

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



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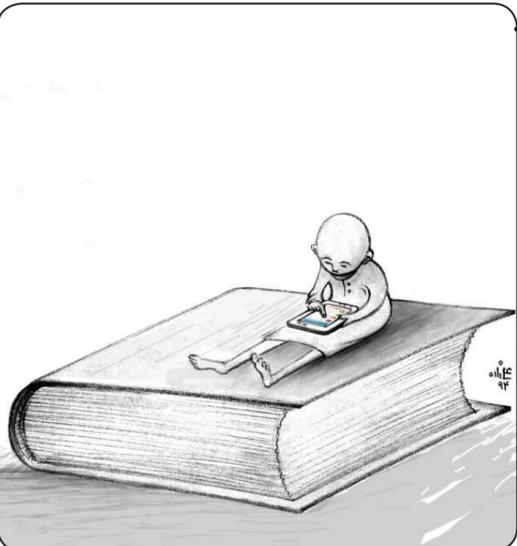
Afghan Journalists: Facing Violence by the Insurgent Groups and Government Forces Indiscriminately

Nobody may deny that Journalism is an important profession. Thus, it can be seen as a skill, a talent, even a passion in a way; a passion to tell the truth, to inform, to reach others, to communicate news using any means necessary. So, why specific elements to this passion, this profession so fiercely challenge and perceive it as controversial? So far, many journalists have risked their futures, have been beaten, harassed, imprisoned and too many have even made the ultimate sacrifice – of their lives – in the pursuit of telling a story, exposing the truth and acknowledging the right to be heard. Along with threats directed to freedom of speech and freedom of the media in general, today the freedom to be and to call yourself a journalist and to perform your job freely is specifically also threatened in Afghanistan. We do not always appreciate the importance of the universal right to free expression and free speech, until they are tampered with by state interference and control. In no society, without the expression of ideas and opinions and their publication and distribution in the media we can ensure social development. As Afghan citizens, it is our duty to protect our freedom of speech and freedom of the media to ensure that all other human rights are protected in the country. We know that, like democracy, freedom of the media and freedom of speech do not come naturally, and cannot be taken for granted. As a result, they must be continually justified, reaffirmed and reinforced to create an enabling environment where democracy flourishes and journalists are free to seek out and question all members of the public, particularly government officials, whose jobs rely upon the public's trust.

Violence against Journalists in Afghanistan

Attacks and crimes against journalists and media workers in Afghanistan are at intolerable levels. Journalists are deliberately targeted and murdered. Unfortunately, the level of violence and number of threats against journalists and the media continues to rise. Losing 14 journalists in a single attack on 30 April, is one of the crystal cut examples of serious violence against journalists in Afghanistan. Journalists are threatened by insurgent groups in provinces to self-censorship by telling them to either broadcast what they want or shut down their stations. In the meantime, government security forces or government-affiliated individuals account for a high percent of violence against journalists too.

As a matter of fact, any threat or act of violence against a media worker endangers not only that individual's ability to exercise his or her right to freedom of expression, but also the rights of many other members of society to receive and access information freely. This situation is preserved by impunity, and the statistics reveal a correlation between high rates of violence against journalists and high rates of impunity more broadly. To practically address the widespread violence against the journalists, it is not enough the government just have a deep belief in the media as an indispensable part of the political system, but it must protect the journalists and provide them security and do everything it can to ensure this.



Learning the Protection of Cultural Heritage and Waterways from China

By: Hujjatullah Zia

Protecting cultural heritage and managing water are two highly essential issues in China. The former will attract domestic and foreign tourists and the latter will make a green environment and support agriculture and the harmony between human and nature. In turn, both will contribute to the country's economy. Themed "The Protection, Inheritance and Utilization of the Culture of Canal Cities", the World Canal Cities Forum was held in Yangzhou, a city in east China's Jiangsu province on October 12. The forum aimed at protecting the cultural remains, promoting the cultural values, protecting and restoring the ecology and improving the environment of the Grand Canal.

Chinese officials reiterated adhering to the principle of "respecting history and minimizing intervention", drawing up plans on heritage protection in accordance with international rules and standards and retaining or restoring the authentic and original style of the heritage sites in their protection and renovation efforts. Strengthening protection over canals, promoting cultural heritage inheritance, enhancing tourism utilization, and increasing exchanges and cooperation were four suggestions made by one of the participants of the forum. The participants further pointed out the transformation from cultural heritage to public cultural space, establishment of a good relationship between cultural heritage and public demand and creation of a dynamic, perceptible and belonging public space. All the functions and facilities implanted should be prudent and restrained and conform to the logic of local culture, they suggested.

Addressing the forum, Panama Ambassador to China Francisco Carlo Escobar Pedreschi stressed the importance of canals and waterways. As a result, he said, "The Panama Canal continues to be an important and neutral link for seaborne trade which since the opening of the neopanamax locks has witnessed over 4,600 transits through the waterway, enabling the movement of all types of commodities in more than 144 trade routes all over the world joining 1,700 ports".

Meanwhile, setting up the concept of low carbon and recycling, exploring actively the road to canal ecological protection and restoration, maintaining ecological water environment and biodiversity by taking comprehensive measures such as river and lake connections, river way treatment, wet land restoration, ecological water allocation and groundwater protection, developing circular economy, building low-carbon communities, advocating green travel, and creating an urban public ecological space – which will integrate beauti-

ful ecology, history and culture, tourism, leisure, fitness and sports – were the significant points stressed in the forum. Likewise, members of the World Canal Cities Organization (WCCO), which is responsible for the annual Canal Cities Forum, were urged to strengthen the unified planning in terms of industrial development, urban layout, infrastructure construction, ecological shoreline delineation, pollution emission standards and bringing the protection, inheritance and utilization into the track of legalization.

According to Yangzhou officials, the Grand Canal of China links the Land Silk Road with the Maritime Silk Road, communicates between the ancient and modern times, connects the world and enjoys multiple co-prosperity. They urged the world international canal organizations, including WCCO, to take full advantage of the dual characteristics of international and folk natures to build a platform for international exchange.

China's Jiangsu province planned to build a Grand Canal Museum and a Grand Canal Culture National Park and designated 11 pilot cities, which are remarkable achievements in terms of protecting cultural heritage.

To view Afghanistan, it is facing water shortages in recent years in many provinces including the capital city of Kabul. It goes without saying that years of war led to the destruction of agriculture system and water irrigation canals. Afghanistan should not ignore the importance of irrigation canals, which are also an element of cultural heritage to be restored and retained.

Even though water management has been improved with the efforts made by the National Unity Government and some projects were completed for managing water, there is still much desired to be done so as to enhance the efficiency of water use and improve agricultural productivity.

It is worth saying that China is making the best use of even the minimum resources. That is to say, China is highly creative in utilizing and industrializing the resources, which can be a perfect role model for Afghanistan, named as 'a rich man lying on gold'. As a close neighbor, Afghanistan has to learn from China in utilizing its resources and restoring and maintaining its cultural heritage. It is hoped Afghanistan will also make the best use of its resources, including irrigation canals and historical sites so as to increase agricultural productivity as well as the number of foreign tourists for boosting the country's economy.

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A Radically Realistic Climate Vision

By: Barbara Unmüßig

According to the latest report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the world's main scientific authority on global warming, keeping global temperatures from rising more than 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels is a feasible goal. The IPCC's stance represents a move in the direction of the kind of "radical realism" that many civil-society actors have long advocated.

The IPCC does not bet on geo-engineering proposals – for example, deep-ocean sequestration of massive amounts of atmospheric carbon dioxide, or "dimming the sun" by spraying the atmosphere with aerosols – to combat global warming. These largely theoretical solutions could have untold consequences for people and ecosystems, worsening not only the climate crisis, but also the other social and ecological crises we face.

Instead, the IPCC focuses on how we can avoid crossing the 1.5°C threshold in the first place. We must, it asserts, decarbonize the global economy immediately to ensure that global CO2 emissions decline by about 45% by 2030 and reach net zero by 2050.

Achieving this will require not just transforming economic activity, but also confronting destructive power dynamics and social inequalities. "Radical Realism for Climate Justice," a new anthology published by the Heinrich Böll Foundation, sets out strategies developed by international civil-society and social movements to bring about such change.

In line with the IPCC's core message, we urgently need a politically managed decline in fossil-fuel production. This means putting a brake on oil, coal, and gas production and exploration. As the group Oil Change International notes, it does not mean abrupt or panicked action that could lead to a "sudden and dramatic shut-down of fossil fuel production, stranding assets, damaging economies, and harming workers and communities reliant on the energy sector."

In building up the renewable-energy sector, we should avoid replicating systems that have driven inequality and entrenched damaging power dynamics in the fossil-fuel sector and other industries. This means replacing the market-based, investor-focused approach to energy production with one that treats energy as a public good, while engineering a shift toward social ownership and management of energy supplies.

Rooted in energy sovereignty and self-determination, this approach would spur faster decarbonization, including by weakening vested interests' power to resist change. It would also facilitate the restructuring of energy systems to serve social and ecological needs.

Another system-level transformation that would facilitate major emissions reductions would be the creation of a zero-waste circular economy, whereby everything we produce and consume returns safely to nature or is recycled and reused. Consider textiles production, which in 2015 generated greenhouse-gas emissions totaling 1.2 billion tons of CO2-equivalents. These massive emissions – more than the combined total for all international flights and maritime shipping – reflect a "fast fashion" culture that produces garments as cheaply as possible, with the expectation of constant turnover in

people's wardrobes. If each garment were replaced half as often, the industry's total greenhouse-gas emissions would plummet by 44%. A zero-waste circular economy for textiles would include not just more use of the clothes that are produced, but also improved recycling and repurposing of materials, to avoid emissions-producing waste-disposal processes like incineration. The biggest gains would come from the introduction of less wasteful production processes.

Important steps should also be taken regarding land use (encompassing agriculture and zoning changes). As the international peasant's movement La Via Campesina shows, the industrial food system's emissions – including those from production, fertilizers, transport, processing, packaging, cooling, and food waste, and from deforestation associated with the expansion of industrial agriculture – account for 44-57% of the global total.

A peasant agro-ecological production system based on food sovereignty, small-scale farming, and agro-ecology could, La Via Campesina argues, halve carbon emissions from agriculture within a few decades. This approach is proven to work: small-scale farmers, peasants, fishers, indigenous communities, rural workers, women, and youth already feed 70% of the world's population, while using only 25% of its agricultural resources.

There is also a need to restore natural ecosystems that have been destroyed. Forests and peatlands, in particular, can sequester several hundred gigatons of CO2 from the atmosphere. Their restoration would protect not just biodiversity, but also local people, including the indigenous communities whose land-tenure rights have been systematically violated. In fact, retaining and expanding the land area under management by indigenous peoples and local communities could protect over 1,000 GtCO2 worth of carbon stocks.

According to a report by the Climate, Land, Ambition, and Rights Alliance, ecosystem-based approaches in the land sector and agro-ecological changes to food production and consumption systems – including more local ownership – could deliver 13 GtCO2eq per year in avoided emissions, and almost 10 GtCO2eq annually in sequestered carbon by 2050. The result would be 448 GtCO2 in cumulative removals by 2100 – around ten times current global annual emissions.

Limiting global temperatures to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels is our best hope of containing the effects of a climate crisis born of historical injustices and deep-rooted inequities. The only way to succeed will be to undertake a shift to a new socioeconomic system. This means abandoning the single-minded obsession with GDP growth – which has facilitated the proliferation of wasteful production and consumption patterns and fueled economic and social inequality and injustice – in favor of a public-goods approach that serves genuinely to make people's lives better.

Demanding such a transformation is not "naive" or "politically unfeasible." It is radically realistic. In fact, it is the only way we can achieve social justice while protecting our environment from devastating climate change.

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