

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



March 30, 2015

A Credible Report Unearthed

Man undeniably is begotten to subsist and serve the interest of humanity; perhaps the underlining reason behind being entitled as a supreme creature. Man most probably is created in getting the world transformed from a desolate land into a bejeweled and well designed dreamland where his fellowman could be provided with very elements of peace, harmony, undying adoration and an immortal bond of affection synchronized in global human society. The selfless efforts of some individuals crystallized by the end of the day getting us closer to the warehouse substantiated with every necessity that could effectively be used bridging the physical distance between far stretched human beings. The countless endeavors of those individuals bore fruit and turned the world into global village where the agonies, miseries, pains of individuals could be unaffectedly felt by fellow individuals and likely would be done away with. Notwithstanding, the individuals driven by evil motives, fear of losing what they owned, lust of having numerous monetary gains put them in the black race of domination, subjugation leading to formation of a human society we witness at the moment, characterized by rule of mob, violence, aggression, innumerable bloodshed and ruthless killings of fellowmen.

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 outraged, 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.

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.

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.

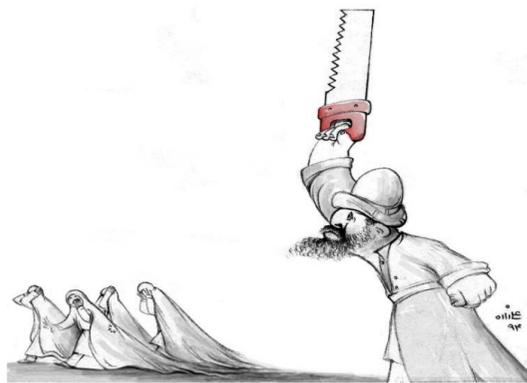
Irrespective to the aforementioned declaration of human rights, Afghanistan shows a dismal picture of law and order accompanied with the rampant human right violation. Insecurity, crimes against humanity, increasing violence against women and children, lack of access to education, torture and killing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

When we sit to carve a way forth and talk of human fundamental rights to pursue happiness and liberty, we shouldn't forget the right to live a dignified life devoid of fear of assassination, suppression and mass murder, stands primary to all other rights. The true sense of happiness and liberty can only be realized provided one leads a life free of being terrorized and harassed. Consequently, putting an end to one's life is deemed one of the gravest human rights violations, which is a matter of routine in every war-torn country like Afghanistan.

Earlier a report was released that unearthed great sum of lives claimed by year's long war on terror in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iraq. The report titled Body Count: Casualty Figures after 10 Years of the 'War on Terror' was released by the Nobel Prize-winning International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, along with Physicians for Social Responsibility and Physicians for Global Survival. The study concluded that around 1.3 million people were killed, both directly and indirectly, in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan as a result of US-led wars in the region in more than a decade.

The data gathered consisted were from individual studies and data published by United Nations organizations, government agencies and non-governmental organizations. It added that one million people were killed in Iraq, 220,000 in Afghanistan as a result of the war and 80,000 people in Pakistan. According to the report the figure "is approximately 10 times greater than that of which the public, experts and decision makers are aware of and propagated by the media and major NGOs. Following the 9/11 attacks this is the highest figure which is concerning for all of human rights organizations.

These human rights violations are the matter of great concern for international community extending donation in various fields' human endeavors. The government must take prior measures in protecting and promoting human rights. It should be noted the rational laws devoid discriminating and individual on grounds of gender, sect, cast and ethnicity must be formulated and be put into operation alike. We have to make it dead certain; without having the law unequivocally applied the claims of human rights violation renders rhetoric.



Suffering under Democratic State

By Hujjatullah Zia

It is believed that the escalation in militancy is foreboding about a bloody year and the bloodthirsty insurgents will not be quenched by decapitating the innocent individuals. A spate of macabre incidents such as suicide bombings, terrorist attacks, abducting and murdering simple travelers and flagrant violation of law are great causes for concern. In spite of the hot debate of peace negotiation, which has come to light, Afghans' suffer from insurgency more than ever before. In other words, under the guise of this political chicanery, our nation constantly falls victim to terrorism.

Our nascent democracy does not seem to be a panacea for the wounded hearts of Afghan nation. Last year, Afghan men and women flocked to ballot boxes, despite the life-threatening terrorism, holding out high hopes for peace and prosperity. However, their dreams are likely to go up in smoke. Their ballots could not save them from bullet. Later on, the cyberspace of Facebook spread a picture of Afghans' men sitting on a hospital's bed having their fingers bandaged for being lopped off by the Taliban militants on the grounds of the democratic use of their suffrage. This ugly incident was the first foreboding about escalation in terrorism after the presidential election.

Heaping encomium upon the hapless victims or hurling condemnation on the perpetrators was not enough to mollify their anguish or heal their wounds. Perhaps the question arose in their mind was that what is the good of voting which cannot ensure the citizens' security? They were right. They voted to enjoy their rights under the aegis of a democratic state - which is supposed to be void of terror and bloodshed. They used their suffrage to breathe a sigh of relief in a violence-free country. Afghans hoped that their ballots would save their blood.

Women casted their votes with the expectation of having their rights and dignity protected. They have constantly urged the government not to be treated as a second-class citizen. Likewise, they wished to be able to take part in social activities without worrying for their safety in a democratic atmosphere. They believed that their votes would change the social attitudes, from negative into positive, towards them. Afghan girls and women felt that their voices against violence, forced marriages, injustice and iniquity would be heard. After all, this is a big tragedy to see that girls' schools are still closed in the Taliban-dominated districts. Hence, women's rights are at stake if the state does not enforce the law and combat terrorism properly.

The government's responsibilities are rightly stated in the preamble of Afghanistan's Constitution as, "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, atrocity, 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".

"A civil society void of oppression, atrocity, discrimination" and "violence" remains as an unattainable dream for Afghan nation. The atrocious and violent practices are rife across the country. People fall prey to sectarian violence and racial discrimination. The citizens' rights and dignity are trampled upon flagrantly. Women suffer from honor killings, fractious attitudes, mental and physical tortures, humiliation, etc. The girls are coerced to abandon school in the areas under the influence of the Taliban's ragtag militants.

For many years, I lived in Moqor District of Ghazni province, where Taliban are highly active there - despite the presence of Afghan National Army. The females are allowed only to attend primary schools outside the governmental building. Hence, the building of girls' school is vacant and they are taught under tents in a playground. As soon as the girls reach maturity, they are ordered by the Taliban to abandon school. Moreover, Taliban check the tents every once in a while to be sure that mature girls are not attending the classes. Additionally, they urge teachers to distort the pictures of the women whose faces are revealed in schoolbooks. In short, girls suffer from sexual discrimination, their freedom is curtailed and they are bereft of their basic rights. "Peoples' freedoms and fundamental rights" are a long-standing utopia for those citizens who are deprived of their rights just for being born in an insecure part of the country.

The issue of human rights begins to pall for the people who are born either in remote or insecure areas. For instance, the girls and women are not only restricted within the frame of traditional customs but also subjugated to the Taliban's order. As it was mentioned previously, they are precluded from attending schools, presenting in public without wearing burqa, taking part in social activities and even bereft of their suffrage. The Taliban foist their warped mind upon the residents by the barrel of gun. Since they are doomed to bite the bullet despite living under a democratic state, human rights are totally meaningless for them. It is the government to provide the citizens equal rights, freedom and security and let them enjoy democracy in its true meaning.

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Farkhunda's Sacrifice Enlightened Thoughts!

By Muhammad Rasool Shah

Now that everything has become clear, there remained no space for anyone to defend the murderers of Farkhunda. In the beginning, some members of society, especially the religious ones, tried to justify her brutal killing by giving the reason of blasphemy and insult of Holy Koran, but now they are also repenting on their previous comments. Due research discovered that Farkhunda was in fact a very good student of religious studies and she was liked by her family members due to her attachment with her studies and religious books.

Although the words are not enough to describe the pain one feels when he/ she watches the videos or photographs in which this innocent girl is tortured, her face bathed in her own blood and among a crowd of angry and violent people, who utilized their boastful strength to torture, mutilate and then burn this only girl, but these videos and photos would always be remembered as the best form of sacrifice to bring into light many hidden evils and show the true picture of morally corrupt society to the world. It is no doubt that she was able to serve the cause of humanity which could have not been done by large numbers of so-called saviors of women's rights who tried their best to cash this sad incident to promote their own causes.

The biggest achievement of the sacrifice of this brave girl is to bring into focus the dirty and nasty criminal business that was carried out on the name of religion. As this business was run on the name of religion so no one dared to say anything against their owners, though many knew the reality behind them. This business is of so-called religious thugs who loot the innocent people on the name of spiritual healing or treatment. They are found in almost every mosque and are definitely found on the shrines of a saint. In Shah-e-Dushamshera, where this incident took place, a mentally and morally sick person was busy in giving sacred religious papers to people on the name of spiritual healing. Initial reports have revealed that Farkhunda also became a victim of this man and when she did not accept her any wrong demand, they accused her of blasphemy. Only blaming or accusing was not going to do the work. But on most of these places, they always keep a number of strong and healthy thugs who threaten the people whenever the things go wrong. So these thugs started hitting her and also encouraged the people nearby. People, completely in the trance of religious emotions, did not bother to inquire about the reality and soon the crowd went so violent that a number of policemen who tried to interfere, had to retreat and all these ended in the brutal killing of Farkhunda. But it is also a fact that except for these thugs, the general public did not take part in direct torture, rather they supported them by shouting slogans and encouraging the front-players. It is the reason why, those who had direct hand in the whole incident, one way or the other, were the stakeholders with the shrine. Not only this, these places have also become a hub for criminal minded people like drug-sellers, kidnapers, and others as they are usually the safe-havens and away from the interference of police due to their sacred identity. It is then not surprising that how people associated with such a sacred and peaceful place can be so brutal and skilled in carrying out such a cold-blooded

act. As we saw, soon after this incident, people not only got enough courage to talk against them but government dared to carry out a wide-scaled operation against such places. In this regard, a lot of criminal-minded people have been arrested and it is hoped that our nation would be able to get rid of them permanently. At the same time, many illiterate people came to know that they were being fooled on the name of religion and spiritual healing by some thugs who were using the name of religion for their objectives.

However, this occasion must not be misused for defaming the good people who give a lot of hope to the poor people. There are also present some kind, pious and sincere religious scholars who also work for spiritual healing and treatment but in return, they never expect or demand any material gain from people. It is due to this sincerity that thousands of people miraculously get benefitted from their treatment, especially in the cases of mental or psychological disorders, in which case, doctors also feel themselves to be helpless. But the most painful was the reaction of people present on the site of this sad incident. None of the people dared to ask if the accusation against her was right or wrong. No one got the courage enough to stop the criminal act of people on the name of religion. And thousands of people, who claim to be mentally sound and reasonable, could not stop themselves from being swept away by their stupid emotions and in a way; they also put their indirect share in the incident. This shows the rotten condition of morality and social awareness and how it has harmed the overall condition of people when they follow the religion without proper understanding. It gives another opportunity for us to talk about those sides of religion which are considered to be forbidden and often included in the blasphemy. However, sooner or later, we will have to discuss these things so that we should be able to see and practice the true picture of religion and get rid of all the impurities that we have added in centuries and which are also taken as sacred as the religion itself.

But the most important role in giving this incident such a focus was the effective and wide role of social networking sites. The incident could have easily been forgotten had this happened without any existence of social networking sites and the internet. The news of the brutal killing spread like a wild fire when its videos were uploaded on Facebook and YouTube and soon these videos got viral. The viewers of these videos were much moved and there was no need of any explanation about the nature of this incident. Soon, pages were formed on Facebook in support of Farkhunda and increasing public awareness also shook the media and civil society activists. Due to mass protests and criticism of the inactiveness of police, top government officials had to intervene and take special interest due to which arrests were made.

The videos made clear the criminals and soon all the major players were arrested including the person who had given the first orders of the killing of Farkhunda.

Farkhunda has given us a new hope of justice and enlightenment by her blood. Now, government must take serious action against the perpetrators and they should be given the harshest punishment. This is the call of public and demand of justice as well.

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