

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



July 01, 2017

Drug Abuse A Persistent Evil

June 26 was observed as International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking. The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) set this day through the resolution 42/112 in December 1987. The basic objective behind observing the day was to reinforce action and collaboration to attain the goal of an international society free of drug abuse.

This year the theme of the day remained the same as last year – Listen First: Listening to the children and youth is the first step to help them grow healthy and safe, which is an initiative to increase support for prevention of drug use that is based on science and is thus an effective investment in the well-being of children and youth, their families and their communities.

In April last year the UN General Assembly in its Special Session on drugs marked a vital breakthrough in achieving the goals set in the policy document of 2009: “Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem”, which defined action to be taken by Member States as well as goals to be achieved by 2019. It is important to see that the countries follow these goals earnestly and achieve them on time as getting late on the issue would have severe consequences for the future generations.

While discussing drug abuse, it is important to note that Afghanistan is also a country that is largely influenced both by drug abuse and its trafficking. It is really important that the country should make efforts to change the lives of those who are influenced by this menace and at the same time divert attention to important sectors like health, human rights and sustainable development.

However, it would not be an easy fight for Afghanistan as the country has an established trend of drug addiction and its trafficking. There are many people, mostly youngsters, addicted to various types of drugs and their number is snowballing with each passing day.

One of the most threatening fact is that many children and women are also in the list of addicted and they do not know any way of coming out this quagmire. Actually, they use it as medicine to resist against severely cold weather and also as tranquilizers to fight against different sorts of diseases.

It is no more a secret that the poppy cultivation and its trafficking in Afghanistan are interconnected to the national and international networks of organized crime with the supporters in the international drug market and national authorities who should otherwise be the protectors of the nation. The most disastrous facts is that they have their associations with the terrorist networks in the country. The rising insurgency and growing webs of terrorism depict clearly that terrorists have got immense financial support from drug trafficking. This should alarm the whole nation as it would shatter the lives of the people.

It would not be difficult to control the situation if it was limited only to farmers but the fact is that the farmers are not alone to benefit from the rising prices and the rise in production; rather farmers take a negligible part of it while most of the income goes to the networks that manage its filthy business. And all the informed individuals know that the terrorist networks have a lion's share in such income.

Thus it implies that with the growth in the production of opium, there will be considerable increase in insurgency from the terrorist networks that are already in the process of gaining strength. Moreover, it has also been observed that the cultivations mostly take place in the areas where Taliban seem to have more control. It is believed that most of the cultivation is concentrated in southern Afghan provinces, and heartland of the Taliban-led insurgency, where the government does not seem to have much control.

In short, the menace of drug abuse and trafficking is influencing the country in various ways. At one instance, it is making drugs available to the common masses, who are, mostly out of ignorance, becoming addict to it and standing responsible for generating various social problems. At the other instance, it is proving to be the fuel for insurgency as it is bound to benefit the terrorist networks in the country that largely depend on such sources of income after losing support from elsewhere. Government authorities, in this connection, have to get very much serious and try to take tangible measures to make sure that the production is reduced to a considerable extent.

Destroying the crops is one of the most practical steps at the present scenario and can to a very great extent discourage the poppy cultivation but it has certain complexities with itself. For the long-lasting solution it is preferable that the government must try to facilitate the farmers and landowners the opportunity of growing alternate crops; try to control its trafficking and treat the addicted in the best possible manner so that they are able to rejoin positive social life. In addition, corruption, in this regard, should never be accepted, as it has already become a major problem for the country.



Surge in Diplomacy, Action in Mediation

By Mevlüt ÇAVUŞOĞLU

The fourth edition of the Istanbul Conference on Mediation will take place on 30 June 2017 with the theme of “Surge in Diplomacy, Action in Mediation.” Experts, diplomats, practitioners and scholars from around the world will explore ways and means to promote mediation as a prominent conflict prevention and resolution method.

The profile of mediation has been rising globally since Turkey and Finland led the way at the United Nations through the “Mediation for Peace” initiative. The initiative culminated in the establishment of the Group of Friends of Mediation.

The Group now has 53 members, including 48 states and 5 international organizations. There has also been substantial improvement in international capacity for preventive diplomacy and mediation within the UN, regional and sub-regional organizations and civil society. The Group has become the leading platform at the UN to promote mediation.

It has initiated the adoption of four UN General Assembly Resolutions, which lay the ground for the development of the normative and conceptual framework of mediation. The Group has also contributed to the 2012 “United Nations Guidance for Effective Mediation”, a fundamental document for those who practice and study mediation worldwide.

UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres has expressed his willingness to further develop UN's mediation support capacity.

His efforts are most commendable. We call on all UN member states to support UNSG Guterres' broad vision and efforts to prevent and solve today's conflicts. Turkey has been doing her part.

Turkey is situated next to a vast region where acute active and frozen conflicts persist. Prevention and peaceful resolution of conflicts is a central feature of Turkey's enterprising and humanitarian foreign policy. Turkey undertakes various efforts in a wide geography from Africa to the Middle East, the Balkans and the Caucasus. She sees peacemaking in a humanitarian-development nexus.

This year, Turkey has again become the most generous nation in the world in terms of per capita humanitarian assistance.

Turkey has been hosting the Istanbul Conferences on Mediation since 2012. These landmark conferences are designed to bring together numerous practitioners and scholars in the field of conflict prevention and mediation activities. The aim of these conferences is to promote synergies between theory and practice and help increase scope, reach and effectiveness of the international community's mediation efforts. I must pay tribute to the efforts of mediators engaging daily in conflicts worldwide.

This year the Conference will explore how mediation methodology and practice can take better account of the needs of the day. In this regard, two questions in particular would be scrutinized.

One is the potential of mediation in all stages of a conflict continuum, namely from prevention to resolution and all the way to peace agreement implementation. The second key question would be the models for greater employment of mediation as a preventive tool in contexts where political, ethnic, religious biases create an environment of hostility.

The latter is especially pertinent since we have come to sadly witness extreme tendencies in various forms of political, social and religious animosities. The rise in attacks in Europe against Muslims and migrants is a case in point. Prevention is key.

However, prevention would be possible only when societies recognize and learn to respect differences and engage in genuine dialogue and interaction. I believe that mediators who are well-equipped with the cultural codes of conduct in a given conflict situation can reach remarkable success.

For that, we need to train more mediators including at youth while encouraging more women mediators and equip them with the right tools.

Our challenges to make peace the overwhelming reality on a global level are immense. However, we should be able to see the opportunities within those challenges. The readiness and willingness of the international community to build capacity in peaceful resolution of conflicts including mediation must be a priority. As we prepare to welcome participants of the Fourth Istanbul Mediation Conference, I call on the international community to take action in mediation.

Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu is a Turkish politician and former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey

Human Rights Violations

By Hujjatullah Zia

Human rights have been violated flagrantly as a result of war and violence. People's rights and dignity are trampled upon on the grounds of their race, sex, color and creed. Warring parties, mainly terrorist networks, spill blood of men, women and children without an iota of mercy. On the one hand, violence and bloodshed are going on unabated, on the other hand, democracy, human rights and international peace are debated hotly.

The fundamental rights and dignity of mankind have been stated repeatedly in the United Nation's Charter and Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). The philosophy behind the United Nation's Charter is state in its preamble as, “to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind, and to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom”. Besides stating the very phrases, the UDHR has pointed out the reason behind wars as, “disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts” and also the way to alleviate the pains and sufferings of mankind as it says, “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”.

Protecting human rights and dignity and alleviating the sufferings of mankind have been the main objectives of international instruments. Men are known to be bestowed natural, inalienable and inviolable rights by the Creator and should be able to exercise their rights without fear.

The Charter of the UN and UDHR were ratified following the Second World War with the aim of ending the destructive war and violence. Strong sanctions have been predicted in the UN's Charter. According to article 5, the General Assembly will suspend a member of the UN through suspending from the exercise of the rights and privileges of membership. Article 6 predicts expelling from the organization. Similarly, article 41 suggests complete or partial interruption of economic relations and of rail, sea, air, postal, telegraphic, etc. Finally, article 42 suggests military action by air, sea or land for ensuring international peace and security. But all these preventive or enforcement actions have neither been implemented properly nor stopped the carnage and sufferings of human societies.

Currently, a large number of people are suffering under violence and militancy in different corners of the world. For instance, the self-styled Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) perpetrated genocide in Northern Iraq through killing thousands of Yazidi civilians, mainly women and children. On 10 August 2014, ISIL militants reportedly buried alive an undefined number of Yazidi women and children in northern Iraq in an attack that killed 500 people, in what has been described as genocide. Yazidi women were abducted and sold into slave markets with ISIL “using rape as a weapon of war”.

Similarly, the flagrant violation of human rights is outrageous in Burma or Myanmar. Rohingyas have been described as one of the most persecuted minorities in the world. According to the United Nations, the human rights violations against Rohingyas could be termed as “crimes against humanity”. The 2016 crackdown resulted in wide-scale human rights violations at the hands of Myanmar's security forces as “women have been gang-raped” and “children have been slaughtered”. A report based on interviews released by the United Nations Human Rights Office. In the interview, one mother recounted in the report how her five-year-old daughter was trying to protect her from rape when a man “took out a long knife and killed her by slitting her throat”, while in another case an eight-month-old baby was reportedly killed while his mother was gang-raped by five security officers. A 14-year-old girl also told of how, after being raped by soldiers, she saw her mother beaten to death and her two sisters, aged eight and 10, killed with knives. More than half of the 101 women interviewed said they had been victims of rape and other forms of sexual violence.

These heart-wrenching stories, which make the daily headlines in national and international newspapers, are a stain on collective conscience. Now as you are reading this article, scores of men, women and children will be suffering in Afghanistan, Syria, Myanmar, Nigeria or other parts of the world on the grounds of their caste, color or creed.

Hence, the world will have to practice tolerance and enhance the spirit of brotherhood so as to put an end to escalated violence and bloodshed. The world must do its best to safeguard human rights and dignity. It should be noted that only military action will not mitigate the current challenges, we need to pursue peace and security through non-violent mechanism and negotiation. We also need to practice upon the golden rule, which is accepted in all religion, which says, “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you”.

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