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Taliban's new demands for ending insurgency include direct talks with US

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The Taliban militants group in Afghanistan has offered new demands for ending the group's insurgency in the country, including direct talks with the United States, it has been reported.

The new conditions include recognition of the political office of the group in Qatar and removal of group's members from the UN blacklist.

“That is why there is need for America and its allies to come to the table for direct talks with the Islamic Emirate (the Taliban) for negotiating an end to the occupation,” Sohail Shaheen, a Qatar-based spokesman of the group, quoted by The News said.

Shaheen further added, if peace is the objective of the other side, then the Taliban must be allowed to open their “political office” in Qatar and names of their senior members be removed from the UN blacklist.

“These obstacles in the way of establishing peace cannot be simply ignored,” Shaheen said, warning that “mere slogans and statements” (by the other side) would further complicate the issue rather than promoting Afghan peace.

This comes as reports emerged earlier suggesting peace talks could likely kick off between the Afghan government and Taliban group.

The Afghan government opted military option against the group after it rejected to participate in direct peace talks earlier this year and after the group announced its annual spring offensive.

The government was forced to withdraw from the peace efforts after the group claimed responsibility behind a number of deadly attacks across the country, including a major attack on VIP protection unit in Kabul that left over 400 people dead or wounded.