

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



July 13, 2015

Women's Social Responsibilities Denied!

We suffer a state of illusion, beating the trumpet of being rational and just with the ever prejudiced section of society –women – contradict the ground realities. The good news of appointment of female judge in the apex court could not last longer –as the lower house of Parliament or Wolsi Jirga turned her down. Earlier, President Ashraf Ghani nominated a leading lawyer, Anisa Rasooli a former juvenile court judge to become the country's first ever female Supreme Court judge. This decision was deemed legitimate and levelheaded capable to reserve the ill perception Afghan have had concerning women rights –which unluckily did not materialize following the dismissal of her candidature. Afghanistan reserves the worst image in the international community pertaining to maintenance of basic human rights in general and women rights in particular –Farkhunda's murder case is not yet unlearned.

Previously, Farkhunda's murderers –due to receive severe punishment by preliminary court was reversed by Appeal Court –intimating the murder of justice by a justice. Undoubtedly, Afghanistan's judicial sector is suffering male administration and inapt officials that undertake biased ruling in frequent hearings –the aforesaid unearthed the untold facts, indeed. Following through minute details of the case, a deliberated twist and turn was witnessed in the judgment issued subsequent to hearing –the Appeals Court reversed the verdict of the Kabul Primary Court sentencing three out of four men to 20 years of imprisonment and another to 10 years. Moreover, eight other convicts, who were each sentenced to 16 years of imprisonment, were also acquitted by the Court last week. 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. This is a premeditated aversion of the former ruling, shocking but damaging the cause for maintenance of rule of law. This seems to be an intentional drive where a great deal of favoritism seemed to have been emplaced.

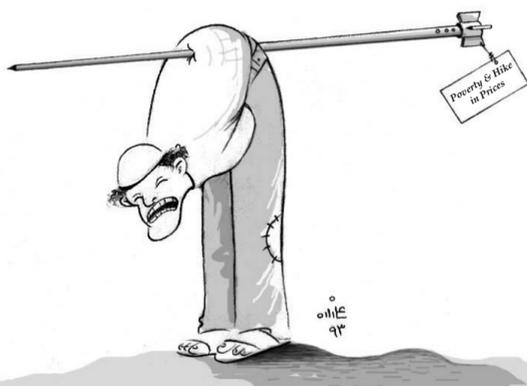
The social participation of women deemed a taboo at large –makes them difficult to head to public offices on a distinct position. Afghanistan is the land where women are treated as a third class citizen, and a household commodity, whose fate rests to parental sightless ruling. Women found exercising her willingness contrary to parental dictate is subjected to severe castigation and humiliation; is recklessly shunned to depth of utter hopelessness. The society where negation of unsound commandment is deemed immodesty and conceit, and pursuit of a rational discourse unpardonable sin, lies at the depth of moral abyss. Hence, a woman is bound to lead a life, at utter submission of her family associates.

The tales of haplessness ends not here, as is hampered every time she gets out in the pursuit of earning herself a modest livelihood. Our tolerance and patience turn off finding women chase a goal oriented life. We are born and raised underestimating girls, consequently we dare hindering equal participation of women in socio-political arenas; we strive hard equating their right to liberty and pursuit of happiness, bashfulness and contrary to Islamic teachings. Despite such assertions if one fails to impose ones' narrow and irrational interpretation, what they heard from so-called clergies, on others, tend to come up in the streets and shamelessly begin molesting the passerby girls and women. This is absolutely a great service they are paying to a morally civilized society.

Dauntlessness is not man's attribute, given he can suppress and duress the hapless daughter of eve –despite being reciprocated in the gentlest way. This is not to render man at fault; instead laws safeguarding women's rights are minimally applied. Every alternate day endless tales of butcheries, physical torture, harassment and sexual assaults are surfaced where women render prey to flawed cultural practices, biased laws and Sharia doctrines. We turn deaf ears to the hapless cries, blind eyes negligent to see the magnitude of mental sufferings she endures while getting out to earn a livelihood, numb to realize the numerous pain of gender based victimization she bears frequently, because of fallacious socio-religious structure based on irrational biases. It reflects women are coerced to repression after being found hapless and voiceless.

The denial to redeem women's socio-economic significance renders functional half of Afghan population, paralyzed. Unarguably, women can play foundational role in formation and development of the society for upcoming generation. They owe equivalent vigor to outstand and undertake the household undertakings appropriately and social responsibilities, aptly. Regrettably, they are deemed second class citizen; meant to plague their innate capabilities rendering them dysfunctional. If properly educated and socialized they can be turned into valuable human resource earning enormous riches for poverty stricken country. If shun in constant denial they will degenerate without contributing.

Execution of dynamic deeds is one of the persona women bear and richly contribute in nation and country building. The role of women in peace, reconciliation, rehabilitation and nation building must not be repudiated. They must be heard by granting maximum if not equal opportunities in societal activities and decision makings. The incumbent government keeping his promise should take bold and immediate measures undoing all such developments eroding and restraining the capabilities of women to work for the good of society provided empowered women can effectively contribute in the development of the country.



Serious Blows to the Islamic State

By Abdul Ahad Bahrami

A number of senior members of the Islamic State group have been killed in Afghanistan in recent weeks, inflicting the most serious blows to the group which was spreading fast in many provinces across Afghanistan. According to officials at Afghanistan's intelligence agency, the National Directorate of Security (NDS), Hafiz Saeed, the leader of the Islamic State in Khurasan has been killed along with other senior militants in a drone attack in eastern province of Nangarhar. The killing of the Islamic State leader is coming shortly after death of Shahidullah Shahid, another high-profile member of the group, who was also killed in a drone strike. Another senior militant killed in the attack is named as Gul Zaman who is said to be having a leading role in the Islamic State group in Afghanistan. The killings of three senior leaders of the Islamic State group operating in Afghanistan is indicating both seriousness of the threats of the new group taken by NATO and the government of Afghanistan, and the hostile ground conditions for Islamic State's emergence in Afghanistan.

Since last year, the Islamic State has been rapidly expanding and taking footholds in some eastern and southern provinces of Afghanistan. The group has been reported to be recruiting disgruntled members of the Taliban and other militants disappointed with the Taliban leadership over the course of the war against the Afghan government and the NATO-led international coalition in Afghanistan. The rapid expansion of the Islamic State group has come as an alarm for both the United States and the government of Afghanistan. Earlier, American commanders warned that the Islamic State group was actively recruiting fighters and expanding their presence, despite low-level contacts with the Islamic State's headquarters in Iraq and Syria. The government of Afghanistan took notice of the group most notably when they claimed responsibility for a deadly bombing in eastern Nangarhar province. While initially the group had low presence in provinces like Helmand and Nangarhar where they emerged, the group managed to quickly grow by taking advantage from hidden rifts and disappointment in Taliban ranks.

Now, the Islamic State group is a prominent militant force in eastern Nangarhar province while it has a significant presence in many other southern and eastern provinces as well. The Islamic State has opened a new front in the jihadi activities in Afghanistan putting the group at odds with the Taliban core militant group who has been a dominant militant player in the fight against NATO and Afghan government forces in last fourteen years. The opening of a new jihadi front in Afghanistan has profoundly worried the Taliban leadership who recently urged Islamic State leadership in Iraq and Syria to respect Taliban's monopoly on jihadi activities in Afghanistan. Sending a letter to Islamic State leader Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi, the Taliban Quetta Shura urged him to not open a parallel jihadi front in Afghanistan. Since then, the two groups have increasingly been turning hostile to each other,

making explicit threats and engaging in a deadly turf war in Farah and Nangarhar provinces. A post on the website of the Islamic State group openly threatened Taliban members to being killed and beheaded if they resisted against the Islamic State. The recent deadly clashes between the Taliban and the Islamic State group trashed all hopes of the Taliban leadership for a possible reconciliation with the new jihadi group.

It is quite probable that the fully-blown animosity between the Taliban and the Islamic State group has had a role in the recent killings of the leaders of the Islamic State group. The Islamic State group is embattled not only for its fight against the Taliban, but also by the Afghan and Pakistani intelligence agencies. There is a likelihood of cooperation between the Taliban, the Afghan intelligence agency and even the Pakistani spy agency in confronting the Islamic State. The Taliban is a number one enemy to the Islamic State Given the Taliban's deep influence among tribal structures in the southern provinces it is much easier for the Taliban to monitor activities of the Islamic State and use it against the group. The Afghan intelligence agency has had a remarkable role in the operations against senior leaders of the Islamic State. However, given the nature and times of the killings, it is quite probable that the Taliban may also have a role in the recent killings of the senior militants.

The Islamic State is a new fight for the government of Afghanistan. The Afghan government considers the Islamic State a highly serious threat for Afghanistan's long-term security given the group's ferocious tactics as well as its global agenda. Afghanistan has long started preparations for confronting the Islamic State with the NDS now carrying out operations against the new militant group. The government of Afghanistan needs to take all advantages existing for eliminating the Islamic State group including encouraging internal clashes between the militant groups and seeking help from Pakistan. The Islamic State is posing a highly unexpected threat to Afghanistan's long-term security. In addition to that, the multiplicity of the jihadi groups in Afghanistan would only further complicate the security situation and the potential peace efforts in the country.

Unlike Syria and Iraq, the Islamic State group has been unfortunate for rapidly expanding in Afghanistan. The group is considered as a threat by Pakistan, and pursued by the country's military and intelligence agencies inside the country. Despite sharing common jihadi objectives in Afghanistan, the animosity between the Islamic State and the Taliban will further exacerbate which would inevitably lead to more confrontation and clashes between the two groups. There is a hostile condition for the Islamic State in Afghanistan, while the group's ability to cope with any unexpected situation is also considerable. The recent killings of the Islamic State leaders would be a test for the group if it will be able to sustain the blows.

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Unveiling Some Bitter Facts

By Dilawar Sherzai

Though the evolution of human society has enabled them to achieve some marvellous achievements, they have not been able to achieve one of the most important aspects – they have not been able to develop a better society to live in. They have not been able to achieve order and true prosperity in their social lives; thus it can be said that the human designs generated by their so-called superior minds have achieved chaos and disorder, on the contrary. It is really unfortunate to note that human systems and ideologies have not portrayed the superior nature of human beings in practical life but instead has defamed them. Disorder and instability prevail in most parts of the world that is dominated by human beings. Ill-fatedly, our country is one of the same parts that have been highly influenced by disorder.

It is important to study the nature of the disorder that has dominated our society and its reason. It is generally believed that politics and politicians are entirely responsible for the current disorder and chaos and such a belief is difficult to reject as politicians have not left any other choice. Their attitude and behaviour have made the people think so and at the same time it has defamed politics.

However, this general belief tends to generalize the situation to a great extent and at the same time overshadows some of the important facts. Politics, as a matter of fact, is a social science and a sacred art. It is through politics that human beings can think of a society with a leadership, system and administration. Though defamed and corrupted to a certain extent, there is no other way out except than politics. The solution for the current chaos and disorder also lie within politics. At the same time, other people, other than the politicians also require to feel their responsibilities.

If we analyze Afghan society, we can see that there are myriads of problems that we face. We are confronted with many economic, social and political issues and multiplied with that is the fact that we are not completely prepared to solve them. Years of wars and instability have further influenced our capacities to face the challenges. And then there is the menace of corruption, which like an anaconda has tightened itself around the society in such a way that it has no chance of escape. Extremism and terrorism have penetrated deep within the roots of our society and have been threatening our people to a great extent. Disorder, disturbance and chaos are building hurdles in front of the designs of our authorities to establish order, discipline and dignity. The current chaos is, to a certain extent, because of our ruling elite as everyone can observe that they because of their negligence and self-centred incentives have made politics a joke. They are, in the true sense of politics, answerable to both politics and the people. Politicians, in fact, are to serve the people, facilitate the people with their basic requirements, guide the nation, lead

the nation towards a better system, solve the problems and issues and have the sense of responsibility. In our country, the politicians evade the people, fulfil their own requirements and demands, mislead the nation, never strive for political order and institutionalization, utilize the issues for their personal and group interests and do not have even slightest sense of responsibility.

On the other hand, because of the strategic importance of Afghanistan, it has been dominated by the international political games played by the world powers. In fact, imperialism blinded with extreme power has influenced the Afghan land to a large extent. "Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely," said by John Emerich, an English historian, politician & writer. I have no doubt in the correctness of this statement. You will not have as well, if you have a proper analysis of the contemporary international scenario. Few say that "Imperialism has died", while I believe it has taken a new birth, it has been transformed in what is more scary. The capacity of imperialism to exercise power has been enhanced by the availability of advanced mechanisms. No land is far away from the imperialists and no one can avoid their influences. They are the decision-makers, they decide the destiny of the nations and they determine the course of world order. A little happens in the favour of what they dislike. They follow their interests in weaker countries in different ways. They can launch a direct war, influence the other countries through cultural dominance or affect their policies through aid and assistance.

However, blaming the other countries for all of the disorders and disturbances has been one of the policies of our political leaders to avoid responsibility. It also helps them create a sense of lethal enemy who is always ready to destroy us and who has nothing else to ponder upon except our extinction. And we fall prey to such ill intentions and get ready to believe such concepts as a result of our blind and fanatic patriotism. In fact, in such a way we become ripe to be utilized by them the way they want.

A little political understanding and prudence can make us understand the games that are basically played by international world and our own rulers. On some occasions they make us be lost in the imaginations of an ideal society and on some others they slap us with the harsh realities to come back to the real world. What we understand is half-reality and half-lie, which is more dangerous than the whole-lie.

At the same time, it must not be forgotten that the understanding and attitude of the people have to be blamed to a certain extent as well for the chaos and disturbance in the society. If the rulers are not able to rule properly, they are also not able to understand their responsibilities and avoid performing them appropriately.

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