



Sheikha Hasina – Mother of Humanity?

“Mother of Humanity” now has a new face. Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Sheikha Hasina, has earned this title by her devout and unquestioning followers, who have declared that her decision to aid the helpless Rohingya is unmatched and unprecedented to protect humanity. To uphold her righteous act, her supporters did not stop here. They went on hanging numerous banners and multi-coloured festoons filled with words of praise for their leader all over the country and also demanded that the birthday of their leader should be declared internationally as “International Humanity Day” to honor her never-seen-before acts of kindness. It would come to little surprise if their claims soon put her in the place of a deity.

Hasina regime has opened the Myanmar-Bangladesh borders to give refuge to over 500,000 Rohingya Muslims in the country recently after they were violently persecuted and forcefully driven out from their homeland by the brutal regime of Myanmar. On last September at the 72nd UN General Assembly held in New York, Sheikha Hasina has also presented her own five-pronged proposal to resolve the Rohingya issue peacefully and permanently with her neighbouring country Myanmar. Giving refuge to hundreds and thousands of desperate refugees and opening border for them are no doubt praise worthy actions, but before applauding Hasina, we should dig into the issue a little deeper to uncover the truth behind this humanitarian mask.

For Bangladesh, the exodus of desperate Rohingya Muslims is not at all a new phenomenon. In 1973 to 1974 right after the country’s independence, a large number of Rohingya Muslims had entered into Bangladeshi territory to escape the savage attacks of Buddhist army. After that, Bangladesh had seen a large-scale influx of Rohingya Muslims in 1978, 1991-1992, 2012 and 2016. However, even after being a direct witness of unspeakable atrocity and full-scale genocide of the Myanmar government against this persecuted community for decades, the consecutive governments of Bangladesh did not take any real action which would have forced the murderous regime of Myanmar to stop the massacre that caused this continuous influx of refugees. No government of Bangladesh had ever felt any moral obligation to, at the very least, cut diplomatic or economic ties with Myanmar in order to encourage a hiatus to such carnages. Instead, the Hasina regime has recently signed a treaty with the atrocious regime of Myanmar to import 250,000 tons of rice from the country during the ongoing genocide.

The story does not end there. Although for decades Bangladesh has a history of giving refuge to hundreds of thousands of Rohingya Muslims, but the truth is that 90% of them were denied a formal refugee status and are living as an illegal migrant in the country without any formal assistance. This has resulted in frequent arrests and forceful push-back by the law enforcement authorities of Bangladesh against the Rohingya refugees. In 2012, the preplanned and government-backed genocide against the Rohingya had begun in the Rakhine State (which is also known as Arakan) where the horrific footages of slaughter of Rohingya men, women and children widely circulated in social media. During this time, Sheikh Hasina, the then Prime Minister of Bangladesh, had ordered to close the borders and deployed the Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB), Coast Guard, Bangladesh Police, Bangladesh Navy and Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) in the border frontier to push those desperate people back ‘home’ where they were being slaughtered. In an interview with Al-Jazeera during the time, Hasina was asked why she was not giving refuge to this desperate people. Sheikh Hasina answered with a smiling face that, “This is the responsibility of

Myanmar government... they are their citizens, so it is up to them how they will treat with their citizens and I have no right to poke my nose in the internal affairs of any country”.

From the very beginning of the crisis which had started for Bangladesh after the country's independence, the country had continued to adopt the policy of “pushing back” against the Rohingya Muslims. To increase further frustration among the Rohingya Muslims, who have been living in the country for decades in squalid camps in an appalling condition, in 2012 Bangladesh government had ordered three international NGOs named: Doctors without Border (MSF), Action Against Hunger (ACF) and Britain's Muslim Aid to stop their humanitarian activities within the refugee camps so that the refugees have no choice but to leave the host country willingly.

The inhuman treatment and shameless activities of the successive governments of Bangladesh did not end there. When the latest genocide against Rohingya Muslims started on 25th August of this year, instead of investigating the matter seriously from the country's past experience, the current government again ordered the BGB to push back these desperate people who managed to escape inevitable death and horrific ordeals. This has resulted in 20,000 Rohingya Muslims, most of whom were women and children stranded at the border in no man's land without any protection, food and shelter for several days.

Later on the 28th of August, in a meeting with Myanmar's charge d'affaires in Dhaka, the Bangladeshi government voluntarily offered a joint military operation in the frontiers against the Rohingya insurgents by promptly labeling them as “terrorist”, who are only fighting to get back their basic rights that has been violating for last 75 years by Myanmar's ruthless military regime. Manjurul Karim Chowdhury, a general director in charge of the Southeast Asia at the Bangladesh foreign ministry said, “If the joint operation is conducted, the terrorists and militants would not be able to flee crossing the border.” In tune with the Myanmar government, the Hasina regime was very quick to accuse Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) as a terrorist group, but turned a blind eye towards the indiscriminate killing, massacre, arson and brutality of the atrocious regime of Myanmar and have failed to condemn the so-called “clearance operation” against the Rohingya civilians.

The matter of ARSA is another point to consider. Dr. Maung Zarni, an exiled Buddhist human right activist originally from Myanmar and an expert on the political affairs of his country, told Al Jazeera that ARSA's actions were borne out of “systematic abuses of genocidal proportions” by the Myanmar military. “This is not a terrorist group aimed at striking at the heart of Myanmar society as the government claims it is...They are a group of hopeless men who decided to form some kind of self- defense, group and protect their people who are living in conditions akin to Nazi concentration camps.” Zarni added. Moreover, Anagha Neelakantan, the Asia Programme Director at the International Crisis Group, told Al Jazeera that there is “no evidence that ARSA has any links to local or international Jihadist groups, or that their aims are aligned.”

Moreover, Hasina regime is extremely vigilant to contain these helpless people within prison like unlivable camps. To ensure this, her government has put restrictions on their movement so that in any case, they cannot leave the camp area and do not mix and live with local people. Last year, to get rid of this unwanted people, the government decided to move the existing Rohingya refugees in an island named Thangar Char in the Bay of Bengal. The island is far away from the main land, difficult to access and two third of it goes under water during monsoon. According to the study of several human rights organizations, the island is completely uninhabitable. Also, few years back, Hasina regime passed a law to ban intermarriage between Rohingya and Bangladeshi men women so that these desperate people can never be part of Bangladeshi people.

In addition to that, we also need to examine Hasina's five-pronged proposal to the UN which was presented to resolve the Rohingya crisis permanently. In her proposal, Hasina declared her intention to create "safe zones" under UN supervision in Myanmar to protect civilians and also demanded the "unconditional implementation the Kofi Annan Commission recommendations". Her followers are mesmerized by the brilliance of the proposal and claimed that her recent actions regarding solving Rohingya Crisis raised her position to the height of global leaders.

However, before considering the proposal as solution, we must investigate the track record of UN around the world, in terms of "stopping genocide" or giving protection to civilians within so called "safe zone" under UN supervision.

We must not forget that in the late 20th century, the world had witnessed two dreadful genocides in Rwanda and Srebrenica. We should also not forget that these brutal genocides took place under the very eyes of UN, where the UN Peace Keeping Forces played the shameful role of bystanders and allowed the genocide to happen.

In 1994, the Hutu extremist indiscriminately massacred 800,000 Tutsi people in Rwanda within hundred days. The genocide was planned and orchestrated by the Rwandan state and its institutions. The Security Council of UN was informed and warned long before the genocide took place by the UN military commanders, many UN experts, reporters of the Commission of Human Rights and Human Rights NGOs. But the Security Council just firmly decided to limit its role as a bystander and let the genocide happen. The so called international community did not take a single step because, to them, Rwanda was not a land of strategic interest. For this reason, US Acting Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Bushnell later stated, "People didn't know that it was genocide. What I was told was, 'Look, Pru, these people do this from time to time.'"

Furthermore, in 1995, under the noses of UN Peace Keeping troops within UN-declared "safe zone" the death squad of Bosnian Serb Christians mercilessly massacred more than 8,000 Bosnian Muslim men and boys within 5 days and gang raped thousands of Bosnian women and girls as young as 6 years for months in Srebrenica. After declaring Srebrenica one of the "safe zones" by UN, the population of the city swelled from 9,000 to 50,000 and a French general of the UN Protection Forces (UNPROFOR) announced to the people of the town that, "You are now under the protection of the UN. I will never abandon you." Then UNPROFOR demilitarized the town by threatening that if the Muslims received any military aid, it will withdraw its force. Thus, by making the Muslim defenseless, the ground of mass massacre was prepared by UN. Furthermore, when Serb army entered the town without any resistance from the UN force, Srebrenica's inhabitants sought protection to the UN Head Quarter but they were expelled. Under the very eye of UNPROFOR, Serb death squad separated men and boys for mass killing and women and young girls for gang rape. UNPROFOR stood firmly in solidarity with the Serb death squad and did not interfere in the genocidal process. It was later revealed that Britain and the US had prior knowledge of it at least six weeks prior to the massacre but they decided to sacrifice the life and honor of thousands of Muslim men, women and children in their effort of establishing peace !

Moreover, we should also take a closer look at the widely discussed Kofi Annan Commission Report. Before preparing the report, Kofi Annan, the former UN Secretary General went to Myanmar to visit the Rakhine state in person in December 2016. After his visit in Rakhine, which was supervised by the Myanmar regime and meeting with Suu Kyi, he quickly switched his position and aligned his statement with the forged propaganda and the endless lies of the Myanmar regime. He cleverly twisted the well documented genocide under the cover of clash between two ethnic groups in Rakhine state and denied terming

the brutal massacre of Rohingya Muslims as “genocide”. He also advised the observers to be “very, very careful” in using the word “genocide”.

Certainly, Kofi Annan did not mention the bottom line of using the word “genocide”. If the crimes like indiscriminate killing, hacking to death with machetes, burning alive, mutilating bodies after gang rape, slitting throats, throwing children into rivers, torching villages and burying landmine on the path of fleeing people do not fall into the category of “genocide”, then the world must redefine the meaning of genocide itself.

So, what do we expect from the Annan Commission Report when the Commission head himself has already taken sides with the murderous regime? Moreover, in the very beginning of the Report, the Commission shamefully surrendered to the will of Suu Kyi and referred Rohingya Muslims as “the Muslims in Rakhine”. In truth, the Commission has failed to uphold the long suppressed cry of the Rohingya Muslims. To mask the truth, it has described the reality of Rakhine state in extremely vague context, like: “inter-communal tension” “deep rooted fear of the intension of other groups” and recognized the problem as a “complex nature” which has no “quick solution to fix”. Moreover, in the name of managing “cross border terrorism” the report is trumpeting the same GREAT LIE of the Myanmar government, under which the regime has justified its severe crime against humanity.

From the above discussion, it is evident that Hasina’s proposal of creating “safe zone” and “unconditional implementation of Annan Commission Recommendations” will bring nothing but further disaster to the lives of Rohingya Muslims. In fact, it is clear that, as a pawn of the colonial West, Sheikh Hasina is only trying hard to push the agenda of the West in her proposal to satisfy her colonial masters. When Myanmar’s ruthless military is impregnating Muslim women and girls through brutal gang rape and captivating them as sex slaves, being a woman, she did not release her army to rescue them and she never will. She, like all the Muslim rulers of the world, is still cowardly begging the UN to stop the genocide, knowing that the UN is an organization created by the imperialist West and under the banner of protecting “human rights”; its actual slogan is “United for Nothing but securing interest of the West”.

Unfortunately, the subservient rulers of the Muslim world devotedly serve the imperial West as they should serve Allah. For this reason, they do not release their army in the time of the Ummah’s dire need, but send this very army to UN Peace Keeping Missions to protect strategic, political and economic interests of the West. Allah (swt) says in Quran: ﴿وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَتَّخِذُ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ أَندَادًا يُحِبُّونَهُمْ كَحُبِّ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَشَدُّ حُبًّا لِلَّهِ وَلَوْ يَرَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا إِذْ يَرَوْنَ الْعَذَابَ أَنَّ الْقُوَّةَ لِلَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعَذَابِ﴾ **“And of mankind are some who take (for worship) others besides Allah as rivals (to Allah). They love them as they love Allah. But those who believe, love Allah more (than anything else). If only, those who do wrong could see, when they will see the torment that all power belongs to Allah and that Allah is Severe in punishment.”** [Surah al-Baqara: 165]

These treacherous rulers do not know that despite their treachery and betrayal, the victory of this noble Ummah is promised and it is indeed very near because Allah (swt) says in the Quran: ﴿نَصْرٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَفَتْحٌ قَرِيبٌ وَبَشِيرٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ﴾ **“Help from Allah (against your enemies) and a near victory. And give glad tidings to the believers.”** [Surah as-Saff: 13]

**Written for the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir by
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