

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



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30 Hostages Wait for Serious Action From Govt.!

Now it is almost a month that 30 passengers hijacked on the Kabul-Kandahar highway are missing and the efforts made by government or their family members have not been much fruitful. They were travelling in one of the passengers buses that they were stopped by a number of masked armed-men. According to the witnesses, the hijackers were speaking a language not identical or close to any of the languages spoken in our country or our neighboring countries. The kidnappers checked the identity documents of the passengers and after identifying their identities, they separated these passengers from the rest and took them as hostages. All the 30 passengers were from the Hazara community.

The news came as a great shock as the kidnapping of 30 passengers was much alarming. Local and international media gave extraordinary coverage to this news as it was alarming from a number of angles. The witnesses described the language of the hijackers absolutely strange and it was assumed that they might be speaking Arabic. Soon the speculations were made that this might be the activity of ISIS activists as their activities are also increasing with every passing day. However, these are only speculations and yet to be confirmed from the independent and reliable sources. This incident also shows another aspect of the implications hidden behind this tragedy. The hostages were from a specific community and it might be another attempt to divide the country on the basis of ethnicity. As expected, this incident gave rise to a wide-spread wave of discussions about ethnicities and ethnic differences. This was especially noticed on the social networking sites of Facebook and others. Though an effort was made to arouse differences among different ethnic groups in the country on the basis of this incident but it in fact, it worked in exact opposite manner and different groups of the country showed their support for the hostages and it became a reason to bring the people of the country closer to each other. Just like the tragic incident of land-sliding in Panjshir, when Afghans from different parts of the country expressed their condolences and contributed in the relief work without any discrimination of ethnicity or region, same thing almost happened in the case of this incident. With every passing day, the awareness of general public about this incident is increasing and more and more people are expressing their support for their release and extending their sympathies with the bereaved families. It is going to be another incident that is going to bring the people of country closer to each other.

However, there are also present same sad facts in this regard. It is said that a police check-post was not much far from the point of the incident and when the road was blocked by masked kidnappers and they were checking the documents of passengers without any haste, there was good enough time for police to come into action but unfortunately, nothing was done in this regard and kidnappers were successful in leaving the spot comfortably. On the other hand, more than a month has passed but no coordinated operation has been carried out for the release of the hostages by our security forces. We have no doubt in the abilities and talents of our forces but it shows two drastic facts about the top officers of our forces. First, they are not either interested in the search and release of the hostages or secondly, they are part of a great conspiracy in which they are stakeholders with some of the important politicians of the country. Though it might not be taken much seriously by our government but it is a shameful fact that 30 people are kidnapped by an unidentified and dangerous group of kidnappers and government either fails to do something or doesn't show the required interest in resolving the problem. Internationally, such mass kidnappings are taken to be much seriously and the whole machinery of government is put into action to bring an end to the uncertain situation.

Very recently, President Ghani took personal notice of the incident and ordered the concerned authorities to take immediate action for the release of the hostages. We are hopeful that the message might have reached to the concerned authorities in our security forces as well and they might conduct a full-fledge search and rescue operation for the release of hostages. For a common person, the failure of our forces doesn't make much sense. It is impossible that a big and well-equipped army, provided with the help of helicopters as well, should fail to find such a big group of hostages. It is for sure that a comprehensive search operation with the assistance of helicopters and terrestrial forces might soon bring about some good news in this regard but it all needs the sincerity at the top level. If the top leadership shows enough interest about this incident, it would certainly affect the others as well and we would be able to receive good news in this regard. For the time being, it falls as a responsibility on the shoulders of media and civil society activists to pressurize government in this regard and not make them ignore the situation.



Putting Afghanistan on Avenues of Long-lasting Development

By Asmatyari

Our beloved motherland passes through diverse security, political and socio-economic troubles. Every problem has got its own dynamics and demands a variant perspective leading towards its solution. Putting pragmatic abilities into practice the public officials reduce if can't eradicate the size of problems. The members of government still dwindle to be gotten elected for different slots. The politicians representing their electoral constitution not necessarily should come up to the expectation of their Electoral College but to the voice of faithfulness and sanity given each constitution replete with countless social problems needs a representative to look after them. Determined executive, vigilant legislature, justice serving judiciary and compliant media are organs of central importance to a vibrant state. Having been blessed by a pragmatic leadership both the quantity and size of problems intervening the rate of progress, subsidies. It should be learned that quantity of material possession decides not the rate and span of collective triumph but the number of well-learned and cognizant men do. Greater the number of eligible citizens, greater will be optimistically contributing individuals to play their part in upbringing of the country out of multifaceted crisis. These only crystallize given the supremacy of rational laws and merits are withheld.

Basically, Afghanistan is an agricultural country—a non-industrial country. The agricultural production can't fulfill the domestic requirements, hence unable to earn revenues for the country. Mostly it relies on foreign aids. The meager and conditional foreign aid provided by international donors is not enough to backup our endless needs. Consequently, Afghanistan suffers budget deficits.

Afghanistan is in dire need of socio-political assistance and trained official in all fields of human endeavors. Any country extending selfless services must be warmly received. In that pursuit a cordial relationship must not be developed but tried to be maintained. Afghanistan at present pushed to directionless avenues of battered relation with international community serve not the Afghanistan's interest.

Afghanistan faces multifaceted issues. After a decade long period of rule, the government couldn't avert the escalating graph of despondency. Neither the rule of law, administrative accountability enforced nor elimination of social ills, terrorism and corruption materialized. The incumbent government seems to be striving on some front to get the problem properly steered. High ranked public officials senior politicians involved in bank scandals and corruption, Taliban involved in sever human rights violation, were not brought to book seem not government's concern or priority. Though the case of billion dollar bank scandal is decreed to reopened but well deserving punishment wreaked on the culprits are yet awaited.

Despite countless challenges left to the new government to face, financial management will be the biggest problem pleading immediate attention. To provide a sustainable backup to its financial needs, the government relies on loans accompanied with handsome amount of interest. According to finance commission head the total

loans amounts 2 billion Afghanis which were received from World Bank (WB) nine times, Asian Development Bank (ADB) 14 times, once from IMF, Islamic Development Bank (IDB) four times and Saudi Arabia Monetary Agency two times. A good amount is earmarked for interest of these loans. The international community lending a helping hand by providing aids to Afghanistan should be relied the most that can be done by establishing better relationships with them.

The budget of fiscal year 2013-2014 reflected greater amount of budget comprising 64 percentages was allocated for security but a scanty amount fixed for governance and public welfare. The details read, 36 percent of the development funds would be spent on basic infrastructure projects, 13 percent on education, 29 percent on health, 21 percent on agriculture and rural development, with the rest going to other schemes.

The figure reflects government negligence towards education that helms development of every other segment of human society. The government for the new term must prioritize education on its high priority list. Certainly, education economy has turned into easy reasonable reality the world pursues to get to their dreams. Many countries are investing enormous amount on their education than any other sector, guarantees the formation of unbeatable state, witnessed in their cases. The incumbent government pledged assurances of betterment will work only when tangible measures are taken. Afghanistan cannot develop without a sustainable economical road map drawn and implemented that grants them financial independence. The state of self-reliance can only be achieved when heavy investments are made in the field of human resource and developmental programs.

Law and order and security concerns remains to be another obstacle on the way to successful Afghanistan. The government must enforce rules that will make it possible for Afghans to live together without conflict. Harmony promoting education and equitable distribution of resources and services narrows down the differences whilst paving the way for peaceful coexistence. There is a documented existence of law and with negligible application or prejudicial application serve none interest. In our beloved country, seemingly, the militants and none-state actors have grown to an extent that easily evades the loosely held net of law and order and turn triumphant. Formerly United States pledged to remain committed to Afghanistan on issues related to illicit drugs and rule of law post 2104. The government of Afghanistan instead of relying on international community must work out genuine means tackling maintenance of law and devise legitimate and standard procedure of prosecution. The US official stressed the strategy must address alternative development, eradication, investigation, interdiction, prosecution, incarceration and then the so-called soft-side programs of awareness, treatment and rehabilitation. The government and public officials must realize, the dream of a vibrant, progressive, developed Afghanistan can only materialize, provided a handsome amount of budget is allocated for education, health, infrastructure and governance. We must learn it that a healthy, literate and well-governed Afghanistan is a secure and developed Afghanistan.

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The Victims of Sectarianism

By Hujjatullah Zia

Feeling a strong sense of dissatisfaction, a coterie of Afghan refugees returned to their homeland to alleviate their anguish beside their family members. The melodic discourse of immature democracy filled the war-weary refugees with great hope. Since they lived aloof from the raucous eruptions and bombings for few years outside Afghanistan, the vestige of war and bloodshed was just removed from their minds. The human rights' debates, presidential election, freedom, equality, etc. whetted their interest to depart for their own country. Thus, they left their sojourn with eagerness to breathe a sigh of relief in their own homes. Perhaps, they took refuge to neighbouring countries either at the time of Taliban regime to survive war and violence or in Post-Taliban time to work for a pittance. In other words, despite resorting to arms to cause social and political turbulence at home, they sought to feed their family via a salubrious manner – if unemployment was the motive behind their peregrination. Their ethical code would reproach them to nurture their families at the cost of murdering their compatriots. They kept innocuous at critical times and considered the propriety of breaking the law a moral heresy.

If they had emigrated from the country at the time of the Taliban regime, it was because they suffered from racial discrimination on a large scale. It is, indeed, too hard to put in words the macabre story of carnage and havoc caused by the Taliban regime. Undoubtedly, the Hazara ethnic group was massacred largely with impunity. The Taliban's barbarity knew no bounds. With the humanity at its nadir, they butchered the Shia minority without an iota of mercy. Therefore, an inordinate number of Afghan citizens took refuge to foreign countries to survive the danger. Ill-fatedly, the Afghan nascent democracy is yet unable to meet the citizens' needs. As a result, in spite of a democratic milieu, insecurity targets the citizens, militancy and suicide bombings are on rise, administrative corruptions and the productions of narcotic drug are at their acme, street crime, armed robberies and kidnapping for ransom continue unabated. Citizens are worried for their safety while walking on streets – especially in insecure parts of the country. The police, the government employees, the taxi drivers, the commuters, the street vendors, the garbage collectors, the school students, etc. are not sure whether they return home safely. About a month ago, unknown armed masked men abducted at least 31 Hazaras from Shah Joy district of Zabul when the passengers were traveling on the Kabul-Kandahar highway. Despite negotiations between the elders of Zabul and the alleged abductors, the 31 abductees are yet to be released, something many blame on the newly-emerging Islamic State (IS) group.

The abductees are said to be transferred to Khak Afghan district of Zabul where the security forces have killed more than 50 insurgents so far in the operation to rescue the hostages.

Reports says that the travelers and taxi drivers have complained

that insecurity has increased since the incident occurred on Kandahar-Kabul highway, decreasing the number of travelers and causing panic among them. "Since the incident occurred, everyone is frightened and the number of travelers has also decreased," a driver said, voicing fear about insecurity on the Kabul-Kandahar highway.

On the other hand, the senators on Sunday warned that if the hostages were not rescued, the government would suffer horrible consequences. First Chairman of Senate Mohammad Alam Izadyar warned, "The government needs to take serious actions otherwise consequences will be suffered." Zabul elders, however, have urged that the issue should be resolved through dialogues instead of military action, something already proved abortive.

Innocence and victim are mostly juxtaposed in Afghanistan. The puny and innocuous individuals are more susceptible to harms – lurid reports about the victims substantiate this fact.

The distressing story of 31 abductees, who fell prey to sectarianism, will shake a sound conscience. Afghan women underwent great suffering and anguish due to losing their beloved children, spouses, brothers and other family members in historical conflagration, sectarian violence, suicide bombings, etc.

What do you think about the tender-hearted mothers whose children are abducted after years of peregrination?

The abductees' families, especially their mothers, must smolder with burning emotions for this incident. About three days ago, the victims' families launched a demonstration urging the government to take serious steps in this regard. The demonstrators demurred the civil activists and political elites for keeping silent about the issue. Moreover, thousands of people protested in Ghazni province on Tuesday urging the government to release the abductees.

After all, the Ulema Council has deprecated the incident and called it an anti-Islamic act. The members of Council urged the government to take every possible step for releasing the victims.

To consider the Afghan Constitution, the state has not accomplished its obligation as it is stated in the preamble as, "...And in order to: Strengthen national unity, safeguard independence, national sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country;

Establish an order based on the peoples' will and democracy; Form a civil society void of oppression, atrocities, discrimination as well as violence, based on rule of law, social justice, protecting integrity and human rights, and attaining peoples' freedoms and fundamental rights; Strengthen political, social, economic as well as defense institutions; Attain a prosperous life and sound living environment for all inhabitants of this land; And, eventually, regain Afghanistan's appropriate place in the international family ..."

Hope, the government will consider its obligation in this regard and seek to provide the citizens equal rights irrespective of their sex, color, race, beliefs, etc.

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