



Welcome The Month Of Ramadan



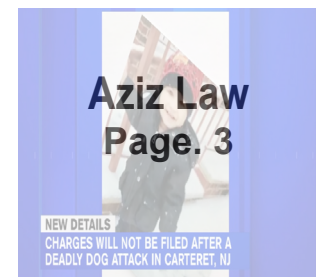
By: **Dr. Aslam Abdullah**

“So that you may attain Consciousness of divine

guidance,” this is how the creator defined the purpose of the month of

fasting. Every religious community follows the tradition of fasting in

different ways. Some fast for 40 days and abstain from *Cont. on page 16*



French Senate Votes To Ban Hijab For Muslims Under 18

By: **Rehan Qamar**

The French Senate has voted to ban the hijab for anyone under 18-years old, a move that follows a Separation Bill proposed on March 30, 2021. While veils were banned in French public schools in 2004, the law comes as the newest addition to French Islamophobia.

According to the Senate, the law will enable “prohibition in the public



space of any conspicuous religious sign by minors and of any dress or clothing which would signify an interiorization of women over men.”

French people assume that by banning the hijab they are working to dismantle oppression, however fail to realize that by not allowing

women to wear hijab, an attire of their choice they are enforcing what they claim to dismantle. The law claims that by banning it for those under 18 children will not be forced to wear the hijab.

The move has been met with severe criticism and has not yet been enabled *Cont. on page 16*

Taliban Threatens Attacks On American Troops If Not Withdrawn By May 1



By **Yousuf Ali**

The Taliban has threatened to attack United States forces in Afghanistan if they do not withdraw from Afghanistan by May 1. This was in response to Biden who

previously said that it would be hard to withdraw by the deadline even though the previous administration had agreed to do so. As of now, there are still 2,500

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Community Calls For 'Aziz's Law' After 3-Year-Old Is Killed By Neighbor's Dogs In His Own Yard



BY: Aysha Qamar

The family of 3-year-old Aziz Ahmed and community members held a vigil on March 28 in remembrance of the toddler, following his tragic death. Ahmed was mauled to death by two dogs in his backyard on March 16, when two unregistered dogs broke into his backyard and attacked him and his mother, ABC News reported. It was the first time the child was playing in the family's new backyard.

According to NBC News, Ahmed was playing outside with his brothers when two dogs came through the fence and attacked them. While his mother was able to get the other children to run inside, Ahmed was too young to understand the situation. When the dogs came toward him, his mother threw herself on top of him in an attempt to protect him. After the attack, the mother, Shabana Mohammed, was hospitalized and survived the incident, but Ahmed died of his injuries after being transported by emergency medical care.

According to a Change.org petition, the mother was released from the hospital on Thursday but will need plastic surgery. Sunday's vigil was the first time the family visited the home since the incident, a family friend told media representatives at the vigil.

The family is now looking to lawmakers to pass "Aziz's law" a law that would allow for the

criminal prosecution of owners whose dogs cause fatal injury. "We don't want any family to [go through] that. We don't want that," Ahmed's father, Tanveer Ahmed told reporters Sunday evening.

According to authorities while the two dogs, both pitbulls, have been euthanized, the owners will face no charges. County prosecutors announced that charges will not bring brought against the owner of the two pit bulls, a report said Tuesday. The decision not to levy charges was revealed in a letter written by Middlesex County Prosecutor Yolanda Ciccone, obtained by NJ.com.

"In this case, based upon the information known at this time, it would appear as if no law has been violated," Ciccone wrote. "Thus, despite the well-intended demands for justice, no charges will presently be filed." Ciccone added that there was no evidence of the dog owner having "intentional, knowing, or reckless criminal conduct."

The state of New Jersey currently has no specific charge for dog attacks, making criminally prosecuting dog owners difficult, NJ.com reported. Despite prosecutors noting that the dogs were obtained without a license, because they were not violent in the past, community complaints and this incident did not influence decisions to prosecute the owners.

"If there is no law, we will

fight to make a law ... It's unfair," Oma Morgan, a coworker of Tanveer Ahmed's and a co-organizer of a GoFundMe for the family, told NJ Advance Media. "They hold people accountable for jaywalking or letting a dog poop on your front lawn ... that doesn't cost someone their life."

"He was murdered by those dogs, and the owners should be held liable," Morgan said. She added that the law does not have the intention of banning pit bulls but instead hopes to hold owners responsible for their dog's violent actions. "I'm not saying it's the pit bulls' fault, it's the owners fault—whether they saved them, beat them whatever they did to train them, and Aziz paid the price," Oma said.

According to my central jersey, this is not the first time the unregistered dogs have gotten out of their yard. A borough spokesman said that the dogs, who belonged to a man identified as Santos Rodriguez, had been reportedly loose on Oct. 23, before the Ahmed family moved to the neighborhood. At that time, police recovered the dogs and they were picked up by the owner. If action had been taken then in regards to the dogs being unregistered this incident may not have occurred. Local reports indicate that Rodriguez has not yet reached out to the family in any capacity.

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YouTube Refuses To Remove Anti-Asian Song Despite Rise In Violence And Complaints



By: TMO STAFF

Despite YouTube claiming that it does not tolerate hate or offensive speech and content, the company is under fire for allegedly refusing to remove a song employees alleged is racist against Asians. According to Bloomberg, staff members called for the removal of rapper YG's song "Meet the Flockers," because the 2014 song's lyrics called for burglaries in Chinese neighborhoods.

"First: You find a house and scope it out \ Find a Chinese neighborhood \ 'Cause they don't believe in bank accounts," the lyrics state.

The incident comes at a time where there has been an increasing rise in violence against the Asian American and Pacific Islander community. According to data released by Stop AAPI Hate, almost 3,800 incidents of hate crimes toward Asians were reported over the past year during the pandemic. Noting the surge of violence against the AAPI community and increased xenophobic rhetoric, some YouTube employees requested that the company's Trust & Safety team remove the song. Although the Trust & Safety team is tasked with ensuring a safe community on the platform, it opted against removing the obviously racist song.

"We find this video to be

highly offensive and understand it is painful for many to watch, including many in Trust & Safety and especially given the ongoing violence against the Asian community," YouTube executives wrote in an email, according to a copy obtained by Bloomberg.

"While we debated this decision at length amongst our policy experts, we made the difficult decision to leave the video up to enforce our policy consistently and avoid setting a precedent that may lead to us having to remove a lot of other music on YouTube," the letter continued.

While YouTube maintains that the song does not pose a threat to a community and is an artistic expression that does not violate its hate speech policy, it maintained that it's still open to hearing from employees on their thoughts.

"YouTube has an open culture and employees are encouraged to share their views, even when they disagree with a decision," a YouTube spokeswoman told Bloomberg. "We'll continue this dialogue as part of our ongoing work to balance openness with protecting the YouTube community at large."

In the past year, YouTube has removed more than 97,000 videos and more than 46 million comments that allegedly violated the company's

policies on hate speech. However, individuals have noticed that some comments and videos that target one group are removed faster than others.

This sheds light on the growing debate that many large companies favor one community over the other or hop the bandwagon of removing racist speech or rhetoric when it may negatively impact their brand imaging. In light of the increasing Black Lives Matter protests last year, many companies began issuing statements and removing content they otherwise had not following calls for big corporations to take a stand. Additionally, after the Capitol insurrection in January, many companies began revisiting their relationships with known hate groups or

individuals involved in such activities while claiming that such involvement was always in their community guidelines.

The timing of when companies decided to act on the requests politicians and activists have been making for years is interesting and goes to show that companies do have the power to make a change, but refuse to do so unless it's convenient. YouTube refusing to remove a song employees have referenced as racist is not okay. Just because some individuals, most likely those who do not identify as part of the community in question, believe something is okay does not mean it is not hateful.

Reports examining the link between hate rhetoric and anti-Asian bias found that discrimination

against the Asian American community increased after the use of xenophobic terms. As such, songs like "Meet the Flockers" contribute to a stereotype that ultimately puts AAPI community members in danger.

Local news reports have repeatedly cited violence in different communities following the spread of misinformation and myths, including that AAPI community members keep valuables in their homes. Multiple burglaries have targeted these community members as a result. Stereotypes have an impact and contribute to the ideology that often perpetuates hate and violence. An obscure song claiming that Chinese people "don't believe in bank accounts" can put Asian Americans in danger.



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Hundreds Missing After Fire In Rohingya Refugee Camp In Bangladesh

By: TMO STAFF

A deadly fire raged through a refugee camp in Bangladesh, where Rohingya refugees who had to flee Myanmar were living, on March 22. The background involves hundreds of thousands of Muslim Rohingya fleeing communal violence and oppression in the Rakhine state in Myanmar. According to Amnesty International, there is satellite imagery showing entire Rohingya villages disappearing in Rakhine. The result of all this is hundreds of thousands of Rohingya having to flee to neighboring countries, one of which is Bangladesh.

The conditions in these camps have also been criticized because of the congestion, lack of running water amongst other things. Consequently, Bangladesh is being blamed by analysts and activists for the fire



which has led to hundreds of Rohingya being unaccounted for.

One point of criticism of Bangladesh is that the camps were fenced in making it hard for refugees to escape. According to Al Jazeera, "The UN, aid groups and Rohingya leaders said the fences erected by the military

trapped many people during the fire and hampered rescue work during Monday's 12-hour blaze in the maze of bamboo and tarpaulin huts in the world's biggest refugee settlement."

Furthermore, the fences are blamed for the missing Rohingya refugees in the camp. The

Bangladeshi government denied that there were any missing refugees and claimed that the fences were completely in line with humanitarian law.

This claim is contradicted by agencies on the ground like the UNHCR. The UN refugee agency, UNHCR, also said children were looking for

their parents, in another trauma for families.

"This is a very difficult situation and our heart goes out to the thousands of refugees who have yet met another disaster," UNHCR official Ita Schuette said in a video message posted on Twitter from Cox's Bazar.

Citing overcrowding in the camps, Bangladesh has been trying to move 100,000 Rohingya to a remote Bay of Bengal island. Aid groups say the flood-prone, low-lying Bhasan Char island, which only emerged from the sea about 20 years ago, risks being overwhelmed by storms and refugees should not be housed there." Meanwhile, Myanmar is not becoming safer for Rohingya as it is in the middle of unrest following a military coup.

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Saudi's Ceasefire Offer To End Yemen War

By: TMO STAFF

Saudi Arabia's top diplomat announced a plan to end Yemen's six-year war, including a cease-fire and a political agreement with the Iran-backed Houthi rebels who control strategic areas of the country on Monday, March 22.

The kingdom said it would adhere to an UN-monitored country-wide ceasefire with Houthi rebels if the group agreed to the terms of the initiative.

The announcement comes as the Saudi-led coalition has intensified airstrikes over Yemen in recent weeks, hitting dozens of targets, including the capital Sanaa and a grains port on the Red Sea coast.

Houthi rebels have also ramped up attacks on Saudi Arabia over the past few months, launching almost daily explosive-laden drones and ballistic missiles targeting airports, military bases and key oil facilities.

The Saudi initiative is the latest effort to reach an agreement between Yemen's warring parties on a ceasefire. The United Nations has been involved in years of stalled discussions between the opposing parties. More recently, the US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken received no response after offering peace talks to the Houthis.

Houthi spokesman Mohamed Abdel Salam said on Twitter that any agreement must address a Saudi air and sea blockade. A recent CNN investigation in Yemen revealed that not a single oil tanker has been able to dock in Yemen's northern port of Hodeidah this year because of a blockade enforced by Saudi warships.

"Any position or initiative that does not acknowledge the aggression and blockade of the last six years and separates the humanitarian aspect from military and political issues and lifts the blockade is not new or serious," Salam said

on Twitter.

The blockade has starved the Houthis of income from oil taxes but has also critically hampered humanitarian agencies' ability to deliver aid, including food, as famine creeps into the country.

The Iran-aligned Houthi group controls northern Yemen, including the capital Sanaa and Hodeidah, and has been at war with a Saudi-led military alliance since 2015.



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Press Release: Christian And Other Minorities Persecution In India Denounced



Ongoing Persecution of Christians in India by Hindutva Forces Denounced in the Webinar by the American Anti-Extremism Alliance ASPAIRE Promised to Educate the American Faith Leaders and Policy Makers About the Onslaught on Minorities in India

A day after news reports came out that the Hindu extremist groups in the US managed to get hundreds of thousands of taxpayer dollars in the name of COVID-19 relief, ASPAIRE vowed to expose them to the US authorities, law-enforcement, and opinion-makers using the data presented in their webinar series: Resisting the Onslaught on Democracy in the World's Largest and Oldest Democracies. "Hindutva, the Hindu supremacist lobby, has launched their long-awaited counter-offensive in the US. We had won a string of victories defeating their congressional candidate Sri Preston Kulkarni in Houston and getting many cities to pass resolutions against the Citizenship Amendment Act. The Hindutva lobby has now started resisting resolutions in the city councils. The Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh (HSS), the international wing of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), has also started approaching city councils in the state of

Texas", said Dr. Shaik Ubaid, co-chair of the advocacy group, Alliance to Save and Protect America from Infiltration by Religious Extremists (ASPAIRE). "ASPAIRE promises to continue to educate the American faith leaders and policymakers about the onslaught on minorities in India and the proceedings of the webinar will be used in this struggle," announced Dr. Ubaid

He was speaking at a webinar organized by ASPAIRE, on the ongoing Christian persecution in India, by the Rashtriya Swayamsevak (RSS) and its allied groups, forming the Hindutva forces. These Hindutva forces have fashioned themselves after the Nazi Party and adore Adolf Hitler as their model. They were also implicated in the killing of Mahatma Gandhi. This was the latest in the ASPAIRE webinar series: Resisting the Onslaught on Democracy in the World's Largest and Oldest Democracies.

"To counter the financial resources of the Hindutva fascist lobby in the US, which is backed by the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government in India, we have to build alliances at grassroots by educating faith leaders, human rights activists, local media, and local politicians. That is why the webinars by ASPAIRE are so im-

portant", he added.

The webinar was organized on the night, which was holy for all three Abrahamic faiths – Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, besides Hinduism, which celebrates the festival of Holi, signifying the struggle between good and evil.

Interestingly some elements of the Hindutva supremacist movement tried to hijack the webinar, albeit unsuccessfully. They can do this with impunity only because of the support of the Indian government, which is highly sensitive to any criticism abroad.

ASPAIRE, which was launched to stem the infiltration of such extremists in the American power centers, was the webinar's main organizer.

The speakers included Tehmina Arora, a human rights lawyer and constitutional expert specializing in minority rights and religious freedom. Dr. John Dayal and Father Cedric Prakash, both eminent human rights leaders, holding senior positions in the Christian community, and Reverend Dan Buttry from Michigan spoke at length about massacres during the 2008 Kandhamal pogrom in Odisha. Nearly 200 Christians were massacred, scores of villages were destroyed along with hundreds of church-

es. And almost a quarter-million people were internally displaced.

Reverend Dan Buttry, who was also an eyewitness to the post-pogrom persecution, was perplexed about the Hindutva forces in the US gaining ground in the Hindu community. This despite exhibiting duplicitous behavior by demanding equal rights for Hindus in America on the one hand and supporting/whitewashing the persecution of minorities in India by the Hindu supremacists on the other. Along with the other speakers, he pointed out that the majority of the Hindus in India do not support the supremacist RSS.

Father Prakash and Dr. Dayal also encouraged the Christians not to fall victim to the Hindutva's Islamophobic propaganda of love jihad, especially in Kerala. They expressed disappointment that Muslim organizations had not expressed their solidarity with the nuns from Kerala who were recently harassed while traveling on a train.

The frank discussion in the webinar focused not only on highlighting the persecution of Christians and other minorities but also on resisting the onslaught on the secular constitution of India and the pluralist fabric of the great nation.

They were also hopeful that activism in the US would help relieve the pressure on the persecuted minorities and moderate Hindus in India by building public opinion against the rise of tyranny in the country.

"Couple of days ago, a law was passed in Georgia, which literally turns back the clock and makes it difficult for the poor and African Americans to vote, which shows how real the struggles are both in the US and India, said Masood Rab, also a co-chair with ASPAIRE. "While the White supremacy organizations are exposed and shunned in the US, the Hindutva supremacist organizations have been using the cloak of interfaith efforts in almost every major city and must be shunned too," he said

Tehmina Arora mentioned the dangerous tweaks given by the BJP government to the already draconian anti-conversion laws in India. These laws are now being very aggressively enforced in 9 states which have passed them. Though these laws have existed since 1967-68, they came up for a challenge in 1977, and the Supreme Court upheld it by laying down a criterion saying that people have the right to propagate their faith, but not the right to convert a

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Libya Transitions To Interim Government After Years Of Civil War

By: TMO STAFF

Since 2013, there has been a civil war raging in Libya in the aftermath of a coup attempt by general Khalifa Haftar against the government. The coup failed unlike in neighboring Egypt but he managed to use his influence to persuade elements of the military to join his side in a civil war which appeared to be going his way up until he tried to capture the capital of Tripoli.

This in turn drew the aid of Turkey which helped the official Libyan government successfully repulse General Haftar's advance. In the aftermath of this, more pressure has been put on sides to achieve a political solution as opposed to trying to achieve victory in the war. There was an important development in which power was handed to an interim government on Tuesday, Mar. 16.

This development pro-



vides hope for stability after 10 years of uncertainty following the overthrow of Muammar al-Gaddafi in 2011. According to Al Jazeera, "Fayez al-Sarraj, head of the outgoing United Nations-recognised Government of National Accord (GNA), transferred power on Tuesday to Prime Minister Abdelhamid

Dbeibah, and Mohammad Younes Menfi, who chairs a three-member presidential council." Furthermore, Dbeibah's government is expected to hold elections on December 24th, 2021.

Additionally, Dbeibah has international connections according to Al Jazeera, "Dbeibah, 61, a wealthy businessman

from the western port city of Misrata, once held posts under longtime ruler Muammar Gaddafi but has shown no clear ideological position. He is also known to be supportive of the Muslim Brotherhood and is close to Turkey. The unexpectedly smooth transfer of power is seen as an important step to end

the chaos in the oil-rich North African country.

The lack of a proper handover among legislators in 2014 was the main factor in the split of Libya's institutions." Analysts foresee several obstacles to this including the presence of thousands of foreign fighters in the country.

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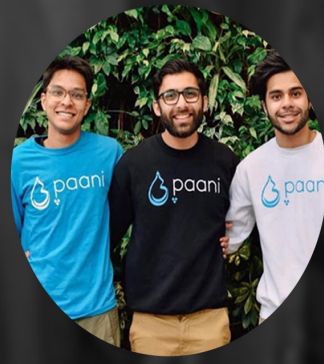
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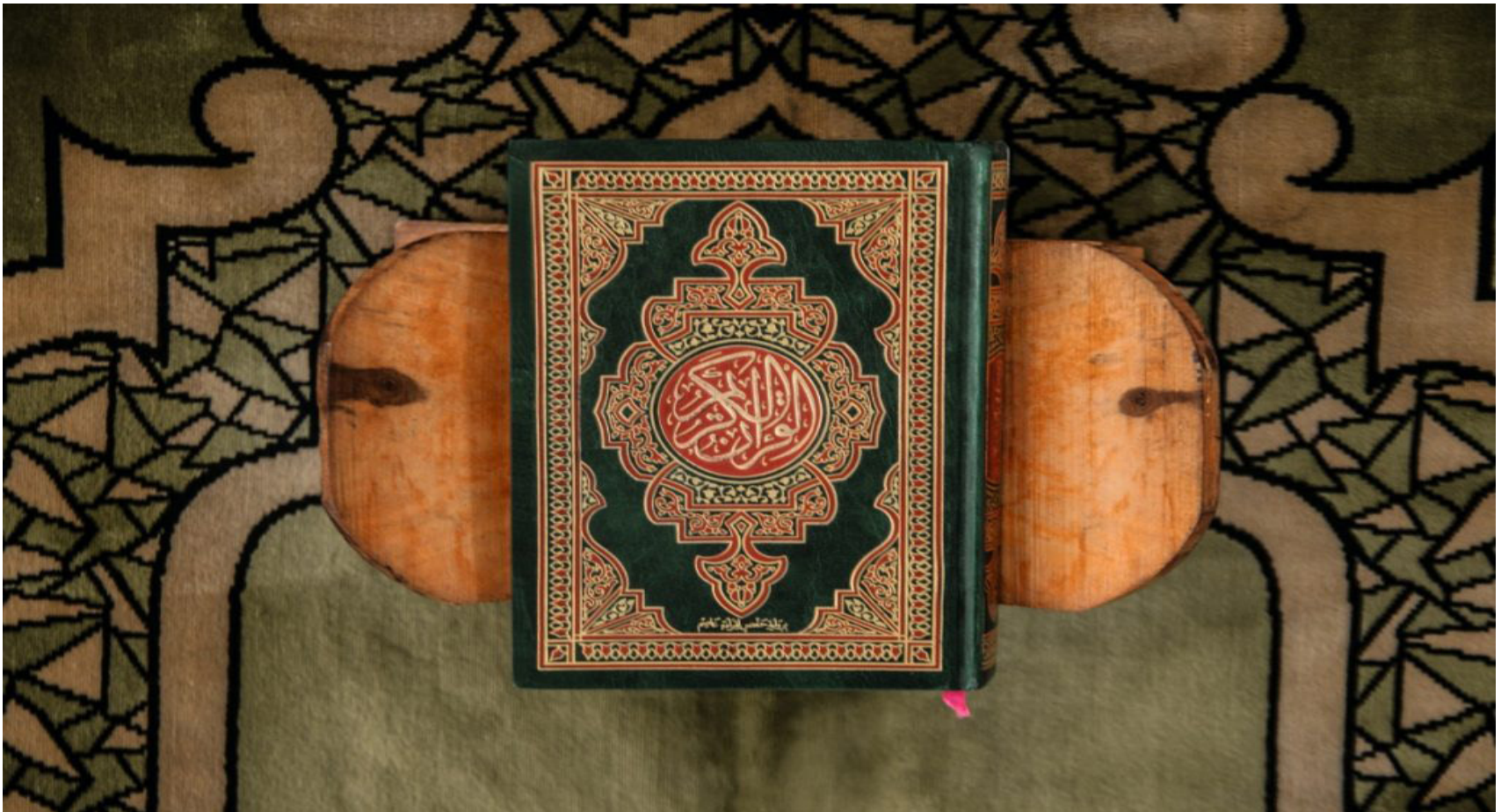
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Hindutva Fascists Behind The Campaign To Ban The Quran Verses



by **Dr. Aslam Abdullah**

The demand to ban the Quran or some of its verses is part of a well-calculated design by Hindutva fascists under the militant Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh's religious leadership, RSS. With increased interactions between Zionist extremists, White right-wing Christian evangelists, liberal militants, and Hindutva fascists, Islam and Muslims have become easy targets. The purpose is to provoke Muslims and destabilize them in countries where they live as a minority. In India, it is also to incite Hindus against Muslims and present Islam as a violent religion to destroy the world.

Recently, the Hindutva fascists used Syed Waseem Rizvi, a former chairman of the Shia Central Board of Waqf in Uttar Pradesh, the Bollywood film producer Ram Ki Janmabhoom, Ayesha and a staunch supporter of Narendra Modi and Bhartiya Janta Party to serve this purpose. With the help of a Hindutva fascist, he filed a case in India's Supreme Court demanding to expunge 26 ayas or verses from the Quran because they promote violence and terror and threaten India's national security.

He claimed that the first three Caliphs after Prophet Muhammad inserted these ayas to encourage terror. The purpose is to intensify the already existing Shia and Sunni conflict and lead them to a non-reconciliation status.

Shia and Sunni scholars have differences over the political successors of Prophet Muhammad. Shia scholars view the first three Caliphs, namely Abu Bakr, Umar, and Uthman, as usurpers and Ali as the Prophet's only legitimate heir. In contrast, Sunni scholars reject that and describe Shias as a divisive force. Many in the Shia community curse the three Caliphas and other companions of the Prophet. During Muharram's first ten days, the cursings become louder with the passion play based on Karbala's events. The forces of Yezid, the monarch of Damascus claiming to be a Caliph, ordered the murder of the grandson of the Prophet who had declared his rule illegitimate.

The differences are well known to the world, and the power elites have always exploited them to ensure that the two groups do not come together to resolve the differences. Members of the two groups have

often become puppets in other's hands to harm and hurt each other.

Rizvi is no different. His hatred is visible in his tirade against the people he describes as Sunnis.

Behind him are the Hindutva fascists who inspired him to challenge the authenticity of the Islamic scriptures and present them as terror documents. In 1984 also, the RSS sympathizers had an unsuccessful effort to seek a ban on the Quran.

Rizvi's main argument is that the 26 inserted by the so-called Sunni Caliphs verses he identified encourage terror. The fact is that Imam Ali, the fourth Caliph, whom Shia's consider a legitimate Imam ruled for years after the three Caliphs, and he never deleted them or questioned their validity. Shia's worldwide read from the copy of the Quran that is available in the Muslim world.

If he is concerned with violence in religious texts, then he should not single out the Quran. The Quran and Muslim scholars have explained the 26 verses and provided their context in defensive wars. They are available on the Web.

Shockingly, those who use Rizvis to rally

against the Quran often ignore the violence found in Hindu scriptures.

There are several passages in Vedas calling for the death of disbelievers.

Rig Veda 7.6.3" May the fire divine chase away those infidels, who do not perform worship and who are uncivil in speech. They are niggards, unbelievers, say no tribute to fire divine and offer no homage.

The fire divine turns those godless people far away who institute no sacred ceremonies." Tr. SatyaPrakash Saraswati

Rig Veda 9.63.5 "Augmenting the strength of resplendent self, urging the waters and rejuvenating all noble acts and destroying the infidels." Tr. SatyaPrakash Saraswati

One who does not offer Sacrifice is inhuman.

Rig Veda 8.70.11" May your friend, the cloud, hurl that Infidel down from heaven who differs from us in rites and rituals, is inhuman, who does not observe fire sacrifices, and who does not show reverence to Nature's bounties ." Tr. SatyaPrakash Saraswati

Rig Veda 7.97.9" O Lord of knowledge, this laudation is for you...destroy the godless and the malice of our enemy." Tr.

SatyaPrakash Saraswati
Rig Veda 1.84. 8 When will he trample, like a weed, the man [Infidel] who hath no gift for him...

Yaska writes,

Nirukta 5.17 When, with his foot, will he trample the unworshipping man like a mushroom

Rig Veda 8.64.1-2 "May our hymns please you; O Lord of stubborn will power, please display your bounty. May you drive off the infidels. May you crush with your foot the niggard churls who offer no homage. You are powerful; there is none so powerful as you are." Tr. SatyaPrakash Saraswati

Rig Veda 5.2.10" May you roaring flames, O adorable Lord, be manifest in the sky as sharp weapons, to destroy infidels. In his exhilaration may his shining splendor inflict destruction. The godless hands try to bind him from all sides but do not succeed." Tr. SatyaPrakash Saraswati

Rig Veda 9.79.10" The powerful flowing elixir... It is the conferrer of wealth, the king of vigor; It crushes malignities and

harasses the enemies." Tr. SatyaPrakash Saraswati

China's Genocide Continues But International Hearing Is Unlikely

By: Zaid Aleem

According to an independent study by more than 50 global experts on international law and genocide, the Chinese government's alleged activities in Xinjiang have breached every single article of the United Nations' Genocide Convention. The report, released Tuesday by the Newlines Institute for Strategy and Policy think tank in Washington DC, claimed the Chinese government "bears state responsibility for an ongoing genocide against the Uyghur in breach of the (UN) Genocide Convention."

It is the first time that a non-governmental organization has conducted an unbiased legal review of the allegations of genocide in Xinjiang, including determining if Beijing bears any blame for the suspected crimes.

According to the U.S. State Department, up to 2 million Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities



are estimated to have been held in a complex network of detention centers throughout the country, where former detainees say they were subjected to indoctrination, sexual assault, and even forced sterilization. China denies allegations of human rights abuses, saying the centers are necessary to prevent religious extremism and terrorism.

The four-page UN Genocide Convention was approved by the United Nations General Assembly in December 1948 and has a clear definition of what constitutes "genocide." China is a signatory to the convention, along with 151 other countries.

Article II of the convention states genocide is an attempt to commit acts "with an intent to

destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group."

Since the convention's inception in 1948, the majority of genocide sentences have taken place in UN-sponsored International Criminal Tribunals, such as those for Rwanda and Yugoslavia, or in national courts. Former Iraqi tyrant Saddam Hussein was found guilty of genocide

in 2006 by an Iraqi judge. However, any establishment of an International Criminal Tribunal would require the approval of the UN Security Council, of which China is a permanent member with veto power, making any hearing on the allegations of genocide in Xinjiang unlikely.

Intelligence Report Informs Of Russian Influence In 2020 Election

By: Nida A. Imam

According to a report revealed by the U.S. Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI), the Russian government interfered in the 2020 presidential election. The report mentions an influence of a vast disinformation force that was successfully directed at and openly embraced by Donald Trump's allies.

Russia intended to not only damage Joe Biden's candidacy while helping Trump's reelection bid but also sought to undermine "public confidence in the electoral process and exacerbate sociopolitical divisions in the US" the report stated.

However, the report also clarified that there are no indications of "any foreign actor" attempts to modify "any technical aspect of the voting process in the 2020 US elections, including voter registration, casting ballots, vote tabulation, or reporting results."



This was confirmed by the Department of Homeland Security's cyber arm (CISA) the day after the 2020 presidential election. "We have no evidence any foreign adversary was capable of preventing Americans from voting or changing vote tallies," the CISA said at the time, according to CNN.

Additionally, the ODNI

report discloses Russia's efforts regarding how "proxies linked to Russian intelligence" were used to promote unsupported claims about Biden into the American mainstream media. Russia was able to "influence narratives — including misleading or unsubstantiated allegations against President Biden — to US media

organizations, US officials, and prominent US individuals, including some close to former President Trump and his administration," the report said.

In an interview with ABC News on Tuesday President Biden's noted that he had a long talk with President Vladimir Putin.

"He will pay a price,"

the president said when asked about Russian influence in the 2020 Election. "We had a long talk, he and I, when we — I know him relatively well. And the conversation started off, I said, 'I know you and you know me. If I establish this occurred, then be prepared,' Biden added.



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**Cont. from page 1
Welcome Ramadan**

food, some for a week, a few days, or a day. The purpose of fasting in Islam is to rejuvenate and energize their commitment to divine values that secure peace with justice and dignity for every human being.

The month-long fasting has three primary dimensions.

Self-improvement

Community relation building

Identifying with social issues

For personal improve-

ment, abstaining from food and water for a specific period, controlling intimate desires for married couples from sunrise to sunset, and disciplining oneself in situations that lead to anger, backbiting, lustful ideas, jealousy, and lying are essentials.

Community relations building requires that those with means and resources address needy and disadvantaged Muslim's needs.

Identifying with social requires involvement in causes of social justice and dignity-related issues facing the society

at large.

It is a refresher program for the community to follow a comprehensive regimen to convince oneself and the people around that divine guidance is beneficial to all.

This pattern of observing the month of fasting is visible in the Sunnah of the prophet. He divided his time in worship, reflecting on divine guidance, helping the poor of the community, and inspiring non-believers to understand their conditions for a better life.

In the United States, the Muslim community is diverse and from differ-

ent ethnic backgrounds. The Prophetic approach can enable it to become a cohesive and stable community for its growth and make constructive contributions to society.

The community is active in making efforts for individual self-improvement. However, it still lacks a cohesive and organized effort in community building and identifying with social issues.

Perhaps, our religious scholars should come forward with programs that would enable us to focus on them. In each city or area covered by

an Islamic center, a list of needy families would help streamline not only zakat ul mal or zakat ul Fitr but channelize the resources to disburse them appropriately. On social issues, the community can organize inter-faith and local neighborhood breaking of fasting ceremony to introduce itself to others.

The prophetic model is easy to follow and beneficial to all. Let us hope that this month of fasting helps us focus on developing a genuine consciousness of divine guidance that revolves around social justice and dignity.

**Cont. from page 1
Hijab Ban**

into law, it follows other laws put in place to silence and take away the freedom of religion from Muslim women.

In 2010, France passed

a law prohibiting people from wearing clothing in public that covers one's face; while criticized the law known as the "burqa ban" remains in place today, punishable with a fine and citizenship course.

The law received fur-

ther backlash after the COVID-19 pandemic made wearing masks mandatory in public places such as schools and on public transport. The government then claimed that while one law is to promote gender equality and the other is to main-

tain public health.

Muslims across the world have condemned the proposed law and are working on efforts to ensure it does not go into effect. "My French sisters, know that we see you, stand with you and

fight with you against the globalized Islamophobia that brought us here," Amani al Khatahtbeh, founder and activist of Muslim Women's Day said condemning the proposed ban.

**Cont. from page 1
Taliban Threatens**

troops in Afghanistan. Under the deal with the Trump administration, the Taliban had agreed to renounce violence and shelter terrorists who are threats to the United States like Al Qaeda.

The broader context is that the United States has been in Afghanistan since 2002 and more than 100,000 Afghans

have been killed or wounded because of the conflict. These developments happened on March 26 and came with other developments from NATO allies.

According to Al Jazeera, "Earlier this week, Germany paved the way for its troops to stay in Afghanistan beyond the May 1 deadline. Legislators approved a new mandate which allows the German military to

keep up to 1,300 soldiers in Afghanistan as part of a NATO mission until January 31, 2022." The Germans justified this by saying that pre-mature withdrawal could pose a security risk. The Taliban said that any agreement to non-violence is contingent upon the withdrawal of forces by the May 1st deadline. Despite seemingly backing away from the deadline agreed

by Trump, Biden still said he did not want to stay in Afghanistan very long: "It's not my intention to stay there for a long time," Biden said, "We will leave. The question is when we leave." When asked if US troops will still be in Afghanistan next year, he said, "I can't picture that being the case."

The Taliban said it was committed to the agreement, which is termed

the "most sensible and shortest path" to end the conflict. Responsibility for its prolongation "will be on the shoulders of those who committed this violation," the statement said." The Biden administration has not committed to honoring the deadline and did not take responsibility for any violence that may follow from that.

**Cont. from page 3
Aziz's Law**

Due to the trauma associated with the incident, both Tanveer Ahmed and Mohammed have been unable to work. The family is currently staying in Brooklyn in their former home prior to moving to Carteret. A fundraiser has raised nearly \$220,000 to help relocate the family from their Carteret home and help pay for medical expenses.

But despite these struggles, the family is firm on getting justice for their

child. "If we're not safe in our own backyard, where are we safe? Nowhere!" Community members cried during the vigil. During the vigil, masked community members gathered in the street of the family's Carteret home holding glow sticks in place of candles.

"My nephew was in his own yard. If you are not safe in your own yard, where are you safe? I feel we need some sort of closure," Farzana Shabbir, Mohammed's sister said. Mohammed still shook from the incident and declined to speak. "I clean

my sister's wound every day, but I cannot clean her heart. She purchased this home so her kids can play in the yard. She didn't want that yard to be a graveyard."

The mayor of Carteret reiterated calls for justice and noted that "people need to know they can be held criminally responsible," for not taking care of or training their pets. "We want to be out here to join with the community and join with the family in mourning for Aziz. We're here to show our support. My heart breaks. This was just

a tragedy that should never have occurred," Mayor Dan Reiman said at the vigil. He added that Carteret police and the borough health department have filed municipal charges with the owners for allowing the dogs to run at large and not being registered. The fact that Aziz was a child is heartbreaking, but such an incident should not happen to anyone regardless of their age. We should all feel safe in our own homes. If we own pets, we should take responsibility for their actions

because it is our duty as pet owners to care for them and train them right.

"An innocent baby was killed. He was just playing in the backyard," Gursewak Singh, who has worked on the Ahmed house, said. "I feel so bad for him. He just moved in. They don't want to live here anymore. They want to move out." Singh noted that had the police not arrived as quickly as it did the mother may not have survived.

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**Cont. from page 7
India Denounced**

person.

However, in states like Rajasthan, the law states that no person shall convert from one religious faith to another, directly or indirectly, by force, inducements, or other means. There is nothing really wrong with it until one gets into a deeper examination of the words mentioned here and realizes how problematic it is. For instance, inducement means not only just material gifts of gratification but also spiritual gifts of gratification.

In Madhya Pradesh, talking about a better life, under a religion, or receiving better education are all inducements and come with penal actions. Prison terms can be anywhere from one year to 5 years. This when the politicians from the ruling BJP brazenly make promises of "acche din" (better days lie ahead) without any threat of prosecution.

The situation is dire when inter-religious marriages are being thrust under this law's scanner and clearly violate previous Supreme Court rulings.

Dalits are especially threatened under these

laws as they would lose all benefits of reservation (affirmative actions) granted to them because of the millennia of oppression. Therefore, they are forced to continue to live as outcaste Hindus and suffer the oppression of the apartheid of the caste system.

Dr. Dayal, who was continuously interrupted by Hindutva elements during his presentation, emphasizing his voice's strength, mentioned how Xenophobia in India revolves around Islamophobia and Christophobia. And how it has become even more aggressive in the last 70 years because of the RSS.

Casteism born in Hinduism has permeated all minority religions and the lower castes still suffering from it have no escape from it because of the anti-conversion laws.

The hill and tribal people, many of them Dalits and Christians in Kandhamal district in Odisha, living in isolation have existed for centuries without violence. Faith formation happened in the region in the last 150 years by Christians and in the last 70 yrs by the Hindutva organizations, under whom things turned violent.

India's senior leaders pointed out that Chris-

tians had been wiped out from 400 villages during the Kandhamal pogrom. A total of 6000 houses were destroyed, hundreds of churches and educational institutions were reduced to ashes, leaving 120 dead. 60,000 escaped the massacre because they took refuge in the forests where they survived for three months in the wilderness and a year in refugee camps. Justice remains to be meted out.

"The US Vice President Kamala Harris and all Indian Americans who share the same genetic material as Indians back home should note the Hindutva forces shaming the US and terrorizing the people in India, and need to speak up against it. The government is on a witch hunt of all those presenting their case abroad, to silence their voice," said Dr. Dayal.

Father Prakash, who also got interrupted during his presentation, submitted how in the late 90s, there were several attacks on Christians in India. In 1999, as the spokesperson of the Christian community in Gujarat, he showed the mass destruction amongst his community to the then prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, who cried, claiming this

should not have happened. He also promised a national debate on conversions. And yet, Vajpayee was helpless when on 6th March 2003, the then chief Narendra Modi brought in Gujarat's anti-conversion law as promised by him.

And on 26th March this year, it was amended and made even more draconian by Modi, now the prime minister.

While challenging the constitutional validity of love jihad in the SC the question we ask is, why can't we as an adult marry the person of our choice, irrespective of the religion and who is the state to decide otherwise, in a matter of our conscience.

Fr. Prakash also spoke about the all-pervasive systemic harassment of Christians and other minorities daily in India today.

Reverend Buttry, who was denied a visa to India when on a mission to create peace between different sections, in 2012 recalled how he was first attacked on Christmas eve of 2007 in Odisha. "I was in the region, and a friend of mine invited me to come in, and I realized many Hindus stood up for the Christians. When the Hindu nationalist extremists

attacked one village during the Kandhamal pogrom, their Hindu neighbors stood between their Christian neighbors and the attackers when they attacked another village. There were peace marches in Bhubaneswar following, and three-fourths of those marching were Hindus. We are not against Hindus, but are pro-human rights," He said.

He highlighted the duplicity and hypocrisy of Hindutva fronts in the US, "I was talking to Hindus about the pogrom, some tied to organizations with ties to the BJP. They ask for an equal place in the American interfaith arena, but they are not standing for India's interfaith relationships. An ethical right should be true for everyone, and if they ask for their rights here, they should support minority rights in India. Instead, they were supporting what was happening in Odisha. Just as I would stand for minority rights even when I am part of the Christian majority in the US, we need everyone to have ethical and religious integrity to stand up for universal rights for all people.

Signed

ASPAIRE

COVID-19 Struggles Continue

By: TMO STAFF

While we are seeing a decline in many countries amid social distancing, lockdown measures and vaccine drives, there are a few countries that are still undergoing continuous issues and are just not able to get COVID-19 under control. A second wave of COVID-19 is ripping through Brazil, pushing hospitals and ICUs toward collapse and claiming record numbers of daily deaths.

While a new variant of the coronavirus spreads throughout the country, many Brazilians continue to defy mask mandates mobility restrictions following the example of President Jair Bolsonaro, who recently said people need to "stop being sissies" and "whining" about the virus. Brazil has broken its own record



three times this month for the number of deaths in a 24-hour period. On Wednesday, Brazil's Health Ministry registered a devastating new high of 2,286 lives lost to the virus. In total, more than 270,000 people are known to have died due

to COVID-19, making Brazil's the second-highest national death toll after the United States.

Meanwhile, countries throughout Europe, including the Czech Republic, Hungary, Estonia, Slovakia, Italy, France,

Poland, and Sweden have seen significant rises in average new daily cases in the recent weeks. Overall, the European Union has recorded over 800,000 new coronavirus cases over the past seven days, an increase of about 5.8% from the sev-

en days prior. A Reuters report claims that Poland has the highest number of new infections since November. The average number of new infections reported in Bulgaria has been increasing for 7 days straight. The average number of new infections reported each day in North Macedonia rises by more than 370 over the last 3 weeks, 34% of its previous peak.

There have been at least 35,665,000 reported infections and 972,000 reported deaths caused by the novel coronavirus in Europe so far. Vaccine drives have also been largely slow. The E.U. has administered the first dose to only 7% of the population and has fully vaccinated 3.09% as of March 10, according to Politico.

Op-Ed: If You Condemn Trump, You Have To Condemn Modi



By Anvee Bhutani

Republished from Brown Girl Magazine.

All eyes are on Delhi as farmers who have been protesting unfair agricultural legislation for weeks hoisted the Nishan Sahib, or Sikh triangular flag, up outside the Red Fort. Violence followed as protesters took to the streets and clashed with Delhi police, who brought with them lathis (large wooden sticks) and tear gas. But the significance of this event was magnified due to it being Jan. 26, India's Republic Day, when the Constitution of India took effect.

Many national and global figures condemned the protests as a despicable act and drew comparisons to the U.S. Capitol insurrection on Jan. 6. The problem? Trump's white supremacist actions that incited the riots in Washington, D.C. don't parallel those of the Sikh farmers. Rather, they can be compared with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government.

But, making this comparison is a fundamentally flawed analogy and this begins with the buildings where these incidents took place. The Red Fort

in Delhi is a Mughal relic which now serves as a park and public site. Meanwhile, the Capitol is the working office of the federal government and some of the top officials in the country were forced to go into lockdown in an attempt to protect their lives.

The irony around the rhetoric of preserving the Red Fort from India's days of Muslim rule is exacerbated when compared with other recent events, such as people involved in the demolition of the Babri Masjid, another historical Mughal site, to build a Hindu temple being acquitted. It is clear that right-wing Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) supporters don't hold themselves to the same standard, but rather, twist principles to fit their broader agenda. Thus, the fundamental analogy is flawed: this was not a threat to the Indian government, nor was it an insurrection because of the sheer nature of where it took place.

The farmers protesting the farm bills are amongst the most marginalized in the country. Additionally, suicide rates for Indian farmers are at an all-time high

as they have been forced to fight for fair prices for years to keep up with corporate money from business conglomerates such as the Reliance and Adani Groups, two of India's largest multinational chains.

A better comparison would be likening these farmers to Black Lives Matter protesters in the U.S. this summer, who, in the face of systemic oppression, were standing up to protect their rights. Both Sikhs and Black Americans have been historically discriminated against, whether it be through the institution of slavery in the States or the 1984 Sikh Massacre in which thousands of Sikhs were murdered. Both groups suffer inequality as a consequence and should not be criticized for organizing in protest of their current status.

The unfortunate reality is that both the Trump and Modi governments were and are strongly right-wing and borderline fascist regimes that operate(d) on a nationalist agenda. Despite both countries' constitutional commitments to equality amidst diversity, they have been oppressing

minority groups for years and this has reached its height under the most recent administrations.

Sikh farmers are only next in line in a chain of the groups already subjugated by the Modi government including women, Dalits, and Muslims. Trump, similarly, in his white supremacist quest, put down groups including Muslims, Latinx individuals, and the Black community. Much like Black Lives Matter efforts have been globally supported and Trump and the Capitol riots were condemned, it should then follow that Sikh farmers are supported and Modi and Hindutva actions are condemned.

Agriculture accounts for nearly half of India's workforce and is largely prevalent in the states of Punjab and Haryana, which have a sizable Sikh presence. Indian farmers also make up 11.2 percent of suicides in the country due to poverty and stress over cultivating and selling crops. These groups have been protesting for nearly six months now without any resolution from the Modi government and have faced an internet shut-

down around areas of New Delhi, with journalists covering the protests also being charged; it is clear that blatant human rights violations are taking place by the current administration.

Ultimately, the very nature of a protest should make it so that the protesters themselves aren't blamed for the incident. Protesters are fighting to be given protection under the law, and if they aren't extended the privilege to voice their contempt against those in power, then India as a country can no longer call itself a healthy democracy.

The struggle for liberation transcends borders and we cannot change our moral framework from country to country. Protests are not designed to be comfortable for those in power. Rather, it is the discomfort that breeds change. Therefore, instead of criticizing the actions of the protesters themselves, the government must be questioned as to the tool which allows such discrimination to fester. In this case, Modi's Hindu Rashtra should be unequivocally condemned.



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- ❖ Helped schools with construction projects in Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, and elsewhere.
- ❖ Provided ventilators to hospitals in Gujarat.
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