Swift withdrawal of int'l troops sparks widespread fear in Afghanistan, experts tell security council . . .

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minorities and schoolchildren, he stressed that the Taliban must respect Afghans' desire for peace, agree to a ceasefire and seriously engage in negotiations. Ireland and its partners in the European Union will only consider the easing of sanctions when genuine progress is demonstrated towards those ends. Such progress must include meaningful engagement by all Afghans — especially women — and protect women's human rights, he said, agreeing with other speakers that "women's rights cannot be the price of peace". He also urged the international community to respond to the rapidly deteriorating humanitarian situation in Afghanistan, where 14 million people are experiencing severe food insecurity.

Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, Minister for External Affairs of India, underlined the need for a genuine "double peace" — peace both within and around Afghanistan's borders. India has been supportive of all the efforts being made to accelerate the dialogue between the Afghan Government and the Taliban, including the intra-Afghan negotiations. However, for peace to last, terrorist safe havens and sanctuaries must be dismantled immediately and terrorist supply chains disrupted. There must be zero tolerance for terrorism, including in its cross-border manifestations. It is equally important to ensure that the territory of Afghanistan is not used by terrorist groups to threaten or attack any other country. India remains committed to steadfastly supporting Afghanistan during its transition. As a development partner, it carries out more than 550 community projects covering all 34 provinces, aimed at making Afghanistan a self-sustaining nation. India has also operationalized air freight corridors and the Chabahar Port to provide greater regional connectivity, he said.

The representative of the United States said that, although her country is withdrawing all its troops from Afghanistan "after 20 long years", its commitment to the nation's security and its people endures. Noting the many humanitarian challenges facing Afghanistan — including high food insecurity and a surge in COVID-19 cases — she said the United States is providing Kabul with more than $266 million in new humanitarian aid and encouraged other donors to support Afghans' immediate humanitarian needs. She also underscored the need to preserve the progress Afghan women and girls have made by protecting their rights and freedoms, and called on all those with influence over relevant parties to "step up now" to secure peace and stability in the region. It is in the international community's collective interest to prevent terrorists from basing themselves in Afghanistan, and organized criminals from trafficking drugs there. For its part, the United States is supporting Afghan farmers in creating sustainable alternatives to poppy cultivation. "The military path will not lead to legitimacy," she said of the Taliban's tactics, stressing that a negotiated, inclusive political settlement is the only way forward.

Audun Halvorsen, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Norway, said the Afghan parties must own the peace process and recognize their responsibility in leading the way to peace.

For its part, the international community must do more to demonstrate solidarity and support to the Afghan people. Targeted attacks, including those against humanitarian aid workers, media workers and human rights defenders, must be investigated and the perpetrators held to account. He urged the Government, United Nations agencies and donors to set up programmes for the reintegration of children detained for alleged association with armed groups. He also emphasized Norway's support for an inclusive Afghan peace process and urged the United Nations and UNAMA to ensure that Afghan women have dedicated seats at the negotiating table.

Tariq Ahmad, Minister for South Asia and the Commonwealth of the United Kingdom, expressed concern over the "desperately slow" progress on peace negotiations and over Afghans' continued suffering, resulting from debilitating violence and multiple humanitarian crises. Despite the withdrawal of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) forces, the United Kingdom remains fully committed to the people of Afghanistan. Citing recent attacks on civilians, he said the Taliban is responsible for most of the violence across the country, adding that the group must cease such acts and respect all human rights if it wants to be a part of Afghanistan's future. He also stated that the direct involvement of women in the peace process "is not a choice, it is a must", and called on the Taliban to engage meaningfully in peace talks and work towards a political settlement that protects progress already achieved. "There can be no return to the intolerant and barbaric Islamic Emirate of the 1990s," he stressed.

The representative of China said Afghanistan's future should be in the hands of its people themselves, and no external forces should be allowed to pursue their narrow self-interests. Urging the relevant parties to seize a "hard-to-come-by" opportunity, he called for the warring sides to resume talks as soon as possible. Since May, the Council has issued three statements condemning security incidents and calling for a lasting ceasefire. Emphasizing that foreign troops cannot just come and go, he called for their orderly withdrawal in close consultation with the affected stakeholders. Progress in Afghanistan requires security guarantees. Noting that UNAMA's current mandate expires in September, he requested the Secretary-General to propose options for the future of the United Nations presence in the country, for the Council's early consideration. He added that, as a friendly neighbour, China has always supported Afghanistan's peace process.

The representative of Kenya condemned the use of terrorism, violence and intimidation to achieve political ends, insisting that those who apply those repulsive methods should not be legitimized through recognition as bona fide political players. As a country that has suffered in the hands of the Al-Qaida-affiliated Al-Shabaab terrorist group, Kenya identifies with the people of Afghanistan who bear the brunt of increasing terrorist attacks. Expressing grave concern that attacks by Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan Province increased to 88 compared to 16 during the same period last year, he said that the Council must take an urgent, unified and unyielding stand against these acts. Any review of the sanction measures imposed under Council resolution 1988 (2011) should also be in line with resolution 2513 (2020) and predicated on the Taliban demonstrating commitment to cease all forms of violence and targeted attacks. Any proposal to delist some of its members should only be considered on merit and on a case-by-case basis, he added.

The representative of Tunisia expressed hope that tangible progress will soon be made in negotiations between the Government and the Taliban, while also voicing concern over the continued violence for which the latter is largely responsible and the subsequent enabling of terrorist activity and drug trafficking. Calling for an immediate cessation of hostilities, he urged all parties to prevent civilian casualties, abide by international law and hold perpetrators accountable. The Taliban must end its attacks, honor its counter-terrorism commitments and negotiate with the Government in good faith. He also underscored that any future peace agreement must include guarantees that protect and promote fundamental rights and freedoms in Afghanistan, particularly those of women, and said UNAMA will have an important role to play in promoting peace, development and fundamental rights going forward.

The representative of Mexico called on relevant parties to immediately resume dialogue, noting that peace talks — an important achievement for the process of reconciliation — depend in part on coordinated efforts by the international community. Just as Afghanistan's partners cannot understand the situation in Afghanistan without listening to women, he stressed that it cannot make progress towards peace without guaranteeing their full participation at the negotiating table. Afghanistan's democratic, inclusive and peaceful future must preserve socioeconomic gains for women, youth and minorities. Turning to the fragile security situation, he stressed that the withdrawal of international troops must be orderly, coordinated and conducted in such a way that does not negatively impact regional dynamics or the Afghan armed forces' ability to counter terrorism. He added that UNAMA must play an essential coordinating role in improving the humanitarian situation in the country, where almost half of the population requires assistance.

The representative of Viet Nam, stressing that the gains achieved so far on Afghanistan's political front must be preserved, called for urgent efforts to advance the intra-Afghan peace negotiations. A permanent ceasefire must be achieved as soon as possible to end the ongoing violence. Describing the high number of civilian casualties in the past months as unacceptable, he urged all relevant parties to fully respect international humanitarian law, immediately stop targeting civilians and civilian objects and ensure unhindered humanitarian access to those in need. The international community should continue to support the Government of Afghanistan in promoting socioeconomic development and reconstruction of the country. In addition, he advocated for strengthened efforts to combat the threats posed by terrorism, crime and drug trafficking, and to assist people with licit sustainable livelihoods.

The representative of France said the international community must respect and condemn violence, which has risen to an unacceptable level in Afghanistan, and called for a ceasefire in accordance with resolutions 2532 (2020) and 2565 (2021).

The Afghan peace process requires a genuine commitment from all parties, he said, urging the Taliban to commit to negotiations. Noting that the committee overseeing the 1988 sanctions regime is considering extending exemptions to the travel ban to allow Taliban members to attend peace talks, he stressed that such a move is a concession to peace, not to the group itself. If the Taliban fails to live up to its commitments, it must accept the consequences. No compromise should be made on the values and principles of the United Nations. Expressing a concern over increased drug trafficking, he warned that such a trend will have serious consequences on peace in Afghanistan and across the wider region.

The representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, expressing deep concern over violence targeting women, media workers, activists, Government employees and health workers, called for earnest joint efforts to eliminate terrorism and extremism in Afghanistan and across the wider region. It is also high time to redouble efforts to resolve Afghanistan's drug control problem and its resulting ills, with a focus on combating illicit opium production and trafficking. The international community must respond urgently to limit the spread of COVID-19 in Afghanistan, where the pandemic is spiralling out of control. She also underlined the link between climate change and food insecurity, including the high likelihood that drought triggered by the weather pattern known as La Niña will exacerbate the situation.

The representative of the Russian Federation, noting UNAMA's important role in coordinating international assistance to Afghanistan, said the terrorist threat still present in the country continues to pose serious security challenges, worsened by the appearance of groups affiliated with ISIL/Da'esh. These terrorists maintain sleeper cells in the country's north and east and are building capacity to consolidate their influence in Afghanistan and spread attacks to the wider central Asian region. Pointing out that "Afghan narcotics remain a powerful driver of terrorism", she expressed disappointment over the relatively limited coverage of that topic in the Secretary-General's report. For its part, the Russian Federation will continue to train narcotics officers and provide additional support to Afghanistan, including through the Paris Pact Initiative. She also expressed regret over the stalled peace process, while noting that the Extended "Troika" — namely, China, Pakistan, the Russian Federation and the United States — has demonstrated its relevance and ability to lend additional momentum.

The representative of Niger said a stagnated peace process in concert with resurging violence has dampened the Afghan people's hope. All peace processes must protect the rights of women and young people, preserving what has been achieved over the last 20 years. Meanwhile, negotiations must also address post-conflict reconstruction, including issues of disarmament, demobilization, the reintegration of former combatants and security sector reform. Calling on the international community to urgently mobilize resources to address the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan — where more than one third of the population faces food insecurity — he noted that while many Western nations are in the process of easing COVID-19 restrictions, the international community cannot escape that the pandemic continues to test the "already threadbare" health systems of developing countries such as Afghanistan, where barely over 1 per cent of the population has been vaccinated.

He also called on the Council to account for climate-related security challenges when renewing UNAMA's mandate in September, which Niger supports.

Monitoring Desk

Afghan Advertisements

AA867

ANNOUNCEMENT FOR BIDDING ICB

Procurement Entities	NPA on behalf Supreme Audit Office, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.
Funded By	World Bank
Item Description / Ref No.	**Procurement of Audit Management Information System (AMIS)** **Ref No: NPA/SAO/1400/G-3134/ICB (AF-SAO-FSP-AMIS-232671-GO-RFB)**
Deadline for submission Bids	**August 30, 2021 at 10:00 Hours** (Local Time). The public opening of Bids received will be held immediately after the deadline.
Address for submission Bids	**Attention:** Bidding Facilitation Secretariat **Address:** National Procurement Authority (NPA) Administrative Office of the President (AOP), Pashtunestan Wat, Kabul, Afghanistan | Kabul Afghanistan. **Telephone:** (+93) 20292626200 | **Email:** bfs-npa@npa.gov.af
Website	Interested bidders may download the complete Bidding Documents from our website. www.npa.gov.af www.agcops.net In case of any problem in downloading, may obtain the same by sending e-mail at the pfd_d_06@npa.gov.af, Cc hikmatullah.asad@npa.gov.af, z.jalalzi@gmail.com, sherzad.zahid@gmail.com, and sattar.soroush2016@gmail.com
Bid Security for	**$ 45,000 USD**

AA868

ANNOUNCEMENT FOR BIDDING ICB

Procurement Entities	NPA on behalf Supreme Audit Office, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.
Funded By	World Bank
Item Description / Ref No.	**Assignment Title: Supply, Installation and Configuration of Hardware & Datacenter for AMIS in 4 Lots** **Ref No: NPA/SAO/1400/G-3136/ICB (AF-SAO-FSP-HARDWARE-232677-GO-RFB)**
Deadline for submission Bids	**August 12, 2021 at 10:00 Hours** (Local Time). The public opening of Bids received will be held immediately after the deadline.
Address for submission Bids	**Attention:** Bidding Facilitation Secretariat **Address:** National Procurement Authority (NPA) Administrative Office of the President (AOP), Pashtunestan Wat, Kabul, Afghanistan | Kabul Afghanistan. **Telephone:** (+93) 20292626200 | **Email:** bfs-npa@npa.gov.af
Website	Interested bidders may download the complete Bidding Documents from our website. www.npa.gov.af www.agcops.net In case of any problem in downloading, may obtain the same by sending e-mail at the address pfd_d_06@npa.gov.af, Cc hikmatullah.asad@npa.gov.af, z.jalalzi@gmail.com, sherzad.zahid@gmail.com, and sattar.soroush2016@gmail.com
Bid Security for	**Lot 1:** Datacenter Equipment **USD 5,000.00** (Five Thousand US Dollars) **Lot 2:** Laptops, Servers and Related Software **USD 10,000.00** (Ten Thousand US Dollars) **Lot 3:** Servers, Related Software and Configuration **USD 10,000.00** (Ten Thousand US Dollars) **Lot 4:** Network Equipment, Configuration and Miscellaneous **USD 9,000.00** (Nine Thousand USD Dollars)

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C+C5 meeting: Toward sustainable peace . . .

played an essential role in coordinating and eliminating transnational threats and risks by adopting and implementing effective measures and policies.

Since the inception of the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) under the security framework of the SCO in 2004, the cooperation between China and Central Asian states on regional security challenges, so-called three evils: ethnic separatism, religious extremism, and terrorism have been assigned as highest priorities. Moreover, Afghan leaders have also regularly taken part in the SCO summits and thus Afghanistan holds an observer status since 2012. Prior to this, Beijing and Kabul already reached a series of agreements to promote cooperation and strengthen bilateral ties in a wide range of fields covering from common security and defense policies to cultural and academic activities, communication and economic relations by signing "The Treaty of Good Neighborly Friendship and Cooperation" in 2006.

Following the inauguration of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in 2013, the bilateral cooperation and the regional integration process between China and Central Asian countries has accelerated; on the contrary, Beijing had initially largely excluded Afghanistan from participating in the initiative, but in 2016 two governments signed a Memorandum of Understanding for enhancing the partnership within the BRI. Furthermore, in 2017, Afghanistan is granted permanent membership to the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), a Chinese-led multilateral financial institution that mostly finances the infrastructure needs and other productive sectors of the BRI members across the regions of Asia, Africa, Eastern Europe, and Latin America. Accordingly, a range of national projects in Afghanistan was already funded through AIIB loans and constructed by Chinese companies.

In addition to improved economic relations, about three years ago, China, Afghanistan, and Pakistan signed a trilateral agreement to further strengthen inter-regional cooperation to address transnational challenges under the framework of jointly building the Belt and Road Initiative and all sides agreed to prevent the Taliban to seize power by force, once possessing the mightiest military power in the country, it could pose a threat not only to Afghanistan but also to the regional countries.