

Food and Shelter for Ukrainians, Starvation and Dispossession for Muslims

News:

The Arab news agency Al Jazeera reported today what no Western news agency considered important: "Families fearful as UN reduces food aid to northwest Syria." A World Food Program (WFP) spokesperson was quoted as explaining that for "For northwest Syria this means, starting May 2022, the [food] basket will reduce from 1,300 to 1,170 [kilocalories] per person," which will affect about 1.3 million people who are a fraction of the 12 million people facing food insecurity in Syria.

Comment:

The internally displaced refugees in Syria have been starving for years; dying of cold in their tents, dying of sickness and living on scraps of assistance, and now they will get less. Of those who sought refuge in the West, those that made it received a mixed reception in Europe; Germany opened its doors briefly in the beginning but waves of racism soon prevailed leading to the erection of fences and the closing of land borders. Then the refugees fleeing Assad's bloodthirsty tyranny took to the seas in small boats. Many were drowned and European Union ships have been filmed towing refugee boats back out to sea to stop them landing on European beaches. As the numbers of refugees continued to climb and disturbing scenes of drowned children emerged, European policies became shrewder and included shady deals with north African governments to do their dirty work for them by brutally preventing refugees from even leaving North African coasts. There were also deals with Turkey to keep refugees inside Turkey, where they then became a political football to be held back and released in turn as diplomatic tensions flared between the EU and Turkey.

The contrast with the reception for Ukrainian refugees escaping the brutality of Russia's invasion could not be greater. A week ago Priti Patel, the UK Home Secretary apologized that only 12000 Ukrainian refugees managed to reach the UK, but yesterday the Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, announced that refugees crossing the channel to the UK will be sent to Rwanda – a country famous for genocide and corruption. Those refugees will be mostly Muslims.

Despite these disparities, the unnoticed starvation of Syrian refugees in their tents caught my attention more, and added to these can be the starving victims of war in Yemen, where an unprecedented human catastrophe is occurring fueled by Western arms, and the similarly invisible Palestinians. Yes the Palestinians make headlines sometimes if enough of them get killed or injured, such as the hundreds who suffered beatings, gassing, stun grenades and rubber bullets this morning while worshipping at Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa Mosque, but usually their suffering goes unnoticed. It has always been that way, but the war in Ukraine has made Western hypocrisy doubly sickening. Javelin anti-tank missiles and Stinger anti-aircraft missiles for Ukraine to fight Russia, but no 'Stingers' or 'Javelins' for the Palestinians to defend themselves! Furthermore, just as the UN lacks funds for Syrian refugees, so too refugee programs for Palestinians are being cut-back, while daily announcements of massive humanitarian and military aid packages for Ukrainians are made. And these are only a fraction of the disparities. The West claims to support Ukraine's territorial integrity, but it has freely dismembered Muslim countries many times, either directly through invasion; or recognizing the gains of its friends, such as 'Israel's' annexation of the Golan Heights. Should Muslims be resentful about such disparities?

The Western ideology recognizes the equality of man in theory, but in practice it is not strong enough to override the racial tendencies that have plagued modern Europe. European politicians claim to speak for humanity and common human ideals, and they claim to be the defenders of good against the forces of darkness in the world. However, only Islam can make black and white equal in practice, and rather than resent the inevitable European disparity, it is enough to expose for those who still have not seen for themselves the flawed and cynical attempts of Western governments to portray themselves as something that they are definitely not, and never will be.

**Written for the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir by
Dr. Abdullah Robin**