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On the Lives Lost in Natural Disasters

Winter season and severe weather conditions are very challenging for Afghanistan. Particularly, people living in rural areas of the country have to face different sorts of hardships and troubles. In certain cases, those hardships come in the form of different calamities or natural disasters. As, the facilities to counter such disasters are minimum, the losses are mostly huge and, in certain cases, even result in the death of many innocent lives.

In one of similar incidents, at least, 12 people lost their lives in torrential rainfalls and floods in Kandahar province, while 18 others were wounded. Reports show that more than 379 families were influenced, while around 1,575 homes were destroyed in all the districts of Kandahar. At least, 1,200 people were rescued by the Air Force and security forces.

The incident is really tragic and shows how difficult the lives of the common and poor people of Afghanistan are. In winter and rainy season when floods hit different parts of the country, the ones who become the victims are the poor people who have ill-constructed houses and suffer from lack of facilities.

After any natural disaster in a particular locality, there are many issues that may rise if support does not reach to the effected people quickly. Moreover, it may take the victims a long time before they are able to live their lives the way they used to live, and by that time they may face problems like rise in diseases, malnutrition, lack of proper medication, hygiene issues and unavailability of shelters. Now that weather conditions have turned intense, the problems may multiply; therefore, it is really essential that speedy measures must be taken when there is any natural disaster. The concerned officials require to act prudently and make sure they reach to all those who have been affected.

The people, at the same time, can make efforts to support their countrymen. Particularly, those who are not influenced by the tragedy and have the capability to support others must stand for others support. They should feel the problems of others as their own and must show true patriotism at the time of trouble.

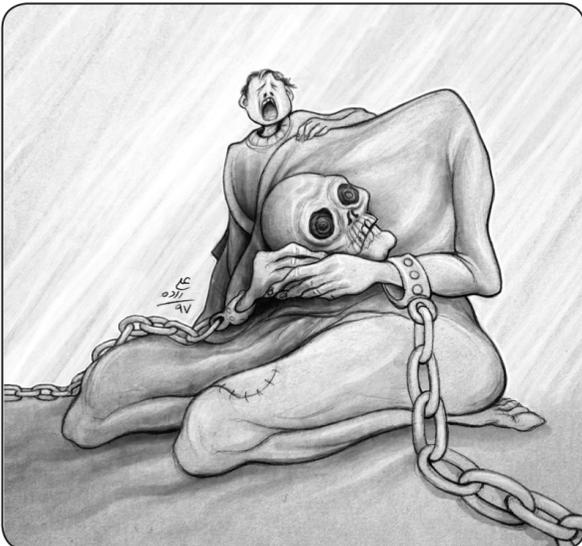
It is really tragic in Afghanistan that common Afghan people have not only been victimized by wars and conflicts but also by natural disasters. Whether it is avalanches, floods, famine or even earthquake, the severest of the shocks shake the existence of the poor and destitute. They are the most effected, in two different ways. First, they do not possess a strong and reliable shelter and other facilities that can safeguard them against the natural disasters, which make them easy victims. Second, the facilities that should be there after the disaster to minimize the level of destruction, never reach them, as they are at the remotest of the areas.

Leave the disaster aside, even when there are severe weather conditions, which cannot be even termed as disasters; the loss of life and property incurred by the poor Afghans is really immense. Every year, the severe cold weather victimizes many poor people as they do not have enough capacity to secure themselves. As the people in the affected areas, because of their wretched and torn shelters and no fuel or wood to burn, are being victimized, there is no enough support from the relevant officials to provide them the facilities to fight against the death. The result is misery. And when the severe cold weather turns into disasters in the form of avalanches, the incapacity of the government to help its people out of the disaster is further exposed.

There are many lives that can be saved through proper and timely efforts. Moreover, there are many other areas as well that are necessary to be given proper attention by the government so that such disasters and incidents should be properly handled. Among them making a very well-equipped and properly trained disaster management unit is the most important one. At the same time making the different parts of country accessible through proper roads is also vital. Many places happen to be in the remotest of the areas, where the rescue teams and equipment take a very lengthy time to reach as there are no proper roads.

Though security has been the most dominant issue in Afghanistan, there are many other issues as well that kill more people than the lack of security. The proper attention of the government in that regard and its services can save many lives. It requires to institutionalize its efforts and put to practice National Disaster Management Plan. Department for Disaster Preparedness must be improved and must be equipped and capacitated enough to carry out its responsibilities during and even before disasters.

The developed countries of the world, through institutionalized efforts, have minimized the risks of disasters and have the capacity to react rapidly when such disasters take place and thus save the valuable lives of its people as much as possible. Therefore, the government of Afghanistan must also pay consideration and concentration in such areas and must make sure that poor people do not lose their lives worthlessly.



The Consequences of Climate Change in Afghanistan

By: **Mohammad Zahir Akbari**

Suffering successive years of drought and climate change, the current white winter has brought out some good news and also some bad news in the country. The good news are expressed by the farmer community and agriculture experts that the longstanding drought will be eliminated in the year coming due to the heavy snow fall. Recently, the government officials also has confirmed of a good and productive year ahead due to the same reason. Meanwhile, it has also created some unpleasing issues in several parts of the country. On 1 March, heavy rains struck several parts of Kandahar city including Zheri, Dand, Damand, Arghandab, Spinboldak, and Takhtapu Districts. According to statement issued by provincial governor's office in Kandahar, at least 12 people lost their lives after heavy rain falls and flash floods hit parts of Kandahar province on Saturday. As quoted, the statement said 379 families were affected in different parts of Kandahar city and their homes were damaged by the sudden floods.

The statement added that 1,575 homes were destroyed in all districts of the province and the families were taken to safe places. At least 18 others including women and children were wounded in the incident and they are under treatment, the statement said. The statement also said that 1,200 people were rescued by the Air Force and security forces. According to officials, humanitarian organization will start distribution of food and non-food materials to all displaced people. Provincial governor Hayatullah Hayat praised security forces efforts for rescuing civilians and thanked relevant institutions for their cooperation and asked humanitarian aid organizations to provide food and non-food materials to the affected families.

Likewise, a large number of Kochi (nomadic) families, about 500 people, were stranded on the river bank and there was an urgent need for air support to rescue them. The rugged mountainous terrain, heavy snowfall and lack of roads were retarding the pace of immediate relief and rescue operations, quoted from a senior official working for the Afghanistan Natural Disaster Management Authority in Kabul. Thus, "At least 10 people, including children, are still missing," the UN agency said. "It is anticipated that up to 2,000 homes may have been damaged."

In addition to humanitarian losses, it has also caused some economic damages; reportedly, it has inflicted severe damages to regional infrastructure in Kandahar province including damaging some roads, houses and also public buildings. Government offices in PD#6 have been affected with buildings and documentation damaged or lost. As aforementioned, Flash floods triggered by the heavy rain have reportedly killed 12 people, including a number of children, when their homes collapsed or the vehicles they were traveling in were swept away.

The Flood-affected families have been evacuated to secure areas in the districts and Kandahar city including schools, mosques, Gov-

ernment buildings and the Haji camp but they are still in need of food and non-food aid item. According to the government officials about 400 families have been rescued by the Afghan army since the flooding began late Friday night. the rescue operations, however, were largely delayed due to heavy rainfall, as quoted from Raziq Shirzai, the provincial commander of the Afghan air force. Disasters such as avalanches and flash floods often hit mountainous areas and river valleys of Afghanistan as snow melts in the spring and summer. It is made worse by deforestation. Heavy snowfall across large swathes of Afghanistan this winter has raised fears of severe flooding as spring approaches, following years of devastating drought in the country. It comes after a recent flood that nearly 50 people have been killed due to flooding in other parts of Afghanistan so far this year, as quoted from the UN officials.

This year flood crisis comes after longstanding drought which had resulted shortage of grazing land and drinking water, affected almost 95% of the farmers in last summer. In 2018 it was said that Afghanistan received less than 30 % of their average annual precipitation. As a result, at least 150,000 heads of livestock had perished in that year due to the severe damage of drought in 22 provinces of the country with causing many internal movements to urban centers. According to Oxfam, in 2018, nearly three million people were faced severe food shortages as a result of drought in many provinces.

The climate change was blamed as the biggest factor behind the issues even drew the attention of international attention. According to experts, with every passing decade, Afghanistan has lost 2 percent of its rain and snowfall due to Climate change. The average temperature across Afghanistan has increased by 0.6°C since 1960. This general warming across Afghanistan is in line with rising temperatures across the region in which Afghanistan is located. As a result, food insecurity and reduced access to safe water on children reported devastating, as these areas have pre-existing high rates of malnutrition. Without adequate nutritious food and safe water for drinking, as well as for hygiene and sanitation, children's health will only worsen.

Based on the above, it is imperative upon the government of Afghanistan to predict and be able to manage any type climate incident may occur in the future. According to experts, the implementation of Afghanistan National Development Strategy, the country's second most important national document after the Constitution, would be the best way to overcome the climate issues. Nevertheless, National Unity Government has paid more attention to water infrastructure rather than previous government but within ANDS, the country's agricultural sector must be given priority and climate change effect should not be neglected.

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The need for Collective War against Terrorists

By: **Moh. Zaher Sha'ban**

The dreadful phenomenon of terrorism is of organized crimes which has caused many humanitarian and fiscal damages all along the history. In the era of globalization, the terrorist acts and dangers are not confined to national and regional territory of countries but also affect other parts of the world. Today, terrorism and organized crime groups are one of the most important issues threatening the Middle East region and the entire world, and it severely affects the stability of international environment. The Middle East region is one of the oldest centers of civilization and governance in the world. The Middle East is a magnificent region for advent of great religions and cultures. Geographically, Middle East played as corridor role which interconnects three major continents of Asia, Africa and Europe; historically, it served as a bridge between the East and the West, and has provided transportation route for transitions of commodity and promotion of cultures. From very long ago, the Middle East was considered one of the most important regions due to its significant role for exchange of goods, views and cultural understanding of different nations. Unfortunately, some of regional players have destroyed the prestige of this historical area owing to exploiting from organizations as a political tools and weapon; whereas, the extremist groups will ultimately damage their supporters, as well.

In the past few decades, the problems in the Middle East, especially the issue of terrorism and its emerging crises, have not only undermined the countries of the region, but also the rest of the world have been affected by this unrestrained situation of this region. Thereof, Afghanistan, Iran, India, China are have increasingly damaged by terrorism; the recent series of terrorist attacks took place in Zahidan and Kashmir are of the latest example for this. Many of the citizens of these two countries were always victims of terrorist acts and while terrorism supporters and nests address are clear. Therefore, it can be said that Afghanistan, along with Iran and India, is at the forefront of confronting terrorism in the region, and has been the main victims of terrorist groups.

Given that Shiasm is the formal religion of Iran and many of terrorists consider Shia as infidel, the growth of extremist groups is a serious threat to this country, and some of these groups formally threaten the current system of Iran. Therefore, Iran and the ruling religion of this country can be considered as a factor in provoking terrorists, especially ISIL. However, the nervousness of Iran originates from the financing of Saudi-backed groups inside the Pakistani territory, and so recently an Iranian commander threatened Pakistan to attack over the mentioned group nests.

Terrorism will also threaten the security and benefits of India in the region. The first threat is that Kashmir under Indian rule will become more insecure. During the years when Taliban was ruling in Afghanistan, the Kashmir under ruling of India got increasingly insecure due to the reason that extremists sought to attack India

through Kashmir. In addition, India, as a region's superpower with rapid economic growth, needs new markets. Insecurity in countries like Afghanistan and Central Asia will hit India's economy.

China, as the second largest economic power in the world, faces a greater threat than other countries. Competing with US, China is in need of more convergence and stability in the countries of the region. The Terrorist groups are serious threats to regional stability. Instability in the region also makes China unable to meet its energy needs and loses its markets in the region. Therefore, China also indirectly threatened from growth of fundamentalism and extremism such as Taliban, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and the eastern Turkestan Movement.

Therefore, it can be said that terrorist groups are a serious threat to the countries of the region, especially India, Iran, China and Afghanistan. The countries of the region need to coordinate and cooperate in a joint resistance front to combat against these groups. Today, under the influence of the globalization process, security threats have become more diversified while the governments unilaterally are not able to ensure their national security. In many cases, the elimination of threats and national security is possible through multilateral cooperation. The regional countries should come to understating that eradication of terrorists are not possible without collective fighting and comprehensive mechanism against extremism and terrorism.

The multi-lateral approach and the joint efforts of regional countries, particularly China, Iran and India, which have recently been damaged by the Terrorism, are the most effective way to fight terrorism; The multi-dimensional approach will synchronize regional actors, reduce the cost of combating terrorism, reduce the interferences of foreigners in the region, and remove the roots of the terrorist groups, etc. Otherwise, the terrorism in the Middle East is the main growing issues which will further challenge the entire regional nations. Millions of citizens of these countries are the victims of either displaced or killed by this wretched phenomenon. The governments of the region have undertaken high costs with holding unilateral approach to counter terrorism, but the result of these efforts are not promising.

The most effective way to deal with terrorism in the Middle East is to unite the countries of the region, especially the powerful actors, to take a multilateral approach in their foreign policy cooperating with the war on terror, in order to achieve a credible outcome. Using all means of pressure against terrorist supporting countries, they can root out the terrorism and establish a safe and secure area benefiting all countries. And finally, ensuring the integrity and stability of the region provides a comprehensive development ground for the interests of all regional countries, while war and conflicts will threaten the interests all nations.

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