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Afghan Leaders Urged to Complete Cabinet

Afghan legislators and citizens on Sunday called on President Ashraf Ghani and Dr. Abdullah Abdullah to complete the cabinet, which still has empty positions almost 70 days after the two signed a political agreement. Based on the agreement, which was signed in May, Abdullah will head the High Council for National Reconciliation and will be able to have his picks in 50 percent of the cabinet. The Presidential Palace has said that it has prepared its part of the cabinet, but it is waiting for Abdullah's list. Meanwhile, Abdullah has not yet appointed three deputies of the High Council for National Reconciliation, which has five members in total.

"They should not take the ... **P3**



Taliban reject UN report on ties with Al-Qaeda

Day after the United Nations report said an estimated 400-600 Al-Qaeda fighters are present in Afghanistan, the Islamic Emirate rejected the report as "false statements" and not based on facts. In a statement, it also claimed Daesh was removed from all the areas in Afghanistan under its control.

In a statement, Islamic Emirate said claims of 400-600 foreign Al-Qaeda operatives being present in Afghanistan were not based on facts because, it said, "following the American aggression against Afghanistan...the possibility for foreign fighter presence and stay was eliminated".

Islamic Emirate said after the changes in the Arab world, "Al-Qaeda members found secure zones in their own countries and all left our country for their own homelands".

"Islamic Emirate has waged large-scale wars against Daesh and all have been expelled from areas under our control. However, it is possible that Daesh militias are present in cities under the control of Kabul administration as ... **P3**

Ghani: 'Govt Will Enter Talks from Strong Position'



President Ashraf Ghani, who visited the western province of Nimroz on Sunday, said the Afghan government will not enter negotiations with the Taliban from a position of weakness, and that the republic and the national security and defense forces will not be compromised in the talks. "I will not compromise on the republic. I will not compromise

on Afghanistan. We are proud of the republic," Ghani said. The Afghan peace process has reached a critical point as the intra-Afghan negotiations are expected to begin in the near future if the prisoner exchange between the government and the Taliban is completed.

The US special envoy Zalmay Khalilzad also started a five-

months. According to engineers, the dam will irrigate thousands of hectares of land and will generate nine megawatts of power. Nimroz residents said the president has not fulfilled the commitments he made in his previous trip to the province. "Our 100-bed hospital has been left unconstructed for the last five years. It has been taken by the OSOPND (Operations and Support Office of the President for National Development) but it has not been started yet," said Baz Mohammad Nasir, head of Nimroz Provincial Council. First Vice President Amrullah Saleh, who accompanied Ghani on the trip, said the Taliban has had no achievement despite increased violence in the country. "They (Taliban) made lots of efforts this year, particularly after the Doha agreement, they thought that they will have achievements after the withdrawal of Americans. At some points, they have conducted up to 100 attacks in a week, but they did not have progress," said Saleh.

Iran supports Afghan-led peace talks: Tehran Embassy

The Iranian embassy in Kabul rejected a US official's misrepresentation of Iran's position on the Afghan peace process, stressing that the Islamic Republic of Iran supports peace talks based on Afghan ownership and leadership.

Following the erroneous statements of a US official regarding the views and actions of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the Afghan peace process, the Iranian Embassy in Kabul reaffirmed Iran's support for peace and stability in Afghanistan, reiterating ... **P2**



Afghanistan writes to UNSC over 'violations' of its territory by Pakistan forces

Afghanistan has written to the UN Security Council over continued "violations" of its territory by Pakistani military forces and said it will ask the 15-nation UN body to take necessary measures and actions to end them if the situation is not de-escalated bilaterally. Afghanistan's Permanent Representative to the UN Adela Raz wrote to the President of the Security Council, Germany, to report on the most recent violations of the Afghan territory by Pakistan's military forces and said the "incursion" represents a reiteration of violations as Kabul had previously expressed its concerns to the Security Council in February and August 2019.

Raz said in the letter that on July 15, Pakistan military forces began "unprovoked artillery attacks" against Afghan border posts and civilian residential areas in the Sarakano and Asad Abad districts



of Kunar Province. The attacks included 12 heavy artillery strikes targeting Asad Abad district and more than 160 artillery rounds fired at Sarakano district. In addition to four casualties among members of the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces, the attacks claimed the lives of six civilians, including two women,

and eight injuries and resulted in significant damage to civilian property.

"We would like to once again reiterate, as we have in previous communications, that the issue of violations of Afghan territory by Pakistani military forces has continued despite numerous appeals made to the ... **P2**

Afghanistan....

Government of Pakistan, bilaterally and through other measures, to cease their illegal and provocative activities in our sovereign territory.

"In that regard, the government of Afghanistan expresses, once again, its strong condemnation of Pakistan's failure to adhere to its obligations under the principles of the Charter of the United Nations" as well as international law and international humanitarian law, she said in the letter.

Raz said the Afghan Government is "currently working to de-escalate the situation bilaterally, but should this fail, it will call on the Security Council to take measures and actions necessary to bring about an end to the violations identified above."

She also requested that the letter of complaint regarding Pakistan's continued activities be circulated as a document of the Security Council and "kept on record for reference should attempts at de-escalating prove unfruitful."

Iran supports...

Iran's firm position on the need to establish peace based on the results of Afghan-led peace talks.

It advised US officials to carefully study these positions before commenting on the views of Iranian officials on regional and Afghan issues.

Previously, Zalmay Khalilzad, the US Special Representative for Afghanistan, said in a statement that Iran did not fully support efforts to bring peace to Afghanistan.

By Arthur I. Cyr

Afghanistan War and Russian money

"Russia Secretly Offered Afghan Militants Bounties to Kill U.S. Troops, Intelligence Says." That was the headline in "The New York Times" on June 26, and other media quickly picked up and promoted the story. Trump administration critics in the media and politics made accusations of covering up and neglecting to act on the explosive, shocking information.

Russia officials flatly deny the existence of any such program, which is no surprise. They hardly would be likely to admit issuing gangster-style contracts. Yet Moscow and Washington do cooperate in Afghanistan.

American officials also soon began to discount the story. President Donald Trump flatly declared the Russian bounty story a hoax. Predictably, various quarters reacted to this with skepticism.

Nonetheless, while Trump has a positive relationship with Russian President Vladimir Putin, no serious observer suggests he would put American troops at risk in order to help that nation. Trump has given sustained high priority to our military, in terms of both political rhetoric and federal budget allocations. He readily approved the planned, targeted killing of Iran General Qasem Soleimani last February.

Moreover, senior administration officials directly involved with our military now publicly express skepticism about the story. On July 9, Secretary of Defense Mark Esper and Army General Mark Milley, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, met with reporters and stated explicitly that intelligence reports about Russian payments to the Taliban in Afghanistan are uncorroborated.

Afghanistan can be an especially emotional subject for Americans. An al Qaeda group based in Afghanistan carried out the horrific terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. In reaction, the United Nations Security Council, including Russia, unanimously passed Resolution 1386 in December 2001.

As a consequence, a multinational military force



authorized by the United Nations occupied Afghanistan. The long involvement by the U.S. and allies in a fitful war approaching two decades in length is the direct result of these events.

In February, after long and painful negotiations, an agreement finally was signed between the U.S. government and the fundamentalist Taliban movement of Afghanistan for the reduction of occupying forces. The accord includes detailed stipulations to help protect the population and discourage the return of terrorists.

Reports of Russian bounties are a fact, but may be calculated plants. Russians may be spreading disinformation to sow confusion and discord. Russian groups interfere in the domestic affairs of the U.S. and other nations. The brutal and ultimately unsuccessful Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in the 1980s left bitter scars.

Also in February, incumbent President Ashraf Ghani formally became the presidential election winner, with just over 50 percent of the vote. In May, he and losing rival Abdullah Abdullah reached a power-

sharing agreement, promising stability.

Some Afghan political factions, which receive generous American support, may be behind the bounty stories. Peace threatens their gravy train.

The wider context remains important. The long and frustrating nature of the Afghanistan war overshadows such positive developments as reasonably honest elections and the growing participation of women. Despite the lack of infrastructure, technology is spreading steadily. Cellphones and the internet are now features of isolated communities.

Ultimately, the Afghan people should be responsible for their nation, especially after two decades of occupation. The U.N. was fully justified in forcibly overthrowing the Taliban regime. Now, they should withdraw, responsibly.

Beyond the uncertainty of this story, the New York Times loses credibility for the manner of their reporting. Adding "Intelligence Says" to a purely speculative headline highlights the decline of a once great newspaper.

By Pushkar M Sharma

Do Afghan lives matter?

In the wake of George Floyd's violent death at the hands of police officers, demonstrations erupted across the United States demanding justice and an end to the impunity of police violence. The protest movement received support from around the world and as far as Kabul, where Afghan artists painted murals memorializing Floyd.

In mid-June, US President Donald Trump attempted to appease American protesters by signing an executive order which encouraged limiting the use of chokeholds and sought to create a national database for police misconduct. The executive order was described as "a band-aid for a bullet wound" and caused much public anger across the country. But a few days earlier, another brazen attack on justice by the Trump administration garnered little attention from the American public. US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced sanctions against International Criminal

Court (ICC) employees for investigating US war crimes in Afghanistan. The move was meant to shield war criminals and steals justice from Afghan civilians. It is important for the American society, especially civil rights marchers, to pay attention.

Impunity for the US military abroad is closely linked to impunity for police forces at home. Americans will not win the battle against police brutality unless they also take on the issue of US war crimes abroad. Expressing support for the ICC at this point is crucial.

Impunity for the US military The ICC holds a mandate to examine cases which national authorities are unable or unwilling to investigate, such as large-scale war crimes, including genocide. While the US has not joined the ICC, 123 countries have, including most US allies and nearly every OECD member.

Since the "War on Terror" began in 2001, reports of numerous war crimes, including soldiers

hunting civilians for sport and CIA operatives systematically abusing prisoners, have surfaced in Afghanistan and Iraq. While there have been some cases of prosecution - for example, for torture in Iraq's Abu Ghraib prison, which yielded convictions of US military personnel - there have been insufficient efforts to properly investigate all reported crimes. Many accused have been acquitted, never charged, or have received minor punishment.

If the US had fairly prosecuted crimes its citizens allegedly committed in Afghanistan, the ICC would not have had to step in to try those individuals. While previous administrations chose to ignore the problem, Donald Trump's administration has decided to directly attack the ICC's probe into US war crimes.

All this does not come as a surprise given that the US has embraced war criminals, pardoning three US service members accused or ... **P3**

DPRK sees...

illegally crossed the border into the DPRK, Yonhap reported citing a military official.

"The military is looking into the detailed routes, seeing high chances of a certain person's border crossing into the North," the official said, adding that regarding the DPRK's report, the military has specified some people and is verifying facts in close collaboration with related agencies.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) is reviewing the overall readiness posture of the military, including its monitoring equipment and recorded video clips, he said.

The first suspected case officially announced

If confirmed, it would be the first case officially acknowledged by DPRK authorities, who have so far said the country has no confirmed cases of the new coronavirus.

During an enlarged WPK Political Bureau meeting over COVID-19 protection measures at the beginning of July, Kim said "we have thoroughly prevented the inroad of the malignant virus and maintained stable anti-epidemic situation" despite the worldwide health crisis, which is a "shining success" achieved by the Party leadership and a high sense of voluntary spirit of the people.

Kim repeatedly warned that hasty relief of anti-epidemic measures will result in an unimaginable and irretrievable crisis,

stressing that "all the sectors and units should further strengthen the emergency anti-epidemic work till the danger of pandemic incoming is completely rid of."

Meanwhile, ROK President Moon Jae-in offered to the DPRK resuming inter-Korean cooperation by jointly tackling the COVID-19 outbreak, saying that this will be a good opportunity for inter-Korean cooperation.

"(The ROK government) will go and find the most realistic and practical way for inter-Korean cooperation. The COVID-19 crisis can be a new opportunity for inter-Korean cooperation as it is the most urgent and desperate task to cooperate in as of now,"

Moon said in a meeting with his senior secretaries on the day to mark the second anniversary of the Panmunjom Declaration. In late January, the DPRK declared the launch of a national emergency system against the coronavirus, shutting down its borders and tightening quarantine measures.

The DPRK has kept a ban on public gatherings and made it compulsory for people to wear masks in public places, said a Reuters report on July 1 quoting a World Health Organization official.

As of 8 a.m. July 25, there are now 15,628,936 confirmed COVID-19 cases worldwide. The United States has the highest number, 4,179,560, followed by Brazil (2,343,366) and India (1,287,945).

Afghan Govt Prepares for Intl Fund-Pledging in Geneva

The Afghan government is expecting a "sufficient" amount of assistance from international donors to be pledged at the Geneva conference, which is scheduled to be held in November. Talking to TOLONews, Economy Minister Mustafa Mastoor said the second document of the Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework, or ANPDF II, for 2021 to 2025 has been finalized and the international community is expected to announce its support to Afghanistan within the framework of this document. The ministerial conference will be organized by Finland and will be co-hosted by the Afghan government and the United Nations.

"Our hopes should remain high. I hope that the international community will not reduce its assistance (to Afghanistan) in the upcoming conference," Mastoor said.

"Our efforts are aimed at having more pledges from our international partners so that we can lead Afghanistan toward self-reliance, but, for now, talking about this issue is premature," said Shamroz Khan Masjidi, spokesman for the Ministry of Finance.

Critics and MPs said they are not optimistic about the international community's pledge for the next four years as many countries have been hit hard by the coronavirus pandemic.

"I think that the Afghan government will fail to get commitments in the upcoming conference," said Shabir Bashiri, an economic affairs analyst.

"Progress in reform and fighting corruption are the key criteria for the international community to decide to help, and in these areas the Afghan government will not have had considerable achievement, said Azim Kebarzani, an MP.



The international community pledged at least \$16 billion to Afghanistan in the 2016 Geneva conference for the following four years. This year's meeting was expected in the beginning of 2020 but was delayed due to the COVID-19 crisis.

Earlier this month, the Ministry of Finance said that 18 out of 63 commitments have been met by the Afghan government so far. Experts said the Afghan government expects to receive pledges of at least \$8 billion of annual aid at the conference.

Afghan Leaders...

cabinet hostage. They should use the opportunity and send their picks to the parliament (for a vote of confidence)," said Abdul Rahman Wardak, an MP.

"Lack of implementation of the political agreement can cause problems for the peace process and the intra-Afghan negotiations," said Abdullah Qarloq, a senator.

Sources have said that a list of Abdullah's picks for the ministries has already been sent to the Presidential Palace, but some names in the list have been rejected by the president.

"They are not thinking about the people. They are thinking about their own interests," said Qand Agha Barazanda, a Baghlan resident.

"They (Afghan leaders) should prioritize national interests rather than their own interests," said Ahmad, a Kabul resident.

Based on the political agreement, Abdullah will lead the peace efforts for the country, but, according to critics, he has not made a tangible effort in this respect so far.

"Mr. Abdullah has shouldered a big responsibility, which is peace. First, he should complete the formation of the High Council for National Reconciliation as quick as possible," said Shahzada Massoud, a political affairs analyst.

Abdullah's spokesman Fraidoon Khwazoon said discussions are underway over the choice of individuals for the cabinet and the three members of the High Council for National Reconciliation.

"Discussions have been held. Various meetings have been held. The list of the high council has been prepared; the general assembly has been prepared. All these will be announced," said Khwazoon.

The Presidential Palace did not comment, but it has already appointed some acting ministers, including for the defense and the interior affairs ministries.

Do Afghan lives...

implicated in war crimes in Afghanistan and Iraq, while loosening the rules of engagement in Afghanistan. He has also ordered an unprecedented surge of air strikes, and reportedly given "unlimited authority, no-holds barred" to the secretary of defence, Jim Mattis, in Afghanistan.

This policy is likely the reason why, in the first half of 2019, civilian deaths from Afghan government and US operations exceeded the number caused by the Taliban for the first time. According to Human Rights Watch, between January 1 and September 30, 2019, some 8,000 civilians were killed in Afghanistan.

The ICC has collected at least 1.17 million statements from Afghans claiming to be victims of war crimes during its investigation of crimes committed by the Taliban, Afghan government forces and US military personnel since May 2003.

Given the devastation that the war has inflicted on Afghanistan and the heavy civilian death toll - more than 100,000 were killed between 2010 and 2019 alone - it is imperative for all war criminals including Americans to be tried. This would not only provide the families of victims with justice but also assist the peace-building process in Afghanistan as well.

The argument the Trump administration is making against the ICC is void. As the UN special rapporteur on torture, Nils Melzer, has pointed out, "The whole argument of the court being illegal, illegitimate and corrupt obviously is not a new argument

... The same argument has been made by the Nazis in Nuremberg - and by Slobodan Milosevic in the Yugoslavia tribunal. It has been made by Saddam Hussein in the tribunal for Iraq."

The civil rights struggle at home and abroad

Violent crimes perpetrated abroad by the US military are deeply linked to violence unleashed at home. Leaders of the civil rights movement of the 1960s and thereafter recognised this very point. Dr Martin Luther King Jr, for example, remarked that, "I could never again raise my voice against the violence of the oppressed in the ghettos without having first spoken clearly to the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today: my own government."

Other prominent leaders of the movement, including Stokely Carmichael and Fannie Lou Hamer, also spoke out against war and US impunity overseas. Angela Davis identified the global ramifications of domestic oppression in 1969, asserting that, "We have been forced to see that the enemy is American imperialism and although we feel it here at home it's being felt perhaps much more brutality in Vietnam, it's being felt in Latin America, it's being felt in Africa." Today, American imperialism is no less brutal and expansive. Since 2001, the so-called War on Terror has stretched far beyond Afghanistan, into the Middle East, Southeast Asia and Africa. Violence and surveillance used abroad have been deployed at home, just as military equipment produced for the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq has been handed over to the US police

force. Some prominent US civil rights leaders have made this critical connection between imperial violence abroad and at home. Scholar Cornel West has said that "In the tradition of Martin Luther King Jr, we have to be morally consistent in our critique of US racism, militarism, poverty, as well as materialism." The Movement for Black Lives has emphasised that "our liberation is intrinsically tied to the liberation of Black and Brown people around the world", while the Poor People's Campaign has called for "an end to military aggression and war-mongering". Yet, we must go beyond declarations of principle. Civil rights marchers in the US need to express support for the ICC and push for cancelling the sanctions against its employees. Divesting from and disbanding police forces must go hand in hand with downsizing US military expenditure and reallocating resources to global peacebuilding, transforming US foreign policy into a tool to advance social and gender justice, and long underutilised and critical institutions like the State Department and USAID.

The US must seek to strengthen the UN and the global governance model it stands for, and join the ICC.

The intercommunity solidarity we seek to establish today in the face of state violence should be reflected in US foreign policy. Ending impunity for police brutality at home and war crimes abroad must be closely intertwined processes. For, as King said more than five decades ago, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

Taliban reject...

they joined the Kabul administration during clashes with us and were resettled in guest houses by the Kabul administration intelligence," Islamic Emirates said.

It said, "Claims that some members of the Islamic Emirate are disgruntled and have joined Daesh is also a fabrication because we have proven the unity of our ranks, no individual

has so far rebelled and there exists no evidence about anyone disobeying the leadership of the Islamic Emirate or joining another group." "The aforementioned false information and other such propaganda are provided to the Security Council member states by the Kabul administration intelligence apparatus with the aim of creating mistrust and unease and to harm the US-Islamic Emirate agreement and

derail the peace process," it said. Concluding, the Islamic Emirate said it is committed to the deal signed with the United States.

"We will not allow anyone to pose a threat to the security of America and its allies from our land, or operate training camps, or fundraise and create excuses for the continuation of war." It also urged the member states of the security council to not fall victim to false intelligence.

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Moderna gets further \$472 million U.S. award for coronavirus vaccine development

Moderna Inc (MRNA.O) said on Sunday it has received an additional \$472 million from the U.S. government's Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA) to support development of its novel coronavirus vaccine. The U.S.-based drug maker said the additional funding will support its late-stage clinical development including the expanded Phase 3 study of Moderna's vaccine candidate.

In April, Moderna had received \$483 million from the U.S. federal agency that funds disease-fighting technology, when the experimental vaccine was in an early-stage trial conducted by the U.S. National Institutes of Health.

"Encouraged by the Phase 1 data, we believe that our mRNA vaccine may aid in addressing the COVID-19 pandemic and preventing future outbreaks," Chief Executive Officer Stéphane Bancel said in a press release.

BARDA's total funding for the experimental vaccine of Moderna, the first in the United States to begin human trials of a coronavirus vaccine, is now about \$955 million.

The vaccine uses synthetic messenger RNA (mRNA) to inoculate against the coronavirus. Such treatments help the body immunize against a virus and can potentially be developed and manufactured more quickly than traditional vaccines.

A Phase 3 study, conducted in collaboration with the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, will begin on July 27 and involve about 30,000 participants, according to the company.

Moderna said it remains on track to be able to deliver about 500 million doses per year, and possibly up to 1 billion doses per year, beginning in 2021.



A look at the world

DPRK sees 1st suspected COVID-19 case, adopts maximum emergency system

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) reported its first suspected case of COVID-19 in Kaesong City, a person who illegally returned to the country from the Republic of Korea (ROK) on July 19, state media Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) reported on Sunday.

"An emergency event happened in Kaesong City where a runaway who went to the south three years ago, a person who is suspected to have been infected with the vicious virus returned on July 19 after illegally crossing the demarcation line," KCNA said.

KCNA did not specifically mention whether



the individual had been tested, saying that the unnamed person "was put under strict quarantine as a primary step and all the persons who contacted that person and those who have been to the city in the last five days are being thoroughly investigated" and quarantined.

An emergency meeting was later convened by DPRK leader Kim Jong Un to discuss the situation and unanimously adopted the "maximum emergency system" decision.

"Despite the intense preventive anti-epidemic measures taken in all fields throughout the country and tight closure of all the channels for the last six months, there happened a critical situation in which the vicious virus could be said to have entered the country," Kim was quoted as saying by KCNA.

Kim declared a state of emergency and imposed a lockdown on the border city of Kaesong.

KCNA also said that the Central Military Commission of the Workers' Party of Korea (WPK) will "administer a severe punishment and take necessary measures" after an investigation of the military unit responsible for the "loose guard" in the runaway case. The Republic of Korea (ROK) said there's a "high chance" that an individual ...

P3

49% of Brits believe Russia interfered in Brexit vote



A new poll found on Sunday that 49% of Brits believed Russia interfered in the Brexit referendum.

The poll was carried out by Opinium for The Observer newspaper, and came after the release of parliament's Russia report, which found that the UK had "badly underestimated" the threat posed by Russia to the UK.

The poll asked Brits about Russian interference in the 2014 Scottish independence referendum, the 2016 Brexit referendum, and the 2019 UK general election. In all three elections, Brits were more likely than not to believe that Russia had interfered.

It found that 40% of Brits believed Russia interfered in the Scottish independence referendum, and 49% believed that it had interfered in the Brexit referendum.

Those who voted Remain were more likely to believe Russia interfered in the referendum than those who voted Leave, 63% and 39%, respectively.

Regarding the 2019 UK general election, 47% believed Russia had interfered: 70% of centrist Liberal Democrat voters, 62% of center-left Labour voters, and 39% of center-right Conservative voters.

Although Conservative voters were the least likely to believe Russia had interfered in the 2019 UK general election, they were still more likely than not to believe Russia had interfered, with 39% believing Russia had interfered and 33% believing they had not. The poll also found that the ruling Conservatives' lead over the main opposition Labour party had halved from 8 points to 4 points. The Conservatives are on 42%, down two points, and Labour on 38%, up two points.

Regarding the government's overall approval rating over its handling of the coronavirus pandemic, it dropped to -15, with disapproval increasing from 43% to 46%, and approval decreasing from 38% to 32%.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson's overall approval rating dropped from -4 to -8, with 36% approving and 45% disapproving of his performance.

Poland to withdraw from European treaty aimed at preventing violence towards women

Poland's right-wing government says it will withdraw from a European treaty aimed at preventing violence against women.

The Istanbul Convention is the world's first binding instrument to prevent violence against women but the Polish Justice Minister, Zbigniew Ziobro, described the text as "harmful" because it requires that schools teach children about gender from a sociological point of view.

Ziobro said over the weekend that on Monday he will begin preparing the formal process to withdraw from the treaty.

"This ideological element is linked to the



imperative to change education in schools and outside of school programs, in terms of learning, attitudes, convictions of the young Polish generation of students to make, in our opinion, the false assumption that biological sex is archaic, and in fact everything comes down to the socio-cultural gender."

In Ziobro's opinion, the convention's articles concerning the education of children and young people as well as family relationships in the LGBT context are not acceptable.

"We also reject the LGBT element of promoting family relationships, a view propagated by activists from left-wing or homosexual circles who want to translate their beliefs into binding law," he said.

The Council of Europe said on Sunday it is "alarmed" that Poland is aiming to withdraw from the Convention.

In Warsaw on Friday, around 2,000 people including women's groups and other rights activists held a demonstration in front of the offices of Ordo Luris, a right-wing organisation that supports withdrawal from the convention. "We will not be victims" they chanted. Demonstrations were also held in other Polish cities.

Poland signed the Istanbul Convention for the prevention and combating of violence against women and domestic violence in December 2012 and ratified it in 2015.



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