

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



June 20, 2017

On World Refugee Day

June 20th is celebrated as the World Refugee Day around the world. The Day was adopted in December 2000, when United Nations (UN) General Assembly passed resolution 55/76, wherein it was emphasized that the rights of the refugees must be protected. This year the day is being celebrated with great commitment as the number of refugees worldwide has increased to a large extent and many of them are not even sure of their futures. Last year, UN Refugee Agency launched its #WithRefugees petition that was delivered to UN headquarters in New York. The petition asked the governments to: 1. Ensure every refugee child gets an education; 2. Ensure every refugee family has somewhere safe to live; and 3. Ensure every refugee can work or learn new skills to make a positive contribution to their community. These objectives should be echoed further on this refugee day and the days after it.

It is important to note that a considerable number of refugees belongs to Afghanistan. Migration has always been an issue for Afghanistan. Different eras of instability have forced millions of people to leave their homeland and move to the neighboring countries and other countries, mostly Europe, USA, Canada and Australia. After the downfall of Taliban and installation of a so-called democratic government, there were some opportunities that the situation could improve and the conditions in the country could get better and people would ultimately return to their country. Regrettably, with an intensification in insecurity people do not appear to be very much confident about the future and many people who have already migrated waver to come back and many of those who are in the country are planning to leave for better future.

Those who decide to migrate are caught in different sorts of problems; nevertheless, they are ready to take the risks and leave their homes. They have to undergo different problems on the way to their destinations as most of the times they have to follow illegal means. They have to face human smugglers, cross borders illegally, face different weather conditions and travel across mountains, rivers and even sea. There have been different incidents when the migrants have lost their lives on these routes. On many occasions, Afghan migrants lost their lives in the waters of Greece on their route to Europe or in Indonesian and Australian waters.

This clearly depicts that people do not take decisions to migrate because of economic conditions, alone; rather, they do so mostly because of the security conditions. Lately, the migrants include many individuals from media and different offices, who having observed the situation in the country closely and then they have opted to flee. Therefore, it is no more the issue of ignorance or tough economic conditions as the decisions are taken by well-educated individuals who are educated and even have jobs.

Unfortunately, the ones who reach other countries after myriads of problems are not guaranteed secure future. As the issue of refugees has become very serious, many countries are not sure about allowing refugees in their countries. Particularly, European countries, after facing a flux of refugees are planning to deport many Afghan refugees. Germany that initially welcomed refugees is now not even sure of what to do with many of Afghan refugees in their country. Same is the case with other European countries. The Afghan government on the other hand seems worried about the deportation of the Afghan refugees. The Afghan Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation had said earlier that Afghanistan would not accept the deported asylum seekers as it would not be in a situation to compensate for their living. Moreover, the policies and procedures regarding the cases of different refugee in European countries have also changed to a great extent. There are many Afghan refugees in European countries who have been waiting for the final decision about their cases and in the meanwhile are not in a condition to move freely, earn livelihood and travel to different places and or meet their family members.

Even in the neighboring countries, Afghan refugees have not always been welcomed with warm hugs; every now and then they have been the victims of discrimination and ill-treatment. Most of the Afghan refugees in the neighboring countries, especially in Iran and Pakistan have suffered the consequences of fluctuations in the way they are treated. Definitely, it has been generous of both the countries to compensate the Afghan refugees, who because of wars and instability left their dear homeland, but on certain occasions they have also displayed the attitude that have violated the rights of the refugees to a great extent. Definitely, these countries have their own problems; they are developing countries and they have their own economic issues to face; however, they have been supported by international community and United Nations to assist the refugees and guarantee their rights under international law.

Both the European and neighboring countries at this crucial juncture must make sure that they design a clear strategy regarding the fate of Afghan refugees. Definitely, there are political and diplomatic concerns for all the governments of the world to consider, but the issue of refugees is more important than such concerns, as it involves the precious human lives and the lives of human beings stand more sacred than any other concern.



Growing Hate Crime

By: Hujjatullah Zia

None of us should tolerate these extremists. They have killed in many countries. They have killed people of different faiths - more than any other, they have killed Muslims. Their actions are irreconcilable with the rights of human beings, the progress of nations, and with Islam. The Holy Koran teaches that whoever kills an innocent, it is as if he has killed all mankind; and whoever saves a person, it is as if he has saved all mankind. The enduring faith of over a billion people is so much bigger than the narrow hatred of a few.

Islam is not part of the problem in combating violent extremism - it is an important part of promoting peace," these words have been spoken by the former US President Barack Obama in his popular speech titled "The New Beginning" in Egypt.

The series of deadly attacks and suicide bombings carried out by terrorist networks reveal this fact that Muslims bear the brunt of terrorism. For instance, a surge of militancy in Afghanistan in the holy month of Ramadan left scores of people, including women and children, dead and wounded.

There is also a sense of foreboding in the air and individuals fear falling victim to terrorist acts. Religious extremists kill people indiscriminately and seek to sow the seeds of discord and conflict among the sects and nations. Therefore, they spread hatred and incite hate crime. A number of individuals fall for the sinister objective of terrorist groups acting violently against Muslims. The death of the 17-year-old Muslim female Nabra in Sterling, Virginia on Monday bespeaks of hate crime. She was abducted after leaving her local mosque and found dead.

Last month, Jeremy Christian harassed two Muslim women. The horror unfolded on board a MAX light-rail train as it pulled into the Hollywood Transit Center on the afternoon of May 27.

He stabbed three men, who sought to calm him down, before leaving the train - two of which were dead. Christian was known as White Supremacist in the Portland Area. This event was said to be hate crime.

According to a report by the Council on American-Islamic Affairs (CAIR), an Islamic civil rights organization, released in May, there was a "57 percent increase in anti-Muslim bias incidents" from 2015 to 2016. "This was accompanied by a 44 percent increase in anti-Muslim hate crimes in the same period," the report found.

Stereotyping Muslims on the basis of violent practices of extremists who happened to be Muslims and acting towards them violently will be highly naïve of one. Muslims are the great victims of terrorist groups and sustained heavy casualties as a result of militancy and terrorism. So, one cannot conclude that violence lies in the nature of Muslims.

A number of political pundits believe that terrorism is more a political issue than a religious one and militant fighters carry out a proxy war. Most likely, if trading weapons are restricted and the mysterious hand behind terrorist activities is cut, fundamental groups will not be able to continue the war so strongly.

It should be noted that seeking revenge through murdering an ethnic or religious individual - as Nabra fell victim to it - will stoke sectarian violence and is counterproductive. Such unfair acts will spark off public sentiments and also trigger fundamental groups to intensify their attacks. Creating multi-national tension is of the main objectives of terrorist networks. Pursuing hate crime is tantamount to succumbing to militants' goal.

The streams of blood spilt by terrorists should not be multiplied by our own. We need to respect and protect the rights and dignity of mankind rather than supporting terrorism through turning against one another.

The world needs to spread the spirit of brotherhood and extend religious tolerance. The bloodshed is a stain on collective conscience. When a Christian is killed in a corner of America, when a Muslim's blood is shed in Syria and when a Buddhist's right is violated in Thailand, these are all outrageous to human conscience. Chanting slogans against ethnic groups or treating them harshly will multiply the tension rather than defusing it.

We are all responsible to work for the day when all nations embrace one another with strong sense of tolerance. We have to strengthen cooperation rather than conflict. So, it will be unfair to pigeonhole a nation on the basis of individual's acts.

It is really cruel to see that a person is held responsible for the action of others. In short, we will never have society void of violence unless we treat one another with the spirit of brotherhood and broaden our horizon so as not to stereotype a group or nation. To mitigate insurgency, the world has to extend cooperation and avoid conflict.

Hujjatullah Zia is the permanent writer of the Daily Outlook Afghanistan. He can be reached at zia_hujjat@yahoo.com

Consequences of Ethnic and Religious Movements

By: Mohammad Baqirian

We are supposed to view the pains and sufferings inflicted upon us within the history. Our history should be an eye-opener for the nation. We all should learn the positive and negative aspects of the past so as to expand the realm of our tolerance. We need to view the history deeply and not forget our past. We should point out the issues which bond us and strengthen the sense of empathy and harmony and let not the history repeat itself.

Although we have a dark history, we are still able to review our past and brighten our future and lighten a candle in the dark air of disappointment. Considering the past, we can prevent from the repetition of the bitter facts. In brief, our history will beckon us from wrong path to the right one and it is a candle in the darkness. Our nation remembers the racial and religious conflicts which murdered, wounded and amputated thousands of people and displaced millions of others. These are all lessons to be learnt. We need to learn lesson that destruction, despotic and exclusive movements and self-superiority and authoritative act will lead to a risky quagmire. The mass killings, amputating women's heads and breasts, horrible violence, the flow of streams of blood in Kabul and tens of tragic incidents still haunt our minds.

All these cannibalistic issues were the results of self-centered and cruel acts of despotic individuals. Do you not think that these issues should be an eye-opener for our nation? Our past horrible events are believed to be enough lessons for all centuries of our generation, if we are able to realize this fact.

We are to open the pages of our history to learn them. It is aptly said that if one does not learn a lesson from the history, s/he will change into a lesson for the history. Our past is an ocean of lesson and one needs to realize it deeply.

Recently, tribal and authoritative practices are on the rise. Our world changes into hell as a result of triggering the public sentiments, chanting racial and tribal slogans, denouncing people and tribes, playing with the minds of people, etc. Politics and management do not necessarily mean playing with individuals' feelings and sentiments. Exploiting the naïve, honest and energetic youths and risking their lives means neither politics nor demanding rights.

The individuals who think about nothing other than position and high political status, hide themselves behind others and push the youths to death so as to gain

their own self-interests and objectives. In short, they use the youths and the surge of their sentiments as human shield. Such political opportunists are responsible before the history.

Creating conflicts among people for gaining position will be a big crime and a betrayal to the nation. Let people practice love and brotherhood towards one another and remain equal so that tolerance and empathy grow stronger and they will no more threaten one another on the basis of caste, color and creed. Let people erase the dark history of violence and hatred through practicing tolerance. Let the ethnic wounds not bleed again through despotism and selfishness.

The contempt for the right of one ethnic group or another is increasing in social media. Insulting tribal elders and generalizing it to the same tribe will spark off hatred and mistrust. The past ethnic wounds will start bleeding and rage and hatred will be widespread. A number of emotional individuals are believed to spread hatred and widen the gap among the nation for being used as political vehicle.

It should be noted that our social challenges will not be alleviated and our wounds will not be healed through using foul language against an ethnic group or insulting them. Such acts will further multiply the challenges and lessen the possibility of getting out of this quagmire. One should know that contempt for a group or using foul language against them will trigger mutual hatred. The humiliated group will certainly show negative reaction. So, one will conclude that spreading hatred will lead to discord and disharmony.

Hence, let us not empower those who sow the seed of animosity and hatred.

In conclusion, it should be said that if the acts of some individuals continue, as it is the same today, we will again turn to our tragic past. In other words, with the continuation of the same trend, people might turn against one another. For instance, the social disorder will become out of control - the demagogue politicians will be responsible in such a case.

People are exhausted from war, violence, hatred and mistrust. Creating disagreement and widening the gap should be ended.

Let us hope that the streams of blood will stop in the near future and this country be no more a butchery of mankind. Since the nation has suffered for life time, it is hoped that it will heave a sigh of relief.

Mohammad Baqirian is the permanent writer of the Daily Outlook Afghanistan. He can be reached at the outlookafghanistan@gmail.com

Chairman / Editor-in-Chief: Moh. Reza Huwaida

Vice-Chairman: Kazim Ali Gulzari

Email: outlookafghanistan@gmail.com

Phone: 0093 (799) 005019/777-005019

www.outlookafghanistan.net



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