

Saudi Builds its NEOM City by Killing its own People

News:

Saudi tribal leader killed after refusing to give up home for NEOM project. He said, "I don't want to leave, I want to stay in my home. I do not want compensation, I don't want anything. I only want my home". Saudi forces shot a citizen (Abdul Rahim Al-Hwaiti of the Al-Hwaitat tribe) who refused to give up his home in order to make way for the kingdom's so-called NEOM mega-project, initiated by Crown Prince Muhammad Bin Salman (MBS). [Middle East Monitor, April 17, 2020]

Comment:

On April 14h 2020, Abdul Rahim Al-Hwaiti of the Al-Hwaitat tribe in the north-western town of Al-Khurraybah posted a video online in which he criticised the NEOM mega project and exposed the areas where his neighbours had been forcibly removed after facing pressure from the government and rejecting financial compensation to move. He said people are being wiped out from their homes and people do not agree with what is happening at all. But the way in which the state has dealt with things can only be described as terrorism... state terrorism. He also predicted his demise at the hands of the security forces, stating, "I would not be surprised if they come and kill me in my home now like they do in Egypt, throw weapons in your home and call you a terrorist... this is my home and I'll protect it." On Wednesday, the official Saudi News Agency (SPA) confirmed Al-Hwaiti's killing and claimed that he had refused to surrender and opened fire on security forces, which subsequently led to a fatal gunfight. But human rights advocates believe, Al-Howeitati was targeted because of his public opposition to the NEOM city project.

In 2017, MBS announced he would build a new city to help diversify the Saudi economy by 2030. MBS hopes it will become a hub for "tourism, innovation and technology" as part of his Vision 2030 to transform the image of Saudi Arabia into one that is "more moderate" and to "diversify" its oil-based economy. The new settlements requires the Howeitat tribe to leave their ancestral homes to make way for the new homes. Al Howeitat refuses to leave and Al-Howeitati has been raising the issue globally. His death follows news that Saudi has executed 800 people.

According to Shari'ah, it is forbidden to take the wealth of any individual, whether Muslim or not, except for a Shari'ah reason. Accordingly, it is forbidden for the State to take the wealth of any individual into its possession on the grounds of benefit, or to make it state property for the benefit of the state or public.

The Messenger (saw) said إِنَّ دِمَاءَكُمْ وَأَمْوَالَكُمْ وَأَعْرَاضَكُمْ عَلَيْكُمْ حَرَامٌ كَحُرْمَةِ يَوْمِكُمْ هَذَا فِي بَلَدِكُمْ «No doubt! Your blood, your properties, and your honor are sacred to one another like the sanctity of this day of yours, in this (sacred) town (Mecca) of yours, in this month of yours.»

It cannot be said that the ruler can take the wealth of individual as part of governing the interests of the people since he has the right to manage the affairs. This is because the management of the affairs is the undertaking of the interests of the people according to the Shari'ah rules, and not the undertaking of the peoples' interests according to the opinion of the ruler, and so the ruler has no power at all to permit whatever Allah (swt) forbade, and if he did so the action would be considered an injustice which he would be taken to court for, and the wealth would be returned to its owner.

During the reign of Umar ibn al Khattab (ra), he had the sacred mosque at Madeenah extended. In 739 CE, Umar purchased the houses that surrounded the Masjid an-Nabawi. After demolishing them, the area was utilised for the extension of the mosque. Abbas (ra) whose house also surrounded the mosque refused to sell his house. He sued the state in the Court of the Qadhi Ubayy bin Ka'b (ra). The Court gave its verdict against the state, and held that the property could not be acquired compulsorily. Umar (ra) accepted the verdict of the Court. Thereupon Abbas (ra) voluntarily gifted his house for the extension of the mosque. Umar (ra) accepted the gift gratefully, and provided alternative accommodation to Abbas (ra). [Sunan al-Kubra - Bayhaqi].

So what the Saudi government did is forbidden according to Shariah. The scholars in the Saudi nation should raise their opinion against these injustice action of the regime. Moreover the project of NEOM is not even an Islamic project, rather it is to modernize the Saudi Arabia and makes it move towards westernization which is termed as VISION 2030 plan. To complete this evil project, Saudi regime oppresses its people by forcing and killing them to give away their lands.

Saudi needs transformation, but not towards westernization rather towards the implementation of Islamic Khilafah (Caliphate). The reform that really should take place is a real Islamic change that will get rid of the Saud clan and give the authority to the Ummah which will cut the ugly tentacles of Kuffar states and implement the Shar'ah of Allah Azza wajal.

**Written for the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir by
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