

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



April 23, 2016

Government must Guarantee Justice

Justice is one of the most essential requirements within a society. It provides stability to the society and it supports in establishing and maintaining legitimacy. Crimes, corruption and many other social evils are directly linked to the unavailability of justice and the societies that have strived to maintain true justice have, in fact, set their nations on the way to a prosperous future. While the countries, which have neglected it, have fallen to the depths of troubles and instability.

At the same time, the people of a country are attached to a country that prioritizes justice and accept the authority of the government that practices it. Finding law and order consistent for every one and treating every one as per merit, gives people confidence in the system and they start belonging to it and ultimately strive to play a positive role within the society. However, if they find that the justice system is biased and favor a certain group of people, they will definitely become neglected and alienated from the system and will, resultantly, follow a path that may be illegal or even unjust.

Afghanistan is also one of the countries that is lacking justice in its system. The people are not treated the way they deserve and the justice has, in fact, become the will of the rich. The ruling class, along with the elite and the authoritative individuals can easily take advantage of the law and order system or totally surpass it; while the poor people have to be treated in the most terrible way.

Moreover, terrorism and terrorists have further debilitated the justice system. Insecurity and clashes have created a situation wherein the powerful can easily escape the law and order. There are many war crimes that go unnoticed or if they are noticed, they are not pursued properly. The national mechanism to control such crimes has not been strengthened, while the international pressure has not resulted in enough action. Therefore, the situation has remained grim.

Pointing to the same fact, Human Rights Watch (HRW) and the Transitional Justice Coordination Group (TJCG) said in a letter to President Ashraf Ghani that the Afghan government should deliver on promises to cooperate with the International Criminal Court's (ICC) ongoing analysis of the grave crimes committed in Afghanistan.

Since 2007, the Office of the Prosecutor of the ICC has been observing whether crimes committed in Afghanistan since May 2003 meet the threshold to open a formal investigation. The prosecutor revealed in a report in November 2015 that its long-sought efforts to visit the country to assess national criminal proceedings, key to its analysis, had been frustrated.

In late January 2016, however, the second vice president made a statement welcoming an ICC visit to Afghanistan.

The prosecutor's analysis covers possible war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by members of the Taliban, Afghan government forces, and international forces, including United States forces.

HRW and the TJCG urged key Afghan government officials, including those in the Foreign Affairs and Justice Ministries, as well as the national security advisor and the attorney general, to meet with the ICC's Office of the Prosecutor. The two nongovernmental organizations also called on the government to ratify the Agreement on the Privileges and Immunities of the Court, an international treaty that provides the ICC with the necessary access and cooperation to carry out its work in the country independently.

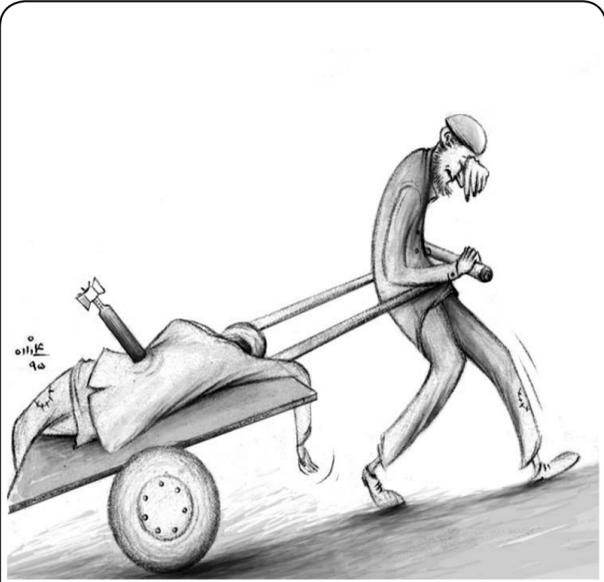
Richard Dicker, International Justice Director, said in a statement, "Afghanistan has been a justice-free zone for too long, with victims of grave abuses paying the highest price... As an ICC member, the Afghan government should make good on its obligations to cooperate with the ICC and show its commitment to the rule of law."

Afghanistan is passing through a very crucial juncture in its history. It has to make sure that it survives through it. And, for that to happen, it must guard justice.

Definitely, the support and assistance of the international organizations can be helpful and the country needs to cooperate with them in that regard. However, the pursuit of justice by the government itself is also very much crucial.

There should be efforts on the national level to strengthen the institutions that may guard justice, promote it and protect it. Without national efforts for strengthening Afghanistan itself to fight against injustice and establish strong and independent law and order system, it would be very difficult to imagine that the country would be able to fight the prevailing injustice successfully.

Afghan government needs to understand that no state in the world can maintain its integrity and order if it does not possess and guard justice. Justice is the requirement to maintain law and order and reduce crimes from a society. If a state fails to establish strong institutions that can practice and provide justice, it is bound to be filled with instability and corruption.



Refocusing on Improving Women's Status

By Abdul Ahad Bahrami

Improving the status of women in Afghanistan has been one of the key objectives of the international community after the US-led international coalition toppled the Taliban regime in 2001. Hundreds of millions of dollars has been spent over past fifteen years on projects aimed at improving women's livelihood conditions as well as the conservative social approach to the rights and status of the women in the country. However, after years of the efforts to stabilize and reconstruct Afghanistan, the question remains that have Afghanistan and the international community reached the objective to restore women's rights and improve the status of women in the war-ravaged country? There is perhaps no straight answer to this question as the experiment has been a mixture of successes and failures over the past fifteen years of the collective efforts.

The status of the Afghan women is an extraordinary aspect of the overall situation in the country. In fact, the plights of women in Afghanistan exemplify the woes and chaos that have grappled the country for so long. Women have come a long way and their has remarkably improved compared to the time when Afghan women lived under the Taliban rule. There have been progresses in many areas related to the rights and social rights of the women. However, when it comes to the collective objective over the status of the women, both Afghanistan and the international community has fallen short of delivering the promises to boost the status of Afghan women to the international standards and those of the Islamic communities. With the international mission in Afghanistan unfinished and the Taliban insurgency ravaging the country, there seems to be an irritating defocus on women's rights. This has left the campaign lagging behind what was aimed to be achieved and what were to be achieved in the long run. Despite the progresses made, Afghanistan is still considered as one of the worst places for women and mothers where women continue to suffer violence, poverty and other deprivations on daily basis. The women in Afghanistan continue to be the largest group in the society who remain underprivileged in areas of education, health, social equality, financial well-being and financial independence.

Perhaps the most important failure regarding improving the status of women in Afghanistan is the Afghan-style conservatism and male dominance both in public areas and within the families. Many Afghan women continue to suffer day-to-day domestic violence mostly committed and imposed by the male family members. The media regularly reports cases of severe violence against women including harming or even killing women by family members. According to human rights organizations, the trend of reporting domestic violence to the government authorities or human rights groups have been on the rise with the increase of public awareness

over the rights of women. Domestic violence is perhaps the most important aspect of violence against women where the government and the human rights organizations cannot do much about it. But the real problem is the lack of resolve to keep the momentum of the campaign and continue the fight to improve the status of women. With the country continuing to struggle with security and economic challenges and the Afghan government shouldering the burden of anti-insurgency campaign alone, the efforts aimed at improving status of Afghan women have gone into a marginal task. The National Unity Government (NUG) took concrete measures to boost political participation of the Afghan women in governance, politics and public administration in the country. However, the government seems to be overwhelmed by the Taliban insurgency, the deteriorating security, political and economic challenges. This situation is potentially undermining government's commitment to lead the efforts to improve women's status.

A real challenge for the Afghan government is the international community's disengagement from the Afghanistan mission and the fatigue of Western countries to deal with the situation and continue to fund the protracted campaign. With the United States and NATO members focusing on completing the withdrawal efforts, the international community has long become disinterested to any matters related to the mission in Afghanistan. NUG needs to refocus on the campaign to boost the status of the women and redouble its efforts to promote women's rights in the deeply conservative Afghan society. Failure in this regard is not an option for Afghanistan. It is crucially important that the government keeps the momentum of the campaign and do not let security or other challenges to derail the efforts.

Education is the most effective way to empower women and provide more opportunities for them. The Afghan government can introduce extensive initiative granting women education and employment opportunities with the aim to boost their presence in education and public sectors. Helping women to educate will work to boost their presence in all other sectors and businesses. The Ministry of Higher Education this year considered some limited privileges for female students who competed to enter state universities. According to officials, the policy helps compensate the low presence of girls in the educational institutions and help more female to get into the state universities.

An important part of the campaign is to improve legislations related to women. The law on banning violence against women is key for the efforts to eliminate domestic violence against women. The government needs to weigh in behind the efforts to enact the law. Many attempts to approve the law have so far failed. The Afghan government and the parliament must continue the fight to pass the crucial bill.

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The Migration Superpowers

By Mark Leonard

We have entered the age of migration. If all the people who live outside the country of their birth united to form their own - a republic of the rootless - it would be the fifth-largest country in the world, with a population of more than 240 million people.

Though much has been written about how a world on the move is changing national politics, there has been little consideration of its geopolitical effects. But the mass movement of people is already creating three types of migration superpowers: new colonialists, integrators, and go-betweens. The new colonialists call to mind the settlers from Europe who spread across the world in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, benefiting not just themselves, but also their homelands. Similarly, the most mobile populations of the twenty-first century are helping their countries of origin obtain access to markets, technology, and a political voice in the world.

The American journalist Howard W. French describes how Africa has become "China's second continent," as more than a million new Chinese settlers remake Sub-Saharan Africa. With more Chinese citizens living outside mainland China than there are French people living in France, a similar story is playing out on almost every continent. When those migrants return to China, their capabilities are expertly harvested. Known in China as "sea turtles," they dominate their country's technology industry.

India, too, has a large diaspora of an estimated 20 million citizens who are super-successful and hyper-connected. Indian-born entrepreneurs are responsible for setting up one in ten companies in Silicon Valley. Microsoft's chief executive is of Indian origin, as is the inventor of the Intel Pentium processor, the former chief technology officer at Motorola, and the CEO of Google.

How does this benefit India? For starters, India receives more than \$70 billion in remittances every year, the largest sum worldwide, amounting to nearly 4% of its GDP, which is more than it spends on education. And while it may not be possible to prove a causal connection, the influx of Indians into America has coincided with a shift in both countries' geopolitical orientations, as evidenced by the historic 2008 nuclear deal by which the US abandoned its policy of equidistance between India and Pakistan. With so many people on the move, it is even possible to become a settler superpower without being recognized as a state. The estimated 35 million Kurds - who regard themselves as a nation without a country - are becoming one of the most politically active migrant populations in Europe. It is likely no coincidence that the governments of Sweden and Germany, with their large populations of Kurdish origin, are providing militarily support to the Kurdish Peshmerga in their fight against the Islamic State (ISIS).

The second type of superpower is the integrator. Libraries could be filled with books about how the United States has benefited from its ability to transform people from around the world into American

citizens. Similarly, Angola and Brazil have reversed the brain drain and are receiving large flows of immigrants from their former colonial ruler, Portugal. But the two most eye-catching experiments in integration today are Israel and ISIS.

Immigration from the diaspora is essential to Israel, which is reflected in the Hebrew word for it: aliyah, derived from the verb "to ascend." Indeed, the government provides "aliyah consultants," as well as free one-way flights, language classes, and practical support. As a result, Israel's population has risen ninefold since the country's founding in 1948. In Start-up Nation: The Story of Israel's Economic Miracle, co-authored with Saul Singer, the American writer and political adviser Dan Senor poses a fundamental question. "How is it," he asks, "that Israel - a country of 7.1 million people, only sixty years old, surrounded by enemies, in a constant state of war since its founding, with no natural resources - produces more start-up companies than large, peaceful, and stable nations like Japan, China, India, Korea, Canada, and the United Kingdom?" The answer, of course, is immigration.

ISIS's leaders would not be happy with the comparison, but their group's rapid emergence on the map has drawn some lessons from Israel. The so-called Islamic State may not be officially recognized by anyone, but it is being built on the basis of immigration. According to the Soufan Group, roughly 30,000 people from 86 countries have traveled to ISIS-held territory in Syria and Iraq.

The third type of immigration superpowers are go-betweens, which use their geography to extract concessions from migration-phobic neighbors. The most notable example is Turkey; once forced to beg to be considered for European Union membership, it now dictates the terms of its relationship with Brussels. A leaked transcript of a recent summit with European leaders revealed how President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan threatened to bus refugees to Greece and Bulgaria if his demands were not met. Niger is another go-between. As a major transit hub through which 90% of all West African migrants pass on their way to Italy, Niger succeeded in securing €600 million (\$680 million) in the last EU aid budget. In doing so, it followed the example of Libya's Muammar el-Qaddafi, who famously warned that Europe would "turn black" if it did not pay him to hold back migrants attempting to cross the Mediterranean.

If the established powers that first benefited from the globalization of trade are known as the G-7, the countries, regions, and organizations that are benefiting from migration - China, India, Kurdistan, Israel, ISIS, Turkey, and Niger - could be called the M-7. As control over population flows become a currency of power, states that follow the M-7's lead will have the opportunity to boost their geopolitical heft.

For the West, the biggest challenge will be to reconcile domestic pressure for closed borders with the geopolitical advantages of embracing migration. For now, at least, it seems that the G-7 - for which an easily affordable influx of refugees has somehow become a "crisis" - will continue to aid the M-7's rise. (Courtesy Project Syndicate)

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