

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

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Law Enforcement Generates Optimism

Citizens are supposed to exercise their rights and freedoms without fear under democratic administrations. Their votes will elect president in a fair and transparent election. Parliament, the beating heart of democracy, will represent the true will and determination of a nation. A country's moral standards, social norms and cultural values will be mirrored in their constitution. All citizens will be equal in the eye of law irrespective of their racial, sexual or any other accidental backgrounds.

Violence should have no room within a democratic system and citizen's life is highly expensive. The main reason behind establishing law is to protect citizens' fundamental rights and prevent from anomy. Whenever one violates the rights of citizens, they have to be prosecuted - be it an ordinary individual or a high-ranking official. Hence, discriminating one on the basis of their social and political status will be a blow to democracy. Therefore, every citizen will be equal in the eye of law.

One will find no barriers to practice their freedoms, mainly freedoms of thoughts and expressions. Civil society will monitor the state, on behalf of the nation, to make sure that law is enforced justly and challenge unjust and impolitic exercises of the state. Media and civil society would be given the rights to voice against any social harms and anti-law performances done by state or an individual.

In a democratic system, division of powers is a significant issue. To decentralize power for preventing from authoritarianism, legislative, executive and judicial powers should be established and all the powers have to work independently. Needless to say, when all powers are centralized under single authority, the power-holder will show tendency towards atrocity and violate the rights and freedoms of citizens.

In post-Taliban Afghanistan, democracy took root to some extent and Afghan Constitution was approved by people's representatives in Loya Jirga on January 3, 2004. This constitution recognizes the natural and unalienable rights of people and their freedoms. As a result, Article 24 states, "Liberty is the natural right of human beings. This right has no limits unless affecting others freedoms as well as the public interest, which shall be regulated by law. Liberty and human dignity are inviolable. The state shall respect and protect liberty as well as human dignity." Similarly, freedom of expression and freedom of thoughts are also supported by law. "Freedom of expression shall be inviolable. Every Afghan shall have the right to express thoughts through speech...." Moreover, the constitution denies all kinds of discrimination and views all citizens equal. To put it succinctly, Afghan Constitution is based on democratic theories and recognizes United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

After the collapse of the Taliban's regime, the girls' schools were re-opened and women took active part in social, cultural and political arenas. A number of women gained significant posts. In short, the relative freedom and immature democracy were critical for women's progress.

Despite all the facts, democracy encounters serious challenges in Afghanistan. One of the main obstacles before the nascent democracy is warring factions. The Taliban fighters have inflict heavy casualties upon Afghan combatants and civilians and trampled upon their rights flagrantly. In other words, life is highly cheap and the blood of citizens, including that of women and children, is spilt without concern.

Meanwhile, administrative corruption is a barrier before democracy and law enforcement. Afghanistan's reputation has been damaged at the international level due to administrative corruption since the country is wrestling with corruption for more than a decade.

Although citizens are equal constitutionally, the rich violate the law with paying bribery and a large number of strongmen and officials break the law with impunity. In another item, the law is approved in the best way, however, it is not enforced properly. The judicial and executive systems are not parallel to legislative system.

It is hoped that democracy will be more prolific in Afghanistan so that our nation be able to exercise their rights and freedoms without barriers. Prayerfully, the government will implement the law equally and form a civil society void of violence, discrimination and corruption.

The government's recent seriousness in prosecuting the strongmen and restricting their power is praised by Afghan citizens and generated optimism for the law enforcement. Indeed, this issue will not be resolved overnight, but the government is expected to continue implementing the law strictly and treating all people equally.

No Excuse for Violence Against Children

By: Zoleka Mandela, Etienne Krug, and Howard Taylor

At the World Health Assembly in May, we made the case for why governments and United Nations agencies need to spend more on measures to prevent non-communicable diseases (NCDs), injury, and violence against children. One of us - Zoleka Mandela - spoke of losing her 13-year-old daughter to a drunk driver, and of suffering sexual violence as a child at the hands of adults who should have been taking care of her. "It was an abuse of power, and it was a violation of trust," she told the assembly. "It left me emotionally and mentally scarred. It led me to self-harm and to try to take my own life several times. It led to alcohol and drug dependency."

We hope this personal account of trauma will serve as a reminder to leaders around the world that violence, mental and sexual trauma, and substance abuse are interrelated issues that can have a deep and lasting impact on the lives of children. The evidence for this is overwhelming. In this year alone, an estimated one billion children will experience physical, sexual, or psychological violence at home, in school, online, and in their communities. One in four will suffer physical abuse; if they are girls, nearly one in five will suffer sexual abuse in their lifetimes.

Violence against children is persistent and pervasive, regardless of gender and geography. If we open our eyes, we will see a constant stream of stories about its victims. They come from all walks of life, from a young girl in India who reports that her family sold her to sex traffickers to the French actor Thierry Beccaro, who has revealed that he was brutally beaten by his father throughout his childhood.

What these and countless other trauma stories show is that the impact of violence lasts long after the abuse itself. Victims often experience lifelong social, emotional, and cognitive consequences. They are at higher risk not just of depression, anxiety, and suicide, but also heart disease, obesity, and HIV/AIDS. And these effects are regularly passed down to the next generation, because children who grow up in abusive homes are more likely to become abusers themselves, and to find themselves in abusive relationships as adults.

[Figure] Still, prevention is possible, response services can be made more available, and the political will to address the problem is at an all-time high. As part of the Sustainable Development Agenda in 2015, world leaders committed to ending all forms of violence, abuse, and neglect against children by 2030. To defend the right of every child to live free from fear, neglect, abuse, and exploitation, the Global Partnership to End Violence against Children and its associated Fund were established in 2016. The same year, the World Health Organization issued its INSPIRE report, outlining seven strategies that have proven successful in reducing violence against

children.

Health policy is a crucial component of progress, and there are some encouraging signs on this front. In 2017, for example, India's National Health Policy identified gender violence as one of the country's seven major public-health concerns. Likewise, Rwanda's national reproductive health strategy now includes prevention and response to sexual violence as a top priority.

In addition to these specific examples, a broader effort is underway to promote universal health coverage for children, and to coordinate policies between ministries of health and child protective services. More governments and public-health agencies are recognizing the link between violence and mental health, and are taking positive steps to provide psychosocial support for victims.

But the battle is not won. Violence-prevention and response services are still absent in many areas; where services are available, children are too often treated without the benefit of evidence-based protocols. From medicine and counseling to criminal justice, large segments of the public sector in some countries lack appropriately trained professionals to care for child survivors of violence.

The global health community has confronted similar challenges before. There has been tremendous progress toward ending childhood deaths from malaria, tuberculosis, and other preventable diseases. These gains are the result of political and financial commitments, and of sustained attention and action on the part of governments and multilateral institutions. The same level of commitment and action is needed to address the scourge of violence against children.

Making the investments needed to end violence against children will also accelerate progress toward a number of other Sustainable Development Goals. But if we do not make those investments, the hard-fought progress that has already been made toward universal health care, high-quality education, and other SDGs will be offset, or even reversed.

Nelson Mandela once observed that, "There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children." To keep the momentum from the WHA's 72nd session this year, we must appreciate the personal stories and shocking statistics about the ongoing scourge of violence against children. Finding inspiration in the progress made so far, world leaders must redouble their commitment to ensure that all children are afforded the safety and opportunities they deserve.

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Equal Education is the Right of Every Afghan Child

By: M. Rezaie

There are dozens of Afghan families who have lost their family man during the civil war and do not have any one to financially support their families. In order to overcome this matter, these families prefer their school age children to work rather than attending school. Orphan school age children and unsheltered ladies cleaning the cars on crossroads in Kabul city is one of the most visible and clear example of the poverty rate in the country. There are number of children around seven year old cleaning and washing cars while tolerating the virus polluted air, till late evening across the roads in the cities. There are families whose children are sleeping hungry during the night. The civil war era demolished the infrastructures of the country which has resulted the nation to fight for survival and run after a loaf of bread instead struggling for better change in their life style.

The lack of school and quality materials has extensively affected the standard and quality of education in the country. Since the transitional government was established in 2002, many international and nation organizations have rushed in Afghanistan. They have been working to reconstruct the war-torn infrastructures of the country. But unfortunately; there are still schools that are housed in tents instead of building. Schools that are housed in tents can be easily targeted by the extremist militants than the ones housed in buildings. Schools without building are more vulnerable and the parents do not dare to allow their children attend the schools housed in tents. The offensive conditions of schools and the

low quality study materials are demoralizing the children to attend schools. In addition, the curriculums being applied in schools and universities of Afghanistan are out of date and none-standard. This is the age of technology and civilization, but poor Afghan children do not have access to a world class educational curriculum yet. Low quality study materials and limited numbers of schools with very limited facilities are the other factors that have contributed to the declining graph of educational standards.

In contrast to other countries, the dullest students are being filtered and placed in education and training faculties of the government universities in Afghanistan. This policy of the government itself is a huge risk for the quality of education and degrades the educational standard. In addition, in comparison to other societies; the teachers are not being considered as the vital human resources the of the government civil service structure. This is the basic issue that neither the government nor the nation is concentrating on. The wage for a primary grade teacher is not more than 8500 AFN in a month which is even less than a simple clerk's salary working in a ministry. This situation and injustice with the teachers have caused the intelligent students to ignore this field and the government has got no option other than placing students with the lowest score in these faculties. We initially need to have and train qualified teachers in order to have qualified ruling leaders. The primary solutions to the current issues are educating the new generations of the country and critically thinking of developing useful peace strategies.

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