**World watches a genocide in silence**

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The Friday Column

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Injustice, tyranny, torture, oppression, repression, fascism, and such other lethal implements, when perpetrated, do not carry the face of the inflictors, but they symbolize a mindset which is gruesome in its making and clinical in its execution.

We are watching a horrible enactment of this phenomenon in the land of the prophets as its people face a genocidal tidal wave of brutal power which refuses to distinguish between war and ghastly crimes committed in its name. Bombing of a hospital in Gaza by the Israeli forces killing hundreds of innocent people including children and the elderly is only a small measure of the juggernaut that is bulldozing everything that stands in the land of the Palestinians.

Devastating scenes of people crying over the dead bodies of their loved ones, including women and children, would bring tears to every soul. This dastardly crime assumed a much more sinister dimension given the alacrity with which the entire Western world, led by the US, jumped to defend, even prompt Israeli barbarism. Leader after leader arrived in Tel Aviv to show solidarity with the Israeli rulers and urge them to raze Gaza to the ground. They are the very people who project themselves as the champions of justice and human rights.

Even more unfortunate is the conduct of a vast number of Muslim countries who are either complicit in the enactment of the crime, or they watched in silence as the Israelis went about committing war crimes with impunity. Despite appeals to open the borders along Gaza for supply of relief materials and medical aid, Egypt and other neighbourly countries preferred to remain mere spectators as an expression of allegiance to their anointed masters.

The world conveniently forgets that the land that Israel claims as its own historically belongs to the Palestinian people who were deprived of the same under the shadows of the bayonets through an international conspiracy. They continue to be ejected from their properties to this day as they watch the same allotted to the Israeli settlers in violation of all international laws and strings of morality. The world conscience does not stir.

It also does not stir at the killing and maiming of hundreds of thousands of innocent Palestinian people as a matter of routine. No one is willing to listen to them as they have been deserted by all, even their so-called supporters and sympathizers. The leaders of these countries hold allegiance to outside powers, and not the opinion of their people, or the tenets of justice. To them, their own place at the helm of power in their respective countries is far more important than to raise voice at the systematic demolition of Palestinian homes and properties. Few examples can be found of such craven crassness dictating policy formulation in a string of Muslim countries.

And what of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the so-called platform for the Muslim world to become a potent voice to be heard? One cringes at the very thought of this group that watches in criminal silence the perpetration of remorseless genocide of the Palestinian people. They even disallow opening of supply routes to provide food and medical support to a bruised and battered people. Only if cruelty had a name, it would aptly fit this bunch of countries. It is Faiz again who echoes the mourning of an innocent people: “Let the hearts be cleansed because,/ On this tablet,/ A new contract may yet be drawn,/ Between you and I./ The rich have embraced the infliction of savagery,/ And the pious have learnt to chant the hymns of humiliation./ To alter the tradition of capitulation,/ Imperative it is that a command of rebellion/ Should echo forth.”

The world is guilty twice over: one, it has been a partner in depriving the Palestinian people of their homes and hearths which belonged to them through centuries and, two, it has failed in ensuring a homeland for them where they would be able to live in peace and security. For decades, chants of a two-state solution have been audible, but it is that one state of Israel which has run riot on all these promises ensuring that more homes are razed to ground, and more settlements built on lands belonging to the people of Palestine.

Varying shades of such brutality have been visible elsewhere also, be it Syria, Iraq, Libya, Yemen, Afghanistan, Kashmir, or elsewhere. The world seems to prosper by partisan ways: promoting a set of favoured people on the deprivations of bulk of the world population. This approach is ingrained in a system of inequity and inequality which is brazenly practised under the shadow of the bayonets which has multiple dimensions encompassing imposing economic strangulation and sanctions, creating internal feuding, prompting rebellions, even taking over countries and appointing proxies to exploit them mercilessly and leaving them rudderless.

Unfortunately, Pakistan has been a victim of criminal manipulation by powers which pretended to be partners but acted more as adversaries. In the process, it was stripped of its assets and sucked into unnecessary conflicts, inflicting unsustainable damage, and creating existential challenges for it to combat. This also adversely impacted the growth cycle of its people who were deprived of provisions of the most basic nature as the state faltered on the social contract that binds it with its people, consequently handing them over to the ravages of circumstances and time.

The world is perched on the brink of a major catastrophe which originates from these double standards applied in deciding the fate of other countries and people. Each day we persist with this inequitable and barbaric system brings us closer to destruction. Palestinian, as also other people of the world have repeatedly demonstrated their resolve to continue fighting for their homeland which is their inalienable right as enshrined in the United Nations charter. In this struggle, they need the world to stand with them, not against them. That, unfortunately, is not how it appears to be at this juncture which could mean continued deprivation of the people of Palestine and other subjugated parts of the world from exercising their right to their homeland.

Instead of employing draconian measures to keep people hostage by those in power in various countries, or by those which exercise influence upon other nations, they should be given freedom, as is their right, to shape their destiny. Perpetual bondage, as appears to be the fate of people like the Palestinians, breeds inimical feelings and contempt which cannot be easily assuaged. In fact, this may trigger a full-blown conflagration causing an unspeakable human tragedy.

Instead of watching a genocide in silence, it is time to tread the path of humanity. Let the world come together in healing the wounds of savagery, not augment its infliction.

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