

The Futility of Putting our Trust in the United Nations

Srebrenica

It has been 25 years ago that over 8,000 Muslim men and boys from Srebrenica, a small, overpopulated town in Bosnia, were murdered in what is now seen as the worst atrocity on European soil since the Second World War.

The fall of the Dutch enclave which had been proclaimed one of six “safe areas” to be defended by Dutchbat, a Dutch battalion deployed there as a Protection Force by the United Nations, was the final chapter in a four-year war in former Yugoslavia.

The population of the enclave increased rapidly with refugees who had been displaced after the hurricane of violence in pursuit of Milosevic’s vision of a “Greater Serbia.” Seeking safety from civilian bombardments, massacres, forced evacuation, concentration camps, torture and systematic sexual abuse against up to 50,000 females who were systematically raped, slaved and impregnated by force.

The massacre of Srebrenica is seen as the most notorious act of horror during the war, more so as it happened under the watchful eye of the UN, who played a part in disarming Muslims men following a Serbian ultimatum, in order to create a “safe-zone”, they assisted the Serbs in separating men from women on the day of the massacre and they allowed the men who had sought shelter on the Dutch compound to be removed by the Serbian forces knowing full well what their fate would be.

That the UN failed miserably in protecting the lives of 8,000 men and boys and that they remained bystanders, as women were abused on a mass-scale is a fact. Yet still we see that with every new issue which arises within the Ummah, the UN is still seen as the only viable organisation that can solve the problem.

One failure might not be enough to convince the Ummah that the UN can never fulfil this role, however, to assess such an idea, let us review the UN’s track record with respect to the Ummah. So besides their failings in protecting the Muslims in Bosnia how well have they done in protecting the Muslims throughout its history?

Palestine

Ever since the occupation of Palestine, the Palestinians have been fighting against what a UN investigator once described as “unacceptable characteristics of colonialism, apartheid and ethnic cleansing”. (Richard Falk)

Today despite UN resolutions, “Israel” as increased its control over Palestinian territories. It has imposed a crippling blockade on Gaza and is continuing its construction of illegal settlements on occupied lands.

History has also taught us that “Israel” has never once abided by any UN resolution that isn’t fully in its favour. Also the support of “Israel” by the US has become more blatant blocking any resolution which doesn’t preserve the Jewish entity’s interests, even inhumane blockades on the Gaza Strip, building illegal settlements on the Palestinian soil in the West Bank, or the detainment of children of Palestine for investigation while mistreating prisoners of opinion and protests.

Iraq

The invasion of Iraq by the US in 2003, which was unlawful and without Security Council authorisation, clearly reflects the fact that the UN is limited in its capacity to constrain the actions of great powers.

The Security Council designers created the veto power so that any of the five permanent members could reject a Council resolution. So when the “powers” of the world want to invade, there is nothing in place to stop them.

In the case of Iraq’s invasion, the US didn’t even veto a resolution, but rather sought authorisation that it did not get.

The UN, should have responded by defending Iraq against this unlawful use of force. Yet it remained impotent whilst the invasion proved a humanitarian disaster with the loss of more than 400,000 lives.

Kashmir

The ongoing confrontation in the disputed Kashmir region has become one of the greatest human rights crises in history, marked by wanton killings, rape, incarceration of leaders and activists, torture and disappearances of Kashmiris, all this with several UN resolutions over the issue.

In 1948, the United States and Britain promised that the future status of Kashmir must be determined by the will of its people. Their wishes must be ascertained through a referendum under the supervision of the United Nations. The U.S. was a principal sponsor of the resolution no 47 which was adopted by the Security Council on April 21, 1948 and which was based on that unchallenged principle.

Yet the UN watched as a spectator while India tore apart its resolutions on Kashmir and unilaterally revoked Article 370 and 35-A to end the special status of Kashmir. India has launched a massive crackdown in occupied Kashmir. The curfews imposed by Indian forces are still in place. There is an acute shortage of medicines and food in the valley. Many people are facing starvation. Patients have been denied medical treatment. The Indian occupant forces beat and humiliate all those people who dare to go out and all the UN and world powers are willing to do is silently watch on whilst Indian forces commit these atrocities.

Yemen:

The Saudi-led coalition, that is supported militarily and politically by i.e. the UAE, USA, UK, France, "Israel", Egypt, Bahrain, and other nations, launched a war on Yemen in 2015 that has been described by the UN itself as "one of the worst human catastrophes in modern history." According to the UN, by the end of the 2019, the fighting will have claimed 102,000 lives. The war has further displaced millions, while 19 million are suffering from poverty and in danger of famine.

What did the UN do?

They haven't named those who are clearly responsible for this catastrophe, and they have actually called for a political solution (in 2016) that would indirectly preserve Saudi Arabia's interest while acknowledging the newly formed government in Sana. The UN nor the international community point out that it's Saudi Arabia and the UAE which are the direct causes of the catastrophe by a huge margin, with the help of the U.S., "Israel", the UK, and France.

Also since the outbreak of the war in Yemen, it has received more than \$8 billion in funds from donor conferences for Yemen, yet the people of Yemen continue to suffer from poverty, famine and disease.

Rohingya:

In a report published a year ago headed by former Guatemalan Foreign Minister, Gert Rosenthal concludes: In the maddeningly diplomatic jargon of the institutions, that the UN system overall has been "relatively impotent to effectively work with the authorities of Myanmar, to reverse the negative trends in the areas of human rights, and consolidate the positive trends in other areas."

In lay terms, the UN did nothing to prevent Myanmar from executing a genocide against the Rohingya of Rakhine state.

The violence that was used has been shocking, yet not unexpected. Researches argued as early as 2015 that a genocidal campaign was already underway. With such clear indications that a crisis was coming, why did the world fail to protect the Rohingya? Especially when we learn that the United Nations endorsed the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) framework in 2005, which obligates the international community to protect civilians from mass atrocities when their governments are "unwilling or unable" to keep them safe. R2P was borne out of collective guilt over the mass slaughter of civilians in Rwanda and Bosnia and promised a new era of "timely and decisive" atrocity response. In pursuit of this goal, early warning efforts to identify the precursors of mass atrocities became a focus for both international and state actors. Yet all they did was document mass gang rapes, killings — including of infants and young children — brutal beatings and disappearances committed by Myanmar state forces. And describe the Rohingya as the "world's most persecuted people."

Syria

The UN itself has stated that at least 250,000 people have been killed between 2012 and 2017. However, the organisation stopped updating its figures in August 2015. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights puts the death toll at more than 321,000, while another estimate suggest the conflict has caused 470,000 deaths, either directly or indirectly.

Five million people – most of them women and children – have fled Syria, according to the UN. Neighbouring Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey have struggled to cope with one of the largest refugee exoduses in recent history.

The longest modern day history was marked by the siege and recapture of eastern Ghouta from war crimes and crimes against humanity that lasted over five years.

Almost 85% of Syrians live in poverty, with more than two-thirds of the population in either extreme or abject poverty. More than 12.8 million people in Syria require health assistance and more than seven million are food insecure amid rising prices and food shortages. Households spend up to a quarter of their income just on water. Some 1.75 million children are out of school.

And now again - even when the Syrian government used chemical weapons on its own citizens, the UN remained incapable of bringing change to the predicament of the Syrian people.

Conclusion:

The list of countries where the UN has failed to protect innocent civilians are too many to elaborate on in this article, with Sudan, Afghanistan, Somalia, Central African Republic and Rwanda being just some of them.

The United Nations was set up in 1945 as an international umbrella organisation with several objectives primarily including the prevention of war and maintaining peace in disputed areas. However, the UN has failed several times across the world mostly because of the right to veto at the disposal of five countries. It has infamously failed the Muslim world time and time again as it is designed to grant higher status to its permanent members of the Security Council. And when the UN does not serve their interest, these nations go around the organisation – as America did when it invaded Iraq in 2003.

Even when on the ground like in Srebrenica we see that the United nation was no friend of the Muslims, they stood by and watched the massacre unfold, even though the residents of Srebrenica refused to evacuate, under the mistaken belief that United nations forces would protect them, yet they not only handed over the men and boys of Srebrenica but also supplied over 30,000 litres of petrol to enable Serb forces to transport the men and bury them in mass graves! The same can be said in the support of the occupation of Palestine of the damning silence on Burma.

To put it in the words of the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley who spoke before the Security Council on Chemical Attacks in Syria stated: *“When the United Nations consistently fails in its duty to act collectively, there are times in the life of states that we are compelled to take our own action.”*

We also must realise that we need to take our own action as an Ummah. And understand that we can only rely on the support of Allah (swt) and then each other's support. As Allah (swt) has revealed: ﴿وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ ۗ إِلَّا تَفْعَلُوهُ تَكُن فِتْنَةً فِي الْأَرْضِ وَفَسَادٌ كَبِيرٌ﴾ **“The Unbelievers are protectors, one of another: Unless you do this, (protect each other), there would be fitna on earth, and great mischief.”** [TMQ 8:73]. Only the Ummah can collectively prevent another Srebrenica, liberate Palestine and Kashmir and put an end to the war in Yemen, not the United Nations. This means we must pressure Muslim rulers and Muslim societies to abandon the ruling systems that serve the West, and build the ruling system that serves Allah (swt).

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