

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



September 19, 2017

## “Caring for All Life Under the Sun”

September 16th was celebrated world-wide as the International Day for the Preservation of Ozone Layer. The day was first proclaimed by UN General Assembly in 1994, while commemorating the date of the signing of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer - 1987. The chief purpose of celebrating the Day is to spread consciousness about the depletion of Ozone Layer and, simultaneously, to highlight the different ways of preserving it.

This year the day marked the 30th anniversary of the Montreal Protocol. As part of the anniversary celebrations, the Ozone Secretariat launched a communication campaign ahead of World Ozone Day, called as the #OzoneHeroes. The campaign sought to celebrate the major accomplishments of the Montreal Protocol in protecting the ozone layer and the climate, to increase public recognition of the success and impact of the Protocol, and to generate further support for the Protocol and its new mandate to phase down climate-warming hydrofluorocarbons under the Kigali Amendment, adopted in 2016. Ozone layer is very important for the life on earth. It is a protective layer in Earth's stratosphere that functions as a shield and protects earth from the ultraviolet (UV) radiation. UV radiation is very much harmful for living tissues; therefore, without Ozone layer earth will be left open to these rays and ultimately all types of life on earth will be greatly influenced. Unfortunately, the Ozone layer is being depleted by harmful gases present in the environmental pollutants that are released by different human inventions. If proper attention is not given there are fears that the life may extinct on earth because of rampant pollution.

There is no doubt that the scientific inventions have blessed human beings with myriads of facilities; however, the improper use of these facilities and their mismanagement has brought them some evils, as well. These evils have the capacity to disturb our environment and introduce disorder within the ecosystem that is necessary for the life to exist on the planet earth. It is really important to note that the possibility of life to exist within the known universe is limited to the planet earth alone. The distance of the earth from the sun, its temperature and other physical conditions exist in such an ordered manner that life is guaranteed here. Moreover, the dependence of living beings on one another, their interactions and their reaction and influence over the environment have certain proportional arrangement, which is termed as eco-system by the scientists. If this eco-system is disturbed in some way or the other, the life is disturbed and the contaminants that are let loose by human beings in the environment has the capacity to disturb it greatly and has the capacity to endanger existence on earth.

Though from the very inception of human beings' civilized life, pollution has been influencing human beings, nonetheless, in today's world of ours, there has been extensive increase in it. With the industrial revolution, the release of pollutants within the natural environment has kept on increasing. There are some important concerns that most of the environmental scientists believe should be pondered upon extensively.

The first one is the degradation of natural environment to the extent that can prove fatal for most of human beings. Already, the pollutants within the environment have been able to introduce different kinds of diseases in the living beings, which, if left unchecked, can go out of control. The other concern is regarding depletion of the Ozone layer and the overall warming up of the globe; this concept is known as "global warming". This concept suggests that with the increase in pollution, there will be considerable rise within the average temperature of the world that may, at maximum, result in the liquefying of the glaciers on the poles and may drown the whole world. The need of time is to save the earth and life by adopting appropriate policies. Any effort in this regard needs to be two-dimensional. Firstly, every individual must feel his/her responsibility towards the earth and must make sure that he/she does not become a reckless being and must prove helpful for the environment. However, extensive awareness programs in this regard can be really helpful. Secondly, there have to be efforts on national level as well. The governments in different countries can adopt strict laws regarding the safeguard of the environment and can make sure that different industries and enterprises adopt atmosphere-friendly attitude. Some of the thinkers suggest that the issues that are raised regarding the depletion of the Ozone layer or global warming are not international issues and they are over-emphasized so that the attentions of the people should be diverted from the basic problems of the society and they become easily governable. Such views have their importance but taking care of environment must never be neglected. There can be changes in the way the issue is treated but it cannot be neglected altogether. For example, the developed countries of the world can be made more responsible for solving the issue, while the other nations can deal with their basic issues. Moreover, there can be different ways of celebrating the days dedicated to Ozone, earth or environment. One of the ways is to celebrate these days in such a manner so as to highlight the importance of the environment and make the people realize to go against the factors that can harm it.



## Aung San Suu Kyi – The Nobel Laureate of Genocide

By Darab Ali Aliyar

In 1991, Aung San Suu Kyi was known as the Nobel laureate in Norway but received the Nobel Prize after 21 years in Oslo since she was under house arrest. Being released from the house arrest and honored to get the Nobel Peace Prize, Aung San Suu Kyi entered politics to work for democratization and the protection of ethnic minority group. She ran for presidency and undertook the leadership of Myanmar (Burma) after the victory. Her victory came as the rights of minority groups, particularly the ethnic minority of Rohingya Muslims, were violated flagrantly and rape, murder and forced escape, which signal genocide, were imposed on them systematically. With the start of recent violence against the ethnic minority of Rohingyas, more than 3,500 people were reportedly killed and 340,000 others were forced to flee to neighboring countries, especially India and Bangladesh. According to reputable media, the Myanmar army forces have planted mines so as to bar them from return. Based on national and international reports, reputable documents, and international evidence, one can claim that Aung San Suu Kyi is the Peace Laureate of genocide. To prove this fact, let us view the state of Rohingya Muslims under her leadership.

The ethnic minority Rohingya Muslims has racial and cultural root in the state of Arak (Rakhine) Myanmar. Based on the reputable evidence, Rohingya Muslims were in the state of Rakhine before the independence of Myanmar in 1948 and even before being under the colony of England.

Notwithstanding this fact, the radical Buddhists and Myanmar former and present administrations denied it and called Rohingya Muslims as illegal immigrants claiming that they took refuge to Myanmar from 1947 to 1948 after the separation of Bangladesh from Pakistan. The population of Rohingya Muslims was controversial and estimated from two to six million. Rohingya Muslims, which form 4 percent population of Myanmar, reside Rakhine located in Myanmar west coast. Rakhine is one of the most underprivileged states in Myanmar and most often Rohingya Muslims live in camps and are not allowed to travel out of Rakhine without the permission of central government. The Rohingya people are Sunni Muslims and follow Sufism.

The United Nations and many international media and human rights organizations describe the Rohingya Muslims as "the world's most persecuted minority". The army forces took the power in 1962 through a coup in this country. All citizens were supposed to have national identity card; however, Rohingya people were given only identity card which introduced them foreigners and curtailed their opportunity for work and education.

The new citizenship law in 1982 made this situation more horrific and Rohingyas were not even recognized among the 135 Myanmar ethnic groups – this issue continued up to now worse than ever before. Within the last eight decades, Rohingyas suffered atrocities and barbarity as scores of them were

killed annually. In 1960s, more than 20000 Muslims were killed in the wake of violent acts of Myanmar security forces. Following such crimes, 200 Muslims fled Myanmar for Bangladesh in 1992.

To describe the state of Rohingya Muslims from legal perspective, one needs to view article 2 of Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide which was adopted by the UN General Assembly on 9 December 1948 and article 6 of Statute of the International Criminal Court adopted in 17 July 1998 both of which pertain to genocide.

Article 2 of the Convention defines genocide as following: In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group, as such: (a) Killing members of the group; (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

Statute of the ICC defines genocide as: For the purpose of this Statute, "genocide" means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group, as such: (a) Killing members of the group; (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

Nicholas Kristof, the New York Time columnist, writes in a commentary titled "A Noble Peace Prize Winner's Shame" as, "Aung San Suu Kyi, a beloved Nobel Peace Prize winner, is presiding over an ethnic cleansing in which villages are burned, women raped and children butchered." He adds, "She genuinely believes that they are outsiders and trouble-makers. But in addition, the moral giant has become a pragmatic politician – and she knows that any sympathy for the Rohingya would be disastrous politically for her party in a country deeply hostile to its Muslim minority."

One will conclude that the killing of Rohingya Muslims is defined as genocide based on article 6 of the Statute of ICC, article 2 of Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, and international media. Hence, it does not matter either the victim of genocide is one person or more belonging to a certain national, racial, ethnic or religious group or killed "in whole or in part".

Hence, the recent crimes of Myanmar government is the epitome of genocide and the systematic ethnic cleansing is going on as one can strongly claim that Aung San Suu Kyi is the Peace Laureate of genocide.

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## Redefining Europe, and Europeans

By Carl Bildt

Traveling through Germany in the run-up to its federal election on September 24, one cannot help but be struck by the lingering signs of profound trauma from the 2015 refugee crisis. Suddenly and virtually without warning, nearly a million desperate people – mostly Syrians fleeing the carnage in their homeland – flocked to Germany. And while Germany may be Europe's most bureaucratically well-managed country, even it was overwhelmed.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel's response to the crisis two years ago was to throw out the rulebook and open her country's borders. She famously told the German people, "Wir schaffen das" (We can do it).

But German public opinion today suggests that the country has become warier of such bold gestures. Yes, Germany did it, because there was no alternative; and many Germans are proud of their country for rising to the occasion. But most hope that such a crisis never happens again.

Although many Germans have come to terms with what happened two years ago, a small minority still feels betrayed. They have responded with anger and xenophobic nationalism, and these sentiments will undoubtedly be reflected in how they vote.

But Germany's trauma from the refugee crisis should be put in perspective. Far more refugees have sought and found protection in countries such as Lebanon and Turkey than in Germany. In relative terms, Germany would have had to take in 20 million refugees to match Lebanon in 2015. In Turkey, Istanbul alone is now hosting more refugees than all of Germany. Of course, Germany is not the only European country that remains unsettled from the refugee crisis.

In my own country, Sweden, a political party that wants to shut us off from the rest of the world will most likely make strong gains in next year's general election. And in many Central European countries that only recently regained their sense of sovereignty, refugees are widely viewed as posing a threat to national identity.

One way or another, these issues will dominate European politics in the years ahead. Europe is slowly trying to build up resilience to the kind of trauma it experienced in 2015. It is a continent that once exported war and turmoil, but that now wants to protect itself from its neighbors' problems.

One of the lessons from 2015 is that the European Union will need to develop a far stronger common foreign and security

policy. The EU must replace lofty rhetoric with concrete action, while also accepting its regional and global responsibilities. Barbed wire fencing between Hungary and Serbia will not shield Europe from the effects of war in Ukraine, putches and terrorism in Anatolia, or violent conflagrations in the Levant and Mesopotamia.

And it will not help Europe manage the dramatic shift now underway in Africa, which will be home to 40% of the world's working-age population in a few decades.

Another lesson from 2015 is that European countries must learn to redefine their national identities. The United States, Australia, and Canada have all been built on immigration, and most of us are the progeny of people from somewhere else. Indeed, there is not much left of the "first nations" in these countries. It is now entirely possible for there to be more people of Swedish descent in Chicago than in Stockholm.

To be sure, Europe is different from its Western counterparts. Its tribes have been fighting one another for millennia. And for the past two centuries, Europeans have been building ever-stronger nation-states and national identities on the basis of long, complicated historical experiences.

The EU itself was of course built by nation-states. But their citizens wanted to overcome their long legacy of tribalism and war. Judged by that objective, the EU's first half-century has been a tremendous success. And yet the strains are there for anyone to see. Whether justified or not, when people perceive a threat to their national identity, their tribal instincts kick in. And for a truly frightened few, Brussels and Mecca have both come to be seen as mortal threats.

For Europe to find its place in a rapidly changing world, its citizens will have to learn to tap multiple identities. One can be a proud Swede and a proud European at the same time; one can also be both German and Turkish, and derive strength from that duality. It is not disloyal to see oneself as a citizen of the world. On the contrary, it is honorable.

Such a shift in attitudes would make for a very different Europe. We would have finally moved on from ancient tribal conflicts and fears, and embraced a networked, digital future. Merkel, who will likely be elected to another four-year term as chancellor on September 24, told Germans that they "can do it." But whether Germany and the rest of Europe will do it remains to be seen. We have our work cut out for us. (Courtesy Project Syndicate)

Carl Bildt is a former prime minister and foreign minister of Sweden.



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