**Rejecting the law of the jungle**

Abdul Sattar

Monday, Oct 30, 2023

The humanitarian catastrophe that is unfolding in Gaza with a strange sense of impunity lends credence to the belief of those who assert that justice means protecting the interests of the strong. It also reflects the chaotic nature of international relations and global order where the law of the jungle seems to be ruling everywhere.

It seems humanity is descending into an age of barbarism, where might is right. Even barbarian tribes sometimes would spare women, children, and the elderly. Even they would prefer to fight armed militants and warriors instead of targeting unarmed civilians and hapless masses. They would sometimes respect the rules and principles agreed upon by various factions to avoid a major disaster that may be caused by wars.

But it seems the current world order that claims to be rules-based is devoid of all rules and principles. No amount of arguments can deter Israel from carrying out these highly disproportionate attacks on Palestinians civilians. No global body – the UN or the Human Rights Council – can prevent the madness that seems to be holding sway over the horizon of the largest open air prison in the world. No protest or demonstration can dissuade the Zionist state from halting this relentless blitzkrieg that is said to have claimed more than 3000 lives besides causing unimaginable destruction in an area that witnessed nothing but death and destruction during the past 42 years.

Tel Aviv and its Western allies have proved that international laws, global norms and human rights are merely a tool to serve the interests of mighty states. The way Israel's allies blocked UN resolutions seeking to put a halt on these barbaric bombardments is really shameful and clearly reflects the hypocrisy of Western powers which on the one hand accuse Russia of targeting civilians in Ukraine but on the other throw blanket support behind Israel's reign of terror that has indiscriminately mowed down children, women, the elderly and the handicapped.

Such abetment has encouraged the war-mongers sitting in the power corridors of the Israeli capital. The bloodthirsty, far-right leaders in Israel are now even planning more deaths on the pretext of Israel's 'right to defend itself. But those who are demanding the prosecution of the Russian president by the International Court of Justice have adopted a criminal silence over the terrible crimes perpetrated by Netanyahu. They don't want to prosecute those who have already spilled the blood of over 91,000 Palestinians since 1920 besides forcing over six million to lead a life of misery and poverty in refugee camps. They will not demand any reparations from a state that has erased Palestinians' houses, wiping out their schools and buildings besides targeting their religious places, fields and hospitals.

It seems that Tel Aviv is following its mentor – Washington – in unleashing this reign of terror. After all, it was the US that mounted an illegal invasion of Iraq that is said to be responsible for the rise of monstrous fanatical groups like ISIS. It is estimated that over two million were killed because of the invasion and subsequent conflicts between various groups in the Arab country. The invasion reduced Iraq from one of the most advanced countries of the Arab world to a failed state with a faltering economy and debilitating infrastructure. It may be mentioned that the invasion was launched after years of brutal sanctions that killed over 500,000 Iraqi children. These deaths were unabashedly justified by former US official Madeleine Albright.

It seems that the West and Israel are also ignoring all democratic principles and rules amidst this terrible invasion of Gaza. At the UN, they have been turning a blind eye to the calls of majority members of the global body who have been appealing for a ceasefire. The ruthless bombardment is not only being fiercely opposed by the ruling classes of some states but people from Madrid to London and Baghdad to Tel Aviv are also taking to the streets to vent their anger against this merciless blitzkrieg that is playing havoc with the lives of Gazans.

Hamas may have achieved a bit of diplomatic success by halting the process of normalization between Saudi Arabia and Israel. Iran may also have benefitted from this situation but in the cost-benefit analysis there has been a heavy price. Hamas needs to learn from the African National Congress that realized at the end of the day that armed struggle was not a way forward. It needs to understand that it cannot win a conventional war against the mightiest state in the region. Besides, most of the Arab countries don't support the Palestinians the way they used to do in the 1960s, 70s and 80s.

Arab nationalism also lost its momentum decades ago, while Palestinian factions are also bitterly divided. Given this, Hamas needs to wage a political struggle while conscientious Israeli citizens will have to come forward to get these barbaric attacks halted. Muslim countries will have to use their oil weapon in a peaceful way to pile pressure on the Zionist state and its Western collaborators for an immediate ceasefire. People across the Western world have to reject all those forces and political parties that extend carte blanche to the war-mongers of Tel Aviv.

The history of wars and conflicts indicate that wars take no time in turning into conflagration. The fear of escalating tensions is already haunting millions of people in the Middle East but such escalating tensions will not affect the conflict-ridden region only – they could engulf the entire world. Therefore, saner elements within the Western ruling elite, Zionist lobbies and the Arab world should spring into action before this unfolding catastrophe incinerates every trace of human existence.

International laws clearly declare Jewish settlements in Palestine illegal. The right of Palestinian people to return to their land is also accepted by international jurists. Therefore, the international community should play its role in ensuring that these principles of global laws are implemented. Those who are committing flagrant violations of human rights should be sent a strong message that they will be prosecuted for war crimes if they don't halt this insane bombardment. If such a warning goes unheeded then the proceeding should be initiated without any delay. Only global laws and not the law of the jungle is the way forward.

The writer is a freelance

journalist who can be reached at: egalitarianism444@gmail. com