

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



July 04, 2015

Is Justice Done?

When four of main culprits in Farkhunda's murder were given the sentence of death and few others severe punishments by Primary Court few months back, there were appreciations by different individuals and factions of society and it was believed to be an act of justice that would play a role in discouraging such incidents to occur again.

However, according to latest news reports, the Kabul Appeals Courts has ruled to commute the death sentences given to four convicts and reduced their sentence to 20 years imprisonment. Moreover, as the news reports disclose, the Court has entirely acquitted the custodian of the Shrine - Omran, who was found guilty of instigating the mob to attack on Farkhunda based on false accusations. He was initially sentenced to 16 years of imprisonment. Moreover, eight other convicts, who were each sentenced to 16 years of imprisonment for their active role in the murder, were also acquitted by the Court.

The decision of Appeals Court has stirred outrage and Farkhunda's family has shown serious reaction. Farkhunda's parents have said that they do not accept the decision and see no justice in it. They have also said that they seek justice from the President and the Chief Executive.

Some civil society organizations have also raised their voice against the ruling of the Court and they have said that the ruling of Court has raised questions on promises made by the leaders of National Unity Government, nor the people neither Farkhunda's family accept the court ruling, the President and Chief Executive must appoint a special court to review the case. And, the ruling of the Court has changed all hope into disappointment; and that means that Afghanistan's legal and judicial institutions support criminals rather than implementing justice.

Both the President and Chief Executive showed anger and pity after the incident and had directed the law enforcement agencies to take quick action and bring the culprits to justice. It is important to see how they react after the decision which is now taken by the Appeals Court.

Though it is always difficult to suggest a death penalty to someone, justice must be done in any case. If the culprits in Farkhunda's murder are not given death penalty, they can at least be given proper punishment in accordance to law. The courts cannot just acquit them and let them go unpunished. Making mockery of justice will further encourage the culprits and they will continue their misdeeds.

It has become difficult to talk of justice and fair play in a country, where the punishment for a crime that one has not done is death? How to talk of humanity when the people feel taste in killing a lonely woman by dragging her on the streets? How to talk of Islam in a society where there is no respect for well-being of others? How to talk of responsibility in a city where the policemen are incapable to provide you safety even when you are being beaten to death in front them? How to talk of guidance and spirituality in a society where the religious leaders are the ones who lead you astray?

There has to be a way to salvation for the coldblooded murder of Farkhunda and this has to be realized by Afghan justice system. The protest by the Farkhunda's parents and civil society organizations are not enough. Something has to be done that can guarantee that such heinous acts will not be repeated. Something that can make women feel more secure while they are on the streets and even in their houses. Something that can teach a lesson to those who will to do anything they want in the name of religion. Something that can restore our belief on human beings and humanity. Something that can absorb the stink of the burning corpse of Farkhunda from the air around us.

Why do not we mend ourselves? Why do not we recognize that we are naturally the best of the creatures and claim to be superior? Why do not our minds think and our hearts feel the way they should? Why do not we strive for a better way of living? Why do not we adopt the habit of research and the search for knowledge? Why do not we open our eyes and see the things as they are not as we want them to be? Why do not we become religious in a true sense and pursue the path of wellbeing and spirituality? Why is the life so worthless for us, and the death so dear to us? When others can do all these things, why can not we? Are we really so senseless that we are not able even to recognize our benefit and the way to our survival?

Enough is enough! Let's stand tall like human beings and not crawl on earth like insects! Let's make life worth living and worth respecting! Let's feel our responsibilities and each one grow a flower to make our country a garden! Let's portray Islam the way it deserves - spreading wellbeing and peace! Let's respect women and their true role and importance in our society! Let's disseminate the message of love, tranquility and humanity! Let's support justice and make sure that the episode with Farkhunda is the first and the last one! Let's do all these as this is the only way to live like better human beings!

Transitory Policies Serving Terrorism, Should be Revised

By Asmatyari

At present, terrorism has turned into a global issue -every ethnic and religious group renders prey to terrorists' attacks. Multilaterally, it seems as if the war waged against terrorist by international community is sparking terrorism instead diminishing. We are facing war like situation against the terrorists -who preys to terrorists acts, is uncertain and capricious. Terrorist acts like suicide bombings have become a norm of the day. On account of these attacks Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Syria and Nigeria are suffering from inefaceable loss ranging from civilian to economic. People have become numerical figures, blown up in numbers every now and then. Terrorists have not spared any place. Bazaars, mosques, educational institutes, offices, hotels, roadside no place are safe anymore. It is witnessed the terrorist even manage to reach unimaginable sites -is alarming for world community.

The terrorist group of international fame Islamic State has surpassed Al-Qaida executing mass massacres and ruthless butcheries of people around the world. In addition it has also succeeded drawing great number of adherents from across the world -western countries in particular. The former US's State Department report is a self evident account to escalating terrorist attacks and resulting casualties. The report unearths detrimental statistics of terrorist attacks in the former year and the relative growth in these attacks in most of terrorist prone countries. The report counts 13,463 attacks in 95 countries in 2014 -up by a third from the year before - with Iraq, Pakistan and Afghanistan bearing the brunt of extremist violence. In total 32,727 people were killed compared to 17,800 in 2013, according to the figures prepared by the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism. A further 34,700 people were injured. This report is an eye opener for policy makers, turning the world into a more insecure place to live than it was a decade earlier.

Formerly, a Shiite mosque in the Kuwaiti capital was targeted that led to 25 people dead and 202 people wounded, according to the interior ministry. Kuwaiti Shiites make up around one-third of the country's native population of 1.3 million people. Following the brutal attack on Kuwait's Shiit mosque another attack took place in a Tunisian seaside resort that killed nearly 40 people, most of them British tourists, the worst attack in the country's recent history. Dozens more were wounded due to gunfire from inside a beach umbrella on crowds of tourists at the five-star Riu Imperial Marhaba Hotel in the popular Mediterranean resort of Port el Kantaoui. The shooting was the worst in modern-day Tunisia and followed a March attack claimed by IS on Tunis's Bardo National Museum that killed 21 foreign tourists and a policeman. The previous brutal but shameful incident reflects the wave of sectarian hatred flowing down the vein of Muslim unity. It certainly is a deliberate move to deepen the sectarian differences across the Muslim world. Tunisia, birthplace of the Arab Spring, has seen a surge in radical Islam since veteran president Zine El Abidine Ben Ali was ousted in the 2011 revolution. Dozens of members of the security forces have been killed in jihadist attacks since then. In October 2013, a suicide bomber blew himself up in a botched attack on a Sousse beach while

security forces foiled another planned attack nearby. Among Tunisia's tourist attractions are its cosmopolitan capital city of Tunis. According to The New York Times, Tunisia is "known for its golden beaches, sunny weather and affordable luxuries." Tourism accounts for seven percent of Tunisia's GDP and almost 400,000 direct and indirect jobs. The attack on tourists is certainly an attack on thriving tourism industry of Tunis that brings financial losses to its people.

One group except Daesh would claim the responsibility for the twin attacks in Kuwait and Tunisia, it proudly did it. The attacks came at the start of the holy Muslim month of Ramadan that marks the first anniversary of the group declaring its territory in Iraq and Syria a "caliphate". Previously, the Ameerul Momineen Abubakar Al-Baghdadi, a self proclaimed caliph publicly pronounced the establishment of independent Islamic State (caliphate) in the land it controls, in an audiotape message, urging all Muslims to migrate to the aforesaid state and pledge allegiance to him. He made a special appeal to those with practical skills, scholars, judges, doctors, engineers and people with military and administrative expertise, to come to the ascribed land. The self claimed caliph was also shown asking the jihadist to escalate fighting in the holy month of Ramadan, which happened to be the noblest deed. Doing so, help them earn the favor of the merciful Allah, is a betrayal. This of course is, a forged interpretation of Jihad sought to further their malicious designs of such splintered group. It is a deliberate "Fassad". Al-Qaida and ISIS fallaciously deem to be the guardian of Islamic jurisdiction and sanctity are misled.

If someone claims to strive for the wellbeing of a cognizable group, it should do away with raison-d'être widening the minute disparity existing between sub factions. Muslims, divided into over seventy three sects, with every sect not only claims to be superior to others but also spare not a minute issuing the jurisprudence of infidelity of other. Factually speaking the Muslims world suffers the height of intolerance and extremism. Apart from bad governance, there are multiple factors behind the escalating extremism yet it is malicious for being solely responsible for the widened unrest, plaguing the world over. It should be learned that states can be built by a disgruntled group, relying on granted war-heads and weapons, but can't be run without clearly laid principles, universally accepted system of governance a profound self-reliance and harmonious coexistence. It should be cultured that terrorism could only be eradicated, provided the interests of governed are kept in prime consideration, politics exercised, upholding human rights and welfare of masses irrespective, cast, creed, ethnicity kept in deliberation.

World leaders and Afghanistan elders should believe that global fairness, peace and human dignity is in the best interest of the global community and terrorism is the greatest menace to human race, thus must be curbed iron handed. The world must do more to restrain extremism and terrorism to alter the very environment from which these terrorist movements emerge. It is the time the world to ponder on transitory policies constituted, that furnishes the breeding ground of terrorism with terrorists, than curtailing, must be revised.

Asmatyari is the permanent writer of daily Outlook Afghanistan. He can be reached at asmatyari@gmail.com.

The Afghan Refugee Crisis

By Ewaz Ali Bahrami

During a recent visit to Islamabad, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Antonio Guterres urged Pakistan to review its Afghan refugee repatriation deadline of December 2015. While meeting Antonio Guterres in the Prime Minister house in Islamabad, Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif said "Pakistan took care of Afghan refugees as a sacred duty and their return with dignity was the government's priority". Earlier, after the attack on Army Public School by Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), which claimed the lives of more than 120 students, Pakistan deported more than 31,000 Afghans as a security precaution, and set December 31, 2015 as deadline for complete repatriation of Afghan refugees. It's reported that around 1.6 million registered Afghan refugees reside in Pakistan, mainly in urban areas. Given the worsening economic and security condition in Afghanistan and no state preparations for accommodation of those returning, the question is that what will happen to the Afghan refugees after they return back home?

Three decades of war in Afghanistan forced more than 6 million Afghans to flee the country, mainly to neighboring Iran and Pakistan. After the fall of Taliban, the Afghan interim government called on Afghan refugees to return back home. The UNHCR reports that "since 2002, more than 5.8 million Afghan refugees have returned home, of whom 4.7 million were assisted by UNHCR, representing 20 per cent of Afghanistan's population." Yet, more than a decade after fall of the Taliban and establishment of the new political system in Afghanistan, the country still has more than 3 million refugees worldwide. J Hussain Aleemi Balkhi, the minister of Refugees and Repatriation has urged other countries not to forcefully repatriate Afghan refugees as Afghanistan "is not ready" for their accommodation. Mr. Balkhi says that as conditions were getting better off in 2011, several Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) have been signed with different European countries on repatriation of Afghan refugees, excluding repatriation of women and children. However, with the worsening security and withdrawal of NATO combat troops from Afghanistan, the situation has further deteriorated forcing more Afghan citizens to leave the country in search of protection and employment. This is while the Afghan government is already struggling in repatriation and settlement of returning refugees. While the Afghan government is not ready to take in and accommodate refugees, mass repatriation of refugees can create a chaotic situation in the country. Recently, a number of countries including Norway, Greece and Turkey have deported Afghan refugees. Most of those deported have lost all their belongings in Afghanistan and have nowhere to return to. In addition, the refugees face threats in their home provinces as well. Therefore, the government should redouble its efforts and urge all host countries not to forcefully repatriate Afghan refugees, especially women and children.

With the withdrawal of NATO combat forces by the end of 2014 and the inevitable decline in the international financial aid, the Afghan government began to face serious economic and financial challenges. The number of refugees seeking shelter abroad has been exponentially growing and people fleeing the country due to lack of security and high rate of employment. In order to

prevent people from leaving the country, the national unity government needs to boost employment by improving security and encouraging foreign aid.

The Afghan government needs to promote and protect of rights and dignity of Afghan citizens including Afghan refugees residing in other countries. It is reported that Afghans are actively engaged in the war in Syria both for and against Syria's Bashar Al-Assad. The Afghan government has so far failed to prevent Afghans from being used as proxy fighters or joining extremist groups like the Islamic State. Afghans engaging in war in Syria will have impacts inside Afghanistan as it can shatter the already weakened Afghan sectarian tolerance and national harmony. The government has to engage in active diplomatic efforts to prevent Afghans from joining the Islamist groups or fighting for Al-Assad's government.

Afghan refugees in Pakistan have been severely affected from security developments in Pakistan and the country's operations against the Pakistani Taliban in North Waziristan. Last year, the Pakistani military initiated the operation Zarb-e-Azb in order to eliminate terrorist shelters in the Federally Administrated Tribal Areas which borders Afghanistan. The operation caused thousands of people to leave their homes and flee to other parts of Pakistan or cross the border to Afghanistan. It has been reported that extremist elements have fled to Afghanistan by covering themselves as refugees. This has further deteriorated insecurity in Afghanistan. The government needs to boost its control on cross-border traffic, and crackdown on those who are members of terrorist organizations. In order to encourage the refugees to return back home, the government of Afghanistan in collaboration with the international community and the UNHCR should provide various employment and accommodation alternatives such as temporary shelters, permanent resettlement and better employment. So far, the refugees who have returned back in the country complain from lack of jobs and employment. Many of Afghan refugees who returned back during last fourteen years have been forced to leave the country again as they have not been provided jobs and accommodation facilities. Extensive unemployment and poverty is a huge problem in Afghanistan, and the government can not sort it out on its own. Therefore, seeking assistance from the international community is fundamentally needed. With Afghan refugee crisis at its peak, thousands of Afghan refugees are currently waiting in refugee camps in Indonesia, Turkey and elsewhere to be resettled into third countries. The government should request the UNHCR to support these refugees and help in their resettlement. In 2014, dozens of Afghan refugees protested in front of UNHCR office in Turkey for a month complaining that the UNHCR was not reviewing their asylum cases. The Afghan government or the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation failed to help those refugees in a meaningful way. The Afghan government and the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation should halt repatriation of refugees until the situation is improved and the country is prepared for taking in and settling the refugees. It is the obligation of the Afghan government to protect rights of all Afghan citizens including refugees who are in search of shelter in other countries. The government should work closely with the UNHCR and the relevant countries to resettle Afghan refugees and improve the status of Afghan refugees around the world.

Ewaz Ali Bahrami is the newly emerging writer of the Daily Outlook Afghanistan. He can be reached at outlookafghanistan@gmail.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



The views and opinions expressed in the articles are those of the authors and do not reflect the views or opinions of the Daily Outlook Afghanistan.

