

In the Name of God, the Most Merciful, the Most Kind



April 21, 2019

National Participation in PA is Vital for Social Justice

There is no doubt that racial issues continue to dominate a large part of the public discourse in Afghanistan. However, Afghan public administrators do not discuss race. They either ignore it, or oversimplify it. The reasons are varied: it is complex, it is anxiety-generating, it makes us uncomfortable, and it can be hidden behind traditional views of government neutrality and impersonal service delivery. According to the Afghan Vice President, Sarwar Danehs, lack of fair participation in Afghan public administration has existed during past governments and exists today. The National Unity Government is determined to take all the necessary measures to ensure national participation and justice at all levels, especially in the public administrations of Afghanistan.

The reasons Afghan leaders and citizens' call for the implementation of the public participation process are that, it is important for the democratization of social values and better planning and fulfillment of public needs. It is also useful for educating the public especially regarding government development programmers. This will potentially influence social or personal changes amongst community members, which can then be used to incorporate diverse public interests and thus accord people with the right to participate in decisions that will affect their lives. The current gap between the people and government in Afghanistan is one the outstanding outcomes of lack of public participation and lack of equal distribution of resources and opportunities among different ethnic groups in the country.

Indeed, the diversity and national participation concepts provide an opportunity to examine the construction and interplay of classifications. In this sense it refers not only to a state of ethnic diversity, but points to the coexistence of individual-based differences and dimensions of difference as well as to the forms of their interactions within a social context.

To address national participation as a mechanism that enables all the ethnic groups of the country to have an opportunity to take part in the public administration, PA scholars suggest several strategies including expanding the concept of administrative responsibility to include a look at one's personal ethics; analyzing the racial dynamics of one's institution, and conducting directed conversations about race and ethnic issues at different levels.

This is happening in one or another way in Afghanistan. Several Afghan leaders have raised lack of national participation during different events. According to Karim Khalil, the leader of Hezb e Wahdat e Islami, ensuring unity among different Afghan groups requires ensuring justice and equality at all areas including remonstrance, development, and fair participation of all Afghan ethnic groups in the public Administration. Unus Qanuni holds that ethnic diversity shall acknowledged in the country because it is the only way out of the current crisis in the country. And it is not enough just to accept the ethnic pluralism, but to ensure justice among these groups in all spheres. According to Omar Daudzay, ethnicization of security sector is the cause of the current situation.

National participation or participation of all ethnic groups in the public administrations can foster national cohesion and trust in the country. Lack of equal opportunity for all ethnic groups in the public administration and unfair provision of the resources has created a deep gap between the people and government. Indeed, it is a process that has started from the past, continued to present and may even continue in the future. It is the national duty of the NUG to take all the necessary measures to strategically tackle this national issue and address it in a proper manner in order to decrease the gap between the people and government and open a new chapter in social justice in the country.

Moral Values Will Lead to Mitigation of Violence

By: Hujjatullah Zia

Morality is of a big value in individual and collective life. "Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and awe, the oftener and more steadily we reflect on them," wrote Immanuel Kant, "the starry heavens above and the moral law within." These days, the moral law within is being viewed with increasing awe, if not always admiration. The human moral sense turns out to be an organ of considerable complexity, with quirks that reflect its evolutionary history and its neurobiological foundations.

These quirks are bound to have implications for the human predicament. Morality is not just any old topic in psychology but close to our conception of the meaning of life. Moral goodness is what gives each of us the sense that we are worthy human beings. We seek it in our friends and mates, nurture it in our children, advance it in our politics and justify it with our religions. Disrespect for morality is blamed for everyday sins and history's worst atrocities. To carry this weight, the concept of morality would have to be bigger than any of us and outside all of us.

Some believe that fundamental hallmark of moralization is that the rules it invokes are felt to be universal. For instance, prohibitions of rape and murder are felt not to be matters of local custom but to be universally and objectively warranted. One can easily say, "I don't like brussels sprouts, but I don't care if you eat them," but no one would say, "I don't like killing, but I don't care if you murder someone."

Nonetheless, others believe that morality is relative and there is no absolute moral values. Imagine that a shepherd has driven the wolf from the sheep's throat, has he done a moral or immoral act? The sheep thanks the shepherd and praises him for his act, while the wolf denounces him for the same act as the destroyer of liberty. So, this act seems moral to the sheep and immoral to the wolf. Regarding human beings, some believe that if you forgive a killer, it will be a moral act, but if you punish him, it will be immoral.

It does not matter whether moral values are absolute or relative, it is aptly said that "just as a candle cannot burn without fire, men cannot live without a spiritual life" and moral values.

It is believed that humanity and moral values have declined to a great extent in our era in the wake of harsh and anti-moral practices. Viewing gory pictures and the riddled bodies of war victims will certainly desensitize the issues. Similarly, frequent violation of women's dignity and hearing about rape victims will not only weaken one's conscience but also embolden them to be engaged in such moral turpitude. No one will feel the pain and anguish of a rape victim, whose dignity is her only world.

Viewing the picture of a Rohingya woman sitting amidst war and shedding bitter tears, I was swollen with pain. The quotation which said, "People have been sharing videos of the killings on WhatsApp. Videos of women and children being killed. Innocent men being shot dead. You can't begin to imagine how scared we are," would add insult to your injury.

Although the rights of mankind, especially those of women and children, freedoms and spirit of brotherhood are reiterated in international instruments and political speeches, they carry less value in practical life.

The vacuum of humanity is strongly felt around the human societies and people's rights and dignity are violated in the worst possible way. It should be noted that if the world does not seek to promote the spirit of brotherhood, religious tolerance, and racial acceptance, the bleeding will continue unabated and fill people with sense of revenge. The ongoing catastrophes around the globe, which compound human fatalities, are the tragedy of our century. The world needs to fill this vacuum with moral values and spirit of brotherhood and respect the rights and dignity of mankind. People have to listen to the call of their conscience so as to have mercy on one another.

All individuals have to empty their souls from vice and evil through practicing moral values and listening to the call of their conscience. That is to say, we are to abandon our wicked characteristics and curtail our desire for power and luxury. All should realize their human responsibilities and practice upon the golden rule "do to others what you want to be done unto you".

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Doha Peace talks Postponed after Controversy over Size of Afghan Delegation

By: Mohammad Zahir Akbari

Amidst growing confusion and opposition, the first ever round of intra Afghan dialogues was supposed to take place in Doha, capital of Qatar on Friday, but after Controversy over size of Afghan Delegation it has postponed to unknown time. The Afghan government had issued a list of 250 persons which included government officials, religious scholars, civil activists, political activists, women and journalists. Subsequently, Taliban objected to the government lengthy list of participants, saying it is not an invitation to some wedding at a hotel in Kabul. However, according to the latest statement issued by government saying Qatar has cancelled the meeting due to the long list issue.

This comes after Taliban delegation's list for Doha talks were finalized and they were supposed to be headed by Abbas Stanekzai includes Salaam Hanafi, Amir Khan Mutaqi, Abdul Latif Mansour, Matiulhaq Khales, Abdul Manan Omari, Sayed Rasoul Haleem, Shahabuddin Delavar, Din Mohammad, Abdul Rahman Madani, Mullah Zahid Ahmadzai, Suhail Shaheen, Mohammad Fazel Mazlum, Khairullah Khair Khwa, Mohammad Nabi Omari, Abdul Haq Waseq, Mullah Noorul-lah Noori, Ziaulhaq Madani, Abdul Ahad Jahangirwal, Amar Yaser, Merza Gul Saleh, Mohammad Naim Wardak, Mullah Daud Abed, Mohiuddin Sadat, and Rasool Ul Haq Aziz.

Taliban also criticized on participation of government officials in Doha peace talks. As quoted, the Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said that the "presence of some participants was completely against the list of what was agreed upon," and indicated that the inclusion of Afghan government officials was unacceptable. The jihadist group also objected to the fact that the Afghan government, which it derogatorily refers to as the "Kabul administration," published the list of delegates, which the Taliban says is a proof that the government was trying to take ownership of the conference.

On the other side, president Ghani said the Taliban should realize the fact that the group has no way except to engage in talks with the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. He added in order to achieve dignified and sustainable peace in the country there is a need for unity, solidarity, and consensus among the people of Afghanistan. He said no Afghan from any layer of the society has been left unharmed from the 40 years of the war imposed on the Afghan people.

Thus, the Former National Security Advisor Rangin Dadfar Spanta said that Afghanistan needs to engage in peace talks and political dialogue with the opponents from a united position and that it should involve a limited team of experts and negotiators familiar with the process rather than sending a large delegation. He suggested that in order to reach to peace, there is a need to engage into the process an inclusive, national and expert team to get breakthrough in the talks with the hos-

tile enemies. He said that the real peace negotiations talks will be held with a small, but expert team in Uzbekistan.

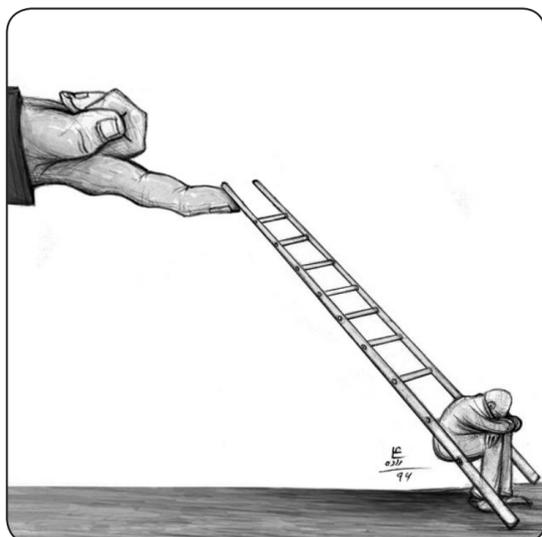
"I don't think that (former President Hamid) Karzai will participate with a separate team," said Spanta, referring to Karzai's participation at the meeting. "Mr. Karzai's team and I myself want to emphasize that we need to send an inclusive national united team which will include the government of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, but from a united position. No negotiating teams in the world have been too large, but they included a limited number of people with expertise to engage in political talks which we can differentiate," said Spanta.

Anyway, the Taliban's refusal to meet with the Afghan government is nothing new. The group has stated for more than a decade that they will not talk with the Afghan government as it views it as a "stooge" and "puppet" of the US and the West. The Taliban has repeatedly stated that it will consider talking to the Afghan government only when US and NATO forces withdraw from the country. The Taliban has also denounced efforts by the Afghan government to build consensus to conduct talks with the Taliban. Last week, the Taliban urged all Afghans to boycott the upcoming consultative Loy girga that is to include thousands of influential Afghans from all walks of the country. The Taliban called the peace jirga a tool of "the invaders and their stooges" to prolong the Western occupation of Afghanistan.

Following the postponement or cancellation of Doha summit, the EU Ambassador to Afghanistan Pierre Mayaudon called the meetings such as Qatar and Moscow are not peace process, but he said that the EU is ready to cooperate in paving the way for peace talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban. "It is not a peace process until it is a direct talk with the Afghan people and the government," said Mayaudon. "The Afghan peace process has most probably reached critical moment and we believe that it can be a moment also for Europe to bring progress and to facilitate the conclusion for peace agreement." He said that the EU will not show flexibility towards making a deal on the gains Afghanistan has made over the past 18 years, specially, in areas of human rights, women's rights, the rights of the youths and minority rights.

He continued that the peace process must not sacrifice three important elements of the Afghan state: constitutional order, human rights gains and territorial integrity. The envoy also suggested that the presidential election, which is now scheduled for September, should not be linked to peace efforts. "We should discuss peace as if there were no elections, we should discuss elections as if there were no peace process," Mayaudon said.

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