



HOW THE KHILAFAH WILL SOLVE YEMEN'S POVERTY

- Even before the most recent conflict, Yemen was one of the poorest countries in the Middle East. Yemen's population stands at 25.4 million and approximately 54% of those people live in poverty. Approximately 45% of the population is malnourished. After the conflict erupted, 82% of the population is in need of emergency humanitarian assistance and 19.3 million Yemenis are without safe drinking water or sanitation. The conflict has also had a significant toll on economic activity. Oil and gas exports, Yemen's main source of income, have ceased. Imports have also contracted, aside from critical food and energy imports. Inflation reached as high as 30 percent in 2015, and is expected to increase further as the fiscal performance continues to weaken. (borgenproject.org)

- Yemen actually has rich resources of agriculture like grains, fruits, vegetables, pulses, coffee, cotton; dairy products, livestock (sheep, goats, cattle, camels), poultry; and fish. It also has fair crude oil production and petroleum refining; small-scale production of cotton textiles, leather goods; food processing; handicrafts; aluminum products; cement; commercial ship repair; and natural gas production. Agriculture is the mainstay of Yemen's economy, generating more than 20 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) since 1990 and employing more than half (54.2 percent in 2003) of the working population. Also, Yemen's extensive territorial waters and marine resources have the potential to produce 840,000 tons of fish each year. However, the fishing industry is relatively underdeveloped and consists largely of individual fishermen in small boats.

- The real question that needs to be asked is how is it possible for a people so rich and so plentiful in resources, to be so poor in reality? There is only one reason for this and that is the rulers over the Muslim lands have never had any intention of making the right use of such huge wealth for their people. Our lands are run by tyrants held in place by the colonial powers, who on their departure ensured a small land-owning gentry or family remained in place.

- Beside the shortsighted rulers and lingering political instability: in the case of Yemen, the underlying reason to why poverty exists in the Muslim world is due to the implementation of a whole host of capitalist ideas which severely restrict the distribution of wealth. The IMF and World Bank and their notorious structural adjustment policies in Muslims lands have directly aided some of the underlying economic problems. The general solution provided by such institutions is the engaging of trade to climb out of poverty. In reality, there are a number of obstacles placed by the developed nations that ensure developing nations will never reach a level where they can compete.

- Much of the situation in the Muslim world stems from the colonial era and is summed up best by David Fromkin, Professor and expert on Economic History at the University of Chicago ***"Massive amounts of the wealth of the old Ottoman Empire were now claimed by the victors. But one must remember that the Islamic empire had tried for centuries to conquer Christian Europe and the power brokers deciding the fate of those defeated people were naturally determined that these countries should never be able to organize and threaten Western interests again. With centuries of mercantilist experience, Britain and France created small, unstable states whose rulers needed their support to stay in power. The development and trade of these states were controlled and they were meant never again to be a threat to the West. These external powers then made contracts with their puppets to buy Arab resources cheaply, making the feudal elite enormously wealthy while leaving most citizens in poverty"***.

• **How the Khilafah (Caliphate) upon the method of the Prophethood will solve Yemen's poverty:**

- Islam defines poverty as the inability to satisfy one's basic needs. Islam defined these basic needs as: food, clothing, shelter, education and healthcare. Islam here differs with capitalism because it views poverty as a consistent and fixed principal.

- As a policy, the Khilafah would make all essential utilities public property. Islam lays out three types of property; state, public and private. It designated any utility regarded as indispensable for the community, such that its absence would require people to search far and wide for it, as public property. It would then be publicly owned and the revenue generated would be administered for the benefit of all citizens. This is derived from the hadith of the Prophet (saw) «**الْمُسْلِمُونَ شُرَكَاءُ فِي ثَلَاثٍ فِي الْمَاءِ وَالْكَلَالِ وَالنَّارِ**» **“Muslims are partners in three things: in water, pastures and fire”**.

- The issue of poverty is not one of production necessarily, but rather the distribution of wealth and resources such as the agricultural products around the economy. Although market forces would ensure this happens the Khilafah will need to aid the distribution of the agricultural products. This can be achieved by a variety of policies. For example, it is well known that if any piece of derelict land is cultivated by a person, he would become owner of that land. This came in a hadith of Muhammad (saw), «**مَنْ أَعْمَرَ أَرْضًا لَيْسَتْ لِأَحَدٍ فَهُوَ أَهْلُهَا**» **“Whoever cultivated a land that is not owned by anybody, then he deserves it more.”** This rule could potentially change the agricultural landscape of the Muslim world fundamentally. In much of the Arab world there is an abundance of water and a very fertile land, yet this land has been left unused due to people residing in the main towns leaving the vast majority of the country uninhabited.

- ***The Khilafah's agricultural policy will meet the relevancy of the agricultural potential of Yemen's land, and this policy should revolve around achieving the following:***

1. Improve food products which will include developing the latest machinery and agrarian techniques.

2. Increasing productivity in the production of clothing materials such as cotton, wool and silk, for these are basic necessities that should be made available without having to resort to imports

3. Improving the production of goods which would have a market abroad, whether they were textiles or food products like citrus fruits, dates, etc.

- The Khilafah will need to encourage its farmers, particularly those with proven expertise, to bring this expertise, particularly in farming methods to parts of the Muslim world that do not have these skills. Turkish farmers are some of the most skilled in the world whilst Pakistani farmers are some of the most technologically advanced. Encouragement may come in the form of issuing of large areas of farming land as well as possible direct financial inducements.

- The Khilafah should enter into the markets as the supplier of the inputs and buyer of the agricultural products within the state in order to regulate agricultural production and to protect the agricultural producers from market fluctuations and the perverse effects of the natural and climate conditions.

Written for the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir by

Fika Komara

Member of the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir