

Fighting for Mistaken Identities

News:

The insurgency in Balochistan is almost as old as the country itself. It began in 1948 when the region was controversially – some say forcefully – annexed to become part of the newly formed Pakistan. Violent separatist uprisings, which were largely tribal-led, took place again in 1958, 1962 and 1973. ([The Guardian](#))

Comment:

With the end of the colonial era nations and countries emerged on the surface of the world, celebrating independence and becoming new colonial masters to the nationalities and ethnicities they hosted on their assigned land. They started forcing the very element they claimed to have fought against, that is, of accepting the identity held by the State. An identity based on the ruling machinery's benefit. Balochistan had experienced that under British rule and becoming a part of Pakistan and realising that they are not getting much different of a treatment than they had from the British Raj. Thus in the first 30 years of it becoming a part of Pakistan, by the year 1977 Balochistan had seen three military operations.

Disputes concerning Balochistan's future following the 1947 partition of the Raj resulted in the first outbreak of an insurgency in post-partition Balochistan. The discovery of new natural resources in the early 1950s further heightened anti-Pakistan sentiments. In 1952, authorities discovered significant hydrocarbon reserves in Sui, leading to growing energy infrastructure investment in Balochistan. Through this discovery of natural resources, Balochistan gained significant strategic importance while continuing to suffer from a peripheral political position in Pakistan as the focus was mainly on extracting and transporting the resources without integrating Baloch settlements into the supply chain. For the locals of Balochistan this was not any different from the British Raj and resistance was their tool.

They resisted the Pakistan Government as they did the British. Separation of Bangladesh also became a reason for increased anxieties.

Under British rule Quetta was established as a key military outpost for the British control over the region. British exploitation of resources including coal, copper, and other valuable minerals along with undermining the authority of local leaders caused anger and rebellion in locals. The locals witnessed the mining operations and the extraction and transportation of these resources through the railway network which was portrayed as infrastructure development in Balochistan. In 1887, the Quetta-Chaman railway was completed that connected Balochistan to the broader Indian railway system, enhancing the movement of goods and military personnel. Meanwhile other social and cultural changes were also made. Institutions were developed that provided education to a limited segment of the population to produce a class of local elites who could assist the British rule. A new legal system, replacing traditional tribal justice was also introduced and this shift created tensions.

Different regimes in Pakistan have tried the British recipe of control over Balochistan and have failed terribly. The only time things got a little under control was the time of General Zia ul Haq and this was the time when he could not afford to have internal insurgencies. He gave a fragment of rights to Baloch nationalists and got the situation under control for a limited time period.

Lesson for Muslims of Balochistan, and other areas of Pakistan and the world is that a temporary quick fix can further delay the solution for a very long time and bigger and more stubborn challenges like Pervaiz Musharraf can arise. And now we see our current military and civil Government following the same footsteps. As the prominent Baloch activist Mahrang Baloch has said "Whichever government comes into power, the human rights violations and extrajudicial killings will persist in Balochistan. It has never been of genuine concern to the leadership,". On the other hand people who are following the resistance pattern on Baloch Nationalist grounds also need to understand that their fight is not against any uniform or military as that limits them to guerilla warfare, where they will keep killing and keep getting killed generations after generations. Their war is against the enemies of Allah. BLA (Baloch Liberation Army), may comprise of people who have been deprived of their rights or who have lost their loved ones in this conflict but this does not give them a right to hurt others and take their own revenge. Islam defines the rules of fighting and resistance very clearly. Neither of the parties be it Pakistan Army or BLA is following those rules.

Genuine concern for this Ummah will only be found in a heart that fears Allah and in a body that obeys Him. Only identity that can unite the Muslims of the world is their Deen and only an Islamic State will use the resources of the Ummah according to the needs of the people. Language, colour and ethnicity hold no value in the centralized system of Islam. In the 1300-year history of Islamic rule Muslims have had their disputes and disagreements but they did not dare to dispute with what Allah has revealed. In the last 100 years since Muslims lost their central power we witnessed them being divided into pieces and into further pieces. None of these pieces can survive alone, however much it tries. Survival for Muslims is in Unity under the Khilafah (Caliphate) State only.

﴿وَاعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا وَاذْكُرُوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ كُنْتُمْ أَعْدَاءً فَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِكُمْ فَأَصْبَحْتُمْ بِنِعْمَتِهِ إِخْوَانًا وَكُنْتُمْ عَلَى شَفَا حُفْرَةٍ مِنَ النَّارِ فَأَنْقَذَكُمْ مِنْهَا كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ﴾

“Hold fast together to the cable of Allah and be not divided. Remember the blessing that Allah bestowed upon you: you were once enemies then He brought your hearts together, so that through His blessing you became brothers. You stood on the brink of a pit of fire and He delivered you from it. Thus Allah makes His signs clear to you that you may be guided to the right way.” [3:103]

Written for the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir by

Ikhlaq Jehan