

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



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How to Curb the Crimes?

Currently, Afghanistan is suffering from myriads of problems and among them the rising rate of crimes is a dominant one. The persistent insecurity and instability have provided the opportunity to the criminals to take full advantage. Moreover, the prevailing circumstances – the snowballing poverty and unemployment, growing injustice and unreliable law and order system – are further pushing the people towards crimes and corruption. It is always important to see that there is a prominent link between poverty and crimes. There are many people who commit crimes only because they are not able to feed their families or they are capable of fulfilling the ever-growing necessities of life. The important point is to realize that though poverty is one of the basic reasons of why people commit crimes, it is not the only reason. It can be observed that the criminals are mostly rich and have connections with authoritative people in the society. Moreover, there are criminals among the ruling elite and they commit huge crimes and never brought to justice.

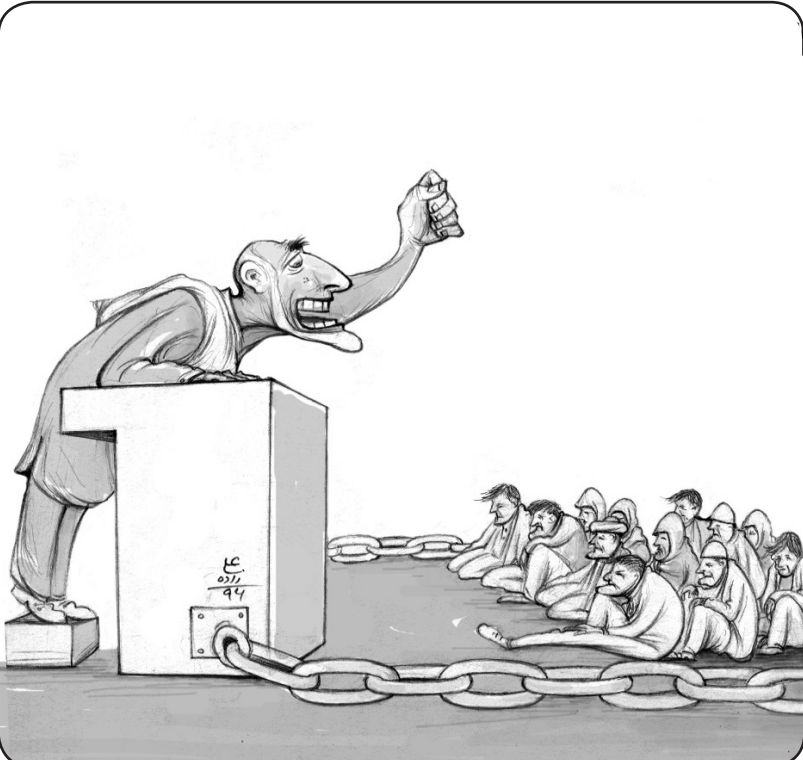
Thus, there are different reasons behind the crimes that are committed within a society and they are not always evident to us. What is evident is the outcome of the crimes as it directly influences the people. Whether there is a murder, robbery or a kidnapping, the effect is very direct and can be felt by the victims, their relatives and other people who come across those crimes. These impacts of the crimes disturb the normal social life and may prove to be a ripple that can generate more crimes and disturbances within the society. Therefore, it is important to safeguard the society from these influences and control the crimes in the best possible manner.

Two types of strategies can be effective in this regard – short term and long term strategies. The short-term strategy is basically carried out by the law-enforcement system in the society that works through the institutions of courts and police. Law-enforcement system within a society basically works on the principle of identifying the criminals, bringing them to the justice and punishing them. The countries with weaker law-enforcement systems suffer to a large extent in providing justice to the alleged criminals. Such societies also suffer from lack of providence of timely justice. The system of courts is not very efficient. There are many cases that take many years in courts and yet remain undecided. The people who are influenced by such cases experience a complete change in their lives, which is from bad to worse and by the time they reach to justice, their lives are already destroyed. It has been also observed that the cases that belong to influential people are pursued immediately while the ones that involve the ordinary people are kept in files and they never reach to the courts.

And then there are detention centers that, in fact, do not transform the criminals into useful citizens, which is the basic philosophy of them. They, on the other hand, turn them into bigger criminals and if unfortunately, which mostly happens, there is a person who has been punished wrongfully; such a person becomes a true criminal after leaving the detention center. Unluckily, Afghanistan is one of the same types of countries that suffer from weak law-enforcement system. Though there has been much development in this regard, serious concerns still prevail and raise questions about the system. The police force in Afghanistan is still in the preliminary stages and it really requires years of attention and support to reach to a truly professional stage. There are many areas in the country where the police do have enough penetration and where they cannot reach to crimes and criminals. Then there are many areas wherein the people still go to traditional courts, which are dominated by religious and tribal leaders instead of going to the courts that are established by the government.

There is a great margin of tireless efforts for the improvement of detention centers as well. The basic facilities that the prisoners get are in no way enough and the environment is not very much healthy. Even within the detention centers the criminals are able to keep their communication with the outside world and are able to lead or to participate in their unlawful activities.

It is really imperative to keep in consideration that the law-enforcement system can provide short-term solution to the crimes. If a society is really interested in controlling them there should be a long-term strategy that must deal with the basic reasons of the crime and try to nip the evil in the bud. There should be efforts to work on efficient administration, better economic condition, political stability, good governance, providence of basic human rights and control of corruption. Justice should reach to all the people of the society alike and the citizens must not feel alienated from the society. Moreover, there should not be discrimination as far as practical implementation of the criminal law is considered. Law should not serve the rich alone as is happening in many societies of the world; rather all should be treated equally in this regard.



Afghanistan's Independence – An Honor for Afghans

By Abdul Hamid Arifi

It is an undeniable fact that Afghanistan's independence is highly valuable for all Afghans and is the epitome of their honor and ambition. Afghans have celebrated this day for many years. However, celebrating this historical pride should uphold common feelings, history, realization, suffering, empathy and sympathy in this land for our nation. All individuals need to consider this honor and remain responsible in protecting it. That is to say, they have to be proud of being Afghan and keep their heads high. Ill-fatedly, the fact shows otherwise. The people of this land have been embroiled in conflict and war and violence which resulted in the destruction of social life and their backwardness. Rather than living a peaceful life and being tolerant towards one another, people were involved in bloodshed. It goes without saying that with the broken foundation of friendship and tolerance, reiterating hatred and avenge and legitimizing the death of one another and violating one's honor and property will lead to the collapse of the wall of life and trigger a sense of disappointment in the society. We should strongly believe and profoundly feel that getting knowledge, reaching a comfortable life, and enjoying justice, public freedoms and human rights values will not be achieved through conflict. This way, the stability will not be gained, either. The history of human societies proved this fact that people's animosity, poverty, ignorance and lack of knowledge, and injustice have sparked off the sense of rage and fueled the feeling of revenge among groups. The historical responsibility of our time and generation necessitates that we all should head towards a common goal and seek to protect our independence and territorial integrity. Further, we need to support the spirit of brotherhood and equality among the tribes and shun segregation and disunity.

Monopolization and discrimination on the grounds of political faction and discrimination in sharing national assets, education, ethnicity and language, employment, access to justice, beliefs and faith, human dignity, etc. are highly destructive and will change hope into disappointment in the society. In addition, these issues will fuel the sense of revenge and prompt people to engage in civil unrest.

We believe that besides common historical honor and having common human feelings and suffering, and social interests, we will be able to live a peaceful life with one another and fulfill our responsibilities in providing peace

and stability in the society.

Moreover, the media have to shoulder the burden of responsibility in promoting peace, stability and the culture of tolerance and should take more effective step for the realization of such lofty ambitions.

We should be hopeful enough that celebrating historical honor will be fruitful and support us in achieving the way for creating empathy and fulfilling our national responsibilities in the best possible way so as to form a united and developed society. Hence, we are all responsible to move based on our social facts, realize and respect our common interests, and seek to bury the differences rather than stressing on them.

On the other hand, the government is also responsible to fulfill its commitment as it is stated in the Constitution, approved in Kabul Loya Jirga (Grand National Assembly) in 2004, that the state will "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".

Considering the aforementioned facts, we will be able to gain peace and stability easier and bury the hatchet and curb the destructive and deadly wars. But if we do not learn from our past and ignore our common interests repeatedly, the most adverse effect will be being engaged in bloody and destructive conflicts. We are all mankind belonging to the same land. Relying on reasonable and comprehensive interests and institutionalizing it in our national culture will be the most effective strategy for gaining access to peace and stability. Likewise, reiterating the criteria of humanity for all tribes in the society will lead to the elimination of discrimination and differences. It is also a path to social justice which has been a long desire for Afghan people.

To sum up, Afghanistan is the common home for all Afghans and all must enjoy common concession and opportunities. No tribe is superior or inferior to another. The religious beliefs and faith of all individuals are valuable in the society and Afghanistan's independence is an honor for all Afghans.

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The Nonstop Cycle of Children's Sufferings

By Hujjatullah Zia

Violation of children's rights is widespread in Afghanistan. Their susceptibility to domestic violence, terrorism, etc. is outrageous. Afghan children undergo great sufferings in one way or another and their pain and anguish continue unabated. Their dream of a prosperous future fall by the wayside. No remedy for their problem is in the horizon.

Decades of war and violence in Afghanistan did not only inflict heavy casualties upon Afghan children but also left them at the mercy of social, economic and political issues. Children are engaged in backbreaking chores, affected by social ills, and killed in terrorist activities in the country. A considerable number of children are supposed to labor from the break of dawn to the fall of dusk to earn a morsel of bread for their families. They take the desire of going to school to the grave with them. That is to say, pain is the twin brother of Afghan children.

Female children are more vulnerable in Afghan society. First, they are treated with discrimination, on the grounds of their gender, both in private and social atmosphere. The misogynistic view regarding women continues in the patriarchal society of Afghanistan, particularly in tribal belts. Female children are confined within cultural barriers and traditional custom. After all, they are still the casualty of their brothers' crime. For instance, when their brothers violate the honor of a girl or woman in their areas, the tribal council – which holds strong sway in remote areas of Afghanistan – will decide to bestow a girl from the perpetrator's family to the victim's so as to compensate for the loss of honor.

Similarly, some fathers who are not able to pay their debt, simply give their daughters in return for the money they owe. On the other hand, forced and under-aged marriages prevail in many parts of the country. Moreover, female children are susceptible to sexual harassment and rape, which occurs repeatedly across the country. The strong superstitions and harsh practices regarding female children portray that as if people live in the age of stone.

Terrorism also threatens the life of Afghan children in some ways. For example, the Taliban militants recruit children to fight against the government. They either succumb to financial support or threatened to join the Taliban. On the other side, scores of Afghan children lose their lives in terrorist attacks and suicide bombings. The militant fighters disregard the international humanitarian law (IHL) and human rights.

They target people indiscriminately. According to a report recently released by the Human Rights Independent

Commission, 10,608 people were killed and wounded in 1395 Afghan calendar that included 2,980 children. The Taliban were 61.2 per cent responsible for the last year's civilian casualties.

The sufferings sustained by Afghan children will put democracy under question. Afghan government made commitment to support children and form a civil society void of violence. Afghanistan's Constitution states in article 54, "...The state shall adopt necessary measures to attain the physical and spiritual health of the family, especially of the child and mother, upbringing of children, as well as the elimination of related traditions contrary to the principles of the sacred religion of Islam."

Moreover, national law has forbidden forced labor and marriages.

On the other hand, crime is deemed a personal act in the constitution as article 26 says, "Crime is a personal act. Investigation, arrest and detention of an accused as well as penalty execution shall not incriminate another person." It is believed that traditional custom contrary to Islamic sharia is one of the main reason behind children's sufferings in the country.

Forced marriages or labor is not only against law but also against Islamic tenets. In the same way, one is supposed to be the casualty of another's crime neither in national law nor in Islamic sharia. But all these issues are being practiced widely in the country which is a matter of great concern. In addition to suffering physically, Afghan children also suffer mentally and spiritually.

They are vulnerable to social ills and moral turpitude in the society. In other words, when children are socialized in unhealthy atmosphere – whether in the family or with their street playmates – they will nurture the same attitude. The morally negative TV programs will put an adverse effect on children.

They will be spoiled through copying the same behavioral pattern. Thus, their parents and school teachers need to monitor their behaviors and guide them to the right way. To protect the rights of children, the government must implement the law strictly and prosecute the violators of their rights.

Second, the state should provide them with social, and economic facilities so that they do not show tendency towards moral turpitude or war and violence such as joining the Taliban militants. Indeed, if the rights and dignity of children are disregarded, the society will be pushed towards social and political turbulence. Thus, this issue should be taken serious.

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