UN; biggest organization in support of refugees in world

20 June is marked as World Refugee Day. The day was marked for the first time in 2001 with marking the 50th anniversary of 1951 convention on situation of refugees across the world. World Refugee Day 2021 focuses on the power of inclusion.

The shared experience of COVID-19 has showed us that we only succeed if we stand together. We have all had to do our part to keep each other safe and despite the challenges, refugees and displaced people have stepped up.

Given the chance, refugees will continue to contribute to a stronger, safer and more vibrant world.

Therefore UNHCR, the UN Refugee Ageney's World Refugee Day campaign this year is calling for the greater inclusion of refugees in health systems, schools and sport. Only by working together can we recover from the pandemic. This year's motto is "Together we heal, learn and shine".

Why is the World Refugee Day important?

The day focuses on the rights, needs and dreams of refugees and helping in mobilizing political and social donation so that refugees can both live and promote.

Although it is important to support each day of refugees' life, international occasions as the World Refugee Day can help in making the world countries to pay further attention to life condition of refugees.

What happens on World Refugee Day?

The World Refugee Day is marked every year by holding various ceremonies for the support of refugees across the world.

The ceremonies are held by refugees, government officials, host organizations, companies and elite figures in support of refugees.

Afghanistan is considered as one of the biggest countries whose mostly citizens have left their country due to continued war, torture and violence. According to information, Afghan citizens are the third big group of refugees in the world.

Neighboring countries such as Pakistan and Iran are hosting nearly 87 percent of Afghan refugees in their countries.

There are different reasons for migration to EU and western countries. Continued war and violence, increasing poverty and unemployment have mostly made Afghan citizens to leave for other countries of the world to live in tranquility and peace.

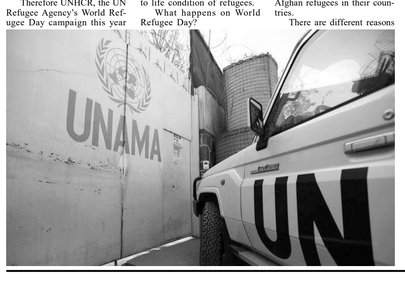
Besides, a large number of Afghan citizens have been displaced from their home areas due to natural incidents as floods, landslide, drought and earthquake. Most internally displaced people are being displaced time by time but avoiding leaving for other countries.

These people do not have access to shelter, food, drinking water, healthcare, education and employment.

Migration is an international problem and cannot be addressed by a government or two; therefore, cooperation of various countries and the United Nations has changed to a need.

A strategic and comprehensive research should be done in this regard.

It is worth mentioning that migration is considered as human rights as each human being can settle at any location of the world but with particular norms and international conventions. World countries do not have the right to expel or forcefully deport refugees. In such circumstances with which Afghanistan is facing, EU member countries and other western countries should not forcefully deport or expel Afghan refugees from their countries. **Lailuma Noori**



International experts discussion on 'Strengthening Peace through Pluralism' in Afghanistan

The State Ministry of Peace and the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in Ottawa, in collaboration with Canada's Global Centre for Pluralism, hosted a virtual meeting of experts on Friday, The Canada Now reported. The participants, Afghan, Canadian and Qatari officials attended the meeting and discussed the future of the Afghanistan peace process meeting.

Sayed Sadat Mansoor Naderi, State Minister for Peace of Afghanistan, said "For nearly five decades, violence has been the defining factor of life in Afghanistan. It has been the main political capital, the main driving force in the economic market and the foundation of social relationships at the grassroots level. This has to change and the peace process offers the opportunity to do just that," the minister added.

According to Naderi, the Taliban has not shown the slightest signs of compromise and flexibility towards the rest of the country, continue their wave of violence and still strongly push for a military takeover. "They have not shown any understanding of human and women's rights, they have not projected any respect for the diversity and pluralism of Afghan society."

The minister also added that number of educated young people had grown for the past 20 years, who are the real supporter of long-lasting peace in the country. He added that focus will be given to ensure the preservation of their achievements.

The attendees to the meeting were Hassan Soroosh, Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to Canada, Reid Douglas Sirrs Ambassador of Canada to Kabul, Saud Al Mahmoud, Ambassador of Qatar to Canada, Meredith Preston McGhie Secretary-General at Global Centre for Pluralism, Jayne Barlow Director of Programs at Global Centre for Pluralism, Christopher Thornton Special Advisers at Center for Global Pluralism.

The participants of the meeting also discussed and shared the importance of purism in society and how it impacts the peace process.

It should be pointed out that His Excellency Aga Khan and the Government of Canada established the World Center for Pluralism, which is an independent charitable organization and aim to promote peaceful coexistence and pluralism in diverse communities.

Afghanistan: COVID-19 at crisis point as hospitals overflow

KABUL: A COVID-19 surge in Afghanistan has reached a crisis point as infections and deaths are spiraling out of control, threatening to engulf the country's fragile health system, as a consequence of decades of armed conflict, and compounding disasters.

Hospital beds are full in many areas across the country and oxygen supplies cannot keep up.

Infection rates have skyrocketed by around 2,400 per cent in the past month. Across Afghanistan, 34 per cent of tests returned positive results last week according to government authorities, pointing to many thousands of undiagnosed infections.

Dr Nilab Mobarez, Acting President of Afghan Red Crescent Society said: "Afghanistan is at a crisis point in the battle to contain COVID-19 as hospital beds are full to capacity in the capital Kabul and in many areas. This surge is fast spiraling out of control adding huge pressures on our fragile health system and millions of people living in poverty.

"Thousands of trained Red Crescent volunteers are risking their lives to help infected people with urgent medical care and to enhance prevention measures. We fear that we are just a heartbeat away from the kind of horror that we have already seen in countries like India and Nepal."

The Afghan Red Crescent is running 140 health facilities, including a 50-bed COVID-19 hospital in Kabul and 70 mobile health teams. Volunteers have screened more than 650,000 people for the disease. In rural areas many people have difficulty accessing medical care, safe water, hygiene supplies or accurate information about the virus and how to prevent it.

Afghanistan is also dealing with a vaccine shortfall exacerbated by a high level of hesitancy. Less than half a per cent of the population has been fully vaccinated against COVID-19. Mask use and physical distancing is very low.

Necephor Mghendi, head of Afghanistan Country Delegation for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) said: "COVID-19 is another cruel blow for millions of Afghans already dealing with the constant threat of violence, displacement, food insecurity and poverty. We're seeing large numbers of people having to make terrible choices between finding a way to feed their families and growing risks of getting sick.

"IFRC is working with the Afghan Red Crescent to urgently deliver more medical equipment, including an oxygen generation plant for its COVID-19 hospital in Kabul. More international support is needed to help win this race against this virus, so we can save thousands of lives."

Afghanistan is one of the poorest and most disaster-prone countries in Asia. More than 14 million people are grappling with food shortages during one of the worst drought crises in decades. With IFRC's support, Afghan Red Crescent volunteers and response teams have ramped up relief, including food and cash assistance, for thousands of drought-affected families.

The IFRC is seeking vital funding for its global emergency COVID-19 appeal, with only around 40% of funding requirements for Afghanistan covered so far. The global emergency appeal funds are crucial to continue supporting the lifesaving actions of the IFRC and member Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies around the world.

The Kabul Times

The Government of Pakistan will name a road after Afghanistan National Hero

The federal government of Pakistan plans to designate a road in Islamabad after Ahmad Shah Masoud, the Afghan Commander, twenty-one years after his assassination.

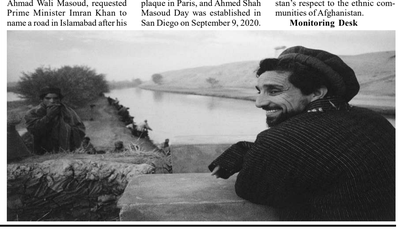
According to federal government sources, the State Department of Pakistan has discussed the concept with the Pakistani Interior Ministry, which is the Capital Development Authority's line ministry (CDA).

The sources further added that this initiative was taken after Ahmad Shah Masoud's brother, Ahmad Wali Masoud, requested Prime Minister Imran Khan to name a road in Islamabad after his brother.

Ahmad Shah Masoud, also known as "Lion of Panjshir", remained in Pakistan in the Soviet war. His father was also consigned to the grave in Peshawar. Ahmad Shah Masoud is regarded in the greatest esteem among other Afghan leaders for his resistance to the Soviet invasion in the 1980s.

This move by Pakistan is not the first, as Ahmad Shah Masoud's contributions to Afghanistan has been recognized and acknowledged by several other states. Last year, he was commemorated with a plaque in Paris, and Ahmed Shah Masoud Day was established in San Diego on September 9, 2020.

The federal government of Pakistan has named four roads after foreign heads of state, including Faisal Avenue, which was named after former Saudi King Shah Faisal, and Attatürk Avenue, which was named after Turkish hero Mustafa Kemal Ataturk. The roads were also named after Chinese leader Zhou Enlai and former Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser.

The Pakistan government shall amend its policy of naming roads only after foreign heads of state as a gesture to show Pakistan's respect to the ethnic communities of Afghanistan.

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