

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



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## People's Basic Rights are Important

State, in the modern sense, is a welfare or social agency and it must make efforts so as to ensure the rights of the individuals who live in it. Its primary objectives should not be only to preserve the law and order but also to provide conditions for ensuring the maximum good of the maximum number of people. It should pursue through its agencies the welfare of all the members of the society and try to make sure that the rudimentary requirements of citizens are provided to them with ease and convenience.

Today, most of the states in the world agree that the basic rights of human beings include both moral and legal rights, whereas the legal rights include the civil rights, like the right to life, right to family, right to property, right to freedom of speech and expression, right to form associations and move about freely, right to work, right to religion, right to equality and right to education, and the political rights, like the right to vote, the right to contest elections, right to public office, right to petition and the right to criticize government.

In the contemporary era when the world has been globalized and the politics has been internationalized, the theories and movements of rights have reached to all the corners of the world to provide the basic rights of the human beings. These endeavors try to facilitate human rights on the face of the barriers of economic and political incapacities and shortcomings of the national governments. These rights are basically monitored by the international bodies and work under the umbrella of United Nations Organizations. Though the international movements and organizations play their roles to make sure that all the human beings are given their rights, at the same time it is necessary for the human beings to have complete awareness about their rights so that they are not violated.

Individual awareness, in this regard, stands as the most important factor. Keeping in view a democratic setup it is imperative that the claim for rights must come from the individuals. Though the states can fulfill their responsibilities, it is not always necessary that they do so; therefore, the individuals have to rise to the occasion and make sure that they are provided such political, social and economic environments wherein their rights are guarded properly. In addition, individuals within a democratic political system can influence the policies of the government and even they have a huge role in the making of the government, mostly during elections; therefore, their aware roles guarantee that they favor a government which keeps in consideration their rights and requirements. Though there have been both national and international endeavors to protect basic rights of human beings, still there are many human beings who suffer from the deprivation of their basic rights. Many governments in the world, like that of our country Afghanistan, still lack the basic democratic principles and the requirements of welfare state and therefore fail to provide the citizens their due rights. To be very specific about Afghanistan we can say that a so-called democratic government has been installed, which has taken oath to provide the people their basic rights, yet there are millions who remain unattended. Food, cloth, shelter, security and basic education are the requirements that should be provided to the people of Afghanistan, unfortunately, the government has not been able to make great achievements in that regard.

Poverty is widespread and unemployment rampant. The basic infrastructure is non-existent. People fall prey to social evils. The rate of crimes has escalated and the gap between the rich and poor seems to be widening with each passing day. Coupled with this problems is the absence of a mechanism for good governance. The government authorities and their policies have not been able to address the actual problems of the people, in fact, many of them are out of the access of government. There are many areas in the country that are never approached by the government representatives; therefore, they remain unattended.

The weaker strata in particular are suffering from the consequences of the bad governance and lack of attention. Women are influenced the most. Their rights are being violated in different parts of the country and they are being victimized by the worst kind of violence. In fact, there are fears that certain achievements that have been made regarding the position and rights of women during the so-called democratic governments will soon be lost and the society may once again experience widespread discrimination against them. At the same time, children are also undergoing the influences of the situation. They are not able to have the basic requirements to live alive and survive against different diseases.

They are kept away from education and there is no guarantee about their future. It is really important that the concerned authorities must pay full attention to the situation and solve some of the basic requirements of the people if it is serious about solving the main issues in the country; as most of the issues are related to the poverty, unemployment and lack of security.



## Freedom of Media is Freedom of Thoughts

By Muhammad Zahir Akbari

Media can play a key role in reinforcing transparency in democratic processes and its institutionalization. Citizens must use new media to monitor social, political or administrative issues or else a nation of sheep will beget a government of wolves. During elections some countries activists created a new social media platform 'Citizen Control' specifically designed to bring all social groups together to monitor the elections. Also Afghan citizens exposed a lot of social or political frauds through their simple handy media such as mobile phone since 2001. In fact, traditional media's watchdog role is significantly enhanced by its utilization of new media as both a source of information and a mouthpiece for democratic process. By monitoring social media discourse, observing citizen journalism postings, and by creating new media of their own through blogs and micro-blogs on official media websites, traditional media's elections investigations have become faster, more diverse, and more interactive. In addition, New Media role as public educator; the decentralized, multi-media, and interactive nature of new media has opened up its potential as a public education tool. For example, international organizations, civil society groups, cultural and political activist make extensive use of face-book, tweeter, YouTube and other video sites to share educative and informative stuffs. Also users of new media often amused with learning or teaching about health, nutrition and other social issues through mobile phone.

The freedom of social media has largely put an end to the monopoly of traditional media; it is a broad term that describes a range of unfettered media utilized for many different purposes. Some of the things that make new media different from traditional media (radio, television, newspapers and magazines) include: They are usually interactive, they are often audience-created and user-driven, they function in real-time, they are usually borderless, the information is often short-lived, they are more difficult to regulate - and to censor, the infrastructure for publishing or broadcasting is usually cheaper for individuals to access and they do not always adhere to journalistic standards and ethics. In fact, Freedom of media is freedom of thoughts but in conflict or post-conflict countries such as Afghanistan- there is a dire need to promote media literacy as a safeguard against hate-speech in otherwise volatile circumstances. An audience that is educated in the tenants of media professionalism is more likely to demand high quality media content and play active role in institutionalizing of a unifying political literature. Media literacy is also important for new or transitioning democracies. In these circumstances legal frameworks are usually under development and will greatly impact the future state of independent and free media. Furthermore, citizens may experience a rather sudden explosion of news sources and media formats after decades or more of controlled and sparse media. The greater the media literacy, the more prepared audiences (and information providers) will be in deciphering messages and recognizing value and credibil-

ity. Media literacy builds an understanding of the role of media in society as well as essential skills of inquiry and self-expression necessary for citizens of a democracy. Media literacy includes understanding code of conduct and knowing the quickly changing media landscapes. This is particularly relevant in today's age of social media, and ever developing media technology. Media literacy also involves recognition of the use of, and power of, subtext. Subtext is the context or background of the primary message and may include images, background audio, and framing, each of which conveys specific messages, associations, and insinuations. In short, media literacy is about developing critical thinking skills and overall awareness. This in turn fosters pluralistic media as well as media who are challenged to improve upon professionalism. Media literacy gives rise to a population who understand the media landscape as a whole, including the impacts of legal frameworks and the importance of media safety.

In current era every individual can play the role of media if we literate ourselves some important points such as: (1) Cautiousness and knowing that we ruled by Media, (2) Recognition of commercial interests behind messaging, (3) Recognizing the impact of media monopolies on media impartiality, (4) Understanding the inescapable influence of values and views of the media makers, (5) Understand that control of media is control of thoughts, (7) Recognizing the impact on culture by media message and recognize the difference between text and subtext, (8) Understanding how media affects our thoughts, attitudes and future generation, (9) Recognizing that there is always a larger story or picture to what is being presented, Recognizing bias, misinformation, or inaccuracies, (10) Recognizing "filters" that we use when interpreting media messages, such as our own experiences or educations, (11) Developing skills to create one's own messages, (12) Understanding the power and role that citizen journalism plays in today's media landscape as an additional category of information providers, This role is especially in the contexts of limited (or entirely absent) freedom for traditional media, (14) Recognizing the different impacts of time-based media (such as movies) as opposed to static media (such as photos), (15) Understanding how audience memory works - what they will remember immediately after consuming a message and what they remember months later, (16) Understanding how emotion plays into message interpretation and memory, (17) Recognizing how messages can be manipulated to enhance emotional responses (including the use of frames, angles, and lighting), (18) Understanding the impact of legal frameworks on media messaging, knowledge of the tenants of media professionalism such as balanced reporting, right of reply, and protection of source identities, (19) Understanding the impact of self-censorship (the power of fear) on media messaging, (20) Understanding how to advocate for positive change in the media system.

Mohammad Zahir Akbari is the newly emerging writer of the Daily Outlook Afghanistan. He can be reached at mohammad-zahirakbari@gmail.com

## Cold War between Kabul and Islamabad

By Hujjatullah Zia

Within the last two years, as militancy has escalated in Afghanistan, a sense of mistrust between Kabul and Islamabad heightened and harsh rhetoric has been exchanged between Afghan-Pak officials. Allegedly, the Taliban enjoy safe havens in Pakistan and orchestrate deadly attacks there from. However, Pakistani authorities either kept silent or resisted against the claim or put pressure on Afghan migrants calling them terrorist. The roller-coaster-ride relation fluctuated seriously and continued up to now. The cold war between Kabul and Islamabad is reflected through media. For instance, Pakistani newspapers report that in the aftermath of Quetta carnage, which left more than 70 people most of them lawyers dead, Pakistan's security forces sealed a seminary in Quetta's Eastern Bypass area on Sunday and 100 Afghan students were taken into custody. Similarly, Pakistan's police arrested a number of Afghan migrants earlier and called them to be involved in terrorist activities. Afghanistan's media, however, states that Pakistani Taliban are widely involved in terrorist attacks in Afghanistan and a number of insurgents who have been killed, recently, in southeastern Paktia include notorious Pakistani militant commander Hafiz Rashid and others. Based on Afghanistan's media and intelligence, the Taliban fighters organize their attacks across the border - where their high-ranking officials such as Bin Laden and Mullah Mansour were killed and Mullah Omar passed away.

Afghan officials have long been criticizing Pakistan for allowing the Afghan Taliban and the notorious Haqqani terrorist network to use its soil for planning and coordinating attacks in Afghanistan. A number of the US lawmakers also criticized Pakistan for not doing enough to eliminate the terrorists' safe havens in that country and refused to fund the purchase of F-16 fighter jets for the Pakistani air force. It is believed that the cold war between Afghan-Pak officials will stoke the current tension and pave the way for warring parties to fish in troubled waters. Needless to say, Pakistan also suffers from unmitigated militancy and comes under terrorist attacks every now and then. Therefore, Pakistan will have to intensify its military operation (Zarb-e-Azb) against the Taliban's hubs and carry out operation against the seminaries, which are changed into hotbed of radical ideology and training center for suicide attackers. Undeniably, a number of Afghan Taliban is trained in Pakistani seminaries and sent back to carry out terrorist attacks - the sealing of madrasah, as reported by Pakistani media, and detaining Afghan students will be welcomed by Afghans. Since Afghan officials believe that there is no matter of good and bad Taliban, Pakistan can sentence them to

death. In a nutshell, Taliban's geography and birthplace do not matter for Afghan government and all militant fighters - be it Pakistani or Afghan - deserve the same punishment.

To be honest, Afghanistan's hard mechanism (serious strategy) against the Taliban is highly appreciable. Reportedly, a local Afghanistan court has recently sentenced guerrilla commander Sirajuddin Haqqani's brother Anas Haqqani to death. The Taliban had earlier confirmed Anas and Hafiz Rashid's detention, adding that the two had travelled to Qatar to meet Taliban leaders released from Guantanamo. Afghanistan handed six Taliban prisoners in Kabul few months back which was followed by a series of target attacks killing some Afghan judges and court officials.

Pakistan's adviser to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz has said Pakistan believes that a politically negotiated settlement through an Afghan-owned and Afghan-led peace process is the most viable option for achieving durable peace in the war-torn country. Underscoring how peace in Afghanistan is linked to peace and stability in Pakistan, the adviser said ultimately it would also help realize our leadership's vision for promoting connectivity with Central Asia and beyond. It is believed that resuming peace talks, which had been constantly persisted by Pakistani officials, will not bring peace in Afghanistan, mainly after the appointment of Mullah Haibatullah, a radical ideologue who has intensified the activities in the country. Regarding peace talks, the Taliban's approach is predictable: First, they will insist on their past preconditions i.e. the complete withdrawal of US forces from Afghanistan, releasing their prisoners, removing their high-ranking officials from the UN blacklist, etc. Secondly, they will not cease their terrorist activities and killing civilians despite the talks, as they never did. Thirdly, the Taliban will simply play a foul game and Afghan government cannot trust the Taliban elements since they focused on one-sided advantages in the past and played no constructive role. As the Taliban have no determination for a bona fide peace, persisting on this issue will be futile and only one option is left for the two countries to reduce militancy which is nothing other than military action. The bitter experience and futile result of seeking peace through negotiation should be an eye-opener for both Kabul and Islamabad and act upon the idea of "if you want peace, prepare for war". The gap between Afghanistan and Pakistan will be bridged through sincere acts rather than giving lip services to counter-insurgency. The two countries will have to stop the cold war and centralize their military attacks on warring factions so as to safeguard the rights and liberty of their nations.

Hujjatullah Zia is the permanent writer of the Daily Outlook Afghanistan. He can be reached at zia\_hujjat@yahoo.com



Chairman / Editor-in-Chief: Dr. Hussain Yasa  
Vice-Chairman: Kazim Ali Gulzari  
Email: outlookafghanistan@gmail.com  
Phone: 0093 (799) 005019/777-005019  
www.outlookafghanistan.net



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