemented. On the creation of millions of jobs, Yaha said: "We have announced a reasonable plan. We will keep our promises in the first month of our rule; we have 500,000 civil servants who will be asked to work in two shifts. This will create job opportunities for another 500,000 people. The number of jobs thus generated will rise to one million in one month."

Syed Noorullah Jalili, the Mother Watan team chief, said all his promises would be honoured, as none of them was imaginary. "I will fund teachers' pay raise with domestic revenue."

Pajhwok tried to obtain comments from other presidential electoral teams as well but contact could not be established with them. (Pajhwok)

### (4) Nothing Can ...

Bibi Gul, a resident of Pasaband district, says she plans to use her vote for the candidate of her choice on the Election Day.

She said, "No problem can stop us from participating in the election. I am impatiently waiting for the day to come and I will go to the polling station and cast my vote for the candidate of my choice."

"Many families in Ghor do not allow their women to go outside, but we convinced our elders that they should not stop us from going to polling stations", she added.

She said insecurity, negative traditions, impassable routes and other issues could create problems for women's participation in the election.

Gul said most women in Ghor would go to polling stations for the sake of positive changes in their lives by voting for their preferred candidates. They would vote a candidate who has good plans for women.

Malalai, a university student in Ghor, said she and her other family members who were eligible voters would participate in the election. "I think a high turnout means little chance for defrauders to win," she said.

She also asked women to vote for a candidate who offered effective programs for improving women's living standard.

Halima Parestish, Ghor Women Affairs Department head, said that women in the province would participate in the election similar to men for electing their future president.

She welcomed the Independent Election Commission (IEC)'s decision to take photos of voters including women during the vote process and said it would help prevent fraud.

"We know it would affect women voters in some provinces, but I think most of Ghor people will not stop their women from voting," she added.

About people living in remote parts of Ghor, she said, "They should support this national process and do not prevent their women from participating in the election."

Mohammad Nazir Nasrat, deputy operational in-charge for Ghor IEC, said that people should not bar their women from taking part in the election.

He said high turnout of men and women in election would stop fraud in the process.

According to Nasrat, more than 88,000 of 250,000 people who have received their voter cards are women in Ghor.

He said 118 polling stations out of total 292 would stay closed on the Election Day due to security reasons.

Electoral officials say 11 million people have received their voter cards across the country. (Pajhwok)

### (5) Karzai, Afghan ...

US-Taliban negotiations should resume as soon as possible.

Besides the lack of Afghan control over the election, the security situation is not suitable for voting and therefore a large number of people will be prevented from casting their vote, the members of the gathering contended.

Moreover, the statement says the Afghan people do not trust in the electoral management organizations to prevent "widespread manipulation" of the presidential election, scheduled for September 28.

"People are highly concerned about the

upcoming election, and we are concerned also," the statement says.

"There are many realities which show that the election will not reduce the crisis in the country, instead it will double the crisis, fuel division among the people, weaken institutions and affect the trust in democracy and political partnership," the statement added.

According to the statement, peace efforts must not be suspended; instead, more efforts should be made for peace and security, and to end the bloodshed in the country.

"We are sure that all politicians and patriots and peace-loving humans will accept our call," it added.

The statement makes the following requests for peace:

- The peace process must be transparent, national, Afghanistan-inclusive and led by Afghans.
- Peace will not happen unless independent and direct negotiations begin between an all-inclusive delegation of the Afghan people and the Afghan government with the Taliban.
- The delegation should enter the peace talks from a unified stance.
- We call on the Taliban to begin direct negotiations with the national and all-inclusive delegation of Afghanistan.
- The US-Taliban talks should resume as soon as possible in order to open the way for "official" intra-Afghan negotiations.
- The US-Taliban talks should be transparent, and people should be educated about all issues affecting their fate.
- Peace cannot be sustainable unless Afghans' sovereignty is ensured all over the country.
- There is a need for regional and international consensus for a sustainable peace in Afghanistan.
- We call on our neighbors, regional countries and big powers to strengthen international consensus on Afghan peace and play the role of a guarantor of peace and stability. (Tolo news)

### (6) Dozens of ...

January and March, some 52 percent of all deaths in that period, according to findings from the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). In one of the most condemned incidents earlier this month, four brothers were killed in a raid conducted by the CIA-trained and funded 02 Unit of Afghanistan's spy agency, the National Directorate of Security (NDS).

On Friday, the US confirmed carrying out a drone attack on September 19 that killed at least 30 farmers in Nangarhar province. At least 40 others were wounded in the attack in Wazir Tangi area of Khogyani district.

The United States and the Taliban began peace talks last October in Qatar, with the aim of ending the almost 18-year-old war in Afghanistan.

But in a surprise move, US President Donald Trump announced last month after the ninth round of talks that he had cancelled the negotiations without a deal.

A week after the talks were cancelled, Trump said in a tweet that the Taliban have "never been hit harder". "After Trump cancelling the peace deal with the Taliban, there has been increase in drone attacks and ground operations, that is causing increase in civilian casualties," Faizullah Zaland, a political analyst based in Kabul, told Al Jazeera. "It will deepen mistrust among people in the Afghan government and will deepen the current crisis," "US must play a more responsible role in ending the meaningless war and prevent Afghan civilian casualties with immediate effect," he said. Afghanistan will hold its fourth presidential elections on September 28 since US-led forces toppled the Taliban from power in 2001. (Aljazeera)

### (7) 1,500 Buses ...

Kabul City in the near future.

"India has promised to provide us with public buses once the construction of stations completed. In addition, India will establish an institute for urban transport," said Mahdi Rouhani, the Spokesman of Ministry of Transport.

Meanwhile, Mohammad Omar, a resident of Kabul expressed his concern, saying there are no buses in the stations.

"As you see there are no buses in the stations to be used and if it continues the stations will be damaged very soon," he said.

Officials in the Ministry of Transport said that they have maintenance teams to take care of bus stations; however, they urged residents to stay cooperative. (ATN)

### (8) 18m Afs ...

"There were many disputes over water in the past, but this problem would reduce with the inauguration of the dam," he said.

Matiullah, a farmer in Nawa district, said that most people in the district were associated with farming and had been facing shortage of irrigation water.

He said the water shortage was mostly resolved with the dam's construction but they still needed more facilities.

Nawa district is one of unstable districts of the province. (Pajhwok)

### (9) Taliban Suffer ...

announced that they had overran Zari, but Afghan officials rejected the claim, saying the district remained under government control.

The situation in Afghanistan remains precarious as the country is set to hold this month its fourth presidential election since U.S.-led forces toppled the Taliban from power in 2001. (RFE/RL)