

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



February 05, 2017

## Muslims Bleeding in Myanmar

The flagrant and large-scale violation of human rights around the globe outrages the public conscience. The individuals' fundamental rights, i.e. the rights to life, liberty and estate are trampled upon widely and streams of blood are spilled on the basis of one's racial and religious backgrounds. Intolerance, ideological differences and lack of acceptance have been the root causes of war and carnage throughout the history. Mankind still fall victim to radical ideology, ethnocentrism and racial superiority. Innocents and minorities are believed to bear the brunt of violence and segregated due to their faiths and beliefs.

On the one hand, Muslims are changed into the sacrificial lamb of terrorism and pay the highest number of casualties, on the other hand, they are stereotyped and their rights and freedoms are curtailed for being Muslim. In other words, Muslims are susceptible to both radical ideology of the fundamental groups. History also reveals the unmistakable fact that Muslims suffered severely in one way or another. Have the pains and sufferings of Muslims stopped?

Of late, Myanmar's security forces have committed mass killings and gang rapes of Rohingya Muslims and burned down villages since October in a campaign that likely amounts to crimes against humanity and possibly ethnic cleansing, according to the United Nations. "The 'area clearance operations' have likely resulted in hundreds of deaths," a report from the UN's human rights office said, referring to a military crackdown launched in the wake of an attack on a military post.

The report, which was based on interviews with 204 Rohingya refugees who fled to neighboring Bangladesh, recounted gruesome violations allegedly carried out by members of Myanmar's security services or civilian fighters working alongside the army and the police. Of the 101 women interviewed, more than half said they had been raped or sexually assaulted. Several women told UN investigators how their young children, including a newborn, were trampled or cut to death. Security forces were also accused of opening fire at people fleeing and burning entire villages, as well as of "massive and systematic rape and sexual violence; deliberate destruction of food and sources of food".

Zeid Raad al-Husseini, the UN high commissioner for human rights, said that Myanmar's leader Aung San Suu Kyi promised on Friday to investigate the allegations. "She informed me that an investigation will be launched. She said that they would require further information," he is cited as saying. The UN said it had reports of three children aged six or younger being "slaughtered with knives". Citing witness accounts, the rights office said, "An eight-month-old baby was reportedly killed while his mother was gang-raped by five security officers."

UN rights Chief Zeid Raad al-Husseini said in the statement, "What kind of hatred could make a man stab a baby crying out for his mother's milk. What kind of 'clearance operation' is this? What national security goals could possibly be served by this?" The Rohingya, numbering about 1.1 million, are loathed by many among Myanmar's Buddhist majority and live in apartheid-like conditions in the Muslims majority Rakhine state in the north. Yangon refuses to recognize the Rohingya as an ethnic minority, instead describing them as illegal immigrants from neighboring Bangladesh, even though many have lived in Myanmar for generations. About 66,000 people have fled from Rakhine to Bangladesh since the army launched a security operation in response to attacks on police border posts on October 9.

The UN humanitarian office has recently put the figure at 69,000. The flagrant violation of human rights and dignity is highly outrageous and against the international law. The war in Middle East, which has been changed into a political game, inflicts heavy casualties upon innocent individuals and the self-proclaimed Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) group is largely engaged in dishonoring women and shedding the blood of people, including the children, in Syria and Iraq.

A large number of men, women and children from Moslem ethnicity suffer in Palestine for years despite the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and United Nation's Charter.

The UDHR declares that "disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts" and was endorsed to alleviate the sufferings of mankind and put an end to global violence and bloodshed. Respect for human rights and dignity and believing in men's natural rights are said to be the panacea for the bleeding wound of human societies. However, lack of a strong sanction behind the UDHR is the main reason for failing to soothe the sufferings and anguish of the international family. The violators of human rights are at large and hardly prosecuted.

The international community will have to protect the rights and dignity of all mankind regardless of their caste, color and creed. To put an end to the unmitigated violence, the international community must disarm all warring parties, wherever they are, and launch a strong military campaign against all terrorist networks.

After all, if a country commits systematic violence against an ethnic group or cannot prevent it, the international community should directly engage in the issue. The systematic violence and killings of Muslims in Myanmar is really heart-wrenching and needs an instantaneous attention of the world. It is despicable for the world to see that one, be it Muslims, Christian, Jewish, Buddhist, etc, is discriminated on the basis of their race or beliefs.

## Violence against Women Persists

By Muhammad Zahir Akbari

Though fighting against violence has been one of the most debated topics since 2001 but it remains one of the most serious issue in Afghanistan. It occurs in various forms including physical violence, economic, verbal and psychological violence. The most horrible type of violence is physical violence, especially beating which is imposed on women in a cruel way. The recent case of a 23-year-old Afghan woman - Zarmina - that her husband tied her up and cut off both her ears has shocked the world! The shameful act followed a series of similar events has been happening in preceding years: In January 2016, a young woman, Reza Gul, her nose had been cut off by her husband in the remote Ghormach district of north-western Faryab province. In November 2015, a young woman was stoned to death in Ghor province after she had been accused of adultery. In September 2014, a man cut off part of his wife's nose with a kitchen knife. Thus, a young Kabul woman, Farkhunda, was beaten and burned to death over false allegations. These are just a few examples which revealed maybe there are many cases which have not been reported.

Thus, it is reported by media that Taliban militants have killed at least two women on various charges last week; The Taliban militants executed a pregnant and a girl in northeastern Badakhshan province in an apparent honor killing. It is quoted from local government officials that the pregnant was killed in the residence of her father last week.

Provincial governor's spokesman Ahmad Navid Frotan said the woman had visited her father's house three days ago in Yamgan district. In the meantime, the provincial government media office in a statement said a young girl was shot dead by the Taliban early on last Wednesday in Khambel Yaftal village.

As aforementioned, there are different types of violence which victimizes women; one of the most serious but less reported is sexual violence against women in Afghanistan. A large number of women and girls become victims of this crime annually. Sexual violence is considered as a taboo in Afghan society. It occurs as sexual assault, uncommon sexual relations, insult and sexual humiliation, forced prostitution, forced abortion, etc. therefore, they try to conceal cases of sexual violence and not to be registered. Sexual assault is the most serious and concerning sexual violence in Afghanistan. In most cases, sexual assault is combined with other type of violence, which usually ends up with the death of the victim.

The other type of violence is verbal and psychological Violence; verbal and psychological violence is the most common type of violence against women, which have received the least attention as violence against women. Such types of violence exert negative effects on the psychology and spirit of the victims. Humiliation, insult, and threat are the common types of violence that, inflict serious negative impacts on the characteristics and spirit of women. Verbal and psychological violence against women may occur at home or public places in the form of harassment on the streets and puts women in a difficult and dangerous situation. However,

Violence against women is not limited to the above-mentioned violations. There are several other types which have negative social, cultural and economic effects on the life of Afghan women, affecting health, self-esteem and social status, living conditions and welfare of women, and prevent their development and growth, causing them to be isolated.

Violence against women caused by several factors but some of important factors consist of: failure to deal decisively with the perpetrators, and continuation of culture of impunity; corruption and abuse of state positions; the involvement of influential people in addressing violence against women, and resolving of cases of violence against women by non-official and informal authorities; hiding of the crimes and lack of referral to judicial authorities for fear of and mistrust upon government agencies; lack of proper coordination between judicial authorities (especially the police, prosecutors and courts); women's limited access to justice (courts, attorney office, female detention centers and lawyers); existence of illegal weapons and illegal armed groups; lack of security and weakness of state authority in districts and provinces; lack of necessary support for the victims of violence against women; considering violence against women as a normal action; Illiteracy and low levels of public awareness; Traditional patterns of marriage in Afghanistan; poverty and unemployment; increased drug addiction.

Overall, the current women condition not only indicates a weak justice system but also mirror the depth of a shameful heartbreak which is on contrary to Islamic and humanitarian values. The number of violent cases is undoubtedly greater than what is reflected in the media, but due to lack of trust of on the government practices, especially the law enforcement organs, weak rule of the government in the districts, in remote provinces have caused hopelessness among the victims of violence to launch their cases. On the other hand, there are lots of obstacles in front of human rights observers to document these cases in the remote parts of the country.

In essence, As long as women are uneducated and weak, they will persist to be vulnerable. The weak is more likely to be victimized in the context of Afghanistan. There are numerous Afghan educated women who enjoy their rights better than many men. They can work, study and benefit from domestic rights while the uneducated women are deprived of very basic rights due to their own unawareness. So, the more they are uneducated the more they are victimized. Additionally and given the government commitments, everyone should be aware that we are a member of global community now. Therefore, we need to understand the commonalities between Islamic teaching and humanitarian conventions are more than differences. Even the general spirits are almost the same; it is far more human to stress on commonalities than blackening the face of our nation and culture by cutting the ear or nose of women.

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## Harnessing the Politics of Disruption

By Mark Leonard

The United Kingdom's vote to exit the European Union and Donald Trump's election as US president exposed a deep generational divide. Cosmopolitan millennials and nationalist pensioners - what Thomas Friedman calls "Web People" and "Wall People" - seem to have nothing in common. But both point to the same crisis of political representation. In the UK, for every "Leave" voter under the age of 24, there were three over the age of 65.

In the US, Trump won 53% of the over-65 vote, but was supported by only 37% of 18-29-year-olds.

In both cases, the elderly were attracted by pessimistic rhetoric assailing the damage to their communities brought about by free trade, free movement, free love, and human-free technology disrupting their jobs and economic security. Young people were far more optimistic about the future, their personal prospects, and technology's potential - and far more empathetic toward marginalized groups.

The pessimists won, and now they're feeling pretty hopeful. The former optimists now fear the worst.

But, despite their fundamentally different attitudes toward technology and globalization, the Web People and the Wall People have one thing in common: both are deeply skeptical of existing institutions.

They think that representative democracy has broken down, and they see the creative potential of disruption.

The Wall People want to smash the existing system, in the hope that something better emerges - something that looks a bit more like the familiar world of times past (or at least of their fancy). The Web People, for their part, believe that technology must transform politics and institutions, just as it has transformed newspapers, taxi services, and hotels.

The web mentality is exemplified by Vyacheslav Polonski, a 27-year-old network scientist of Ukrainian origin, who has spent time at Harvard and is currently completing a PhD in social media at Oxford University. "We are dealing with a twenty-first-century world," he tells me, "but our political system has not evolved since the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries." Polonski points out that our government institutions were established not just before Facebook and Instagram, but even before television and radio. Whereas our economy is now characterized by choice, customization, and participation, our politics remains stifled by bureaucracy, special interests, and entrenched-yet-declining political parties.

"As our government becomes more agile," he says, "people can vote for specific ideas and agendas, rather than a political party." As a result, "politics will become more like Uber: more decentralized, more open, more immediate."

To reinforce his point, Polonski connects me with his friend María Luisa Martínez Dibarbouré, a 27-year-old trainee lawyer who is one of the founders of El Partido Digital, a new digital political party in her native Uruguay.

"We live in a crisis of representation," Dibarbouré tells me on Skype (how else?). "Once people are in power," she laments, "they vote according to their own preferences," not those of the voters who put them there. Dibarbouré's solution is to use the

Internet to ensure accurate representation. El Partido Digital is currently working to elect a representative to parliament. That representative would use the Internet to poll her constituents before each parliamentary vote, thereby ensuring that she really is a voice for voters.

More intriguing, constituents will be able to delegate their votes to others, perhaps friends with more expertise on particular issues. Fred the economist could vote on my behalf on economic questions, and Anne the scientist could vote for me on environmental matters.

Dibarbouré's concept relies on neither elections nor referenda. Instead of representative or direct democracy, it offers what she and Polonski call "liquid democracy" - a system that combines the best of both. "We are about representation, not ideology," she clarifies. "We don't represent left or right.... This is about the people."

Polonski and Dibarbouré are members of a community of 6,000 "global shapers," brought together by the World Economic Forum. These 23-27-year-olds are creative, connected, cosmopolitan, and full of energy.

They are crestfallen about recent election results ("2016 was the year in which I lost faith in humanity," says Dibarbouré). But my sense is that they will bounce back soon, and find opportunities in today's political disruptions.

This is not to say that these disruptions are the answer to their problems, or even to the problems of the Wall People. On the contrary, today's political disruptions could make some of the outcomes that these groups favor more difficult to achieve.

The old and young alike hope to recapture the opportunities enjoyed by the post-1945 Baby Boom generation. But those opportunities were enabled by a commitment to collective action, broad support for redistribution, and strong economic growth - none of which can be counted on today.

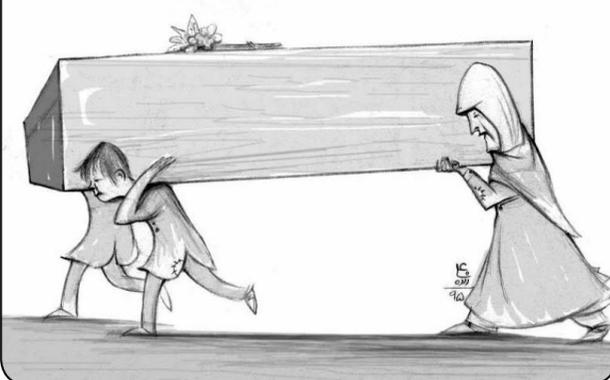
On the contrary, the backlash against globalization and immigration will likely damage global growth, while the need to build ad hoc coalitions of the willing undermines progress in building new institutions. For many nowadays, redistribution has become a dirty word.

So the politics supported by the Wall People isn't the answer. But nor is the politics of the Web People. While disruptive, Internet-enabled politics can upend the status quo - the Arab Spring revolutions taught us that - it has not proved particularly effective at creating sustainable alternatives.

The grievances of the old and the young are very real. The economic gains of the last few decades have not been shared widely enough. Political parties are more beholden to themselves than they are to the communities they serve. There is socialism for the rich, and capitalism for the poor. The war on terror is creating more terrorists. And trade and migration systems are losing support.

Rather than defend the status quo from the counter-revolution, the political class should work to create a new system - one that responds to the needs of the people. Both the young and the old have made their demands known. It is time to respond. (Courtesy Project Syndicate)

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