

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



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A State Has Obligation Towards Everyone

It is really imperative that a society must ensure that all its residents get their due rights. And these rights must be ensured without any sort of discrimination as all the members of the society stand equal as far as justice and fair play are concerned. The societies that are multicultural and consist of different ethnic or religious groups must make sure that the rights of minorities are properly guarded. In the similar fashion the rights of the special people - the people suffering from different sorts of disabilities, must also be ascertained through proper policies and actions by the relevant authorities.

The underdeveloped and the developing countries, in particular, need to give proper attention towards the disabled as such countries face many other problems to tackle with; therefore, they are not capable of giving time and attention to them. Moreover, in such countries the opportunities and proper arrangements are not there that can help the disabled to fight with the harsh challenges of life and be the part of normal lives. Afghanistan is one of the similar types of countries where the opportunities are limited for the disabled.

Some NGOs on certain occasions made some efforts in this regard. They have provided fund and support to uplift their standard of living. Such efforts, if followed and monitored with determination, consistency and honest intentions will definitely support the disabled to live normal life and become productive citizens of the society. In addition, positive attitude of the society can assist the disabled in developing optimistic approach towards life and bring prosperity and development not only to themselves but to the country, as well.

Nevertheless, it must not be forgotten that the negative attitude of the people towards the disabled may discourage them to a large extent. Unluckily, it can be observed in our country that both the government and the people do not treat them properly. Although Afghanistan has signed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, concrete steps are not taken yet in that regard. According to the convention people with disabilities must be given all the opportunities of having proper treatment and the feasibilities to live their daily lives normally. Unfortunately, the government of Afghanistan has been suffering on both the fronts. The medical facilities for the disabled are in no way sufficient. Hospitals and care centers for them are not enough, while the existing ones suffer seriously from the lack of modern equipments. The methods of treatment are obsolete. The compensations or improvements that can be made in their lives are not realized appropriately and they go unchecked. Furthermore, the endeavors of government to support them in their daily lives need to be invigorated and they should be supported voluminously.

However, it should be noted that the financial compensation alone is not enough to support their families. At present, the disabled people receive about 500 Afghanis a month from the government, which seems negligible, keeping in mind the rising inflation. It should be noted that more important than the compensation is the job opportunities and vocational training. That will support the disabled people in standing on their own and live a life of self-esteem and reverence. They cannot keep on depending on the favor of the government indefinitely - if the government feels sympathy they should get their share, if not they will stay underprivileged. It would be a better option to make them stand on their own and equal to their fellow citizens. Indefinite dependence on the kindness of the government or fellow citizens can in fact cripple them. They will get used to it and shun hard work; some of them may even opt begging. It is not peculiar to find the disabled people begging on the roads, taking advantage of the sympathy of the passersby.

Another important issue in this regard is the response of the fellow citizens towards the people with disabilities. Instead of assisting them out, most of the people further torture them by their discriminatory and even abusive attitude. There are so a lot of instances when such people are socially neglected. Since, they are not able to do the things in the way the other people do, they are considered weird and even called with various inapt titles.

The families with economic hardships and other difficulties curse their children with disabilities and treat them as burden on the family. Many of them are forced to go for begging; in addition, it is hard to find people who readily get into any type of relation with the disabled people. In particular, the females who are with disabilities do not get proper chances of getting married. They remain neglected throughout most part of their lives and suffer from severe kind of social isolation. It is really imperative to understand the difficulties faced by the people with disabilities; whether the disabled are so, naturally or as the aftermath of disasters or wars they should be treated appropriately.

The government has to make sure that they receive all the facilities for their treatment and modern facilities are available for them free of cost, and they get feasibilities that may support them in living their daily lives about normally. On the other hand there should be marked changes in the attitude through which the fellow citizens treat the disabled people; in particular, they should be considered equal human beings.



Pakistan on FATF's watchlist; Business of Terrorism

By William Aerts

Terrorism is a syndicate-based activity; its business is to induce fear and, in order to generate that fear, terrorism, like any other business, requires money. Terrorists need financial support to carry out their operations - to acquire weapons, to fund travel, to run training camps, to recruit new terrorists, to bribe officials, to secure safe-havens, to obtain false documentation, to popularize their cause, etc. As long as money flows, terrorism will continue to sustain itself. Therefore, virtually by depriving terrorist outfits from having an access and exploiting the wider financial system, and being externally funded, terrorist attacks could be prevented.

As the former US Attorney General, John Ashcroft has summarised it: "The war against terrorism is a war of accountants and auditors, as well as a war of weaponry and solicitors".

Money trails often provide invaluable information to law enforcement bodies about those potentially involved in terrorism, helping professionals to identify and apprehend terrorist outfits. The recent findings of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) with regard to Pakistan's propensity towards state-sponsored terrorism confirms that claim. The attitude of Pakistan's government towards terror groups has been described, at best, as dualistic. On the one hand, terrorists are criminalized by law and should be held liable; on the other hand, elements within the Pakistani establishment provide them with both logistical and financial support, turning Pakistan's State institutions, accomplices in a broad range of terror finance operations.

The FATF, an inter-governmental body that sets standards and promotes the effective implementation of legal, regulatory and operational measures for combating money laundering, terrorist financing and any related threats to the integrity of the international financial system, altogether with the United States and its European allies have tabled a motion, which intends to place Pakistan on a money-laundering and terror-financing 'grey' watchlist of countries considered non-compliant with global anti-terrorist financing regulations.

The FATF maintains grey and black lists for identifying countries with poor and corruptible measures against these issues. The agency does not have the powers to impose sanctions on a country that does not meet the required standards, yet its listing can affect its international transactions, which would then become subject to greater scrutiny. This increases the cost of doing cross-border transactions and ultimately higher cost of doing business locally. A decline in foreign transactions and a drop in foreign currency inflows could further widen Pakistan's large current account deficit, the Achilles heel of its economy, and it would be more difficult and expensive for Pakistan to borrow money from international debt markets, which as a result would have serious negative consequences on its economy.

The last time Pakistan was on the watch-list was in 2012-2015 and FATF's decision seems far from groundless; The country has experienced a whirlpool of various forms of terrorism and insurgent activities for several decades. Pakistan is internally crippled by terrorist activities within its borders, which despite the fact that impose a perilous danger on the entire stability of the country and destroy its socio-economic structures, continue to receive vast flows of funds from its governing bodies. Pakistan-based terrorist groups use a wide array of methods for raising finances, which include, the manipulation of the hawala system (an informal system of money transfer), misusing the charitable sector as a forefront, drugs-financing, abduction for ransoms, having undeclared assets abroad and many others.

State Department spokesperson Heather Nauert argued, "the U.S. has consistently expressed a long-standing concern about ongoing deficiencies in Pakistan's implementation of its anti-money laundering/counterterrorism finance regime. In addition to broader systemic concerns, this also includes Pakistan's non-compliance with its commitments under UN Security Council Resolution 1267"

This Resolution sanctions individuals and entities associated with terrorist groups wherever located, and freezes their assets. Therefore, one of the main focuses of the FATF motion is the targeting of Hafiz Saeed, the 2008 Mumbai attacks mastermind and founder of Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and its charity branches Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD) and Falah-i-Insaniat Foundation (FIF), who has been designated a "Global Terrorist" by the United Na-

tions and had a \$10m bounty placed on him by the US in 2012. Saeed has repeatedly denied involvement in the Mumbai attacks and says the charitable organisations he founded and controls have no ties with militants, and in a recent statement deemed Pakistan's crackdown on his seminaries 'illegal'.

Yet, after years of denial and under pressure to act against banned groups, Pakistan announced that it had amended its anti-terrorism law to prohibit militant groups and organisations that are listed as "terrorists" by the United Nations, a move seemingly seen to be targeting charities run by Saeed. However, the FATF motion, the US \$2 billion suspension of military aid, and any other increased coercions on behalf of the international community, are unlikely to get Pakistan to fundamentally alter its behaviour. The threat of economic downfall does not seem to worry Pakistan too much. For example, U.S. military aid to Pakistan decreased by 60% between 2010 and August 2017, without a significant impact on Pakistan's Army. Pakistan feels it can always seek economic assistance from China, its lasting ally. Although China does not want to see a further external leakage of terrorism and destabilization in South Asia, it has not been willing to take punitive action against Pakistan's support for the Haqqani Network and the Afghan Taliban. Furthermore, Islamabad can attempt pursuing Saudi financial aid, which Saudi Arabia may grant, since it regards Pakistan, which shares a 909-kilometer border with Iran, as an important asset in restraining Iranian influence. Thus, Pakistan might believe that it can ride out tensions with the constraints currently imposed by the US and its European allies.

In addition to that, the current operation of cracking down the funding of terrorist groups risks backlashing against itself. The international community has many interests in Pakistan, beyond freezing the financial assets of extremist outfits: ensuring the political stability and socio-economic development of the country; encouraging its democratization, pluralization, and stronger civilian and technocratic governance; safeguarding the human rights of the population; getting Pakistan rid of the deployment of tactical nuclear weapons (which could fall into terrorists' hands); dissuading Pakistan from resurrecting its past nuclear proliferation activities, and preventing a major Pakistan-India war, as well as Pakistan-sponsored terrorist attacks.

In response to foreign pressure, Pakistan could threaten any of these interests. For example, it can discontinue cooperation on nuclear safety issues or suspend Pakistan-India nuclear confidence-building measures. Hence, it is highly unlikely that Pakistan will fully sever its support for and desire to control its terrorist networks, after being enrolled in the FATF watch-list. Most likely, the country will claim it is no longer assisting those militant groups and will temporarily reduce its level of support for them while waiting to increase it later again.

The only possible solution for Pakistan to dramatically cut its support for terrorist organizations is a scenario where the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), and the overall military apparatus loses its ubiquitous grip and control over the Pakistani government and becomes subordinated to an enlightened, efficient, and accountable civilian leadership. That means that both the Pakistani military and the country's civilian politicians would have to undergo a radical transformation and the State develops the political and physical resources, and financial means, to tackle its internally-sponsored rapidly spreading terrorist groups.

State-sponsored terrorism against neighbouring countries, mainly against India, Indian Administered Jammu & Kashmir and Afghanistan, and against national religious and ethnic minorities, does not reflect a sudden change in the current situation. Over the last couple of years, thousands of secular intellectual Pakistani citizens - University professors, teachers, artists, musicians, poets, human rights activists and journalists have been murdered, apprehended, routinely disappeared or punished for asking inconvenient questions.

Once the young, well-educated, technocratic and secular segments of the population that try to fightback the warlords, insurgents, oligarchic powerbrokers and powerful military establishment, are suppressed by the thirsty-for-control and dominion influential layers of the Pakistani society, any fundamental change to Pakistan's internal power distribution and strategic calculus, is facing failure, risking its very own destructive annihilation.

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