

Two Years of Slaughter and Starvation of the Muslims of Yemen is not Enough to Shake the Conscience of the Current World Order!

This March marked two years since the start of the brutal war in Yemen between the Saudi-led coalition and the Iranian-backed Houthi rebels, that has sown utter devastation on the lives of its people and created a humanitarian catastrophe in the country – one of the worst in history. 10,000 people have been killed in this senseless war and 40,000 injured. A report published by UNICEF on the 26th March entitled, “Falling Through the Cracks - The Children of Yemen” stated that 1,500 children have been killed since March 2016, an increase of 70% compared to the same period of the previous year, and 2,450 have been injured, nearly twice as many as the previous year.

The conditions facing the population are of apocalyptic proportions. According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 18.8 million people are in need of direct assistance (70% of Yemen's population) with children comprising more than half of this figure, and 2 million have been internally displaced. A UN-backed report published on March 15th stated that 60% of Yemenis or 17 million people are in an emergency food situation and at risk of starvation. This result is of both drought and the consequences of the war compounded. Yemen usually imports 90% of its staple food but a naval embargo imposed by the Saudi-led coalition, as well as fighting around the government-controlled port of Aden, and airstrikes on the rebel-held port of Hudaydah have severely restricted imports of food and medicines since 2015. This has been compounded by fuel shortages, insecurity, and damaged roads, severely hindering the delivery of aid to those in need. The World Food Programme's executive director, Ertharin Cousin, warned in March 2017 that aid workers faced a *"race against time"* to prevent a famine, adding: *"We have about three months of food stored inside the country."* Millions of our Muslim brothers and sisters in Yemen are therefore literally months away from starvation. The UN has also stated that 3.3 million people, including 2.1 million children are acutely malnourished, and around half a million children are suffering from severe acute malnutrition – starvation in layman's terms – which is a 200% increase since 2014 before the conflict began.

Alongside this theatre of slaughter and starvation, according to the UN, 14.4 million people have no access to safe drinking water or sanitation. This is the result in huge part to firstly, the restriction on fuel import which is essential to maintain water supplies and secondly the damage to water pumps and sewage treatment facilities. As a consequence, people are relying on untreated water supplies which carries the risk of life-threatening illnesses. In October 2016, there was an outbreak of cholera and acute watery diarrhea which continues to spread, with over 22,500 suspected cases and 106 deaths.

Yemen's healthcare system is also at the brink of collapse due to the destruction of hospitals, medical facilities and ambulances, and the blockage of the import and delivery of medicines and vital medical supplies and equipment. This will leave 15 million men, women and children with no access to healthcare. As of October 2016, at least 274 health facilities have been damaged or destroyed in the conflict, and the UN estimates that 600 health facilities, more than 1/5 of the total in the country have been put out of service due to the fighting. As a consequence, thousands are dying from treatable conditions. According to UNICEF, 7 million children have no access to adequate healthcare, 10,000 children are estimated to die each year from preventable diseases, and 600,000 pregnant women have limited or no medical support. Poor diet and lack of medical care is also increasing cases of miscarriage.

Hana Musleh, head of the maternity department of the Al-Jumhori Health Centre in Saada City, Northern Yemen, stated in an interview to the BBC in October 2016, that before the war there were on average two miscarriages a week at the hospital while now it is more

like two or three a day. The BBC report also described how in the maternity department, the last obstetrics and gynaecology specialist is gone, leaving only under-qualified midwives to treat women and deliver children. It gave an account of one of these midwives, Mona, who said that the pregnant women who make it safely to the hospital are the lucky ones because, *“some days the planes hit everything that moves”*. She described, ‘a woman who died, along with her baby, on the operating table on a baking hot day in June, days after she needed an emergency Caesarean;...a woman who bled to death in the back of a car as she tried to give birth on the way to the hospital;...and a woman who arrived with two thirds of her body burned and died, with her baby, eight days after her home was hit by a strike.’ Hassan Boucenine, Medecins Sans Frontieres’s head of Mission in Yemen said, *“This is not some kind of rare tragedy, this happens every day.”*

Despite this human tragedy that has unfolded in Yemen as a consequence of this brutal war, the bombs continue to fall, the guns continue to fire, and Western governments and their defence industries continue to profit from the billions of dollars of arms sold to the warring factions. Indeed, the conflict shows little sign of dissipating. Rather the violence in the country is set to escalate. According to Reuters and other media agencies, Iran has increased its arms supply to the Houthis in recent months, including sending advanced weapons to the militia movement such as sophisticated drones that have in-built high explosive warheads and surface-to-surface short range missiles. The US has also stepped up its aerial bombing campaign in Yemen since the beginning of the Trump administration, targeting what it claims suspected al-Qaeda militants in the country. According to AFP, it has carried out over 70 airstrikes since February 28th this year. Pentagon spokesman Navy Captain Jeff Davis also stated that US aircraft carried out 20 strikes over Yemen just this last weekend (the beginning of April). In January, scores of Yemeni civilians, including at least 9 children were killed in an American raid in the country. In addition, as British Prime Minister, Theresa May visited Riyadh, this week, she expressed hopes that the meetings with the Saudi monarchy would, *“herald a further intensification”* in relations between their two countries, with no talk of ‘de-intensifying’ arms sales to the regime which have been central to the destruction of Yemen, with £3.3 billion worth of military equipment having been licensed to the Saudi state since the beginning of the war. Indeed, according to the UK paper, ‘The Independent’, Whitehall is working with BAE Systems to sell even more of the same fighter jets that are currently flying over Yemen.

All these players in this bloody conflict that has created this humanitarian catastrophe clearly view the deaths of thousands of innocents and the looming starvation facing millions of others as an irrelevant stepping stone to securing their political and economic interests. Indeed, we live in a world today, where no government views it as a matter of urgency to bring this humanitarian crisis to an end. Rather it is the converse, with many such states seeing it as a source of profiteering or means of exerting their influence on the region. Indeed, this conflict has always been a proxy-war between Britain and the US to ensure their chosen players gain greater dominance in any future political structure in the country. Such colonial governments have always viewed the Muslim lands as nothing but a chessboard upon which they battle for influence, using the people of the region as pawns in their bloody political games. The Muslims of Yemen have therefore served as sacrificial lambs to feed the selfish interests of power-hungry regimes, their western-backers, and the morally bankrupt defense industry who view this incomprehensible scale of human suffering and senseless loss of life as a price worth paying for financial and political gains.

Furthermore, this human disaster has been the result of a struggle by the Saudi-led coalition and its western backers to return President Abd Rabbu Mansour Hadi to power in Yemen – a British hand-picked stooge. They waged this bloody campaign under the guise of restoring the so-called legitimacy of his rule following the seizure of Sana’a, the country’s capital by the Houthis in 2014. However, as a western hand-picked stooge, what possible legitimacy can Hadi’s rule ever have? Meanwhile, the Houthis have allied themselves with the forces from the General People’s Congress - the party of the country’s former dictator,

President Ali Abdullah Saleh, with both groups fighting this brutal war for the sake of securing greater political representation in the future government.

So, all this bloodshed, this mass starvation, this desperate level of human suffering has been for the purpose of either installing in power another western puppet ruler who will simply do the bidding in Yemen of his western-masters OR re-instating the remnants of a brutal 30 year dictatorship which was also a western-puppet regime. Furthermore, all fighting factions are bereft of any vision, if they gain power, for how to practically solve the country's deep-seated political, economic, and social problems. The utter insanity of it all!

It pains the heart deeply, not only to witness the scale of suffering of the Muslims of Yemen but to also remember the stability, security and great prosperity that this land once enjoyed under the Islamic rule of the Khilafah. During the Khilafah of Umar bin Al Khattab (ra), Mu'adh ibn Jabal was appointed as his envoy to Yemen. One year Muadh sent the Khalifah one third of the zakat of the people of Yemen. However, Umar denounced that saying, *"I have not sent you as a tax collector, I sent you to take from the rich and give to the poor"*. Muadh replied, *"I could not find anyone to accept it."* The next year Muadh sent him half of the zakat and they exchanged similar words. And in the 3rd year, he sent him all of the zakat, and Umar said something similar to him. And Muadh replied, *"I could not find anyone to take anything from me."* Subhanallah!

This is the great history of the Muslim lands, including Yemen under the rule of the System of Allah (swt), the glorious Khilafah, which alone can practically heal the rifts that have developed today between the believers due to decades of rule under non-Islamic systems and regimes. These non-Islamic leaderships and their western colonial backers benefitted from the weakness that arose from the division they created between the Muslims and the diversion of their attention to fighting one another rather than uprooting the very systems that oppressed them and deprived them of their God-given rights.

It is the re-establishment of the Khilafah (Caliphate) based upon the methodology of the Prophethood that will end the bloody colonial political games that are being waged in our lands; it will prevent sectarianism being used as a tool to further political agendas and ensure the rights of all – Sunni or Shia are fulfilled; it will mobilize the sons of the Muslim army to fight the enemies of Islam and defend their brothers and sisters rather than to slaughter them on behalf of foreign powers; and it will be governed by a ruler of taqwa who will sincerely take care of the needs of his people, and implement comprehensively the Laws of Allah (swt) which alone can guarantee security, justice and prosperity for the people.

As long as the Muslims give their support to any ruler, leadership or system that seeks to implement anything other than Islam in its entirety, through the re-establishment of the Khilafah, this Ummah will continue to experience the most appalling levels of oppression, bloodshed and human suffering with no end in sight. Allah (swt) says,

﴿فَإِنَّمَا يَأْتِيَنَّكُمْ مِنِّي هُدًى فَمَنِ اتَّبَعَ هُدَايَ فَلَا يَضِلُّ وَلَا يَشْقَى * وَمَنْ أَعْرَضَ عَن ذِكْرِي فَإِنَّ لَهُ مَعِيشَةً ضَنْكًا وَنَحْشُرُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ أَعْمًى﴾

"So there will surely come to you guidance from Me, then whoever follows My guidance, he shall not go astray nor be unhappy. But whosoever turns away from My Reminder (i.e. neither believes in this Qur'an nor acts on its orders, etc.) verily, for him is a life of hardship, and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Resurrection." [Ta-Ha: 123-124]

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