

In the Absence of the Khilafah, Sri Lanka's Muslims will Always Live in Fear of Violence from Buddhist Extremists

News:

On Tuesday 6th of March, the Sri Lankan government imposed a nationwide state of emergency following a series of mob attacks in its central district of Kandy against its Muslim minority by Buddhist extremists. Hundreds of Buddhists, from the country's majority Sinhalese ethnic group, carrying sticks, rocks and petrol bombs attacked dozens of Muslim businesses, homes and mosques, setting many alight. According to media reports, a young Muslim man died inside a burning house. One Muslim civil activist stated, *"Men are on the road looking for Muslims and even checking in the buses that are passing through Sinhala villages."* There are also repeated allegations that police and security forces stood idly by, watching while Muslim houses and shops were destroyed, failing to take action against the mobs or arrest perpetrators of the attacks.

Comment:

Anti-Muslim bigotry and violence has been on the rise in Sri Lanka in recent years due to the increase of Buddhist nationalist groups and Buddhist nationalist fervor amongst certain sectors of the population. In June 2014, there were deadly riots against Muslims in the towns of Aluthgama and Beruwala. Hardline Buddhist monks, especially from the group Bodu Bala Sena (BBS) (Buddhist Power Force), who draw their inspiration from their counterparts in Myanmar are inciting this communal violence, aided by their political allies. Muslims in Sri Lanka are, therefore, living in fear, unsure when the next bout of violence will take place or if their religious rights will be taken away.

Muslim minorities, whether in Sri Lanka, the West or in other countries, often feel that the only way to safeguard their security, interests and rights is to engage in the democratic process of the state, supporting politicians or parties who they feel are more pro-Muslim or left-wing in their politics. In Sri Lanka's 2015 presidential elections, many Muslims campaigned and voted for the country's current President, Maithripala Sirisena, in the hope that he would crackdown on the communal violence instigated by the previous government, led by Mahinda Rajapaksa, which had links with the BBS and was supportive of Buddhist nationalism. Sirisena courted the Muslim vote and vowed to investigate anti-Muslim hate crimes and attacks after assuming power. However, he and his government not only failed to make any significant progress in this matter but also failed to clamp down on the expression of religious bigotry by Buddhist extremists or to hold them accountable for the resulting violence, allowing the popularity of the BBS and Buddhist nationalism to rise. In fact, the populist nationalistic leader, Rajapakse, won a landslide victory in this year's local government elections.

As Muslims, we should understand that trying to secure our rights and interests by attempting to play the political games of the flawed secular democratic system will always end in failure. *Firstly*, under this system, politicians and parties will promise the world to different sectors of their electorate to secure power but more often than not, fail to

deliver. Then, they will ride the tide of popular sentiments in order to stay in power, regardless of how detestable those sentiments may be or the detrimental impact on minorities. Following a series of attacks on mosques and Muslim-owned businesses in Sri Lanka last year, Hilmy Ahamed, vice president of the Muslim Council of Sri Lanka, stated, “*We have met the president twice on the attacks on the mosques. He promised to take action but did nothing. When we met the Prime Minister he said that the government does not want to be seen by the public to be acting against Buddhist monks at the behest of Muslims.*”

However, *secondly* and most importantly, Allah (swt) prohibits Muslims from engaging in any political system where sovereignty is given to the human being to legislate laws. Therefore, to try and play the corrupt secular political game will not only lead to failure in this world, due to the inherent inability of politicians and parliaments to create laws which are just to all, but crucially it will lead to failure in the Hereafter. Allah (swt) says, ﴿ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَاكَ عَلَىٰ شَرِيعَةٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْرِ فَاتَّبِعْهَا وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ﴾ “***We made for you a law, so follow it, and not the whims of those who have no knowledge.***” [Al-Jathiya: 18]

The only way to lift the state of fear that Muslims in Sri Lanka and Muslim minorities across the world today is to establish a state in the Muslim lands that truly represents the interests of Muslims and Islam, and that will act as their shield and guardian regardless of where they live. This state is the righteous Khilafah (Caliphate) based upon the method of the Prophethood. It is due to the absence of this state that believers have no sanctuary to flee to for protection, and extremists feel they can espouse anti-Muslim hatred and attack the believers with no fear of repercussion. They take comfort in the docile and indifferent state of the rulers and regimes of the Muslim world today who they know care nothing for the Muslims and will not lift a finger to protect them – as we see in Myanmar, Syria, Kashmir, Central Africa and elsewhere. However, this will not be so with the establishment of the Khilafah, which will show in action and not empty rhetoric that it will not tolerate a single Muslim being harmed, striking fear into the hearts of those who seek to terrorize the believers. We saw for example how under Islamic rule, the great sultan of Mughal India, Aurangzeb Alamgir, destroyed the formidable empire of the mighty Rakhine marauders, the notorious ancestors of the Myanmar Buddhist regime to end their oppression of Muslims within their territory and the wider region. So, we call the Muslims of Sri Lanka to reject futile secular politics and to place their focus and efforts on the urgent re-establishment of this glorious Khilafah state (Caliphate) that will lift their state of fear and ensure they enjoy secure and prosperous lives.

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