

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



March 07, 2015

Government should Take Stern Action against Power Abusers

Man suffers, not only when the part of the world in which he is residing is hit by natural calamities like earthquakes, famines, floods, diseases, etc., but occasionally also at the hands of men driven mad by political, economic or social power. In both types of situations response from the rest of humanity is spontaneous. In the former case, it takes the form of efforts to bring relief to the stricken. But whenever man has been made to suffer at the hands of other men, the conscience of humanity has been jolted, and the cry has gone round for some sort of guarantees to afford protection to him against the tyranny of his fellow human beings, so that he can be assured of at least his rights to life, liberty and security.

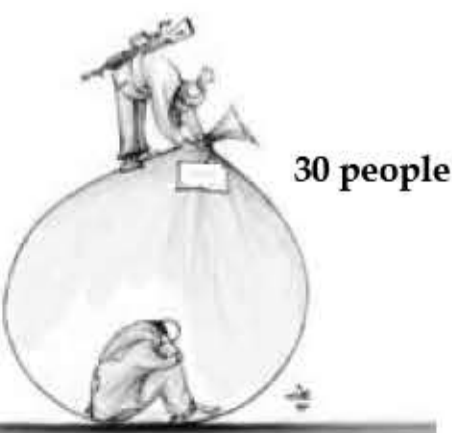
The Bonn Agreement of 2001 established the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) as a national human rights institution to protect and promote human rights and to investigate human rights abuses and war crimes. The Afghanistan Constitution of 2004 entrenched the existence of the AIHRC. While the ongoing turmoil, violence and reconstruction efforts often make it difficult to get an accurate sense of what is going on, various reports from NGOs have accused various branches of the Afghan government of engaging in human rights violations. There have also been various human rights abuses by foreign soldiers on Afghan civilians. Consequently men of high integrity and unblemished history must be opted for this credential office.

The values of freedom, respect for human rights and the principle of holding periodic and genuine elections by universal suffrage are essential elements of democracy. In turn, democracy provides the natural environment for the protection and effective realization of human rights. These values are embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and further developed in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights which enshrine a host of political rights and civil liberties underpinning meaningful democracies.

Irrespective to the aforementioned declaration of human rights, Afghanistan shows a dismal picture of law and order accompanied with the rampant human right violation. Insecurity, crimes against humanity, increasing violence against women and children, lack of access to education, torture and killing of the innocent people either by Taliban NATO forces, Afghan forces or war lords are just some of the human rights violations happening in our country.

In the absence of an effective national judicial system, the right to judicial protection has been compromised as uneven local standards have prevailed in criminal trials. Fair trial principles are enshrined in the Afghan constitution and the criminal procedure, but frequently violated for various reasons, including the lack of well-educated, professional staff (especially defense lawyers), lack of material resources, corruption and unlawful interference by warlords and politicians. Many conflicts within a country is sparked by a failure to protect human rights, and the trauma that results from severe human rights violations often leads to new human rights violations. As conflict intensifies, hatred accumulates and makes restoration of peace more difficult. In order to stop this cycle of violence, states must institute policies aimed at human rights protection. Civilians frequently have been killed in battles between warlord forces. Poor conditions in the overcrowded prisons have contributed to illness and death amongst prisoners. Previously, the Human Rights Watch (HRW) released its report titled "Today We Shall All Die" holds public officials and strongman responsible for grave human rights violation and calls on new President Ashraf Ghani and his government to prosecute officials and commanders whose serious human rights abuses have long gone unpunished. The report stated the former Afghan government and the United States had enabled powerful and abusive individuals and their forces to commit atrocities for too long without being prosecuted. The report compiled based on 125 interviews HRW had carried out since August 2012 profiles eight "strongmen" linked to police, intelligence, and militia forces responsible for serious abuses in recent years.

The HRW not only demands the head of the state to bring the accused individuals to book, but also asks the United States and other aid donors to press Afghanistan to prosecute government and security force officials guilty of serious human rights violations. Holding powerful individuals accountable should be a top priority, the rights group said in a report, as impunity fuels support for the Taliban and raises concern about efforts to train and supply Afghanistan's security forces. The report demands United States to help prosecuting the power abusers for extra-judicial killings who were installed subsequent to overthrow of Taliban. The aforementioned human rights violation ranged from individual official to institutional. These human rights violations are the matter of great concern for international community extending donation in various fields. The donor countries demands for guarantees withholding human rights. The government must take prior measures in protecting and promoting human rights. International community and human right organizations strongly back the oppressed section of Afghan society suffering massive human rights violation and ask for the protection and promotion of fundamental human rights. Earning a pro-humanist image before international community brings ease to public and economical gain to the poverty stricken country. Consequently any unwise decision affecting human rights affairs should imminently be revised. It is high time the government takes serious actions against power manipulators and law abusers that could restrain them exploiting the powerlessness of poor masses.



A Different Perspective about Negotiations with Taliban

By Muhammad Rasool Shah

Behind the curtains, there seems to be efforts underway to broker a deal with Taliban and making them agree to lay down their weapons and join the national stream. Not affirmed by any source in the government, there were a number of less-resounding and almost silent news in national and international media that showed the increasing eagerness of government for making this happen. Taliban's office in Qatar has once again become active and there were the reports of a visit of Taliban's representatives to Pakistan where they met top Pakistani officials. There were also reports of a close interaction of Afghan and Pakistani officials on the occasion of this visit and it was closely monitored by the governments on both the sides of border. The prime objective of this communication was to make sure that the process should not end fruitlessly and with objections and complaints from the stakeholders against each other, as it happened a number of times in past. Due to repeated rounds of fruitless talks between the involved parties, Taliban were always doubtful of the sincerity of Afghan government in making these talks fruitful and Afghan government also complained of the promises not honored by Taliban.

Whatever may be the reason, international powers and Afghan government during the reign of ex-president Hamid Karzai never ignored the needs of talks with Taliban. Out of many possible ways to bring peace and stability to Afghanistan, talks with Taliban had the priority as it was the safest, stable and most desirable solution of this conflict between the government and Taliban. However, the efforts of government were not successful in past due to a number of reasons. Although a special government body by the name of High Peace Council was established which had reasonable authority in brokering a deal with Taliban and large numbers of Taliban were released from prisons in Afghanistan and Pakistan, the results of the peace process were never satisfactory. Till his last days in power, Ex-President Hamid Karzai regarded these talks much essential for the future stability of Afghanistan but he was much disappointed by the negative role of a number of regional and international powers in this regard. According to Mr. Karzai, these powers were involved in derailing the talks or they did not show the interest needed for the successful completion of these talks. According to political experts, it was necessary that government should have worked to establish good understanding with the regional and international powers before making efforts to win the trust of Taliban.

When Mr. Ghani came into power, he and the Chief Executive expressed their desire to make all the efforts to bring Taliban back on the table of negotiations and this time, he did not repeat the mistakes of the past government. Before the talks could have been initiated with Taliban, the President paid a warm visit to Pakistan which resulted in the gradual improvement of relations between the two countries and with the efforts and cooperation from both the sides, both the countries are experiencing the best relations of history. Peshawar attack resulted in the increased interaction between the two countries to tackle the menace of terrorism with mutual cooperation. Afghan government and forces did their best to push into Pakistani area the terrorists who had carried out Peshawar attacks and then escaped across the border into Afghan soil. It is an undeniable fact that the relations between these two neighbors are really essential if they want peace both in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Due to the wide border, the

similarities between the people on both the sides of border in a number of Afghan and Pakistani provinces, the easy and uncontrollable infiltration of terrorists across the border are a few of many reasons when they rely on each other for controlling terrorism. In such circumstances, it becomes necessary that both the countries should work together to fight the mutual enemy. It is also a fact on record that past Afghan governments have achieved nothing by blaming Pakistan of sending Taliban to Afghanistan and providing them with a safe haven in different parts of Pakistan.

These accusations and blames have only deteriorated the relations between the two countries and had adverse effects on the trust-building measures needed for the promotion of dialogue. The present strategy of both the governments to build trust and deepen the relations is really optimistic and has been hailed by all the powers of the world. Without going into the results and achievements of past peace talks with Taliban, the need of peace talks has always been felt by Afghan governments due to a number of facts. The most interesting is the fact of local and international Taliban. According to political experts, there are present a number of Taliban groups. There are Taliban who are sponsored by international powers who work for successful attainment of the objectives of their foreign masters, there are present Taliban sponsored by regional powers (mostly Pakistan and in some cases, Iran is also blamed in this regard), who carry out terror acts on the orders of their masters and there are local Taliban who still think that they are fighting a holy war. They are not sponsored by any power and though they are said to be small in number and weak in supplies, they are said to be really enthusiastic due to their emotional attachment with their cause. Afghan government has repeatedly said that these Taliban are misguided and they may lay down their weapons if shown the true picture. It is the reason why, a wide-scale media campaign is carried out throughout the year by Afghan government when these 'angry brothers' are invited to join peace and contribute their share in the stability and progress of the country. In this regard, there were also reports that government had offered a number of ministries to this Taliban group during the formulation of the cabinet of the unity government.

The reports that there are rifts between different Taliban factions also gave hope to Afghan government to carry out peace talks. These Taliban factions share different views in treating civilians, government servants, members of police and Afghan National Army and foreign civilians and security forces present in Afghanistan. Some believe in attacking foreigners only while some target Afghan security forces while there is also present a small group that doesn't believe in inflicting any harm on civilians and civilian government servants. Government is hopeful of getting into agreement with a group that has more rational and less-extremist views. In the same way, the government may also consider of convincing international and regional powers to take off their hands from the support of Taliban factions and this can only happen if done with extreme care and sensitivity. Accusations, blaming and other tactics have lost their effectiveness now. Once these international and regional powers join hands with Afghan government, the rest would be very easy. On the other hand, the newly-born and frail democratic government of Afghanistan may not be able to accomplish this task on its own. This harsh reality has been realized by Afghan government and the resultant efforts would bring good news for this nation, sooner or later.

Muhammad Rasool Shah is the permanent writer of the Daily Outlook Afghanistan. He can be reached at muhammadrasoolshah@gmail.com

Advertisement Gimmicks - A Threat to Our Youth

By Hujjatullah Zia

It is believed that all the pressures young people face, the most pernicious is that of fashion. By this is meant the current vogue in dress. The up-to-minute fashion, which tantalizes Afghan youth, particularly the girls, via advertisement gimmicks, is one of the great challenges across the country. The teenagers succumb to the temptation of a flamboyant dress being advertised on local TVs or hanged on the window of a market. With asking the price, they are easily deluded by the glib salesmen. Believe it or not, a pile of the female teenagers' clothes became passé every year. The girls covet the stylish dress of their next-door neighbors. They compete seriously in spending on clothes but companies reap all the gain. Hence, the mouth-watering styles reduce the youth's peace of mind. How can youngsters who vehemently resist advice from the older generation become so malleable in the hands of those who make fashion? Perhaps the sudden shifts in fashion occur fortuitously. Or is there some group who, through legerdemain, switches styles and customs on us right before our eyes? Today's teenagers seem to be quite gullible when it comes to embracing the latest trend in fashions.

If you walk on the street of capital cities, your mind will be captured by the girls' gaudy styles. They are likely to be slave to the fashion trend. Sharp lipsticks and thick makeup metamorphose a girl to mannequin. Hence, her simple beauty and attraction will be covered under the veneer of makeup. Hence in such a case, you will feel great nostalgia for the idyllic days of austere life, when people masked neither their faces nor the emotions and truth. I believe that we live in the age of phobia and alienation. We are alienated from our reality, self-dignity, moral values, humanity, etc. While looking at ourselves in the mirror, we panic and use makeup to hide our faces from our own. Children conceal their emotions from their parents and vice versa. The problem is not only the distortion of our appearance, but the metamorphosis of our personality. Being deep in the quagmire of moral corruption, we forget being the super creature. Love and compassion are meaningful only in amorous films and relegated to lust and sexual affairs. Humanity is in a moribund state and the code of ethic is on the verge of collapse.

Since we focus almost all of our time and energy on materialism and economic issues, we are the right people on the basis of capitalist criterion. In Capitalism, the humane values such as ethical behaviors, beliefs, individual freedom, etc. are segregated from realm of economic activities. In Capitalism, a man is called "rational human",

who has to seek his personal interests, be voracious, be self-judge of his comforts and whose wishes do not depend on others' status. To put it succinctly, the ideal man in capitalism is the one who limits his gains in the frames of materialism regardless of virtue and moral norms. Hence, aren't we the ideal men defined in capitalism? Being devoid of inner beauty, which is believed to be virtue and moral values, we seek to redress our physical and spiritual imbalance through external beauty. In other words, our external beauty far outweighs our morality and humanity. We repress our spiritual thirst via engaging in physical desires or better to say we put our soul in chains by satisfying our carnal desires, lust for properties and moral corruption. Afghan female youth should note that in dress, the fashion seems to be set by a few foreign designers and a handful of affluent individuals who purchase these designs. Fashion industries are aware of the fact that fashions must change rapidly and continuously or their economy would become stagnant. For such industries, it would prove fatal if it were not prepared well in advance for a new fashion trend. As the old fashion becomes outmoded and a new fashion appears to be in the making, the garment manufacturers cannot afford to delay. They rush large sums of money into production for a mass market. Having invested heavily, the manufacturers do everything possible to influence and motivate the purchasers. Through every facet of publicity and advertising, industries exploit the natural desire for people to be au courant with the latest fashion. Finally, fashion industries will foist a new style on the teenager.

On the other hand, the older generation especially the parents, who have lived austere life and free from glamour of fashion, stigmatize the stylish manner of their children as some form of rebellion. Perhaps, the feelings of individuality and audacity that the teenager gets from a new style of dress will result from the propensity of their elders to disparage them. The actual situation is that the clothing fashions will be desensitized and soon become accepted by all - there is nothing upsetting or revolutionary about them. To the unmitigated chagrin of the elders, while the youth are complacent about their styles, clothing industries are busy planning how to tantalize them with next year's fashion. We have to be cautious enough not to fall for advertisement gimmicks and avoid focusing on external beauty rather than moral values - inner beauty. Let's seek to fill our spiritual vacuum through acts of virtue and practicing humanity, having compassion for our fellow beings and communicating with our Lord.

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



Chairman / Editor in Chief: Dr. Hussain Yasa
Vice Chairman: Kazim Ali Gulzari

Phone: +93 799 005 019/799 408 271/777 005 019

E-mail: mail@outlookafghanistan.com, outlookafghanistan@gmail.com

Address: V-137, Street 6, Phase 4, Shahrak Omeed Sabz, Kabul, Afghanistan

Sub Office: Shora Road, Street 10, District 6, Kartey 3, Kabul, Afghanistan

