



DOHA TALKS

- Abdul Matin Beg, Nader Naderi, Fawzia Kofi and Fatima Gilani, members of the delegation of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, and Maulavi Abdul Hakim, chairman of the delegation and Abdul Ghani Brother head of the Taliban's political office have not returned to Doha. Fawzia Kofi said that "Negotiations are set up in small contact groups. A number of our colleagues in the contact groups are set up to conduct preliminary discussions. Other members and a few who have not left for personal reasons will leave soon and take turns. "They participate in contact groups."
- People close to the politicians who met with Zalmay Khalilzad, the US special envoy for Afghanistan's last visit, confirm that Mr. Khalilzad talked to them about the plan to form an interim government.
- Negotiators from both sides of the peace negotiations held meetings with Zalmay Khalilzad in Doha over the past few days as they try to finalize the agenda of the talks, sources familiar with the process said on Friday.
- No progress has been made in finalizing the agenda for the peace negotiations eleven days after the return of the negotiators of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the Taliban to Doha at a time that violence has taken momentum in the country.



State Ministry for Peace (Courtesy image)

PEACE TALKS IN THE COUNTRY

- President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani says that whenever new US President Joe Biden wants to reduce the number of troops in Afghanistan, the withdrawal process must be agreed upon by both sides. Ghani says there is an opportunity for the new US administration to take over, and that "four points" need to be clarified in the context of US cooperation with Afghanistan. Mr. Ghani summarized those four points in an interview with CNN:
- First, what is the definition of US security interests in Afghanistan and the region? No one wants the footprint (terrorists) again.
- Second, an agreement with regional and international guarantees is needed to end the 40-year war in Afghanistan.
- Third, the peace process must be wholly owned by the government and people of Afghanistan.
- Fourth: Define the presence and number of American troops in Afghanistan, and most importantly, we must reconcile the two issues of conditional and scheduled withdrawal.
- Meanwhile, First Vice President Amrullah Saleh in an interview with the BBC has said that the US has conceded too much to the Taliban. "American mission, which began 20 years ago, is not yet accomplished," he said as quoted by the BBC. Saleh warned the US forces withdrawal risks more violence in the country.

Afghanistan's Second Vice President Mohammad Sarwar Danish has said that he does not see the Constitution of Afghanistan as creating any sort of obstruction in the way of the peace process, adding that there is no need to amend the Constitution as part of the process. Speaking to TOLONews, Danish said that the Afghan government fully supports the peace process within the framework of the current system.

THE REGION	ONGOING VIOLENCE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The International Crisis Group, in a briefing titled “What Future for Afghan Peace Talks under a Biden Administration?”, analyses various aspects of Biden administration’s role in Afghanistan’s peace efforts and says he might have both options to pursue political settlement or opt for an enduring counter-terrorism mission in the war-ravaged country. • Gen. Scott Miller, the US and NATO forces commander in Afghanistan, has said that the Taliban’s continued violence is an obstacle in the way toward peace in Afghanistan. • The US chargé d'affaires in Kabul, Ross Wilson, on Twitter Wednesday wrote that the US is 'not advocating' an interim government in Afghanistan. • “The peace agreement that the Donald Trump administration signed with the Taliban is a flawed, it abandoned a long-term approach in favor of satisfying the desire to disengage from the war,” McMaster said on the US-Taliban peace deal. “As the US continued its withdrawal and an intra-Afghan talks stalled, the Taliban intensified attacks against Afghan security forces and civilians. The situation in South Asia requires a consistent, sustainable long-term strategy based on realities.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In less than 24 hours, five people, including a doctor, were killed in criminal incidents in Kabul. • Unidentified gunmen opened fire on a car belonging to a Malik of one of the villages in Paghman on Sunday evening, killing the Malik and his two bodyguards. • At least seven provinces witnessed attacks by militants in less than 12 hours, leaving over 19 security force members dead, according to officials. The incidents happened in Kabul, Herat, Baghlan, Laghman, Nangarhar, Kandahar and Helmand provinces. • Security officials in Herat said that 13 members of Afghan Local Police were killed in an attack by Taliban “infiltrators” in their outpost in Ghorian district of Herat province on Friday night.
ROLE OF WOMEN AND CSOs IN PEACE TALKS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Afghan Women's Network AWN with support from UNWomen on 14 January 2021, held a conference to present research reports on women's perspectives on the peace process and the effects of illegal weapons and armed violence on women's lives in Afghanistan. • Afghanistan Public Policy Research Organization APPRO conducted an open forum on Multiple-Track Diplomacy for Afghanistan’s Peace Process. This Virtual Open Forum for Peace aims to strengthen efforts by civil society and other actors toward a more complete Track 1 and initiation of Track 2 and Track 3 of Afghanistan’s peace process. 	