

Press Release

Political Monopoly of Building Materials in Zanzibar: Another Strike for the Destitute

Recently, government of Zanzibar has banned the transportation and use of stones in masonry activities.

The prohibition was announced by the Minister of Water, Energy and Minerals, Hassan Shaibu Kaduara, who stressed that the decision to restrict using of stone resources which has been reached due to ongoing environmental degradation.

The said minister claimed that the government has been receiving a great deal of resentment from citizens (without mentioning who and their whereabouts), on the environmental impacts from extraction of stones. Hence, citizens are being urged to utilize cement blocks during the prohibition period instead of stones especially in their structure construction.

The government of Zanzibar's directive of using cement blocks instead of stones in the construction of house foundations is quite the contempt to people since it knows for sure that the price of the cement blocks is higher due to their earlier politicizing of mining of building sand in 2017, a situation that led to an alarming rise in the price of that particular resource.

Experience vividly indicates that the inserting of political hands in primary building materials leads to artificial scarcity, overprice and frustration and also creates unbearable burden in the masonry industry especially to the ordinary people.

The current political hand in usage and excavating building stones has no difference with the previous one on building sand. Both implying malicious aims of a state monopoly and accumulation of benefits to the politicians and their cronies at the cost of pain and a higher price to destitute individuals.

The 2017 Government statistic on the issue of building sands further exposes an existence of state malignity on this scenario.

It was said in 2017 that Zanzibar was only left with 14 hectares of building sand, while its building industry consumes more than 10 hectares annually.

Question raised here is, from 2017 up to now, those 14 hectares of sands left, are they still there or gone? Since people still continue to build.

It is very unfortunate that the government of Zanzibar instead of easing things and creating a motivating environment that would enable ordinary people to possess their own houses, yet it is highly commercializing building sands and stones on false pretexts

of 'scarcity' of sand, 'environmental degradation' not to mention other malevolence pretext of protecting 'investment zones' via it, it is committing an open oppressive grabbing of necessitous citizens' lands and plots in areas such as at Bweleo and Fumba (Urban Zanzibar, West District 'B') that were developed for years from dead lands costing people a great deal of money, times and sweats.

We in Hizb ut Tahrir / Tanzania would like to make three points following this issue:

a. We sincerely warn the government of Zanzibar to further avoid frustrating building industry that make life of common man further unbearable especially in their struggle to possess accommodation. By making and creating hardness and harshness situation in people's lives is clear oppressions to citizens and a betrayal to them and you would be harshly accounted by Allah Taala in Hereafter and making things harder in this life. `A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said: I heard the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) supplicating in my house: **«اللَّهُمَّ مَنْ وَلِيَ مِنْ أَمْرِ أُمَّتِي شَيْئًا فَشَقَّ عَلَيْهِمْ فَاشْقُقْ عَلَيْهِ وَمَنْ وَلِيَ مِنْ أَمْرِ أُمَّتِي شَيْئًا فَرَفَّقْ بِهِمْ فَارْفُقْ بِهِ»** **“O Allah! Treat harshly those who rule over my Ummah with harshness, and treat gently those who rule over my Ummah with gentleness.”** [Reported by Muslim].

b. These injustices arise from the innate trait of the capitalist system and its democratic governments around the world. The system claims it is in the position to serve the people, but in reality is only exploiting more benefits from the backs of the people instead.

This means capitalism does not have the quality to rule over the humanity, since it is a system of only accumulating interest at any cost even if is harming citizens.

c. Only the Khilafah Rashidah (rightly guided Caliphate) state (that should be reestablished in the Muslim world) has all the qualities of the management of justice, integrity in serving humanity justly regardless of their colours, religion or background.

Masoud Msellem
Media Representative of Hizb ut Tahrir
in Tanzania