

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



June 13, 2017

'Protect Children from Child Labor'

June 12 was observed as the International Day against Child Labor in different countries around the world. The day was basically launched by International Labor Organization (ILO) in 2002 in order to focus considerations on the important issue of child labor all over the world and highlight actions and determinations to eradicate this threat. On 12th June every year, NGOs, civil society organizations and media raise voices to highlight the troubles of the child labors and inspire governments and international organizations to carry out measures to control them.

As per the information from ILO there are around 168 million children who remain trapped in child labor, many of them work full-time. Today, throughout the world, around 215 million children work, many full-time. They do not go to school and have little or no time to play. Many do not receive proper nutrition or care.

The environment they work in is mostly inappropriate and, therefore, they are susceptible to maltreatment, delinquencies, violence, drug addiction and trafficking, and sexual exploitation.

There are many among them who do not get even proper nutrition and medication. In brief, they do not avail any sort of opportunity to live like children and have suitable sustenance that can assist them in becoming energetic and optimistic members of the society.

This year the theme of the day was 'in conflicts and disasters, protect children from child labor'.

The theme was selected because globally over 1.5 billion people live in countries that are affected by conflict, violence and fragility. At the same time, around 200 million people are affected by disasters every year. A third of them are children. A significant proportion of the 168 million children engaged in child labor live in areas affected by conflict and disaster. Keeping this information in mind, it is important to tackle the issue of child labor in such areas on top priority basis. One of the basic reasons of the child labor is, undoubtedly, the growing poverty. The countries that suffer from poverty and instability have the highest ratio of child labor. Afghanistan is also among the same countries.

According to a rough calculation around 8 million children in Afghanistan are caught into child labor.

Child labors are exposed to crimes and maltreatment to a risky extent, especially the ones who are employed by shop-owners, mechanics and small firms. They are even put to violent treatment by their employers on pity matters. Further, another concerning factor regarding the plight of the children in Afghanistan is the growing number of child beggars.

Families, stricken with intense poverty, do not hesitate even to send their children for begging. Apart from that, there are professional beggars who utilize the helpless children for the begging purposes. The children are even abducted for the same purpose. The phenomenon of violence against children is multifaceted. It involves recruitment of children by armed forces and armed groups.

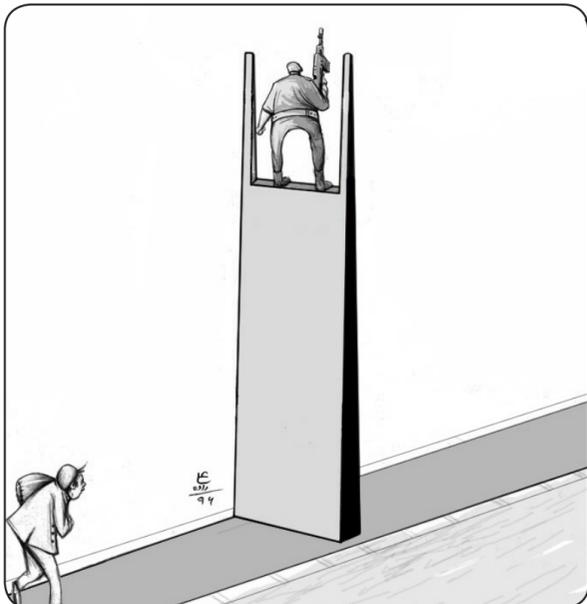
The involvement of armed forces in this regard is really embarrassing. The recruitment that is carried out by militant groups is mostly for the purpose of carrying out suicide attacks through them, who because of their immaturity or because of the intense pressure do not understand the incentive of their actions.

There have been many incidents of suicide attacks in different parts of the country, wherein the attacker were below 16 years of age. Apart from that the children are also welcomed by the militant groups with the intention to have a cadre that they can train in accordance to their own will, within their training camps.

It is important that the menace of child labor should be tackled before it is too late. However, the situation does not seem to be getting well as the insecurity and poverty seem to be strengthening their roots in the country and the government is not doing enough to curb the situation.

There are clear indications and many concerned authorities also believe that child labors is on the rise, and the government has not been able to do anything tangible in this regard. Moreover, insecurity has discouraged investments to a large extent; on the other hand, there is change in the wages of the people, therefore, they are not able to fulfill the overgrowing necessities of life and become compelled to send their children to work as well.

The proper nourishment of the children, their character development and their education are the most important considerations to contemplate on, if the government is really serious to safeguard the rights of the children. The same children are going to be the builders of future; their proper care should be ascertained through every possible means. Apart from the government the members of the society can also play a tremendous role in diminishing discrimination against the children, saving them from child labor, uplifting their morale and supporting them in becoming responsible members of the society.



Management and Significance of Procurement System

By Zia Danish

Founding National Procurement Office and Commission is one of the state's significant achievements in a transparent and responsible campaign against corruption. Within the two past years, this institution has investigated 2,500 procurement contracts with the value of 375 billion AFs - 2100 cases which have been approved includes various construction projects, goods and services.

As a result of this investigation, 18.3 billion Afghans were economized and the waste of 45 billion Afghans was prevented. The National Procurement Office blacklisted 120 companies for its violation and corruption. Their cases were sent to judicial organs. The meetings of the National Procurement Commission have been supervised by domestic and international institutions. Procurement Office, which has been created and managed by the national youths, reveals the youths' abilities and capabilities. Now the question is that why controlling and managing the procurement system is important?

In 1990s, the public procurement system was considered an economic-strategic activity in the world and its strategic significance has increased, since defects and mistakes in this regard will affect the entire development programs of a country.

According to economic experts, procurement system is in direct and permanent connection with a country's administrative and economic system. A sound procurement system will lead to economic, social and political stability and pave the ground for business extension, employment and infrastructural facilities in different fields, including health and education.

On the other hand, about 19 per cent GDP and 50 per cent national budget will be spent through public procurement system, which requires meticulous supervision and more control. The problems due to weak procurement system in the past prompted the government to establish a National Procurement Office and Commission under the authority of country's law with the aim of better service delivery, transparent and effective system, control of public expenditure and anti-corruption campaign.

To understand the need for National Procurement Office and Commission, first it is essential to know the significance of controlling various contracts and projects for Afghanistan. It is believed that the country's big challenges such as the issue of administrative corruption, the low-quality projects, delay in implementing the projects, etc. are caused by strong weakness in controlling procurement system in the past.

The study in submitting the projects to various companies in the past shows the projects' low quality and ineffective and dissatisfactory services to the citizens despite paying large amount of money to the companies. Within the past years, billions of dollars poured in without a tangible result due to corruption and irresponsibility in contracts, which led the world and the nation to lose their confidence in public institutions. Recognizing the importance and status of procurement and contract, the National Unity Government (NUG) targeted the heart of corruption and took high step in this respect.

The National Procurement Commission

The National Procurement Commission is composed of the President, the Chief Executive Officer, Second Vice President, and ministers of Finance, Economy, Justice and the Senior Advisor to the President. President is the head of the Commission. Based on article 54 of the Procurement Law, review and approval of grant-

ing the procurement contract - which is outside the mandate of the granting head - taking reports from the granting heads of departments about the implementation of contracts, evaluating the proposals regarding the award contracts, deciding on refusing, restoring or approving contracts, making decision based on the country's interests, etc. are the responsibility and authority of the Commission.

The National Procurement Office

Based on article 56 of the Procurement Law, the National Procurement Office operates with the aim of: improving procurement system, arranging politics and logistic plan, monitoring the logistic periods, facilitating the procurement, ensuring the quality of contracts in the frame of the General Directorate of the Office of Presidential Affairs and also reports its activities to the Commission.

Institutionalizing systematic, effective and efficient procurement order at local and national level, strengthening the culture of transparency in public expenditure, supporting a safe and transparent ground for procurement services, strengthening a sound competition among the volunteer contract-makers, upholding the rights to data access about procurement, etc. are parts of the 16 objectives of this office. It also has ten principles such as creating transparency and responsibility, fighting corruption, providing justice in providing facilities, etc.

Achievements

From the establishment up to now, the National Procurement Office and Commission had great achievements regarding the reform and improvement in procurement system which are pointed out shortly:

- 1-Reviving and promoting the trust of the international community about fighting corruption in the current administration.
- 2-Attracting support from donor countries to spend more through Afghanistan's national budget.
- 3-Attracting the support and trust of the institutions fighting corruption at national and international level.
- 4-Attracting the public trust.
- 5-Economizing about eighteen and half billion Afghans in spending over contracts.
- 6-Preventing the waste of about 50 billion Afghans.
- 7-Finding out and boycotting tens of corrupt companies.
- 8-Paving the grounds for fair provision of economic facilities for all public and private sectors.
- 9-Establishing and using modern systems and technologies to facilitate procurement services.
- 10-Boosting national self-confidence and displaying the youths' abilities.

Considering the role of public procurement in developing economic system, the establishment of National Procurement Office and Commission is a great achievement for the government. Through investigating hundreds of contracts, these institutions have gained great achievements in controlling, monitoring and fighting corruption, economizing and preventing from the looting of public properties, and ensuring transparency.

The current procurement system, which offers services via modern methods, has been appreciated nationally and internationally and gained international trust in fighting corruption and offering effective services.

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Terrorism - A Global Threat

By Hujjatullah Zia

When Jeremy Christian hurls abuse at two dark-skinned women and stabs Ricky John Best, Taliesin Myrddin Namkai-Meche and Micah David-Cole Fletcher, when English-born suicide bomber Salman Abedi detonates a backpack bomb during a concert by pop singer Ariana Grande at the Manchester Arena - leaving 22 people dead and more than 100 wounded - when suicide attacker strikes Kabul with a massive truck bomb leaving more than 500 dead and wounded, and when gunmen attack Iran's parliament the global conscience will be outraged. The four gory incidents occurred in four different countries killing people from various race, color and creed, but no matter where and on which grounds the blood of mankind is spilt, one's conscience will be shaken and senses will go numb.

Terrorism has been changed into a global threat and warring factions seek to cultivate their fundamental ideology in the hearts and minds of vulnerable groups in any corner of the world. The self-styled Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) - which claimed responsibility for the Manchester attack and called Abedi "a soldier of the caliphate" - has extended the realm of its influence globally overnight despite losing ground in Iraq and Syria recently. This group has intensified their attacks and massacred a large number of people, including women and children, in different parts of the world in the holy month of Ramadan. In this month, war is considered forbidden.

However, the groups that claim to fight for religion shed streams of blood and compound violence in this month. It is self-explanatory that the militants carry out deadly attacks under the mask of religion without having the basic knowledge about religious tenets. There are two main reasons behind painting their mentality with the brush of religion. First, they tend to prey upon the vulnerable groups.

There are a number of youths who easily fall for the militants venomous preach for growing up in racial and radical backgrounds. For instance, those who are born in harsh and tribal structure will succumb to militants' rhetoric. Second, terrorist networks aim to legitimize their acts of terror in a veil of religious secrecy. Otherwise, they will have no means of justification for their followers and fail to recruit fighters. In brief, faith and religion have been exploited throughout the history by kings and religious institutions and this trend continues by warring factions in our time.

The May 31 terrorist attack in Kabul has been strongly condemned by Afghan religious scholars and said to be against religious sharia. Subsequently, the militants attacked Shaura-e-Okhovat Islami

(Islamic Brotherhood Council) in which civilians, including clerics, were killed and wounded on June 06. Hence, the militants seek to impose their warped mind at gunpoint and opposing their mindsets will be followed by death.

The flagrant violation of human rights and liberty is highly outrageous. It is globally accepted that people are born free with natural, inalienable and inviolable rights. In other words, Afghanistan's Constitution and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) assert that all people should be able to exercise their rights without barrier and "freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people."

The recent bloodshed by terrorist groups, mainly ISIL, will fill one with a strong sense of fear and hatred. According to the United Nations, ISIL fighters have killed more than 160 people in one day last week to prevent them from fleeing western Mosul. "The brutality of Daesh [ISIL] and other terrorist groups seemingly knows no bounds," Zeid bin Ra'ad al-Hussein, the UN's human rights chief, is cited as saying.

Currently, a large number of people are suffering amidst violence and bloodshed throughout the region and threatened around the globe by terrorist networks. No mercy is shown to women and children, who are highly susceptible to militancy. In 21st century, terrorism is a great challenge before human societies.

Now the world will have to prevent from the streams of blood being shed in every nook and cranny. The terrorists' widespread and indiscriminate attacks on Muslims, non-Muslims, men, women and children of any race and ethnicity reveal their barbarity and desire for killing.

At the international peace conference in Kabul on Tuesday - when a number of Afghans were killed and wounded in Herat province - Afghan President Ashraf Ghani once again called warring parties to stop violence and come to negotiating table.

"We are offering a chance for peace but this is not an open-ended offer. Time is running out... this is the last chance, take it or face consequences".

He added, "If Taliban wants to join peace talks, the Afghan government will allow them to open an office, but this is their last chance". Afghan officials have constantly called the Taliban to hold peace talks, but this offer was denied up to now. To mitigate the escalated insurgency, the world will have to form a strong coalition force, including eastern and western countries, or else the sufferings of human societies will continue.

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