The Issue of Rights

By Hujjatullah Zia

A number of standard individual rights are exigent to effective governance, including rights to freedom of religion and assembly and freedom of religion. Human rights instruments also lay conceptual foundations that confer protection on such rights. For example, the Civil and Political Covenant in Article 19, paragraph 1, states that "everyone is free to profess and believe in a system of idea or belief of his own conscience, and no one shall be compelled to disclose his religious beliefs." This principle means that "there shall be neither denial of the right, in community with their group, to profess and practice their own religion, or to use their own language." Furthermore, the right to freedom of religion is indispensable, for it secures freedom of thought and the expression of religious beliefs and practices. It allows individuals to have a voice in religious matters and to live their lives in accordance with their beliefs. When the government enforces its policies in a manner that infringes on these rights, it is a violation of the constitution that the government is being held accountable for. Consequently, the government is responsible for ensuring the protection of these rights and preventing any form of discrimination against individuals. This involves providing legal and institutional frameworks that enable individuals to exercise their rights in practice, including by ensuring the freedom of belief and the right to practice one’s religion. It also involves taking concrete measures, such as providing legal protection and support to individuals, to ensure that these rights are respected and protected. In conclusion, the government is required to establish and enforce laws and policies that respect and protect the right to freedom of religion, ensuring that individuals are able to exercise their beliefs and practices without fear of discrimination or persecution. This requires a commitment to upholding the principles of equality and non-discrimination, and a willingness to engage in dialogue and cooperation with civil society organizations to ensure that these rights are upheld in practice. Ultimately, the government must prioritize the protection of individual rights to ensure a just and equitable society for all.