

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



February 10, 2015

## Grounds Barren for Afghan Refugees

The past three decades of war could bring nothing but miseries of homelessness, social insecurity and eternal state of desperation, to Afghan refugees who have been staying in various countries, ranging from Eastern to Western, for over decades. The later owing rational laws under the realm of liberal democracy provided the refugees with basic life sustaining necessities and great deal liberty. Nevertheless, the former being either Islamic democracy (Pakistan) or theocratic states (Iran) hardly provided a certain degree of liberty and facility.

Pakistan has been a hospitable country, hosting scores of legal and illegal immigrants. According to the UNHCR, 1.6 million Afghan refugees have been recorded in Pakistan where most of them are living in Peshawar and other cities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Around five million illegal immigrants have been residing in different cities of Pakistan for more than three decades. To complement the UNHCR's efforts and those of other international partners, the government has extended the validity of Afghan refugees' Proof of Registration (PoR) cards until the end of 2015, issued birth certificates for 800,000 Afghan refugee children, provided land for several refugee villages, and given refugees access to public schools and health clinics. Apparently, the refugees in Pakistan enjoy certain degree of freedom and right to access to basic amenities of life. Nonetheless, there are multiple complications hindering on the way to their easy going lives ranging from insecurity, health and education. Pakistan is a developing country with a huge population; most frequently the basic facility of health and education can hardly suffice the growing needs of its indigenous citizens. The host country despite being rewarded with funds from corresponding donor agencies, already grappled with variant predicament, could do little to turn the fate of wretched refugees. However, the refugees inhabiting urban localities enjoy a noticeable share of studying in public schools and seek access to basic health units. The nuance cultural variation let it feasible to refugees easily socialize in Pakistani society with some having homogenized via marital bonds. Significantly, most of the people residing on the two sides of border shared similar ethno-lingual, and cultural practices. Such, all provisions consolidate the case of patriation of small fraction of refugees which inflict great loss for Afghanistan in term of human resource.

In the wake of growing terrorists attacks particularly, the former Peshawar tragic incidence, the government planned to tighten the security net. Moreover, the provincial government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa concluded the terrorist attack on an army school in Peshawar had been planned in Afghanistan and ordered the Afghan refugees should leave the state in a month. Subsequently, regular raids were made to search out a credible clue to the perpetrator with Afghan refugees held as the prime suspects and were subjected to frequent maltreatment and harassment.

Allegations of mistreatment and abuse of refugees at the hands of the police continue to emerge ever since Peshawar Incidence. The adoptive measures that involve picking on easy targets, such as economically poor refugees who may have little or no means of protection, can never find a coherent justification. The United Nations Higher Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Pakistan has informed the government about the refugees having legal immigration documents can stay until the end of 2015, given they have the right to live legally in the country based on the legal document. The UNHCR spokesperson stated the federal government obliged to repatriate Afghan refugees to their homeland based on their willingness. Despite, such assurances, arbitrary raids and deportations by the K-P government have started. What is most disturbing; however, are allegations of mistreatment of Afghan minors by the police, specifically of seminary students. Picking up underage students and subjecting them to abuse will not result in any solutions.

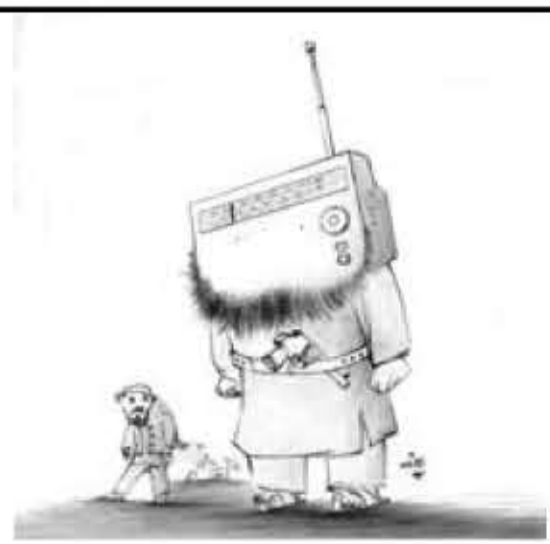
Formerly, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Afghanistan showed grave concern over thousands of Afghan families fleeing Pakistan to escape harassment after a deadly Taliban attack in Peshawar. In a statement posted on its website, Richard Danzinger, the IOM's mission chief in Afghanistan, said more than 22,000 undocumented Afghans flocked across the border at Torkham in January, more than twice the figure for the whole of 2014.

Pakistan hosting the largest refugee population; the generosity shown so far is to be appreciated but the moral values can't allow or give authority the right to snatch away human dignity exercising an act of abuse against some of the weakest members of society. The government of Afghanistan has to take this very concern of refugees into account. This isn't the only country where Afghan refugees face case of maltreatment.

Iran is another such of country hosting large number of Afghans witnessing rampant harassment and maltreatment. Iran of course renders great humanitarian service by allowing Afghans seek refuge in this land. Nevertheless the mass violation of human rights must be deemed inhuman if not immoral. Reportedly Afghans are suffering ill-treatment in the said country. Many are on death row on flawed accusation of criminal activities. Previously, numerous such cases were surfaced with or without concern of government. The issues might have been negligibly raised on diplomatic level. Conversely the Afghan government with exception of receiving corps has done nothing satisfactory.

It high time government has to find out and work out the underlying reason behind miseries that force them leave abroad and how that should be discouraged. The persistent state of insecurity, unemployment is playing eminent role forcing Afghans move foreign countries in the search for better livelihood.

Conversely, Afghanistan has done a little, making congenial grounds to provide every necessity of life to returning refugees. In the past two terms, the democratic government, succeeded to earn the fame of bad governance, corruption and irregularities. It could rarely streamline the socio-political and financial matters of the state. The incumbent government has to take serious measures, reversing the ill deeds of ex-government whilst striving hard to get this piece of land rid of calamities of terrorism, extremism, corruption, illiteracy and poverty,



# The Philosophy of Human Rights

By: Hujjatullah Zia

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which was adopted on December 10th 1948, results from historical violence and bloodshed in human societies. Men were in chains and their megalomania led to two universal wars that took hundreds of thousands of lives around the world. The violation of man's inherent rights and dignity, discrimination on the basis of race, sex, color, beliefs, etc. and barbarous acts outraged human's conscience all around the world. As it is stated in the preamble of UDHR, "Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,

Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people, Whereas it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law..."

Human rights discourse is a universal topic, which transcends culture, religion and beliefs, delineating man's rights for being human no matter if he is Muslim or non-Muslim, Eastern or Western, religious or irreligious, man or woman. The main objective of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is to root out cruelties and oppressions and prevent from further violence and bloodshed in any corner of the world. Furthermore, it aims to gather the people of the world, who live in the heart of multiple cultures with a myriad of beliefs, under the same law. The cultural pluralism of human societies is beyond doubt and human rights, which are aimed to abrogate oppressions and aggressions, will accommodate to cultural or religious pluralism so that each person could resort to the Universal Declaration for supporting their rights. Hence, this Declaration which roots in the bitter experiences of human societies within thousands of years, will, as it claims, pave the way for freedom, justice and peace.

When men see their natural rights, such as rights to freedom or life, at risk, they feel a puissant need to human rights discourse so as to revitalize their freedom. In another item, human rights are to be considered a set of law to cater genuinely to the certain needs of human societies and lead them to a peaceful life in social and political arena. So, when lack of tolerance is felt in men's mutual behaviors, an emergency case will appear which will be dealt only by human rights discourse.

Human rights seek to ensure human's existence with

keeping their dignity and freedom safe and recognize for them a social frame. Moreover, human rights discourse entitles men with a set of equal rights based on morality and justice not on pity or sympathy.

The adoption of Human Rights Law is the outcome of historical necessity to curtail war and bloodshed rather than rooting in philosophical or religious issues. A general agreement over religious beliefs will never take place. This Declaration is a practical resolution to recognize human rights and dignity in any conditions without exception or discrimination. In short, human rights deal with human issues not with divine ones.

Article 18 of UDHR states, "Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance." Based on this article, no one can impose their religious beliefs on others or make them convert their religion. The freedom stated in this article bears no religious meaning and does not deal with divine dos and don'ts. In short, this freedom is silent about religious messages and does not prevent the pop, monk or clergy from preaching religious values. Recognizing the right to religious freedom neither adds to nor deducts from one's faith in a society.

The written human rights law, which is the product of modernity, bears secular contents. It refers to man's reason and conscience as a way of understanding human being. A secular concept does not mean to deny the religious messengers sent for man's salvation or to prevent religious scholars from preaching. After all, this law invites people from all around the world, relating to any cultures or beliefs, to stand against oppression, aggression and discrimination.

"Now, Therefore THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY proclaims THIS UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction." Hence, since men are endowed with inherent dignity and inalienable rights, we are to enjoy and practice our rights freely so as to avoid war and violence. The UDHR will heal men's bleeding wounds sustained throughout historical wars provided on being practiced properly.

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## Trust on Fellow Humans

By Dilawar Sherzai

One of the factors that are responsible for keeping human beings bonded with each other is trust. It is one of the most unique qualities of human beings and supports them in attaching hope within their social life. Without trust it would be very difficult for human beings to live with each other and further their social existence. Trust is a belief that others are there to support you; they are there to assist you when you are in trouble; they are there to share your sorrows and happiness; they are there to keep your secrets and share their own with you. Trust makes the relations reliable and the friends dependable. The trust deficit would definitely make human beings live solitary lives and make life nothing more than a pile of disbeliefs and skepticisms. As rightly quoted by Stephen Covey, "Trust is the glue of life. It's the most essential ingredient in effective communication. It's the foundational principle that holds all relationships".

As per the requirements of human nature, he requires different sorts of need. Along with the physiological and safety needs, the need of love and belongingness play a very imperative role in the lives of the human beings. Throughout his life, he wants to be loved and at the same time love others. He wants to be appreciated for what he does and wants others to take care of his feelings and emotions. If a person's life lacks this requirement he would find himself in the desert of hatred, with the sun of jealousy and hot winds of disdain blowing his face ferociously.

The fact of human life is that when he is a baby he requires the love and care of his parents to grow with. He requires the company of his joyful friends to nourish within. He needs the attention and companionship of his peers to nurture his personality. He longs for the friendship of trustworthy friend who is ready to give up his personal gains for the sake of amity. He then wishes for a life partner who is ready to spend her whole life with him, going through every thick and thin, loving each other and caring for each other's sentiments. The life continues and he then desires for children, whom he can love, cuddle and play with and in return expects that his children would grow become loving towards them, respect them and above all trust them. This is how the cycle of the life continues; however, the most important factor throughout all the phases of life is trust. It is like the strong chain that binds all the factors and phases sturdily and never

lets a person lose hope keep on living. Barbara Smith had rightly observed, "Trust is to human relationships what faith is to gospel living. It is the beginning place, the foundation upon which more can be built. Where trust is, love can flourish".

While trusting others and expecting others to trust him, a human being would require trusting himself, as well. It is one of the most crucial beliefs within a human, without having it a person would never be able to find his true self and his characteristics. Believing oneself means knowing that one has the potential to live a successful life and face all the troubles and worries with courage and determination.

One of the greatest examples of self trust can be found in trees. The trees live solitary life, each one responsible for its own self. Each tree trusts its own characteristics and nourishes through every weather with the same trust. It, with the passage of time, spreads its roots within the soil and stand strong and still, while rains pour, winds blow and the troubles grow. It knows that by standing its ground and trusting its roots and ground it would be able to save its existence and secure his life. As Hermann Hesse writes in *Bäume. Betrachtungen und Gedichte*, "A tree says: My strength is trust. I know nothing about my fathers, I know nothing about the thousand children that every year spring out of me. I live out the secret of my seed to the very end, and I care for nothing else. I trust that God is in me. I trust that my labor is holy. Out of this trust I live".

However, in today's world of ours human beings seem to be losing the precious gifts of trust. They are pursuing the material benefits and living mechanical lives. The socio-economic setup that they have developed for them, make them lonely and distrusting. They are, no more, trustworthy for their fellow beings, as they see every other person as a competitor in the long and tiring race of life; that is being run in pursuit of nothing else except wealth and status.

Such a scenario is really threatening not only for the human beings but for the entire humanity as a whole. It is really necessary that human beings must maintain trust for each other and never let time and circumstances that this precious gift away from them.

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