ANDSF tactically retreated to prevent from civilian casualties

Officials for Ministry of Defense (MoD) say falling a number of districts to the hands of Taliban does not mean Taliban's strength but the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) have retreated to prevent from civilian casualties.

"With due respect to justified concerns of the people, Afghan National Defense and Security Forces have serious program to suppress Taliban fighters and free districts that have recently fallen to the hands of Taliban," said Rohullah Ahmadzai, a spokesperson to ministry of defense.

He said the situation would soon change in areas captured recently by the Taliban group and the Afghan security forces would be deployed with full strength in the areas.

During recent weeks, insecurities and Taliban attacks have increased unprecedentedly from the country's north to the south and west. Based on media reports, 11 districts have fallen to the hands of the Taliban group in the past 2 two months. As a result of recent fighting in Ghor, Shahrak district of the province has fallen to the hands of Taliban and fighting is ongoing between ANDSF and Taliban in two other districts of the province.

Meanwhile, Chak district in Maidan Wardak and Qisar district in Faryab have recently fallen to hands of the Taliban group. Besides, five other districts in Urzgan, Ghazni, Zabul and Nooristan provinces have fallen to the Taliban in the past one week.

According to the country's defense and security organs, Afghan National Defense and Security Forces have tactically retreated in some of the respective districts. Tactically retreating from districts by Afghan National Defense and Security Forces have somehow made the process of district collapsing process accelerated.

Nevertheless, a spokesperson to Afghanistan National Security Council by rejecting recent claims in connection with retreating tactically from some districts, weak action of ANDSF and defeat, saying that Taliban have recently intensified violence and war in recent weeks as they have intended to capture more areas, loot public infrastructures and military bases.

"Retreating and progress in battlefields and wars are natural-Afghan National Defense and Security Forces are fighting independently to defend the country and its people," said Rahmatullah Andar, a spokesperson to the country's National Security Council.

Currently, fighting is underway in most of the country's provinces and it is said that a number of districts are about to fall to the hand of the Taliban group.

A number of Afghan military experts believe that Afghan National Defense and Security Forces with increasing capabilities and abilities can defend the country and its people they are home-loving soldiers. "In current situation in which serious fighting is ongoing, Afghan National Defense and Security Forces should keep strategic and key corridors under their control and there should be a way to send them possible supply and equipment," Javed Kohistani, an Afghan military expert said.

He said that ANDSF should act more professionally and not let fighting extended to all other provinces and districts in the country.

With the US announcement for full troop withdrawal from Afghanistan by September, Taliban have intensified and increased their attacks on districts and provincial cities and are making effort to somehow escape from peace talks by attacking and capturing more areas in the country.

Suraya Raiszada

Citizens' complaints continued over power pylons explosions

Following the people's complaints about poor power pylons' security the Breshna Shirkat—the country's main power-supply company, said this was the 19th power pylon blown up in the last two months of the current year that left millions of Afghanis in financial losses to the company.

The Breshna Shirkat said in a statement that it had lost three million Afghanis per hour due to repeated power outages. Press and Communications Office of the First Vice President said that the plan to secure the electricity pylons was under consideration and will be implemented soon.

In the latest case, two power pylons were destroyed by a bomb blast in Ahangaran area of South Salang district of Parwan province. Rezwan Murad, the Press and Communications Director of the First Vice-President, however did not comment on the plan to secure the electricity pylons, but stressed that their security would be difficult without the people support.

The country's detective and intelligence institutions, in cooperation with local people, have begun efforts to track down and arrest the saboteurs and those behind the power pylons desturction, however it noted the goal would be too difficult to reach without the people cooperation. "It is up to the people to work together with the security institutions to prevent such incidents, the security plan is about to finalize and the details will be shared as soon as it is completed," he added. Prior to Eid-ul-Fitr, following the destruction of several powers pylons in Kalkan district north of the capital Kabul, Amrullah Saleh wrote on his Facebook page that he was investigating the issue. However, the country's electricity company said that despite the authorities' commitment to secure the power pylons, they were being exploded one after another north of Kabul and called on the security institutions to take immediate action. In a statement, the company criticized the security agencies for failing to take security of the pylons.

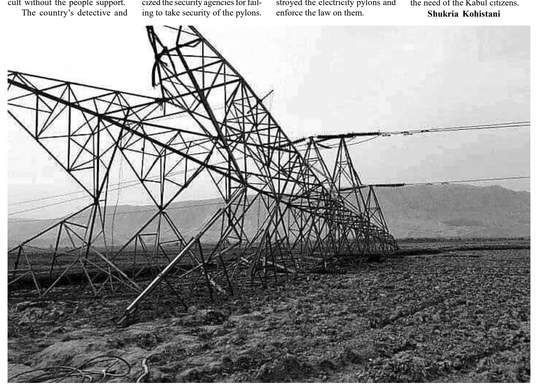
The technical team of the company, said it has arrived in the area and work will begin on the damaged pylons. "The area is mountainous and will take time to build them," said Sangar Niazi, a spokesman for the Afghan Breshna Sherkat.

But our colleagues are trying. Who is involved in the destruction of the electricity pylons? Although security officials have not commented on this issue but, the power company said in a statement that local extorters, companies affiliated with the powerfil, oil contractors, mafia groups and criminals may be behind it. Currently Kabul, Parwan, Lugar, Ghazni, Maydan Wardak, Paktia, Khost, Nangarhar, Laghman and Kapisa are the provinces with electricity cut off. Meanwhile, some Kabul, Nangarhar and Parwan residents call on Afghan security institutions to arrest the perpetrators and bring them to justice. They call on the government to arrest those destroyed the electricity pylons and enforce the law on them.

"The weather is much warmer this ones than in previous years and our children cannot tolerate the rising heat, so we need electricity," one of the citizens said on condition of anonymity. According to them, in Nangarhar province, Mazar-e-Sharif, Kandahar and even in Kabul, the temperature is high and it is difficult to live without electricity. "People are ready for cooperation with the government, but the government has not been able to arrest the saboteurs so far.

We hope that such people be arrested as soon as possible and hung on electricity towers," he reiterated. The Afghanistan Electricity Company said that Kabul electricity is currently supplied from domestic sources and that the Naghlu, Surobi and Mahipar power plants generate 110 megawatts and the Tarakhil Solar Power Plant generates 60 megawatts to ensure the need of the Kabul citizens.

Shukria Kohistani



MSF reports basic medical needs of Afghans are not being met

KABUL: Médecins Sans Frontières/Doctors Without Borders (MSF) on Tuesday said despite the international community having touted the achievements of Afghanistan's health care delivery model, strong evidence shows that the health system is unable to meet the basic medical needs of Afghans.

"Public health facilities in Afghanistan are under-funded and under-resourced, lacking qualified personnel, equipment, medicines and medical supplies."

In a briefing paper published Tuesday MSF said Afghans today are struggling to access basic healthcare facilities as a result of violence and insecurity, poverty, and an under-funded and under-resourced health system.

"Every day, Afghans must undertake dangerous journeys across active frontlines and mined roads, through checkpoints and areas controlled by armed groups to seek medical care.

"They are often unable or too afraid to leave their homes, and, when medical emergencies happen, such delays can prove fatal."

MSF also stated that healthcare facilities in Afghanistan are attacked more often than almost anywhere in the world, forcing their temporary or permanent closure and depriving millions of access to vital medical services.

"In addition to creating a climate of fear, such attacks severely limit access to vital medical services by forcing health providers to suspend or discontinue activities," MSF reported.

Citing World Health Organization (WHO) findings, MSF stated that up to three million people were deprived of essential health services in Afghanistan in 2020 as a result of health facilities forced to close by parties to the conflict.

In addition, the organization said the humanitarian crisis, compounded by the health and socio-economic shocks of the COVID-19 pandemic, is worsening throughout the country.

According to MSF, the COVID-19 pandemic has worsened the financial hardship for Afghans and that many have lost their livelihoods as a result of border closures, reduced commercial activity and job losses, and are receiving less in overseas remittances.

"Direct medical and non-medical costs put healthcare further out of reach for people living in poverty," the report stated.

MSF stated that in recent years, "the international community has touted the achievements of Afghanistan's health care delivery model, despite strong evidence that the health system is unable to meet Afghans' basic medical needs."

"Public health facilities in Afghanistan are under-funded and under-resourced, lacking qualified personnel, equipment, medicines and medical supplies."

Actors, such as MSF, have stepped in to fill important gaps in health service provision. "However, the situation is not sustainable, as humanitarian needs multiply and add further pressure on already overburdened medical facilities," MSF reported.

The organization also warned that national and international stakeholders must recognise that basic services, such as healthcare, are insufficient and incapable of addressing Afghans' immediate needs, and that now is not the time to reduce humanitarian support to Afghanistan.

"Access to quality and affordable medical care for all must be made an urgent priority," MSF said. **The Kabul Times**

Daraf's Death, a new approach to expressing oneself

By: Faramin Mikaeel

Daraf's Death has just been published and arrived in Kabul. It is a collection of Persian/Dari poems written by Nima Asi, who is living now in Ankara, Turkey, where he immigrated to in 2017, to find meaning to the meaninglessness of life like any other migrants who had already left – or are still leaving—Afghanistan's insecurity and instability. Daraf's Death is Asi's complicated, shocking debut collection of poetry which, I believe, will leave readers wondering about what the poet's intention is— each poetry is a collection of apparently simple words which have simply structuralized form, but delivers rather complicated meaning to the reader. We are so overwhelmed by the wordplays in any poems that we become part of the show in which words play a role searching for something, like Vladmir and Stragon, two main characters in Samuel Becket's play "Waiting for Godot", searching for the time to meet Godot, someone that never arrives, keeping us waiting and waiting.

The poems have been written between 2014 and 2020, and convey most of the situation which the writer has been or living in for a while. But, ask yourself, what is the significance of them being written in such a complicated manner? Is it a poet's deliberate act of conveying things to the reader in such a complicated manner that it questions our knowledge and perception of things, or is it an anecdote to the readers' pain? Would it be a tale of pain and suffering that an immigrant goes through while living abroad? Before answering those questions, let us first introduce Nima Asi: a 26-years-old poet whose writings date back to 2011, when he began to write his first poems inspired by 20th century Farsi-speaking writers and poets from Iran and Afghanistan, including his uncle, Abdul Qahar Asi, Afghanistan's most prestigious contemporary poet who was accidently hit and killed by a rocket during the civil wars in Kabul, in 1994. Qahar Asi was much respected for his revolting, epic and romantic poems.

Nima became an active member of Afghanistan's Pen Associations in Kabul, while also being a member of the Afghan Civil Society and one of the founding members of a poets' circle known as "Daricha," where poets gathered and read their poems, which were later reviewed, commented on, and judged by a senior writer or poet. Then, Nima was known as a junior poet whose uncle, Qahar Asi, had been overshadowing in his nephew's poems for years. However, in 2014, Nima separated himself from traditional poetry and began experimenting and writing in modern poetry forms such as haiku, free verse, and prose poetry, Avant-garde, mostly inspired by Iranian poets such as Ahmad Shamlo, Nima Yushij, Sohrab Sepehri, and Frogh Farokhzad, who were the founding fathers of Persian modern poetry and whose inspirations rooted.

Meanwhile, another generation, senior to Nima Asi's, known as the "post-Taliban generation," has been experimenting with new languages in poetry inspired by Iranian poets, as well as translation of Avant-Guard, postmodern, and war literature from all over the world.That generation appears to have been overwhelmed by the Beat Generation (William S. Burroughs, Jack Kerouac, and Allen Ginsberg) and their new approach to poetic language, middle eastern literature and poetry such as Mahmoud Darwish, Nouri al-Jarrah, Maram al-Masri, and etc... Observing his co-generation's approach to finding new ways to write poetry, Nima realized he had a serious interaction with literature, so he changed his path, migrated to Ankara, Turkey, learned Turkish, which he has been reading books and translating poetry and short stories from into his native language, Farsi.

Having mentioned the complexity of poems, it is worth acknowledging to say that, in Nima's prose poems, it seems as though complex situations give birth to complicated ideas and pictures where we are extraordinarily panicked by the unexpected things that come along the way and hardens our understanding of them. But I should have to also assert that one of the factors that Nima's hard, but poetic language catches our attention is its complexity, along with his unusual title that is quite biblical. Nima becomes Daraf, a word, which, Nima himself puts in the book's paralogue as a symbol of humanity or an endurance to becoming human. He also sees it as meaningless as any other word we use in our daily communication, but the difference is that this particular meaningless word is seeking meaning as Nima himself is searching for meaning in his life, being a migrant, in a strange country.

Getting into Nima's world is as hard as getting into the meaning of the surreal painting by Picaso. Asi's collection of poetry is perhaps a surreal picture of the world that we either sometimes take for granted or hope not to experience in reality.

In addition, we also hope his words define what it is like to be in a world full of strangeness and suffering that could only Daraf is or has been allowed to experience on his own, having no one to talk to but to choose to write them down on a paper in a poetic form. If it were a novel, I would have described it in this way: Daraf, a painter, is the only protagonist that creates himself, experiences, and kills himself in the end, leaving us a substantial number of abstract paintings he worked on so hard when he was alive. Now, the choice is up to us to decide whether we're going to preserve what we inherited and learnt from Daraf.

To summarize, I believe–and I hope Nima will agree with me one day–that "Daraf's death" is one of the few books in which all poetic elements collide, change shape, and give a new meaning to a text attempting to convey things we see, situations we go through, and circumstances we occasionally hope to foresee with someone we lost long ago in the meaningless, dishonest, dehumanized world that we live in. Last but not the least, Daraf's Death is shocking and the best of poetry collections that I recently read in Farsi.