

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



May 05, 2016

## Protecting Human Rights

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 by the one 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, NUG 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 of 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. According to Public Health official, on Wednesday May 04, 2016 at least 120 schoolgirls were poisoned in the Rustaq district of northern Takhar province. Health Director Hafizullah Safi said that scores of students of the Khanaqa School were poisoned. "So far 120 girls have been evacuated to hospital, but their health condition is stable," he added. Though, last year in May, Afghanistan endorsed the global Safe Schools Declaration, thus committing to do more to protect students, teachers, and schools during times of armed conflict, including through implementing the guidelines on protecting schools from military use but so far no progress has been seen in this regard.

Another reason is that 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.

In our society the disparity in perspective and outlook between two persons or two groups of people means being each other's enemy. This sort of attitude has created a great deal of mistrust among the people. Is it really the sort of attitude that must be adopted by the most superior of the all the creatures? Does this suit the sane minds that have the capacity to think and to distinguish between the right and the wrong? Such sort of attitude is really very destructive for a nation and does not let the cooperation, national integration and nation building take place easily.

In fact, every group thinks that it knows all the truths in the universe and has all the positive qualities in the world; that it has been the most blessed and beloved group on the face of earth and that the developments that have taken place are basically because of it - in fact, it thinks that the whole world and the incidents in the world revolve around it and it is the main character of the novel while all others are supporting characters or side-heroes. Discussion, in the real sense, is this the practice of the wisdom and understanding of human thinking and mind. And it seems we lack wisdom and understanding, therefore, what has been done to innocent school girls in Takhar is nothing more than frustration. Unless, we overcome this frustration and invite wisdom and understanding with open arms and have healthy discussions with one another, we are not able to bring about positive changes in our society.

These human rights violations must be matter of great concern not only for Afghan government but for the international community extending donation in various fields' human endeavors. The donor countries must demands for guarantees withholding human rights. The government must take prior measures in protecting and promoting human rights.



## Tendency towards Violating Moral Standard

Hujjatullah Zia

Social norms and cultural values will have to be practiced upon in a society and tendency towards the deep-seated values and beliefs and breaking societal norms are considered wrong. One is supposed to live according to culture and ethical standards in a community. Violating the mores and moral restrictions will lead to disorder and hurt the public feelings. Whenever one disregards the way of life in a society under the term of freedom, this will results in curtailing the freedom of others.

The cosmetic changes into the fashion of younger generation, including male and female, in our country and the charms and attractions oozing from the stylish make-up of girls seem in conflict with the cultural values and deemed the western product. In other words, the advertising gimmicks and amoral serials and films have dominated the younger generation on a large scale and play unhealthy role in the community. The current fashions seen on streets, wedding ceremonies, birthday parties, etc. are in conflict with social values and considered a blatant anomaly. Needless to say that the dominant modern style is a direct threat to our societal norms and erodes the moral values, as it has done so, with the passage of time. The moral standards, which held strong sway among our forefathers, remain no more than nostalgia for the old individuals who have found their children vulnerable to cultural invasion.

Ill-fatedly, the present generation is a slave to modern fashion and can't help adopting it. They seek to look the same as their favorite actor/actress, singer, dancer or film hero. Therefore, they walk, talk and dress in the same way irrespective of the social values, which are supposed to be practiced properly. Hence, there is a growing rift between the past and present generations and our culture and moral standards are susceptible to social harms. In a nutshell, the fashion-oriented girls and boys show great tendency towards modern styles at the cost of their ethical standards - which is a matter of serious concern.

It is believed, however, that it is not only the skin-deep changes we can see in younger generations, they are also prone to secular or radical way of thinking. Their mindsets change and they adopt different attitudes and new cultural standards. Besides the changes in appearance, they seek to alter their characters and build their personality as their favorite actors or actresses who come from completely different backgrounds and grown in a different culture with certain norms and values.

A group of sociologists believe that one's character and personality are shaped on the basis of his/her interactions with others. They state that even one's tendency towards crime

is not natural but earned through interacting with criminals and being socialized in unhealthy environment - be it family, street, playground, etc. There are many other factors which contribute to make one's character: Media, behavioral charms and attractions and redirection of motivations prompt one to be orientated towards a certain behavior - including immoral actions or crime.

If you ask a sociologist that why a number of individuals carry out suicide attacks among a group of innocent people without an iota of mercy, the answer you get will be that it is because they are born and bred in a radical environment and had interactions with fundamental ideologues. Radicalization and cruelty are not inborn and natural characters but acquired through relations with violent individuals and growing in a hotbed of extremism and terror. In another item, they have been socialized in a horrific and violent atmosphere along with ruthless playmates. Therefore, they think about spilling the blood of people in the cruelest possible way rather than humanity and sympathy. Their ideology is harsh and their worldview is dark and narrow. So, liberal and radical ideology is acquired via social interactions rather than being a natural phenomenon.

The second reason behind violence is said to be deprivation from social and financial assets. Whenever a group of people live a poor life, unlike many others, and belittled and regarded in contempt in one way or another, they ultimately resort to crime so as to vent their pain and mental pressures. Thus, economic challenges also force people's hands to crime and violence. Scores of members of terrorist groups will succumb to terror and cruelty to alleviate their financial pressures and break the lump in their throats rather than being ideologues. This fact is obviously seen among the self-styled Islamic State (IS) group. Members of IS outfits rape women flagrantly - which is in strong conflict with religious values and social and cultural standards - and declared Jihad-e-Nikah to satiate their carnal desire for being deprived of capturing the heart of a girl or being able to afford going to cinema or a luxury hotel with her - perhaps unlike the people in their surroundings.

Therefore, it should be noted that social values and cultural norms are broken by both liberal and radical individuals on the basis of the said reasons. To mitigate crime and moral corruption and safeguard the culture against erosion, the government is supposed to provide healthy environment for the citizens, have control over programs being broadcast through media and also alleviate financial challenges. Moreover, the parents must have an eagle eye upon their children, consider their playmates and surf educational and sound channels for them so as to prevent them from violating moral norms.

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## War and Peace and Water

By Laura Tuck

India is currently facing its worst water crisis in years, with an estimated 330 million people - one-quarter of its population - affected by severe drought. Ethiopia is also dealing with its worst drought in decades, which has already contributed to the failure of many crops, creating food shortages that now affect around a tenth of the population. Under such circumstances, the risk of tension over resources is high.

In the past, droughts of this severity have led to conflict and even wars between neighboring communities and states. One of the first in recorded history erupted around 4,500 years ago, when the city-state of Lagash - nestled between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers in modern-day Iraq - diverted water from its neighbor, Umma. Competition for water sparked violent incidents in ancient China and fueled political instability in Pharaonic Egypt.

Today, actual wars between countries over water resources are uncommon, owing to improved dialogue and cross-border cooperation. But, within countries, competition for scarce water is becoming a more common source of instability and conflict, especially as climate change increases the severity and frequency of extreme weather events. As we detail in our new report "High and Dry: Climate Change, Water and the Economy," limited and erratic water availability reduces economic growth, induces migration, and ignites civil conflict, which fuels further potentially destabilizing migration.

This cycle has been apparent in some regions for decades. In Sub-Saharan Africa, for example, periods of low rainfall over the last 20 years have often been followed by spikes in violence, civil wars, and regime change. And in many parts of rural Africa and India, a decline in rainfall has acted as a "push factor" for internal or cross-border migration to more water-abundant places, often cities, creating new social pressures as the numbers of displaced people grow.

In our report, we predict that water scarcity could act as a conflict-risk multiplier, fueling cycles of resource-driven conflict, violence, and displacement, especially in already water-stressed regions, such as the Middle East and the Sahel in Africa, where agriculture remains an important source of employment.

Fortunately, there is a way to avoid the cycle of poverty, deprivation, and conflict. If countries take action now to implement effective water-management policies and practices, backed by well-designed incentives, they can not only reverse the slide toward water scarcity, but also raise their rates of economic growth by as much as six percentage points per year.

One water-scarce country that has taken action to improve its resilience to climate change is Morocco. In years of low rainfall, Morocco's river-basin authorities give the lowest priority to crop irrigation, the largest consumer of the country's water. But, of course, agriculture remains critical to feed the population. So the government has been investing in modernizing irrigation infrastructure to provide farmers with more efficient water services that enable them to adjust more easily to variations in water availability.

The Moroccan authorities are also working to improve ground-water governance, to avoid over-extraction. Farmers engaged in rain-fed agriculture receive support that helps them to make better use of rainfall - such as through the introduction of climate-resilient practices like direct seeding - resulting in higher yields than traditional practices produce during dry years.

The message from Morocco - and from our report - is that, with smart water policies and interventions, countries can ensure a climate-resilient, water-secure future. At the core of effective water-management strategies will be improved planning for water-resource allocation, the adoption of incentives to increase efficiency, investment in infrastructure for improved water security, and better urban planning, risk management, and citizen engagement. The recently created International High-level Panel on Water, comprising ten heads of state, will be promoting precisely this agenda to foster better water management globally.

Of course, not every country will follow the same path in safeguarding a water-secure future. But, as countries develop their strategies, they can look to one another for ideas and insights into what works - and what doesn't. With strong and prudent action, governments around the world can cope effectively with the natural limitations and uncertainties affecting water resources, ensuring that their people and economies are prepared for what might lie ahead.

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