

Secret UK-Saudi Deal Exposes the Fallacy of Human Rights

News:

Last week, *The Guardian* Newspaper revealed the UK and Saudi Arabia had a clandestine deal in place, which involved selection to UN's coveted Human Rights Council. In 2013, Britain conducted secret vote-trading deals with Saudi Arabia to ensure both states were elected to the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC), according to leaked diplomatic cables. The promotion of the Saudi kingdom to one of the UN's most influential bodies instigated international criticism of its human rights record. The newspaper further reported, "The delegation is honoured to send to the ministry the enclosed memorandum, which the delegation has received from the permanent mission of the United Kingdom asking it for the support and backing of the candidacy of their country to the membership of the Human Rights Council (HRC) for the period 2014-2016, in the elections that will take place in 2013 in the city of New York".

Comment:

Britain's long history of supporting the Saudi regime often involves sacrificing human rights in exchange for safeguarding British interests. The conservative government of Cameron is not alone in overlooking Saudi Arabia's human rights abuses in favour of commercial interests.

During the rule of the Labour government, Foreign Office Minister Peter Hain giving evidence before the parliamentary committee in 1999 spoke of balancing commercial interests with human rights. Later in 2000, Hain described the visit of despotic Abdullah to the UK as "we like to think [UK] is your second home' and he implored Saudi regime to "please do your best to open up as many sectors as possible to foreign investors".

But perhaps the most candid assessment of Britain's silence over Saudi Arabia's human rights abuses came during the Thatcher years from former commander of UK forces in Iraq, Peter de la Billiere who reassured Saudi Prince Khaled that the Saudi regime would remain in power no matter what. Billiere said, "Saudi Arabia was an old and proven friend of ours, and had deployed its immense oil wealth in a benign and thoughtful way...It was very much in our interest that the country and the regime should remain stable after the war." Billiere unashamedly pledged support for a regime that routinely suppresses domestic opposition with an iron fist, especially those that call for political Islam in a peaceful manner.

However, this did not deter the UK in making Saudi Arabia its biggest export market for arms sales in 2014. It is estimated that arms export licenses to the kingdom under the coalition government of 2010-2015 amounted to nearly £4bn. The UK was the largest supplier of arms to Saudi Arabia between 2010 and 2014, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. The sale also included equipment for suppressing dissent and carrying out torture included CS hand grenades, components for water cannons, and tear gas/ irritant ammunition.

Britain is not alone in putting commercial interests above human rights. During the Arab Spring, western governments were busy selling crowd control equipment while publicly siding with the protestors. This duplicity over human rights just underscores the lack of belief in the West about the values they supposedly cherish and uphold. On the one hand, Western governments invoke human rights to invade Muslim countries and replace non-compliant regimes, and on the other hand, for compliant regimes human right abuses are swept under the carpet. So if the West is not serious about human rights then why do Muslims blindly follow them?

The time has come for Muslims to put an end Western hypocrisy over human rights, which has become an evil tool to intervene in Muslim affairs. The practical way to abolish this is to re-establish the Khilafah state upon the method of the Prophethood, which will elevate the whole of humanity not just the Muslim world.

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اسْتَجِيبُوا لِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ إِذَا دَعَاكُمْ لِمَا يُحْيِيكُمْ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَحُولُ بَيْنَ الْمَرْءِ وَقَلْبِهِ وَأَنَّهُ إِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ﴾

"Oh you who have Iman, respond to Allah and to the Messenger when he calls you to that which gives you life. And know that Allah intervenes between a man and his heart and that to Him you will be gathered." [TMQ: Al Anfal: 24]



بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

Written for the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir by
Abdul Majeed Bhatti - Pakistan