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The ASEAN Conference has Failed to Protect the Rohingya Muslims

'Our Citizens, Our Communities, Our Vision' is the theme in conjunction with Malaysia's position as Chairman of the 26th ASEAN. In the speech of the Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak at the inauguration of the ASEAN Summit, he expressed his determination to make ASEAN 'Pivoted by the People'. This indicates a need to set up good governance, a better standard of living, sustainable development, empowerment of women, youth and, most importantly, there are more opportunities for the citizens.

Malaysia began organizing several meetings to discuss further actions based on the outcomes of the ASEAN 26th Summit on 24th - 28th April 2015. The series of meetings will begin with a meeting of Senior officials of ASEAN (ASEAN SOM) on 8th June 2015, followed by a meeting of senior officials of the ASEAN Plus three (APT SOM) and the meeting of senior officials from the East Asia Summit (EAS SOM) the following day. The meetings were concluded by a meeting of senior officials from the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF SOM). In addition, this meeting was held in preparation to face the 48th ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting (AMM) Foreign Ministers Post Conference (PMC) which was held from the 1st to 6th September 2015 at the Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC), Kuala Lumpur.

YB Dato' Sri Anifah Hj. Aman, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia has chaired the 22nd Ministerial meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF-ASEAN Regional Forum) on 6th August 2015. The meeting was attended by Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the 27 countries who participated in the ASEAN Regional Forum which comprises of 10 ASEAN country members (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam), 10 countries of ASEAN dialogue partners (Australia, Canada, China, European Union, India, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea, Russia, and the United States), an ASEAN Observer Country, Papua New Guinea, as well as other countries, namely North Korea, Mongolia, Pakistan, Timor-Leste, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.

During the settlement session, the meeting exchanged constructive views concerning the political and security situation and also the security challenges faced in this region. Among the main issues discussed was regarding the development for the South China Sea, developments in the Korean Peninsula, the increase in extremism and extreme violence by the Islamic State (IS) and the exceptional migrant movements in Southeast Asia and the Middle East Peace Process. The meeting also discussed the direction of the ASEAN Regional Forum, in particular regarding the progress of the implementation of preventive diplomacy.

When discussing the issue of Rohingya, Myanmar was reluctant to comment upon this issue in the Conference. Myanmar initially expressed reluctance to attend the ASEAN Summit if the invitation intended to raise the issue of Rohingya refugees. Myanmar's stand is in line with its firmness in not wanting to be blamed regarding the refugee crisis that is becoming critical.

As the chairman of ASEAN, Malaysia has received insistence from various parties to solve the issue of Rohingya migrants. Former Prime Minister, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who is also President of the Perdana Global Peace Foundation (PGPF), also urged on ASEAN to take action against Myanmar over their violence towards the Rohingya Muslims. He said it is time the ASEAN countries set aside the policy of non-interference in internal affairs of other countries, especially if it involves murder like this case. "We cannot accept this carnage, and if Myanmar still insists in doing it, they should leave ASEAN," said Dr

Mahathir in his keynote address during the international conference 'Plight of the Rohingya', held at the Museum of Islamic Art.

The Organisation of Human Rights for Myanmar Rohingya Ethnic in Malaysia (MEHROM) stressed that the issue of refugees and human trafficking will not end as long as ASEAN is not willing to cooperate in urging Myanmar to end the denial of citizenship to the Rohingyas. Its president, Zafar Ahmad Abdul Ghani said the massacre in southern Thailand was caused by the government's actions who oppressed the Myanmar Rohingyas until they fled. "This issue cannot be solved merely through political negotiation, but what should be done is exerting pressure economically and enforcement of international law," he told Utusan Malaysia in reviewing the issue of Rohingya refugees and that there is a possibility there could be more tombs of human trafficking victims.

The Rohingyas are a Muslim community persecuted in their own land to the extent of threatening their lives which has forced them to flee from their homeland in weak and hopeless conditions to seek for a new home. They have been forced to speculate on ships that head towards human trafficking camps in isolated islands in Thailand. They have been the victims of extreme violence, do not possess basic necessities such as food and are often forced to drink their own urine. Those who have become victims of diseases are then thrown into the sea if they die or are nearly dying.

In Thailand, the Rohingya Muslims have been placed in detention camps. They have to pay thousands of money if they want to be freed. If they cannot afford it, they will be sold like servants to the highest bidder. Those who cannot afford to pay will become slaves. Whereas women and young girls are forced to marry and there are even those who are raped. Men on the other hand are sold to Thailand fishermen.

According to UNHCR, there are over 130,000 Rohingyas who have fled from West Arakan and Bangladesh since the crisis broke out in 2012. The Myanmar Navy and local security forces are taking advantage out of the ethnic cleansing of Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar by demanding payment from smugglers who then hand over the Rohingya race to be traded.

Not only has the fate of the Rohingya Muslims not been fought for by Muslim communities in Muslim countries, but their presence has also been rejected. However, the discovery of mass graves and hundreds of bodies in southern Thailand has been a wake-up call for Malaysia to immediately solve this problem in the ASEAN conference. Unfortunately, ASEAN countries seem hopeless. Without any fear, Myanmar refuses to obey any recommendations to solve the problems of smuggling migrants. Other ASEAN countries are also ignoring the plight of the Rohingya Muslims on the basis of national borders until they are regarded as outsiders or refugees who are not eligible to obtain protection. Compassion and humanity has vanished from rulers due to 'assabiyyah' national borders that exist today.

National borders outlined by infidel invaders have managed to close the hearts of Muslims until their minds are also dragged with the nationalism spirit. They claim that their souls are free but their minds are occupied by the capitalism ideology. Rasulullah (saw) has reminded the Muslims regarding assabiyyah :

«ليس منا من دعا إلى عصبية, وليس منا من قاتل على عصبية, وليس من آمن مات على عصبية»

"He is not one of us who calls for Asabiyyah, (nationalism/tribalism) or who fights for Asabiyyah or who dies for Asabiyyah." (Narrated by Abu Daud).

They are brothers of the same faith that we are obliged to help, what more by Muslim rulers as at the government hands lie the greatest 'taklif' (obligation) to save every Muslim that is being oppressed or is suffering like the Rohingya refugees. We cannot place hope anymore in ASEAN or the UN to solve the problems of the Muslim Ummah. It is us, the Muslims that must rise to unite and defend the fate and plight of the Muslims. This is in accordance to Allah swt words in the Holy Quran in surah Ar-Ra'd, verse 11:

﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ حَتَّىٰ يَغْيِرُوا مَا بِأَنفُسِهِمْ﴾

“Indeed, Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves.”

In viewing and handling human trafficking cases, especially those involving Muslim Rohingyas, we cannot run away from reviewing and dealing with the root cause of the problem itself. A major factor why this is occurring is because the world nowadays is gripped by the capitalist ideology that has placed the nationalism borders to prevent the unity of the Muslims. Apart from that, capitalism has also made the benefit of material higher than anything else. Through this ideology, everything that can be taken advantage of will be used to the maximum in order to obtain benefit for the sake of satisfying desires and lusts of its believers. Without rulers who implement Islam, within and outside of the country, the problems of the Rohingya Muslims particularly and the problems of this Ummah will never be solved. Indeed, there is no other way to save the Muslims and restore their glory except by executing effort in reestablishing the Khilafah which will be governed by a Khalifah, which will act as a shield for this Ummah as affirmed by Rasulullah (saw),

« إِنَّمَا الْإِمَامُ جُنَّةٌ يُقَاتِلُ مِنْ وَرَائِهِ وَيَتَّقِي بِهِ »

“Indeed, the Imam (Khaleefah) is a shield, from behind whom you fight and by whom you are protected.” [Narrated by Bukhari & Muslim]

Allah (swt) sent down the Qur'an as a guide for Muslims and the Shariah law to be applied in order to bring peace to the whole world. This is only possible in an Islamic state which implements Islam comprehensively and is ruled by a Khalifah. In the Khilafah state, the lives and dignity of humans are guaranteed by Islam and if there are any who breaches these rights, those responsible will receive appropriate punishment from the state, in accordance to the Shariah law that relates to the case. The pro-active act of the Khilafah by warning the Myanmar regime to treat well and be decent to the Rohingya Muslims who live in Myanmar similarly to the way they treat the other citizens. All their aid and rights that they deserve must be provided as they provide it to the other citizens. If this is carried out, then there will be no need for the Rohingya Muslims to flee from the Myanmar rulers and they can still live in Myanmar and carry out their daily activities including dawah activities to the non-Muslims there.

If the regime of Myanmar refuses to do all those mentioned, then the Khilafah will initiate political pressure on that Kuffar country including threats and calls for jihad *fisabilillah* if they are still stubborn! This is in order that the brutality and despotism carried out by these Kuffar rulers are stopped immediately. In fact, when jihad is launched and Islam has achieved victory, then Myanmar will become a part of the Khilafah state and Allah (swt) Laws will be implemented there. Thus, there will be no need for the Rohingya Muslims to flee.

These actions of the Khilafah are vastly different from the actions of states such as Malaysia. This is because the capitalism ideology which is practiced by this state has made material benefit as their main benchmark. If Malaysia as the chairman of ASEAN is incapable of objecting Myanmar's violent acts, and cannot even lead the ASEAN countries to subjugate Myanmar, jihad under the Khilafah State as a solution is surely far from their minds. This is the implication of the nationalism spirit which has been left by the Kuffar imperialists. This ideology has become poison which has leaned on all the bodies of the Muslims until the Muslims are sick. Therefore, the choice is in our hands. Whether to remain with poison that can kill or throw this Kuffar ideology and return to Islam under a righteous Islamic Khilafah State upon the method of the Prophethood.

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