

BI-LINGUAL MONTHLY PUBLISHING FROM LONDON

Lahore INTERNATIONAL

June
2020



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intelligence
officer being targeted:
Report

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A Magazine for Scholarly, Literary, Political, Economic and Religious Activities

www.lahoreinternational.com



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Issue : June, 2020

Price : UK Pound 2, per copy

Annual Subscription : 24 UK Pound

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Politics of Adhaan, Niqab and medical masks



Zakaria Virk, Editor

For the first time Muslims in Canada, UK, Germany were able to hear Muslim call to prayer from loudspeakers within the confines of the mosque. Normally calling on Azaan on loudspeakers is prohibited under city bylaws. Nothing to rejoice, as it had more to do with politics than having any feeling for Muslims during the month of Ramadan.

This permission was granted as an exception due to coronavirus lockdown, hence people were not arriving at the mosques. This permission was only for Ramadan. Muslims are waiting to see public reaction over this temporary permission. If there is no strong opposition they will seek permanent permission to use loudspeakers for Azaan.

In the UK mosques in Waltham Forest- East London were allowed to use loudspeakers for Azaan at sunset – iftar time and for Juma prayers. Council agreed that nine mosques could perform the Adhzaan as mosques were closed and Muslims were unable to pray at the mosque.

Question is what is the purpose of Adhaan? It is to alert people to stop other activities and come to pray at the mosque. But if the mosques are closed then what is the need for Azaan? In

some countries like Dubai the Muezzin changed the wording and was heard reciting As-salatu fee bayootikum – that is offer Salat at your homes. To be honest it is all politics, time to put hopes that with this gesture Muslims will vote for the politicians.

Calling people to come for prayers at the mosque on loudspeakers is not mandated. There was a time when Ulema in the Indian sub-continent had given fatwas against calling adhzaan on loudspeakers. People can say prayers virtually or

the adhzaan can be played on appointed times on iPhones or tablets. Hearing the call to prayer outside the mosque when most people do not live near the mosque so cannot hear the adhaan is useless.

Meanwhile in Quebec it is not yet mandatory to cover the face with a mask. Bill 21 bars some public-sector employees in positions of authority from wearing hijabs, kippas, turbans and other religious dress at work. Some people are asking why it was a problem when Muslim women covered their face with a Niqab, it was deemed against secular values of the province. Majority of people in Quebec support a ban on religious symbols in the public sector, but this has not changed their perception of religious face coverings. Are these two issues connected?

A medical mask and an optional religious face covering may be similar in practice, but they symbolize different things. There are very strong stereotypes that people have of Muslim women wearing traditional clothing, such as Burka or Niqab.

With a medical mask people feel safe and secure, that it will protect them from COVID 19. But with a face covering like niqab there is no guarantee that it will protect from the virus. Some Muslim women who wear burka in public say life in public places is now more pleasant. Holding that azaan (call to prayer) “may be an essential and integral part of Islam”, the Allahabad High Court Friday said its recitation “through loudspeakers or other sound amplifying devices cannot be said to be an integral part of the religion.”



US praises Pakistan's cooperation for peace in Afghanistan

The newspaper's Staff Reporter



ISLAMABAD: The Trump administration's outgoing point person for South and Central Asia Alice Wells on Wednesday praised Pakistan for "solid cooperation" for peace in Afghanistan and emphasised that future of bilateral ties depended on Islamabad's continued support.

"We have seen over the last year, solid cooperation between Amb Khalilzad and the Pakistani civilian and military leadership to encourage the Taliban to take steps to reach the negotiating table," Ambassador Wells said during an online media briefing in which she reviewed and reflected on US policies in the region during the past three years.

Amb Wells, the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs at the State Department, is retiring this month. This was possibly her last official media engagement.

"The advancement and improvement and the foundation for a stronger US-Pakistan partnership

is premised on our ability to work together constructively to advance peace," she underscored.

Recalling how the United States upped the pressure on Pakistan to deliver on its counter-terrorism expectations, the retiring senior diplomat said President Trump's strategy for Afghanistan and South Asia unequivocally made it clear to Pakistan that it needed to take "decisive action" against groups, and the subsequent suspension of security assistance demonstrated Washington's "resolve".

"Since then we have seen constructive steps by Pakistan to encourage the Taliban to advance the Afghan peace process. Pakistan has also taken initial steps towards curtailing terrorist groups that threaten the region, such as arresting and prosecuting the LeT leader Hafiz Saeed and beginning to dismantle terrorist financing structures," she further said.

Amb Wells said that the US-Pakistan ties,

especially bilateral trade, expanded as Islamabad's commitment to peace in the region grew.

She said continuing violence in Afghanistan was at an "unacceptable level".

Noting that progress to intra-Afghan political negotiations in the peace process had been difficult, she said it was the responsibility of the Taliban to reduce violence.

Amb Wells urged the Afghan government and the Taliban to jointly fight Covid-19 and ISIS-Khorasan that has carried out numerous "ruthless and evil attacks" including last week's attack on a maternity centre in Kabul in which mothers and newborns were killed.

The peace process, she reminded, was difficult, but obstacles have to be overcome.

The US diplomat said India's role in Afghanistan was crucial. The importance Washington attached to India with regards to its Afghan policy, she said, was evident from Amb Khalilzad continuing consultations with Indian leaders on the issue.

"Obviously, it's up to India to determine how best to support the peace process. India is a very important actor in Afghanistan, \$3 billion in assistance that has already been pledged, touched every province, the diplomatic and political support that India traditionally has provided to Afghans. ... India's going to be a critical player and is a critical player," she said.

CHINA: Amb Wells repeated her criticism of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and its flagship project China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and urged Beijing to relieve the countries involved in these undertakings of its "predatory loans".

She said the US calls on "China to offer transparent relief from the BRI's predatory loans that countries are suffering from, emerge on stable footing."

Amb Wells reiterated the US was concerned about CPEC projects because of lack of transparency, and the unfair rates of profits that are guaranteed to Chinese firms involved in their execution.

Published in Dawn, May 21st, 2020



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MOHIUDDIN ABBASI
Editor-in-chief

Pakistan's Scorn for Science and Surrender To Religious Forces Has Put Millions In Danger

Dr Pervez Hoodbhoy



Representational Photo

WHEN the coronavirus suddenly emerged in Wuhan province, panicked Chinese authorities botched it badly and were sharply criticised internationally. Yet rapid self-correction led to a systematic, comprehensive and coordinated response. Soon China 'flattened the curve' drawing praise from everywhere (except the US). Now, by sending thousands of ventilators and millions of masks overseas, China is re-imaging itself as a world leader battling the pandemic.

China succeeded because it takes science seriously — very seriously. When its epidemiologists saw Titanic speeding towards an iceberg, they demanded drastic action. Raised in a culture of science, the Chinese political establishment concurred and soon engineered the largest mass mobilisation in recent world history. Imposing country-wide quarantines, building a score of temporary hospitals, and meticulously locating all who might have encountered the virus, China showed what a disciplined, rational and collective response could do.

The United States, undoubtedly the world's most scientifically advanced country, could have done still better. Approximately 18 American citizens have died for every Chinese one and so the urgency is greater. But a quirk of history has put at America's head an extreme-right-wing, science-bashing president who just rebuked his country's senior-most epidemiologist, cut off funds to the World Health Organisation, and ordered America to end its lockdown.

The state's scorn for science and surrender to religious forces has put Pakistan's millions in danger.

Trump's approval rating still hovers around 50 per cent — a sad thing for a nation that the world once admired but now mocks. Nevertheless, its suffering could have been still worse. Fortunately, Americans had the good sense not to

buy into the crazy prescription of a lunatic — even if he's their president — and self-inject Lysol/Dettol as protection against the virus. The mask remains mandatory and social-distancing has lessened but slightly.

Ordinary Americans are partially overcoming Trumpism because they, like ordinary Chinese, were raised inside a cocoon of rationality. Evangelists aside, all others accept that disease comes from viruses and bacteria, not God's wrath. All who went to high school learned at least a few things there. Proper education pays.

What of Pakistan, both leadership and people? An image coming to mind is that of Prime Minister Imran Khan reverentially listening to Maulana Tariq Jamil at a fundraiser where the latter piteously bleated to the heavens for forgiveness and blamed scantily clad women for bringing down divine punishment. Another image: though in dotage, Khan follows Trump in refusing to wear a mask lest his appeal be diminished. His unfazed followers say no evil virus can defeat a brave man under God's protection.

But all bravery evaporates when up against religious forces. Suspecting that the government was planning to close mosques and shrines, in a rare display of unity both Sunni and Shia ulema sent a stern warning. In response, President Arif Alvi declared mosques could remain open

subject to 20 conditions agreed upon by the government and ulema. Like everyone else, he knew it was a farce. Indeed, the ink was still wet when flagrant violations were reported in about 80 per cent of the country's mosques.

Thereafter the floodgates crashed down. After a brief hiatus, public places are now teeming with unmasked and ungloved people who have recklessly abandoned all to fate and chance. Food, footwear, and clothing markets are packed. Even as Covid deaths spiral up, life is normalising everywhere except where priorities are low — such as education. Although younger people are statistically at lower risk all schools, colleges, and universities in Punjab will remain closed until July 15.

What makes ordinary Pakistanis so much more religiously charged and difficult to handle than Muslims elsewhere? Saudi Arabia plans to enforce a countrywide five-day-long 24-hour curfew over the forthcoming Eidul Fitr, while Iran's interior minister says the government is still debating whether to impose a full lockdown on that day.

But to ban congregational prayers, and follow the steps taken by other Muslim countries, is impossible for Pakistan. Even if the government was to so decide, ordinary policemen and foot soldiers would likely disobey received orders. The bitter experiences of moving against the Taliban in the aftermath of 9/11 have yet to fade from the minds of the military establishment.

President Alvi therefore had no choice other than seek face-saving. Whether half-civilian, mostly-military, or full military, every government must mollify the likes of Maulana Abdul Aziz of Lal Masjid because mullahs control the masses. The state tried choosing co-optation over confrontation, but this was sensed — correctly — as a sign of weakness.

Might more education fix the problem? Very often one hears that expanding education will induce a more rational outlook and bring Pakistan closer to more enlightened and more governable Muslim countries like Turkey, Malaysia, or

Morocco. But if education means the stuff which presently goes under that name, then this cannot happen.

The core impediment to greater rationality is that particular interpretation of our national slogan Faith-Unity-Discipline (and permutations thereof) which gained currency during the Ziaul Haq era. It has since remained dominant. In seeking to create national unity through faith alone, the price paid was a demotion of reason and a demotion of trust in temporal institutions. This reduced governability. Whatever laws the state now makes are regarded by the public as man-made and distinctly secondary to orders received from a much higher authority.

This mindset permeates every aspect of life. Reforming education and creating a critical mindset becomes extraordinarily difficult in these circumstances. Science — impossible without scientific thinking — remains stuck despite large injections of money. Pakistanis do not question science's utility for making bombs, machines, and medicines. But any step-by-step process that demands carefully weighing empirical evidence is culturally alien. Few encounter it in school, even while studying science subjects.

No one knows what price Covid-19 will extract for our disrespect of science and reason. Epidemiology and virology lack the exactness of physics so even our best experts can provide only guesstimates and advise on setting strategies. But since science is little understood or valued, their recommendations fall on deaf ears. If lucky, Pakistan's final death toll will be limited to a few thousands. What's certain, however, is that this ship's crew and captain are powerless to steer it away from the iceberg ahead.

Pervez Hoodbhoy teaches physics in Lahore and Islamabad.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1557469/some-take-science-seriously>



Pakistan's Discrimination Against Its Minorities Is Entrenched in Its Constitution



By Farahnaz Isphahani

Pakistan, long described by human rights monitors and the Western media as one of the worst countries for religious minorities, is trying to improve its international image through what can only be described as symbolic gestures and public relations gimmicks.

Soon after the 2020 annual report of the United States Commission for International Religious Freedom listed Pakistan's continued disregard for the religious freedom of its Christians, Hindus, Sikhs, and Ahmadis, the Pakistan government announced the decision to create a National Commission for Minorities.

The report noted, "The systematic enforcement of blasphemy and anti-Ahmadiyya laws, and authorities' failure to address forced conversions of religious minorities — including Hindus, Christians, and Sikhs — to Islam, severely restricted freedom of religion or belief."

The creation of the commission was obviously part of the Pakistani government's effort to mitigate the reputational damage caused by Pakistan's designation, year after year, as an egregious violator of religious freedoms.

Pakistan's discrimination against its minorities is entrenched in its constitution and various laws and is supported by a powerful segment within Pakistani society.

Forced conversions of young Hindu and Christian underage girls are reported regularly. Pakistan's pernicious blasphemy laws, often wielded against the Ahmadiyya and Christian communities in particular, continue to claim new victims.

The curricula of public and private schools, which demonize other faiths, reinforce in children a hatred or indifference toward children of other faiths. Anti-Semitic conspiracy theories are ubiquitous and are spread by clerics and politicians. Mob violence against members of unarmed

minority populations and attacks, including bombings, targeting places of worship have also been recorded through most of Pakistan's history.

A commission that has no jurisdiction to amend the constitution and change inequitable laws is hardly a meaningful step toward improving the condition of religious minorities in Pakistan. Its formation was merely a formal response to a 2014 judgment by Pakistan's Supreme Court that demanded a formal review of how minorities are treated in the country.

Former United Nations Rapporteur Hina Jilani pointed out that the minority commission had not been created like other national commissions through an act of parliament. Meanwhile, leaders of minority communities, including Christians, criticized the government's decision, and Peter Jacob, chairperson of the Peoples Commission on Minority Rights, announced that the creation of the commission in its present form would be challenged in the Supreme Court.

The government agreed with hardline clerics that Ahmadis, who consider themselves Muslims but are designated non-Muslim by Pakistan's constitution, would not be represented on the commission.

Even if the government had included an Ahmadi representative, the community would not have accepted being part of a commission on improving the condition of non-Muslims because Ahmadis consider themselves a sect within Islam.

From the Pakistan government's point of view, the creation of a toothless, symbolic commission that is unlikely to reverse decades of institutionalized religious discrimination, has already achieved its desired goal.

The U.S. Commission for International Religious Freedom, which had listed Pakistan's transgressions in its annual report released on

April 28 and condemned the denial of coronavirus-related food aid to Hindus and Christians a few days earlier, welcomed the creation of the commission in a press release.

The press release described the creation of the commission as “an important step in Pakistan’s continuing journey towards the protection of religious freedom.”

In Pakistan’s media, those comments were portrayed as marking the end of U.S. criticism on the subject. It eroded the impact of the strong stand on religious freedom issues abroad manifested in Secretary of State Michael Pompeo’s muscular leadership and the day-to-day work done by the office of the U.S. ambassador-at-large for religious freedom, Sam Brownback.

The effectiveness of moral pressure on foreign

governments requires sustained effort. Mixing praise for engagement and symbolic gestures weakens critical messages.

Pakistan has resisted U.S. pressure on a range of issues over the years, from nuclear weapons to terrorism, by stringing American officials along with deliberately crafted half measures.

It is trying to do the same with religious freedom, by substituting hospitality and public relations stunts for substantive policy change. For the sake of Pakistan’s minorities, and the principle of religious freedom, U.S. officials should not fall for that trap.

Author of ‘Purifying The land of the Pure: A History of Pakistan’s Religious Minorities’ (Oxford)

[https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/opinion/dont-fall-for-pakistans-pr-campaign-its-still-awful-on-religious-freedom?](https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/opinion/dont-fall-for-pakistans-pr-campaign-its-still-awful-on-religious-freedom?hpid=hp_hp-top-table-main-religious-freedom%3A-pakistan%3Ahomepage%2Fstory&hpid=hp_hp-top-table-main-religious-freedom%3A-pakistan%3Ahomepage%2Fstory)

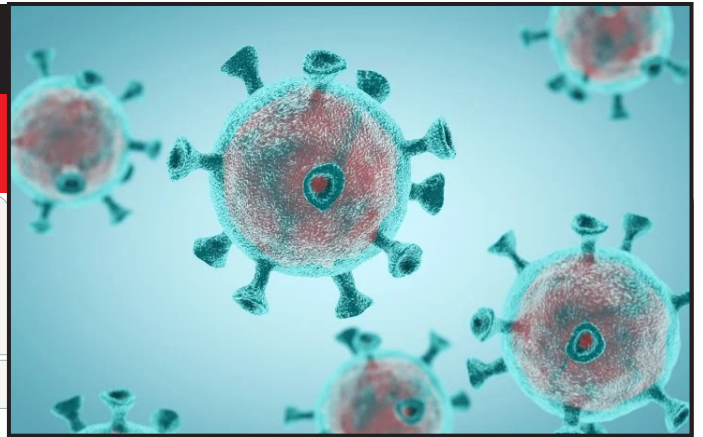


Voice of sanity

Dr. Faheem Younus from the University of Maryland in America, head of the Infectious Disease Clinic.

From the tweets of Dr. Faheem Younus:

1. We will live with Covid19 for months. Let’s not deny it or panic. Let’s not make life unnecessarily difficult. Let us learn to be happy and live with that fact.
2. The virus will not reduce its effect in the summer. It’s summer in Brazil and Argentina, but the virus is spreading rapidly.
3. You cannot destroy Covid19 viruses that have penetrated the cells by drinking too much water, you will just go to the toilet often.
4. Washing hands and keeping a distance of 1,8 meters is the best method of protecting against the virus. If you don’t have a Covid19 patient at home, there is no need to disinfect the surfaces in the house.
5. Cargo packages, petrol pumps, shopping carts or ATMs do not cause infection. Wash your hands, live your life as usual.
6. Covid19 is not a food infection. This is associated with drops of infection like flu. There is no documented risk of Covid19 being transmitted by ordering food.
7. Entering the sauna does not kill Covid19 viruses that have penetrated the cell.
8. You can lose your smell with many allergies and viral infections. This is a non-specific symptom for Covid19.
9. Once we get home, we don’t need to change clothes



and shower urgently. Purity is a virtue, not paranoia.

10. Covid19 virus does not hang in the air. This is a drip infection that requires close contact. The air is clean, you can walk around the gardens (keeping the distance) in the parks.
11. Covid19 does not separate race or religion, it is passed on to all people.
12. It is enough to use normal soap against Covid19 by not necessarily using antibacterial soap. The virus is not a bacteria anyway.
13. You don’t have to worry about your food orders. But if you want you can heat it up a bit in the microwave.
14. The chance to bring Covid19 home with your shoes and getting sick is the same as getting hit by lightning twice a day. I’ve been working against viruses for 20 years, drip infections don’t spread like this.
15. You cannot be protected from the virus by drinking / eating vinegar, sumac, soda and ginger.
16. Wearing gloves is a bad idea, the virus can accumulate on the glove, it can easily be transmitted if you touch your face. It’s best to wash your hands.

14-year-old Christian girl abducted, converted to Islam and married off to her abductor in Pakistan

About 1000 Christian and Hindu women between 12 and 25 years are abducted, raped, married, and forced to convert to Islam in the Islamic Republic.

A 14-year-old Christian girl, Myra Shehbaz, was abducted in Faisalabad in Pakistan by Muhammad Naqash and his accomplice while she was travelling to her workplace in April 2020, reported Forbes.

Eye witness accounts by Pervez Masih, Younas Masih, and Naeem Masih state that Myra was forcibly abducted in a car while she resisted. The men were armed and as such the eyewitnesses could not help the victim. The accused also fired shots in the air. Speaking to International Christian Concern, her mother, Nighat, expressed fears of rape, forceful conversion to Islam, and even murder. She was indeed married off to her abductor and forcibly converted.

While Myra's marriage certificate stated her age as 18, it contradicted her National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) certificate. As a part of the modus operandi, a typed statement that she had left her home willingly was also produced. The case is yet to be taken to the Court.

Movement for Solidarity and Peace (MSP) has estimated that about 1000 Christian and Hindu women between 12 and 25 years are abducted, raped, married, and forced to convert to Islam. Due to limited financial means of the families of such victims, many cases go unreported.

On October 10 last year, another 14-year-old Huma Yunus was abducted from her parents' home in Karachi by a Muslim man named Abdul Jabbar, a resident of Dera Ghazi Khan in Punjab. Farzana (14), and Sehrish (16) were gang-raped by 3 Muslim men but the families were forced to settle the matter outside the Court. In the case of Sana John (13) and Mehwish (14) who were abducted by Muslims, the police conducted a botched investigation and no attempts were made to rescue them. A 11-year-old Christian girl named Maria Sarfraz was also gang-raped for 3 days but was forced to settle the matter outside.

Justice Denied

Justice is rare in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. In most cases, such abducted women never get to reunite with their families. In the case of Huma Yunus, a Pakistan Court upheld her marriage and



forced conversion to Islam, despite her being underage. The case will now proceed to the Supreme Court.

Lack of proper investigation, prosecution of the accused, and denial of the right to the reunification of such abducted victims with their guardians make the victims an easy and vulnerable prey to the Islamic predators. It must be reiterated that every child deserves a normal childhood.

However, in an unprecedented judgment by the Lahore High Court, it was ruled that a 14-year-old Pummy Muskan who was forcibly converted to Islam lacked legal capacity to change her religion. The petitioner aka her mother Nasira, however, received some success in the case. "The Petitioner being the lawful guardian of Pummy Muskan is entitled to her custody. There is no reason to deprive her of that right", the Court directed.

Minorities denied ration in Pakistan

Earlier, the Sindh Government had issued orders to local NGOs to distribute ration to poor daily-wage workers and labourers. However, the Hindus and Christians were singled out and denied their fair share of the ration by a Karachi-based NGO, Saylani Welfare Trust.

The Pakistani Hindus and Christians, most of who are daily wage workers, had gathered at Rehri Goth in Karachi to receive essential supplies. They were informed that the ration was meant only for Muslims and the minority were asked to go back. Moreover, no screening was done for the 3000 odd people who had gathered to receive ration. Similar treatment has been meted out to Hindus in Liyari, Sachal Goth, and other parts of Sindh.

<https://www.opindia.com/2020/05/minor-christian-girl-abducted-converted-islam-pakistan/>



Roots of Anti Ahmadiyya Cause and role of Shorish Kashmiri

By Manan Ahmed Asif



Abdul Karim Shorish Kashmiri

What we often report is that it was Zulfikar Ali Bhutto who passed a constitutional amendment on September 7, 1974 to declare Ahmadis non-Muslims. What we frequently state is that it was his nemesis Ziaul Haq who promulgated Ordinance XX which prohibits those already declared as non-Muslims from practicing Islam. We trot out these constitutional and legal provisions sometimes to explain and at other times to justify – even condone – the unending physical and psychological violence inflicted upon the Ahmadi community in Pakistan.

Such as when a mob burned down Ahmadi houses and historical sites in Sialkot on May 23, 2018. Such as when Atif R Mian, an economist at the Princeton University, had to resign on September 7, 2018 from the newly elected government's Economic Advisory Council.

Those who support the exclusion of Ahmadis from public life in Pakistan argue that this exclusion is well-deserved because the Ahmadi community violates the Constitution of the Islamic Republic by insisting on being Muslim. (They conveniently ignore the fact that all citizens do not have to agree with all the provisions of a constitution all the time. Otherwise, any demand for a constitutional amendment would be illegitimate.) Even those

who support civic liberties for Ahmadis do so only after qualifying their statements with Ahmadi-specific legal and constitutional provisions.

That the problems we have with Ahmadis all stem from the law and the Constitution is a soft-bellied lie of our prejudiced present and fallacious history. The current status of Ahmadis does not have its origin in 1974.

We seldom pause to remember how anti-Ahmadi laws came about and how the movement against them originated. We assume that these things happened as a logical next step after the creation of Pakistan as a Muslim state, making it an imperative to define and determine who was a Muslim – and, thus, a legitimate citizen of the new state – and who was not.

We need to remind ourselves that the discrimination that Muslims display towards Ahmadis did not suddenly develop after the creation of Pakistan. In fact, Majlis-e-Ahrarul Islam – one of the earliest instigators of an anti-Ahmadi movement – originated in British-ruled India. As early as 1935, it made a call for Ahmadis to be excommunicated from Islam and expelled from government offices. One key target of its ire was Chaudhry Zafarullah Khan, a leading Ahmadi jurist at the time.

We also need to remind ourselves that there have been many fierce champions of an anti-Ahmadi cause much before Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan's chief Khadim Hussain Rizvi came to promote it last year. One of the most prominent among them was one Agha Shorish Kashmiri, a poet, reporter, author and publisher. He did much, perhaps the most, to turn Pakistan's Urdu-reading middle class – mainly in Lahore and Karachi – against Ahmadis. Born in Amritsar in 1917, Kashmiri joined the Majlis-e-Ahrarul Islam in the mid-1930s and spent more than five years in jail under the

Defence of India Act in the late 1930s and the early 1940s for his anti-Ahmadi activities. In 1944, Kashmiri moved to Lahore and began his career as a journalist. On January 1, 1949, he launched a colour weekly from the same city. It was called Chatan ('rock' in English).

Kashmiri imagined the magazine as one dedicated to the cause of Islam. It deployed Allama Muhammad Iqbal's poetry and Islamic history as twin poles to emphasise the finality of the Prophet of Islam (may peace be upon him) as the last messenger of



God. It had a couplet from a poem by Iqbal as its motto (which was printed on the cover of its every issue): *Agarche buth hain jamaat ki aasteenon main/mujhe hai hukm-e-azaan la ilah-a-illallah* (though idols are hidden in the sleeves of those standing for prayer/I am commanded to proclaim there is no God but Allah).

Inspired by Zamindar a Lahore-based Urdu newspaper that had played a major role in mobilizing Punjabi Muslims along religious lines before 1947, Chatan was priced low so as to maximize its outreach. For the first few years, an issue cost a couple of annas (12 paisas); by 1965, it cost 37 paisas; by 1980, its price rose to three rupees.

Chatan argued that, instead of being a religious group, Ahmadis were a political community that had conspired to create Pakistan out of India in order to have its own independent state which, it claimed, was going to be set up in Kashmir. This claim was the reason why Kashmiri raised his voice against Chaudhry Zafarullah Khan's appointment as Pakistan's foreign minister, arguing that, being an Ahmadi, he would misuse the post to help his own community achieve its political objectives.

Chatan also published reports that claimed Ahmadis were poisoning the Pakistani Army and the civil bureaucracy with their propaganda. Soon, the magazine started organizing public meetings to demand Chaudhry Zafarullah Khan's ouster from the government. These meetings featured speeches and writings from religious

figures as Maulana Abul A'la Maududi, the founder of Jamaat-e-Islami, and Maulana Abu'l Hasan Nadwi, an eminent scholar.

Thus originated the earliest political movement in

Pakistan — with the objective to demonize, expel and even discard the Ahmadi community. It is a movement that has been with us since 1947 — since the Kashmir issue began — and Jinnah appointed Zafarullah Khan as Pakistan's foreign minister.

Maududi and Nadwi subsequently published two pamphlets, *Qadiani Masla* (The Qadiani Problem) and *Qadianiat: Islam aur Nabuwat-e-Muhammadi kay khilaf aik baghawat* (Qadiani Movement: A rebellion against Islam and Prophet Muhammad), respectively. The pamphlets were published in March 1953.

Chatan, in the meanwhile, was aggressively mobilising public opinion against Ahmadis, labelling the agitation against them as *Tehreek-e-Raast Iqdaam* (Righteous Step Movement). Yet the agitation was seen by many in the country merely as an "Ahrar-Ahmadi Controversy" — at least this is how Justice Muhammad Munir framed it in his inquiry report on the anti-Ahmadi pogroms of 1953.

Kashmiri made a fresh bid at fanning anti-Ahmadi hatred in the mid-1960s. He began to argue that the Ahmadis were, in fact, Zionists. By using terms such as *Mirza'il* (an amalgamation of Israel

and Mirza, the title of the Ahmadi community's founding leader Mirza Ghulam Ahmad) and Ajami Israel (Eastern Israel), Kashmiri relied heavily on anti-Semitic and anti-Jewish notions to associate Ahmadis with a Zionist conspiracy to dominate the whole world. Chatan's earlier insistence on Ahmadis being a political community was now smeared with an anti-Semitic internationalism.

The stories published in Chatan included lists of Ahmadi civil servants, bureaucrats and businessmen — 'secretive', 'conspiratorial' Ahmadis who were planning to bring about the demise of Pakistan. Ayub Khan's dictatorial regime, that was generally soft towards the magazine, started censoring its contents in 1967. Kashmiri published the censorship order on his magazine's cover on August 1, 1967. He was also jailed during this period for inciting violence.

After 1971, Chatan blamed the creation of Bangladesh on Ahmadi 'conspiracies'. It portrayed Mirza Muzaffar Ahmad, President Yahya Khan's economic advisor, as the source of grievances that East Pakistanis had developed against West Pakistan. On October 18, 1972, the magazine published a cover story that 'exposed' India's plans to divide Pakistan into many states. Along with Bangladesh, these included Sindhudesh, Khalistan and an Ahmadi state in Balochistan.

During these years, Chatan turned to lobbying Zulfikar Ali Bhutto who had taken over power from Yahya Khan and who had already received a glowing profile in the magazine's December 4, 1967 issue for publicly declaring that Ahmadi were non-Muslims. Though the government briefly jailed Kashmiri in August 1972 for provoking anti-Ahmadi violence, his agenda was clearly ascendant. By then the title of Mujahid-e-Khatm-e Nabuwwat (the soldier of the finality of prophethood) was conferred upon him by his supporters.

Kashmiri died in 1975 but Chatan did not stop its anti-Ahmadi campaign. It published cover story after cover story 'exposing' the presence of Ahmadi spies in the government as well as an Ahmadi 'conspiracy' to control the whole world in

collaboration with Jews. Its July 12, 1982 issue carried a cover photo of Zia along with a self-explanatory caption: "Qadiani Activities and the Role of the President". Inside the magazine was the coverage of an International Khatm-e Nabuwwat Conference in London and an article 'exposing' an Ahmadi 'conspiracy' against Pakistan's nuclear weapons programme. The article included a quote from Dr Abdul Qadeer Khan, who is credited with being the founder of that programme, to substantiate its claims.

Chatan, however, is just one of the many streams that contribute to the river of hatred that separates Ahmadis from Muslims in today's Pakistan. The magazine's long run – that ended in 1989 when it ceased publication – helps us see the role of popular media in creating a public opinion in which Ahmadis have been reduced to nothing but conspirators, sub-citizens and even sub-humans.

These are the foundations of our hatred and communal discrimination that undergird our contemporary perceptions of the Ahmadi community — not any law or a constitutional amendment.

<https://herald.dawn.com/news/1398687>



Lahore International Magazine

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Zafrullah Khan, Objectives' Resolution and the Islamic Republic

By Yasser Latif Hamdani



The man of principle that Jinnah was, he resisted immense pressure from both outside forces and within the Muslim League on the Ahmadi issue. A lesser man like Bhutto or Imran Khan would have buckled under it. Similarly Gilmartin can write whatever he wants and Ayesha Siddiqua can interpret it however she wants, but the facts are that there is not even a single letter or statement of Jinnah in Jinnah Papers where he conceded the idea of an Islamic state to any Pirs or Mullahs.

He was just not built that way. The so called Pir of Manki letter- that many bring up as evidence of the claim that Jinnah promised the Pir shariat- does not exist in any archive or record. It is an incredible fabrication. These are of course no new assertions. In another article Ayesha Siddiqua wrote about Jinnah acquiring the services of Hassan Al Banna and the Ikhwan based on some obscure dispatch by some intelligence official, talking of a letter that Jinnah supposedly wrote in Arabic is another unverified assertion.

Not only does no such letter exist in record, but it is well known that Jinnah always wrote all of his letters in the English Language. There was not even a single letter by Jinnah in either Urdu or his native tongues Cutchie or Gujurati (which he spoke fluently). To imagine that Jinnah would send a letter in Arabic is preposterous. So both these claims are false and inaccurate.

Coming back to the topic, Majlis-e-Ahrar was also completely opposed to the Muslim League and the idea of Pakistan. Backed by Congress, Majlis-e-Ahrar started several sectarian movements not just against Ahmadis but also Shias. This party along with Mufti Mahmood (the person who famously called the making of Pakistan a sin) were to later become the prime movers of the 2nd Amendment against Ahmadis. Strange that those who committed the outrage in 1974, 2nd Amendment, were more or less allied with the Congress Party before 1947, be they Mufti Mahmood or Wali Khan or Maula Bux Soomro. Bhutto himself had been too embarrassed to attend most of the debate.

These are however smaller quibbles. Now, Ayesha

Siddiqua's claim that Sir Zafrullah Khan snubbed the Christian and Hindu members. There were of course Hindu and scheduled caste members and I do not want to go into the controversy of whether there was a Christian member or not. However Zafrullah Khan did not 'snub' them. His speech is available on NA website. What Zafrullah Khan did was to explain to those members that Islamic principles were universal and did not discriminate between Muslims and Non-Muslims.

It was a most respectful and erudite exposition even if one disagrees with it. Zafrullah Khan was an earnest believer in the compatibility of Islam and human rights. He wrote a book on the topic and used this conceptual framework to convince the Muslim majority countries in the UN to accept the United Nations Human Rights Declaration.

Singling out Zafrullah Khan is unfair. There were many others including Liaquat Ali Khan who spoke in favour of the resolution.

This is another interesting thing about the resolution. The resolution, as it was adopted on March 12, 1949, used the word 'God Almighty' not 'Allah Almighty'. Interestingly this change was brought to the preamble in 1973 and then as substantive part in 1984. So while, even though the resolution was a terrible mistake, what it did not do was create an Islamic state. It sought to enable Muslims and not force them to live in accordance with Quran and Sunnah.

In the next clause, it provided for the minorities to freely profess and practice their religions and develop their cultures. Most importantly, though it was just a resolution – an attempt to stall at best. Speaking on the occasion, Liaquat Ali Khan said very clearly, "A Non-Muslim can be the head of administration under the Constitutional Government" under the state to be established in line with the resolution. This was not an Islamic Republic.

A Basic Principles Committee to make recommendations for the future constitution was appointed the same day that Objectives Resolution was passed. This committee – with Zafrullah Khan at its head- presented its report in the early 1950s. It did not propose an 'Islamic Republic'. It sought to sidestep the difficulty by simply calling the country Pakistan. This was changed to Islamic Republic of Pakistan on November 2, 1953. It was also decided that the President of the Republic (though not the Prime Minister) would be a Muslim. There was however no state religion.

The writer is a lawyer and commentator. He is also the author of the book 'Jinnah: Myth and Reality'.

<https://nayadaur.tv/2020/05/zafrullah-khan-objectives-resolution-and-the-islamic-republic/>



ISIS magazine tries to instigate Indian Muslims on CAA-NRC

By Vineeta Pandey - The Asian Age

New Delhi: The terror group ISIS has stepped up its India-specific propaganda aimed at stoking a sense of injustice among Indian Muslims in the context of recent issues and instigating them to pick up weapons.

In the latest edition of its online magazine 'Voice of Hind', a magazine specifically aimed at Muslims in India, ISIS has tried to make a case out of the unrest over the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), National Register of Citizens (NRC) and highlighted the atrocities against Muslims by vigilante groups in recent months.

While ISIS has vast plans in South Asian region, it has thus far not had much influence in India except for a few stray individual cases of radicalization and formation of some modules, which were quickly busted by the security agencies. However, this is the first time that an online ISIS publication with specific focus on India has surfaced, for which an organization called Al-Qitaal Media Centre by Junudul Khilafaah al-Hind, identifying itself as a pro-ISIS group, has taken credit. The propaganda has been tracked by security agencies on various platforms like Rocket Chat, pdfhost, Internet Archive, Mediafire and Nextcloud.

"Indian Muslims are the target audience for Voice of Hind magazine, of which there are currently three issues. The magazine attempts to appeal to Indian Muslims by trying to make a case for ISIS, comparing violence against Muslims in India to the losses suffered by ISIS in Iraq and Syria, and portraying Indian governmental policy as anti-

Muslim. The magazine seeks to inculcate a sense of injustice that can be rectified through violence," a researcher at the Counter Extremism Project which tracks extremists in South Asia told this newspaper.

The first two issues of Voice of Hind, released on February 24 and March 25, had focused on the Jammu & Kashmir issue and violence against Muslims in other parts of India.

The third issue of the magazine, uploaded on April 22, contains an article headlined 'Call towards Tawheed and Jihad' which states that recent constitutional changes in India are meant to deprive Muslims of their rights. It says the only purpose of the CAA was to make Muslims understand that things are working towards making India a Hindu nation.

"They (Hindus) wanted to show you the police are for them, the courts are for their benefit and they are only there to torture and persecute the Muslim community. Did the methods of voting and protests (anti-CAA) work for you? Have the courts and legislators (from) whom (you) seek help besides Allah done you any good," the magazine asks. The pro-ISIS group encourages attacks using knives, axe, hammers, heavy objects, petrol bombs, choking through rope or belts or using vehicles as weapons to cause fatality.

<http://www.asianage.com/india/all-india/100520/isis-magazine-tries-to-instigate-indian-muslims-on-caa-nrc.html>



Muslim, pregnant and in jail as coronavirus sweeps through India



The 27-year-old PhD student is one of five Muslim students and activists arrested since

be given to a pregnant woman. It is keeping us up at night,” he said.

India’s lockdown began on March 25 for their role in protests against a law that would make it easier for non-Muslims from neighbouring countries to gain citizenship. Critics say the law entrenches rising Hindu nationalism and openly discriminates against Muslims, who form just over 10 per cent of the population.

But Safoora Zargar, four months pregnant with her first child, is not one of them. Instead she languishes in the Tihar jail complex of New Delhi.

Safoora, who is studying sociology at Jamia Millia University, has spoken to her husband twice from jail since she was detained on April 10. Both times, the call lasted for five minutes before automatically disconnecting, her husband said.

She has told him and her family that she is keeping well. “She is a tough character. But at the end of the day, there can’t be enough care that can

Police allege Safoora was a “key conspirator” in the three days of communal violence in February, when at least 53 people, mostly Muslims, died and several hundred more were injured. She has been charged under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) – a regressive anti-terror law under which a person can be denied bail for an indefinite period of time.

But activists involved in the protests say they were peacefully opposing the new law, known as the Citizenship Amendment Act or CAA, and the rioting was caused by Hindu groups who attacked mostly Muslim protesters. The activists allege police did nothing to stop the armed mobs and in some cases were even complicit in their actions.

<https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/politics/article/3084447/muslim-pregnant-and-jail-coronavirus-sweeps-through-india-says>



Role of Jamaat-e-Islami in radicalizing next generation of Muslims

By Sam Westrop and Clifford Smith

intellectuals who led the Bengali war for independence from Pakistan. After the war ended, some of the leaders of Jamaat-e-Islami killing squads fled to the West afterwards. Chowdhury Mueen-Uddin, a leader of the Al-Badr killing squad, moved to the UK and helped establish Muslim Aid, today one of the country's leading Islamic charities. Another Al-Badr leader, Ashrafuzzaman Khan, moved to the U.S. and became a prominent leader in the Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA). Khan was later sentenced to death in absentia by Bangladesh's war crimes tribunal for murdering 18 Bengali intellectuals.

ICNA is today "the most important representation of Jamaat-e-Islami in America," said Westrop, with local chapters all across the country. Together with the Muslim American Society, a Muslim Brotherhood-linked group, ICNA hosts an annual conference that draws tens of thousands of attendees and often features American politicians as guest speakers.

ICNA also runs several charities, notably ICNA Relief, which provides domestic aid here in the U.S.; Helping Hand for Relief and Development (HHRD), which provides international aid; Young Muslims, "a youth group that indoctrinates young Muslims;" and two proselytizing organizations, GainPeace and WhyIslam.

Although ICNA's charities have received federal grants and established good relations with both local and federal government officials, they retain ties to violent extremists. "A couple of years ago we caught HHRD working with two front organizations for Lashkar-e-Taiba, the Pakistani terrorist organization responsible for the 2008 Mumbai attacks, ... they ran a conference together in a Pakistani city," recalled Westrop. HHRD has also worked with Alkhidmat Foundation, a Pakistani charity linked to JI's armed wing.

Although Jamaat-e-Islami figures in the U.S. often talk the talk of religious moderation, they do this for tactical reasons. Westrop gave the example of Hafiz Muhammed Masood, who was the imam of a prominent Massachusetts mosque during the 2000s. When it emerged that he was the brother of Hafiz Muhammad Saeed, leader of the above mentioned Lashkar-e-Taiba terror group, "Masood said, 'Oh yes, he is my brother, but I share nothing in common with



him. I have no links to his terrorism. I repudiate, I reject his ideology,' and everyone believed him, the media believed him, the local politicians believed him," Westrop recalled. Around 2008, however, Masood was deported to Pakistan for lying on his visa application. "What did he do the day he got back? He became an official spokesperson for Lashkar-e-Taiba."

Last year, Smith notes, Congressman Jim Banks (R-Indiana) "introduced H.Res.160 which calls out Jamaat-e-Islami's actions across the board in India and Bangladesh and Pakistan and also their fundraising arms and their links to terrorism in the US." But the small number of voices raising this issue face an uphill battle. A taxpayer-funded umbrella organization of international charities, InterAction, is lobbying Congress on behalf of ICNA and HHRD, discouraging any investigation of their activities.

Westrop and Smith urged webinar participants to write their congressional representatives and urge them to oppose federal funding of Jamaat charities. "Jamaat is a dangerous force. It has flown under the radar for decades. Across the US it is radicalizing the next generation of Muslim kids," said Westrop. "You just have to look to Europe to see what happens when you don't stop that radicalization in time."

Asked which is more dangerous, the Muslim Brotherhood or Jamaat-e-Islami, Smith replied that the latter is today more worrisome. "Jamaat-e-Islami's franchise groups, its friends in the U.S., have been more influential, have gotten more funds, have gotten more respectability and have been more involved in shaping policy than Muslim Brotherhood-linked groups."

<https://www.meforum.org/60815/jamaat-e-islami-more-dangerous-than-brotherhood>



UK: Amid the coronavirus, bailing out mosques is essential

By Harris Iqbal

Mosques in the UK and across much of Europe and North America are going through a financial crisis due to coronavirus lockdown restrictions. We have a duty to help these essential places of worship, which often simultaneously function as community hubs, charities and education centers, to protect the spiritual, social and physical wellbeing of Muslim communities and the wider society.

Muslim-led charities, which offer important support for the most vulnerable members of various communities, have also been hit hard by the pandemic. While all charities experienced some reduction in income since the beginning of the crisis, because the lockdowns coincided with the month of Ramadan, the economic toll of this public health emergency has been particularly high on Muslim charities. Many Muslim charities receive a significant portion of their donations – perhaps 35 percent or more – during the month of Ramadan. Much of this fundraising is now impossible due to social distancing measures.

Some of these charities, particularly the larger ones, may emerge relatively unscathed from the crisis. They have large reserves, as well as automated residual donations, much of which will continue. Many mosques, however, lack this

infrastructure.

In the UK, for example, it can cost around \$2,500 a month (£2,000) to keep the smallest of mosques open. For the bigger mosques that serve tens of thousands of congregants, monthly costs often exceed \$125,000.

Most mosques have little to no cash reserves, and survive simply on collection bucket donations from one Friday prayer to the next. Others rely on larger, one-off donations they receive during the month of Ramadan to stay afloat throughout the year. With lockdowns and other restrictions continuing with no end in sight, however, many of these places of worship are now facing the prospect of closing their doors for good.

This would be a tragedy and not just for practising Muslims. Mosques are much more than just places of worship. They provide much-needed community services like supplementary education, welfare and aid, counselling and even career and legal advice. They help children with out-of-school clubs and classes. They support women and the elderly, and are hubs for charity and interfaith work.

Despite the odds being stacked against them, many mosques across Europe and beyond also joined the front-line fight against COVID-19. In



Workers prepare shrouds to wrap bodies in the Central Jamia Mosque Ghamkol Sharif, which is currently being used as a temporary morgue in Birmingham, UK, April 21, 2020

the UK, for example, mosques swiftly transformed their facilities to serve as morgues, hospices and food distribution centres during this time of crisis. Some mosques even directly made PPE donations to local hospitals.

The services offered by mosques are essential for the economic wellbeing of not only the communities they serve but society at large.

In the UK, 50 percent of the Muslim population is facing poverty and deprivation. Any service - delivered through or by a mosque - that helps these communities to be economically productive and self-reliant, without using government resources, benefits not only Muslims but all taxpayers. What this means is that if the pandemic takes away British Muslims' places of worship, socializing and support - as well as a disproportionate number of their lives - there will be dire consequences for all communities.

Just like businesses, charities and the self-employed, mosques need a lifeline. Large Muslim-led charities, which have built the necessary safety nets to ride out this crisis thanks to the generosity of Muslim communities, now need to do everything they can to support mosques that are essential for the survival of the communities they care for.

My charity, Penny Appeal has already issued tens of thousands of pounds to various mosques at this difficult time, and is setting up a special COVID-19 mosque bailout fund, as we expect demand to increase in the coming weeks and months as mosques burn through their limited reserves.

But these are just short-term solutions. In the long term, we should work to make mosques - and all places of worship and assistance - financially independent and sustainable.

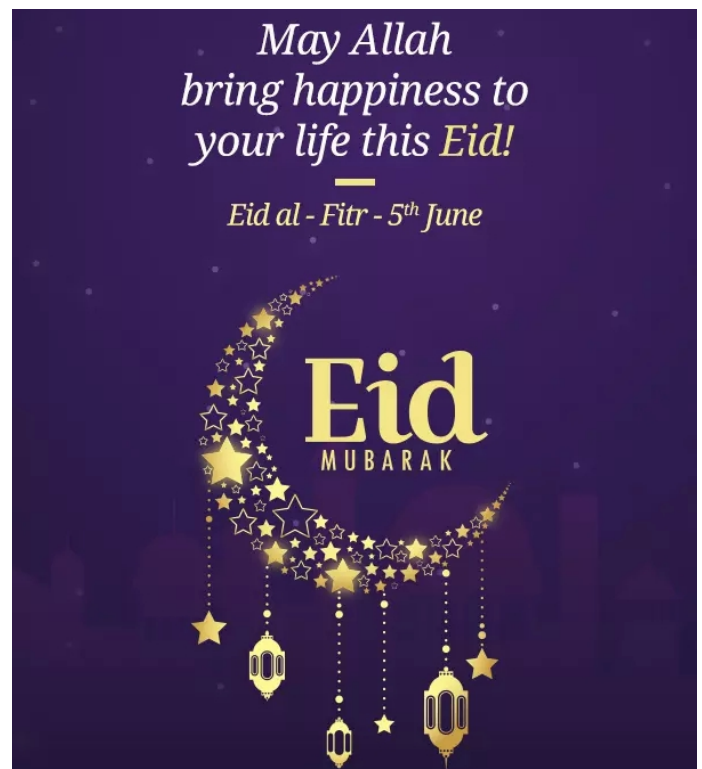
In Muslim-majority countries, most mosques are supported by "waqfs" or inalienable charitable endowments. The waqf system, which was built over many centuries, has protected faith-based institutions through times of war, famine, and yes, even pandemic.

Combined with sound financial management and

investments, these endowments can ensure that mosques can weather any storm, and continue to provide the support that Muslims and people of all faiths and none receive from these places of worship. This is not a model limited to Muslim-majority countries: similar to the waqf model, the Church of England is sitting on a combination of ancient endowments and investments worth £8.3bn, making it the UK's biggest charity (its income is more than three times that of Oxfam's). British Muslim communities have just not had the relative time to develop these strong financial safety nets. We need to develop similar systems to protect mosques in Europe and North America. But until then, charities, organizations and individuals who have the necessary financial means should do everything they can to help these essential places of worship, support and solidarity.

Since the beginning of this pandemic, mosques have been on the front line of the fight against COVID-19, encouraging social distancing, distributing key health information, and offering support to people from all backgrounds and faiths. Just as they have stood by our society at its darkest hour, we must do the same for them.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/coronavirus-bailing-mosques-essential-200505124520195.html>



VE Day: What is it, when is it and why do we remember?



How was VE Day celebrated?

By the beginning of 1945, the German army had been weakened and defeat looked likely. Tuesday 8 May, 1945, was an emotional day that millions of people had been waiting for. Many people were extremely happy that the fighting had stopped and there were big celebrations and street parties.

Huge crowds - with lots of people dressed in red, white and blue - gathered outside Buckingham Palace in London. They cheered as King George VI and his family, including Princess Elizabeth (the current queen) and Princess Margaret, came out onto the balcony to greet everybody. Princess Elizabeth and her sister were allowed to leave the palace and celebrate with crowds outside, although they had to do it secretly. The future Queen described it as "one of the most memorable nights of my life". Many people also attended church services to thank God for the victory. London's St Paul's Cathedral held 10 services, which were attended by thousands of people. But VE Day was also a moment of great sadness and reflection, as millions of people had lost their lives or loved ones in the conflict.

Many had to continue fighting in other battles and lots of people were being kept as prisoners of war abroad. Even though VE Day marked victory for Europe over Germany, it did not mark the end of

World War Two. In his VE Day announcement, Winston Churchill said: "We may allow ourselves a brief period of rejoicing, but let us not forget for a moment the toil and efforts that lie ahead."

Even after 8 May, many soldiers, sailors and pilots were sent to the east to fight against the Japanese, who had not yet surrendered. This came on 14 August 1945, after two atomic bombs were dropped on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima (6 August) and Nagasaki (9 August). On 15 August 1945, the allies had officially defeated Japan. This date is known as VJ Day. World War Two was finally over.

Did you know?

2 September is also known as VJ Day, as this is the day in 1945 when Japanese leaders signed a document to officially surrender.

What happened after World War Two?

While the war was over, it was not the end of hardship. Millions of people had lost loved ones and their lives had been turned upside down by the fighting. The nation had to rebuild as the war had been so expensive. Clothing and food rationing remained in place.

[https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/48201749?xtor=CS8-1000-\[Discovery_Cards\]-\[Multi_Site\]-\[SL02\]-\[PS_CBBC~C~~P_WhatisVEDay](https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/48201749?xtor=CS8-1000-[Discovery_Cards]-[Multi_Site]-[SL02]-[PS_CBBC~C~~P_WhatisVEDay)



One billion people will live in insufferable heat within 50 years

The human cost of the climate-crisis will hit harder, wider and sooner than previously believed, according to a study that shows a billion people will either be displaced or forced to endure insufferable heat for every additional 1C rise in the global temperature.

In a worst-case scenario of accelerating emissions, areas currently home to a third of the world's population will be as hot as the hottest parts of the Sahara within 50 years, the paper warns. Even in the most optimistic outlook, 1.2 billion people will fall outside the comfortable "climate niche" in which humans have thrived for at least 6,000 years.

The authors of the study said they were "floored" and "blown away" by the findings because they had not expected our species to be so vulnerable.

"The numbers are flabbergasting. I literally did a double take when I first saw them," Tim Lenton, of Exeter University, said. "I've previously studied climate tipping points, which are usually considered apocalyptic. But this hit home harder. This puts the threat in very human terms."

Instead of looking at climate change as a problem of physics or economics, the paper, published in

the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, examines how it affects the human habitat.

The vast majority of humanity has always lived in regions where the average annual temperatures are around 6C (43F) to 28C (82F), which is ideal for human health and food production. But this sweet spot is shifting and shrinking as a result of manmade global heating, which drops more people into what the authors describe as "near unliveable" extremes.

Humanity is particularly sensitive because we are concentrated on land – which is warming faster than the oceans – and because most future population growth will be in already hot regions of Africa and Asia. As a result of these demographic factors, the average human will experience a temperature increase of 7.5C when global temperatures reach 3C, which is forecast towards the end of this century.

At that level, about 30% of the world's population would live in extreme heat – defined as an average temperature of 29C (84F). These conditions are extremely rare outside the most scorched parts of



the Sahara, but with global heating of 3C they are projected to envelop 1.2 billion people in India, 485 million in Nigeria and more than 100 million in each of Pakistan, Indonesia and Sudan.

This would add enormously to migration pressures and pose challenges to food production systems.

“I think it is fair to say that average temperatures over 29C are unliveable. You’d have to move or adapt. But there are limits to adaptation. If you have enough money and energy, you can use air conditioning and fly in food and then you might be OK. But that is not the case for most people,” said one of the lead authors of the study, Prof Marten Scheffer of Wageningen University.

An ecologist by training, Scheffer said the study started as a thought-experiment. He had previously studied the climate distribution of rainforests and savanna and wondered what the result would be if he applied the same methodology to humans. “We know that most creatures’ habitats are limited by temperature. For example, penguins are only found in cold water and corals only in warm water. But we did not expect humans to be so sensitive. We think of ourselves as very adaptable because we use clothes, heating and air conditioning. But, in fact, the vast majority of people live – and have always lived – inside a climate niche that is now moving as never before.”

We were blown away by the magnitude,” he said. “There will be more change in the next 50 years than in the past 6,000 years.”

The authors said their findings should spur policymakers to accelerate emission cuts and work together to cope with migration because each degree of warming that can be avoided will save a billion people from falling out of humanity’s climate niche.

“Clearly we will need a global approach to safeguard our children against the potentially enormous social tensions the projected change could invoke,” another of the authors, Xu Chi of Nanjing University, said.

We’ve got an announcement ...

... on our progress as an organisation. In service of the escalating climate emergency, we have made an important decision – to renounce fossil fuel advertising, becoming the first major global news organisation to institute an outright ban on taking money from companies that extract fossil fuels.

In October we outlined our pledge: that the Guardian will give global heating, wildlife extinction and pollution the urgent attention and prominence they demand. This resonated with so many readers around the world. We promise to update you on the steps we take to hold ourselves accountable at this defining point in our lifetimes. With climate misinformation rife, and never more dangerous than now, the Guardian’s accurate, authoritative reporting is vital – and we will not stay quiet.

You’ve read 8 articles in the last six months. We chose a different approach: to keep Guardian journalism open for all. We don’t have a paywall because we believe everyone deserves access to factual information, regardless of where they live or what they can afford to pay.

Our editorial independence means we are free to investigate and challenge inaction by those in power. We will inform our readers about threats to the environment based on scientific facts, not driven by commercial or political interests. And we have made several important changes to our style guide to ensure the language we use accurately reflects the environmental emergency.

The Guardian believes that the problems we face on the climate crisis are systemic and that fundamental societal change is needed. We will keep reporting on the efforts of individuals and communities around the world who are fearlessly taking a stand for future generations and the preservation of human life on earth. We want their stories to inspire hope.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/may/05/one-billion-people-will-live-in-insufferable-heat-within-50-years-study>



NYC Muslims struggle to hold traditional burials

With bodies piling up at hospitals and morgues, and funeral homes turning families away due to a lack of capacity, New York City has been stretched to its limits by the COVID-19 pandemic. The crisis has touched thousands of grieving families, virtually all of which have been forced to navigate chaos after their loved one's death from the deadly respiratory virus. The funeral process can be even more complicated for Muslim New Yorkers, who make up about three percent of the population across the city's five boroughs, because a series of religious practices guides the burials. "It's overwhelming - just the amount of illness, the amount of deaths," said Imam Khalid Latif, executive director of the Islamic Center at New York University (NYU), about the general feeling in the city. He said that early on, it became clear that "funerals and things happening at end of life were likely really difficult for a lot of people" in the Muslim community. "A lot of people [were] reaching out saying, 'We just can't connect to anybody, and the places we are connecting to, they're telling us it's going to be days before anything can actually happen'."

Rising costs

Latif said families have also raised concerns about the cost of burials. An Islamic funeral service in New York City would typically cost around \$2,000, including a plot of land for burial, Latif said, but these days, some members of the Muslim community said they were being charged around \$10,000. "In Islam, the funeral rites are considered a communal obligation," he told Al Jazeera. "Here, we have a responsibility to ensure that people who can't afford it are still able to have it done." Latif helped set up an online fundraiser that collected nearly \$195,000 this month to support Muslim Funeral Services of New York, a Brooklyn-based group also known as the Janazah Project. The money will be dispensed to funeral homes to bolster their services - including the purchase of vehicles and refrigerated trucks to transport and



A Muslim woman kneels for midday prayers in a nearly empty Times Square in Manhattan during the outbreak of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in New York City, New York [Mike Segar/Reuters]

store bodies when hospitals are over-capacity, and personal protective equipment for workers. Latif said financial strain should not be a reason people do not get a chance to properly remember their loved ones, so needy families will also directly receive some of the money to cover funeral costs. "To me, that's a really unfortunate reason as to why someone who is already in a lot of emotional strife will have added anxiety that doesn't allow for them to grieve," he said.

Shifting practices

Financial concerns are especially prevalent among people employed in public-facing industries - such as taxi or Uber drivers, restaurant staff, or construction workers - who have taken a hit during the pandemic. Muslim New Yorkers make up a high percentage of those workers in the city, said Ahmed Mohamed, litigation director at the Council on American-Islamic Relations New York chapter (CAIR-NY). "Especially for immigrant communities, telework, work from home, is not a possibility. Having to be confined to your home means you don't have a job and you don't have a paycheck," Mohamed said.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/04/coronavirus-nyc-muslims-struggle-hold-traditional-burials-200414163419702.html>



Pakistani doctor indicted in Minnesota on terrorism charge

A Pakistani doctor and former Mayo Clinic research coordinator has been indicted on one count of attempting to provide material support to a foreign terrorist organization



Dr Masood 28 - research coordinator at Mayo clinic indicted in Minneapolis

MINNEAPOLIS -- A Pakistani doctor and former Mayo Clinic researcher has been indicted on one count of attempting to provide material support to a foreign terrorist organization after authorities say he told paid FBI informants that he pledged allegiance to the Islamic State group and wanted to carry out lone wolf attacks in the U.S.

The indictment against Muhammad Masood, 28, was announced May 8 by U.S. Attorney Erica MacDonald. Masood was initially charged by criminal complaint and has been in custody since his March 19 arrest at the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport.

Prosecutors say Masood was in the U.S. on a work visa H-1B. They allege in court documents that from January to March, Masood made several statements to paid informants — whom he believed were members of the Islamic State group — pledging his allegiance to the group and its leader. He also expressed a desire to travel to Syria to fight for IS and carry out lone wolf attacks in the U.S., they said.

Masood messaged an informant “there is so much I wanted to do here .. lone wulf stuff you know ... but I realized I should be on the ground helping brothers sisters kids,” according to an FBI affidavit.

Prosecutors say Masood planned to leave for Amman, Jordan, and go on to Syria at the end of March, but on March 16 he had to change his travel

plans because Jordan closed its borders due to the coronavirus pandemic. Masood and one of the informants then developed a plan for him to fly from Minneapolis to Los Angeles to meet with that informant, whom Masood believed would help him travel in a cargo ship into Islamic State territory.

Masood’s attorney didn’t immediately return messages left Friday. Court documents do not name the clinic where Masood worked. The Mayo Clinic has confirmed that Masood formerly worked at the medical center, but said he was not employed there when he was arrested. According to an affidavit supporting the criminal complaint, Masood said in February that he was going to notify his employer that his last day of work would be March 17.

The affidavit said the FBI began investigating in January, after learning that someone, later determined to be Masood, had posted messages on an encrypted social media platform indicating an intent to support IS.

On Jan. 24, Masood contacted one of the informants on the encrypted platform and said he was a medical doctor with a Pakistani passport and wanted to travel to Syria, Iraq or northern Iran near Afghanistan “to fight on the front line as well as help the wounded brothers,” the affidavit said.

Roughly three dozen Minnesotans — mostly men from the state’s large Somali community — have left since 2007 to join al-Shabab in Somalia or militant groups in Syria, including the Islamic State group. Several others have been convicted on terrorism-related charges for plotting to join or provide support to those groups.

<https://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/pakistani-doctor-indicted-minnesota-terrorism-charge-70713607>



Pakistani-American woman sentenced to 13 years by US court for funding ISIS



NEW YORK: A Pakistani-American woman -- Zoobia Shahnaz -- has been sentenced to 13 years of imprisonment by a United States' Federal Court for providing material support to terror fronts of Islamic States in Pakistan, China and Turkey.

The verdict was pronounced by District Judge Joanna Seybert on Wednesday. Zoobia Shahnaz had pleaded guilty in November 2018 for providing material support to a foreign terrorist organisation, specifically more than USD 150,000 to the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS), and attempting to travel to Syria to join ISIS.

"As set forth in court filings and facts presented at the sentencing hearing, between March 2017 and July 2017, Shahnaz defrauded numerous financial institutions to obtain money for the ISIS, including a loan for approximately USD 22,500," reads a statement by US Department of Justice.

Shahnaz also fraudulently obtained more than a dozen credit cards and used them to purchase approximately USD 62,000 in Bitcoin and other

cryptocurrencies online. Shahnaz then made multiple wire transfers totaling more than USD 150,000 to individuals and entities in Pakistan, China and Turkey that were fronts for ISIS," added the statement.

On July 31, 2017, Shahnaz was arrested at John F Kennedy International Airport in Queens, New York, while attempting to board a flight with a layover in Istanbul, Turkey -- a common point of entry for individuals travelling from western countries to join ISIS in Syria.

Shahnaz had accessed ISIS violent jihad-related websites and message boards, and social media and messaging pages of known ISIS recruiters, facilitators and financiers. She also performed numerous internet searches for information that would facilitate her entry into Syria. <https://www.newindianexpress.com/world/2020/may/15/pakistani-american-woman-sentenced-to-13-years-by-us-court-for-funding-isis-2143778.html>



Pakistan's first Sikh woman journalist among top 100



Pakistan's first Sikh woman journalist has been named among 100 most influential Sikh personalities under 30 years of age in the world by a UK-based global Sikh organisation. Manjeet Kaur, 25, has been selected for

the award by The Sikh Group' a global organization recognizing people of Sikh faith around the world. She will receive her award next year at a ceremony in Britain. A resident of Peshawar, Kaur is also a social activist, who has received awards in Pakistan for highlighting issues faced by minorities and women. She expressed happiness that her name was included in the category of influential Sikh personalities around the world. Those who work hard will reap the rewards and it is a great honor for my family to visit the UK and represent Pakistan". She was quoted as saying, PTI.

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/world/pakistans-first-sikh-woman-journalist-among-top-100-influential-sikhs-under-30-85678>



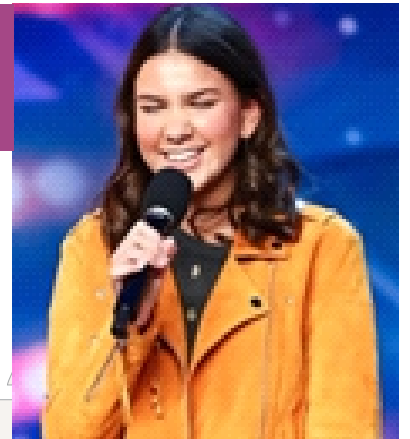
Inspirational story of blind British Pakistani girl who's stormed to Britain's Got Talent

LONDON: A 14-year-old British Pakistani girl who lost sight at the age of 10 has become a huge sensation in ITV's famous hit show - Britain's Got Talent – hoping to make it to the final of the popular show. Sirine Jahangir, 14, will appear on Britain's Got Talent on Saturday night and attempt to wow the judges with her unique vocals. Sirine Jahangir, who is the only contestant of Pakistani origin on the hit show, is the granddaughter of Sahibzada Jahangir, who presently serves as Prime Minister Imran Khan's spokesperson on Trade & Investment in UK & Europe. Fauzia Kasuri is Sirine's aunt and the late pop and nasheed singer Junaaid Jamshed was her uncle. Before losing her eyesight, Sirine's parents ensured they exposed her to as much beauty as possible. They took her around the globe to different specialists in an attempt to save her sight but were sadly unable to do so. Sirine's parents Kafeel, 48, and Ghizlane, 40, who live in north London with her and sons Zayn, 13, Aydin, six, are proud of her strength. Her father described the heartbreaking moment he realized her sight was gone. Sirine has become an instant hit after outperforming her rivals through her amazing music performances – and winning approval from judges Simon Cowell, Alesha Dixon, Amanda Holden and David Walliams. Sirine was born in 2005 in London. Until the age of five, she excelled in everything including sports, with dancing being her favourite pastime. Her family discovered when Sirine was five years old that she had lost her vision totally in one eye and although the other eye was perfect, there was a danger it may deteriorate. Over time, the worst fears of the family were realized as Sirine lost vision slowly in her remaining good eye until the age of 10 when she lost it all. A family friend told The News and Geo that those 5 years were very traumatic for Sirine as she could not do many things and slowly she learnt Braille and started to read books again. Her parents and family were supportive throughout this time and helped Sirine, who wanted to make it big in the world.

Her parents had to move to Mill Hill, in North London,

when she reached the age of 12, as there were no secondary schools in central London that could cater to her special needs. In her new school, Sirine had access to expertise that helped her learn other skills. It was around this time that she delved into music. She learnt how to play the piano by herself and started singing and writing music. Sirine has never looked back and her passion took her, after a gruelling process of selection, to Britain's Got Talent. On Saturday, she will appear in the audition stages of Britain's Got Talent on ITV. When contacted by The News and Geo, Sahibzada Jahangir confirmed that Sirine would be appearing before the celebrity panel. Kafeel Jahangir, Sirine's father, told The News and Geo that Sirine taught herself how to write, compose and play music. "We are all very proud of Sirine. Music is her passion and Britain will give her the right platform to share her music with others. She is very excited. She did the auditions by herself for BGT. One day she told me to come along with her. I went along and was shocked that she was performing before 3,000 people. She taught herself how to play music." Kafeel said that during his trips to the UK, the late Junaaid Jamshed used to sing with Sirine and teach her about music. Sirine uses music and her story to inspire other people with disabilities. Every Monday she goes to a school and teaches a young 6-year-old boy who has the same condition as her and she teaches him Braille and gives him confidence in seeing the future and believing he can do anything as well.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/659101-inspirational-story-of-blind-pakistani-girl-whos-stormed-to-britains-got-talent>



World carbon pollution falls 17pc during pandemic peak

KENSINGTON:

The world cut its daily carbon dioxide emissions by 17pc at the peak of the pandemic shutdown last month, a new study found. But with life and heat-trapping gas levels



inching back towards normal, the brief pollution break will likely be a drop in the ocean” when it comes to climate change, scientists said. In their study of carbon dioxide emissions during the coronavirus pandemic, an international team of scientists calculated that pollution levels are heading back up and for the year will end up between 4pc and 7pc lower than 2019 levels. That’s still the biggest annual drop in carbon emissions since World War II. It’ll be 7pc if the strictest lockdown rules remain all year long across much of the globe, 4pc if they are lifted soon. For a week in April, the United States cut its carbon dioxide levels by about one-third. China, the world’s biggest emitter of heat-trapping gases, sliced its carbon pollution by nearly a quarter in February, according to a study in the journal *Nature Climate Change*. India and Europe cut emissions by 26pc and 27pc respectively. The biggest global drop was from April 4 through 9 when the world was spewing 18.7 million tons (17 million metric tons) of carbon pollution a day less than it was doing on New Year’s Day. Such low global emission levels haven’t been recorded since 2006. But if the world returns to its slowly increasing pollution levels next year, the temporary reduction amounts to a drop in the ocean,” said study lead author Corinne LeQuere, a climate scientist at the University of East Anglia.

It’s like you have a bath filled with water and you’re

turning off the tap for 10 seconds,” she said. By April 30, the world carbon pollution levels had grown by 3.3 million tons (3 million metric tons) a day from its low point

earlier in the month. Carbon dioxide stays in the air for about a century. Outside experts praised the study as the most comprehensive yet, saying it shows how much effort is needed to prevent dangerous levels of further global warming. That underscores a simple truth: Individual behavior alone ... won’t get us there, Pennsylvania State University climate scientist Michael Mann, who wasn’t part of the study, said in an email. We need fundamental structural change. If the world could keep up annual emission cuts like this without a pandemic for a couple decades, there’s a decent chance Earth can avoid warming another 1.8 degrees (1 degree Celsius) of warming from now, study authors said. But getting the type of yearly cuts to reach that international goal is unlikely, they said. If next year returns to 2019 pollution levels, it means the world has only bought about a years delay in hitting the extra 1.8 degrees (1 degree Celsius) of warming that leaders are trying to avoid, LeQuere said. That level could still occur anywhere from 2050 to 2070, the authors said. The study was carried out by Global Carbon Project, a consortium of international scientists that produces the authoritative annual estimate of carbon dioxide emissions. They looked at 450 databases showing daily energy use and introduced a measurement scale for pandemic-related societal confinement in its estimates.

Published in Dawn, May 20th, 2020



Cyclone toll hits 95 as Bangladesh and India start mopping up



India and Bangladesh began a massive clean-up on Thursday after the fiercest cyclone since 1999 killed at least 95 people, leaving a trail of destruction in its wake. Cyclone Amphan flattened houses, uprooted trees, blew off roofs and toppled electricity pylons, while a storm surge inundated coastal villages and wrecked shrimp farms vital to the local economy. The United Nations office in Bangladesh estimates 10 million people were affected, and some 500,000 people may have lost their homes. But the death toll was far lower than the many thousands killed in previous cyclones — a result of improved weather forecasting and better response plans. The disaster has raised fears, however, that overcrowding in storm shelters will exacerbate the spread of coronavirus. India's West Bengal reported 72 deaths — including 15 in the capital Kolkata — with state premier Mamata Banerjee saying: "I haven't seen a disaster of this magnitude." "This is the worst cyclone to hit the state since the one in 1737 when thousands lost their lives," she told reporters. Banerjee earlier described the cyclone's impact as "worse than coronavirus". Twenty-three people have died in Bangladesh, according to the official death toll.

India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi will survey the damage in West Bengal and Odisha states on Friday, as well as take part in aid meetings. Modi tweeted earlier that "no stone will be left unturned in helping the affected". Improved weather forecasting meant Bangladesh was able to move some 2.4 million people into shelters or out of the storm's direct path, while India evacuated some 650,000. At least 10 million people were without power on Thursday afternoon in the worst-hit districts of Bangladesh, said rural electricity board chief Moin Uddin. The storm levelled more than 55,000 homes — most made of tin, mud and bamboo — across Bangladesh, junior disaster management minister Enamur Rahman told AFP. Kolkata residents woke to flooded streets, with part of the city's yellow taxi fleet up to their bonnets in water in one neighbourhood and many areas without power. "Each second seemed like an hour," bank manager Susanta De said of the storm. "There were only howling winds and sounds of shattering window panes. All of it was very scary and we thought the end was nearing." Bangladesh's Sundarbans forest chief Moyeen Uddin Khan told AFP the storm surge that smashed into the vast mangrove area —

which bore the brunt of the storm — was "not as high as was feared earlier". He said Amphan's impact on wildlife, especially the forest's endangered Bengal tigers, was not yet known.

Virus, cyclone double blow

The cyclone weakened as it moved north through Bangladesh but still unleashed heavy rain and fierce winds in Cox's Bazar, the district which houses about one million Rohingya refugees from Myanmar. The UN said the effect in the vast camps of flimsy shacks appeared to be "fairly minimal". The area most affected by Amphan, the first "super cyclone" to form over the Bay of Bengal since 1999, was the Satkhira district of southwest Bangladesh. There a storm surge — a wall of ocean water which is often one of the main killers in major weather systems — roared inland and destroyed embankments protecting villages and shrimp farms. "My home has gone under water. My shrimp farm is gone. I don't know how I am going to survive," Omar Faruq, 28, told AFP.

Jessore, the district next to Satkhira and which borders West Bengal, was also hard hit with at least 12 killed. "The coronavirus has already taken a toll on people. Now the cyclone has made them

paupers," said local councillor Bhabotosh Kumar Mondal. The last super cyclone in 1999 left nearly 10,000 dead in Odisha, eight years after a typhoon, tornadoes and flooding killed 139,000 in Bangladesh. This time, as during a cyclone in Odisha last year, the human cost was greatly lessened thanks to the evacuations, said Rahman.

"Only several people died. The majority of them ventured out to collect fallen mangoes during the storm," he told AFP. Natural disaster expert Nayeem Wahra, at the Disaster Forum think-tank, said the storm also lost some of its potency over the Bay of Bengal before it made landfall.

"The storm surge was not powerful or high enough to cause extensive damage to lives or properties," Wahra told AFP. "Bangladesh was largely spared." Packing people into shelters, however, raised the risk of coronavirus spreading, with cases still surging in India and Bangladesh.

Charity WaterAid also warned water sources could have been contaminated by the cyclone, making hand-washing and other hygiene practices to combat the spread of the coronavirus more difficult.



French language authorities rule disease terrorizing the world is a 'she

The Académie Française, the venerable 386-year-old gatekeeper of the French language, has ruled that covid-19 is feminine. Although the disease caused by the coronavirus has been widely referred to as "le covid-19" in the French media, the academy declared last Thursday that using the masculine article was incorrect. Instead, it should be "la covid-19" — the usage already favored by the World Health Organization and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. Assigning gender to a disease might seem arbitrary to English speakers. But under the academy's extensive and unyielding set of rules acronyms always take the gender of their "core word." The French refer to "le FBI" and "la CIA" because a bureau is

masculine in French, while an agency is feminine. By that same logic, covid-19 must be feminine because it's shorthand for "coronavirus disease," and disease in French translates to the feminine "la maladie." The virus itself is masculine — "le coronavirus" — because it takes its gender from the masculine "le virus." That led some French speakers to wrongly assume that the illness it causes would also be masculine, the academy said.

"The fact nevertheless remains that the use of the feminine would be preferable," the Académie Française wrote in a firm edict posted to its website last week. "Perhaps it is not too late to give this acronym back the gender it should have."



Use of charity to advance radical ideologies

By Sam Westhorm

The use of charity to advance radical ideologies is hardly a novel idea. European fascist movements built a base of support through charitable programs and promises of social welfare. The Ku Klux Klan delivered food and medicine to poor white communities. Hamas, the Muslim Brotherhood, Khomeinists, Wahhabis, ISIS and al-Qaeda have all made use of charities and welfare programs to propagate and consolidate their control over Muslim communities. Radical ideological movements do not only establish their own charitable groups; they also hijack the altruism and naïveté of others. In a widely discussed scandal in Britain, it emerged in 2014 that dozens of prominent charities had funded a jihadist support group for years, apparently under the impression they were merely backing a civil-rights campaign.

But not all charitable accomplices to radical causes are guileless, respectable organizations; some are fellow travelers, perfectly aware of their partners' extremism. One enormous charitable umbrella organization, InterAction, offers a compelling example. This taxpayer-funded, D.C.-based charity works to lobby Congress on behalf of dangerous, bigoted Islamist charities tied to extremism and terror, with the express purpose of shielding them from serious questioning and freeing them from restrictive terror-finance laws. InterAction does all this in the beliefs that it is fighting "disinformation" and "populist-nationalism." Founded in 1984, InterAction is the largest alliance of international NGOs in the world, comprising over 180 separate groups "working to eliminate extreme poverty, strengthen human rights and citizen participation, safeguard a sustainable planet, promote peace, and ensure

dignity for all people." As delightful as this sounds, federal agencies, foreign governments, journalists, and independent researchers have repeatedly found that a number of InterAction's member-bodies work towards a very different set of ideals. In fact, InterAction members include several radical Islamic charities tied directly to criminal or terrorist activity. For instance, LIFE for Relief and Development is a Michigan charity whose offices and officials' homes were raided by FBI agents in 2006. The investigation revealed that LIFE had been sending money to Saddam Hussein's Iraq, in an "egregious" violation of U.S. sanctions. A raid of LIFE founder Mujahid Al-Fayadh's home reportedly uncovered \$134,000 in cash and Iraqi military decorations. And LIFE's public-relations coordinator, Muthanna al-Hanooti, was later sentenced to a year in federal prison for his efforts to influence Congress on behalf of Saddam's Iraqi Intelligence Service. LIFE itself was fined \$780,000 in 2015 because it "knowingly and willfully formed a conspiracy for the purpose of transferring funds from the United States to Iraq." Other InterAction member bodies include the Zakat Foundation of America. This charity was founded by Halil Demir, a former official at the Benevolence International Foundation, an al-Qaeda charitable front designated in 2002 by the U.S. Treasury. According to Professor Ahmet S. Yayla, director of the Center for Homeland Security at DeSales University, the Zakat Foundation is today a key component of the brutal Turkish regime's network of proxy organizations across the United States. Nonetheless, InterAction works on behalf of these extremist groups and others. Most recently, the main conduit for InterAction's efforts



Together Project members assemble at the offices of the Zakat Foundation of America.

has been its Together Project, which was launched in 2017 to, in theory, "confront discrimination or targeted prejudicial regulations in the U.S. due to their operating principles or religious faith." In practice, the Together Project is a coalition of extremist-linked Islamist charities that work together under an InterAction banner. Their implicit goal, the Middle East Forum has concluded, is to stifle criticism of Islamist charitable fronts and undermine terrorism-finance laws. Astonishingly, this work is subsidized by the taxpayer. InterAction has received grants worth tens of millions of dollars over the last decade from the U.S. Agency for International Development and the State Department — \$5 million in January 2020 alone. The Together Project contains five core Islamist charities with documented links to extremist movements: Helping Hand for Relief and Development, Islamic relief, Zakat Foundation of America, American Relief agency for the Horn of Africa, and United Muslim relief.

InterAction has worked with these groups for the past three years to downplay examples of extremism and terror-finance links. In 2017, shortly after the Together Project was established, InterAction, along with its Together Project member bodies, was a leading force behind a letter sent by then-congressman Keith Ellison (now attorney general of Minnesota) to other legislators that attempted to minimize the extremist activities of Islamic Relief — an enormous charity headquartered in the U.K., established and run by prominent members of several Muslim Brotherhood branches. Ellison and his InterAction-led backers urged lawmakers to reject a bill that would have excluded the Islamist organization from receiving government monies.

And yet Islamic Relief has been designated as a terrorist organization by the United Arab Emirates and Israel. It has seen its bank accounts shut down by UBS and HSBC. The German government has determined that Islamic Relief has significant ties to the Muslim brotherhood, with a Swedish government report reading similar conclusions. Both British and Italian officials have investigated Islamic Relief's habit of hosting radical preachers. And the Egyptian and Tunisian governments have accused Islamic Relief of financing jihadists.

In Gaza, Islamic Relief openly works with proxy organizations for the terrorist group Hamas. In the U.S, the Islamic Relief branch is run by senior Islamist operatives who openly identify as supporters of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood.

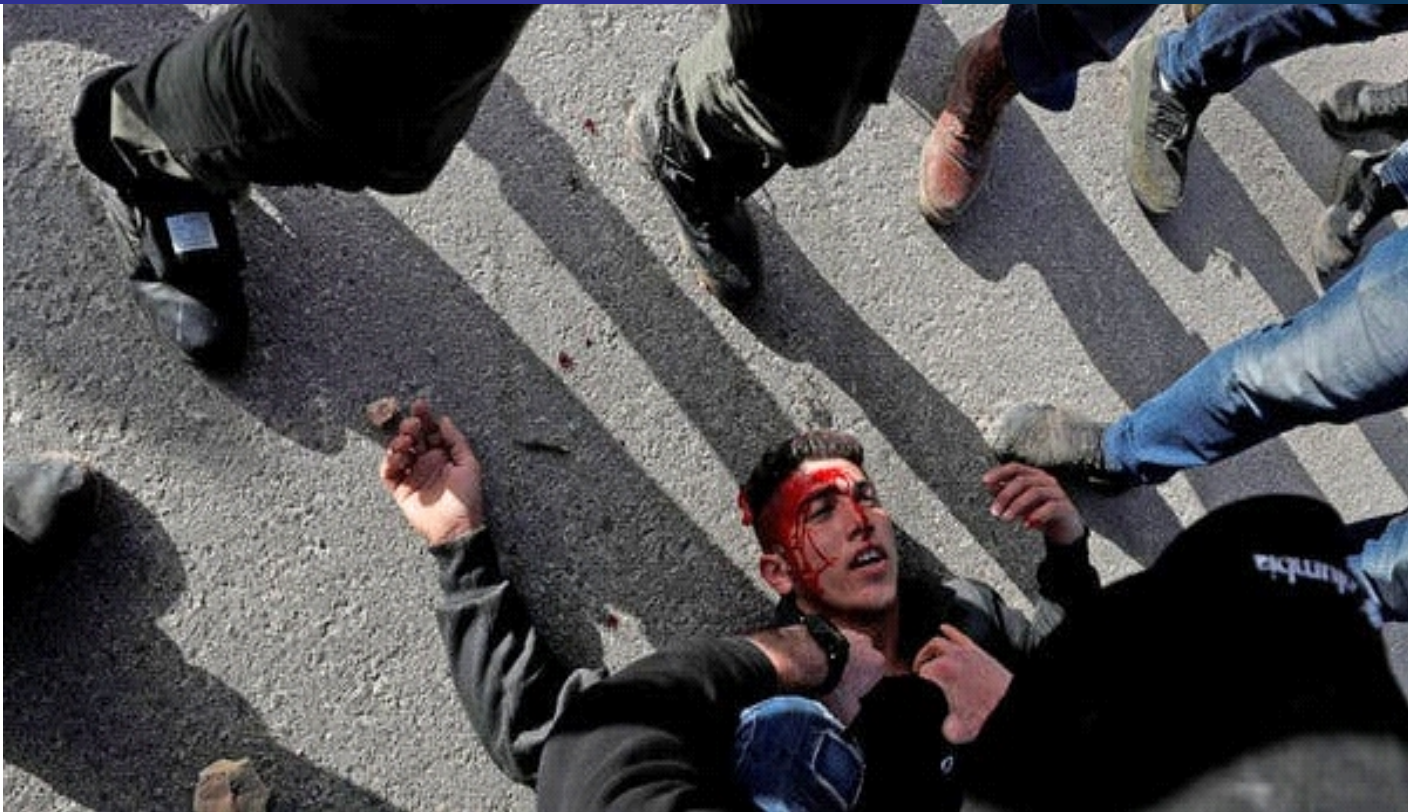
One official, Yousef Abdallah, left the organization after his virulent anti-Semitism became the subject of an international media scandal. Most recently, on May 3, Islamic Relief USA ran an event with Omar Abdelkafi, a hardline Egyptian preacher who has spoken of the "filth of Jews" and urged God to "slay them one by one and spare not one of them." InterAction's Together Project makes no secret of the tactics it employs in defense of these extremist charities and their hateful practices. In response to a proposed congressional amendment to bar funding to Islamic Relief, InterAction called on its "informal support network" to "flood congressional offices" with messages. Together Project manager Princess Bazley-Bethea advised nonprofits to counter with "strong human stories" and avoid focusing "too much on challenging allegations." A wise tactic, especially when such allegations are irrefutably accurate. InterAction openly and unashamedly runs interference for the terror links and racism of its Islamist partners. It even discourages its members from voicing discontent: Bazley-Bethea has urged member charities not to question the actions of their fellow charities, insisting that they "compromise or defer to a partner's judgment in decision-making to move towards the greater common goal." It is not just counter-terror legislation that InterAction fears, but any criticism concerning its members. InterAction notes that "one organization . . . had to spend over US\$100,000 in one year to improve search engine optimization results for its name and leaders." This expenditure was seemingly in response to a comprehensively sourced and detailed Middle East Forum report on Islamic Relief's extremism that was discussed by lawmakers and experts at a congressional hearing and has been cited by journalists, academics, and various experts ever since. Islamic Relief is far from the only Islamist charity to benefit from InterAction's unquestioning, taxpayer-subsidized defense of these extremists. At the end of 2019, InterAction officials, accompanied by representatives of its Islamist charities, met with congressional staff on behalf of Helping Hand for Relief and Development (HHRD), one of its core member charities and a branch of the violent South Asian Islamist movement Jamaat-e-Islami.

<https://www.meforum.org/islamist-watch/60910/terror-charity-lobbyists-are-subsidized-by-us>



Annexing the West Bank Would Hurt Israel

By Daniel Pipes, NYTimes



wounded Palestinian demonstrator being helped during a protest against Israeli settlements, near the town of Beita in the Israeli-occupied West Bank on March 11. Credit...Mohamad Torokman/Reuters

Thanks to the Trump administration's "Peace to Prosperity" plan, the topic of Israel annexing parts of the West Bank has moved from the fringe to the center of Israeli politics. The apparent noninvolvement of the United States State Department in the issue has prompted Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to state his confidence that annexation will happen within "a few months," or before the American presidential election in November.

I am not someone who frets over the Israeli "occupation" of the West Bank: in my view, the Palestinians long ago would have enjoyed self-rule had they stopped murdering Israelis. I ignore the Clinton Parameters, the former American president's compromise formula to resolve the Palestinian-Israeli conflict two decades ago. Contrarily, I do encourage Israeli steps that signal the Palestinians that the conflict is over, and they lost. Despite these views, I strongly oppose Israel

annexing any of the West Bank, and I do so for six main reasons.

First, President Trump could well erupt in fury at Israel for unilaterally taking that step. While the Trump plan permits Israelis to annex about 30 percent of the West Bank, it does so, the State Department reminds them, "in the context of the Government of Israel agreeing to negotiate with the Palestinians." Should Israelis charge ahead with the part they like and ignore the rest, they invite Mr. Trump's monumental displeasure.

Second, annexation would alienate and weaken Israel's diminishing number of friends in the Democratic Party and in Europe. Representative of this, the Democratic Majority for Israel did not mince words about annexation: "We cannot overstate the long-term damage such a move would have on the U.S.-Israel alliance. The repercussions would be extremely serious and long-lasting." Senior advisers to Joe Biden

conveyed the same message, as did a group of 30 Democratic Party foreign policy heavyweights, if less bluntly. Simultaneously alienating both Mr. Trump and the Democrats requires real skill. In addition, major European states condemned the prospect of annexation and hinted at reprisals. Ha'aretz quoted the French ambassador to the United Nations, Nicolas de la Rivière, as saying annexation "would not pass unchallenged and shall not be over looked in our relationship with Israel" That could mean recognizing a State of Palestine.

Third, as the threat from Iran has grown in recent years, the Israeli government has successfully managed to expand ties with the Sunni Arab states, especially those bordering the Persian Gulf. This working relationship has been premised on the Arab governments de-emphasizing the Palestinian issue; nothing is more certain to make that issue come roaring back to life than the provocation of a unilateral Israeli annexation. Years of hard work, led by Mr. Netanyahu himself, could quickly blow up.

Fourth, annexation would most likely lead to Palestinian fury that could well destabilize Jordan, the West Bank and Gaza. Jordan's Palestinian population has quieted down from the revolutionary fervor of old, but annexation could incite it again and gratuitously challenge the monarchy. Residents of the West Bank could start a new intifada — uprising — costing Israeli lives and harming its international standing. Emboldened, Gaza's Hamas rulers might start a new round of war.

Fifth, annexation is sure to alienate Israel's Left, which would lead at a minimum to a vicious political battle and probably to a contingent of Israeli Zionists turning anti-Zionist, with some Israelis leaving the country in disgust.

Sixth, annexation would be likely to make more Palestinians eligible to become citizens of Israel. That would be a profound mistake, since its Arab citizens constitute what I believe is the ultimate enemy of Israel's status as a Jewish state, the one that will still be standing after the threats posed

by Iran and Gaza have been dealt with. Citizens of Israel, unlike external enemies, cannot be defeated. Their allegiance must be won over, and the larger their number, the harder that becomes.

In short, annexation of the West Bank would probably damage Israel's relations with the Trump administration, the Democrats, Europeans and Arab leaders, as well as destabilize the region, radicalize the Israeli Left, and harm the Zionist goal of a Jewish state.

And what does annexation actually achieve? It is a symbolic move, a gesture toward Israelis living on the West Bank in legal limbo. But annexation does not extricate them from that limbo, since it is likely that no important government in the world would recognize their change in legal status.

The conclusion is simple: Don't toy with Mr. Trump's temper, don't infuriate Democrats and Europeans, don't alienate Arab leaders, don't inflame Palestinians, don't radicalize the Israeli Left, and don't add Palestinian citizens to Israel.

Israel must assert itself against the Palestinians; but that assertion must be strategic, fitting into the larger campaign to compel Palestinians to give up their goal of eliminating the Jewish state. Annexing the West Bank is a self-indulgence that has the opposite result. Therefore, despite its intention, it buoys the Palestinian cause and renders a resolution of the conflict more distant.

Accordingly, friends of Israel must loudly and clearly say "No" to West Bank annexation.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/07/opinion/contributors/annexing-west-bank-israel-palestinians.html?action=click&module=Opinion&pgtype=Homepage>



Family of ex-Saudi intelligence officer being targeted: Report

Authorities arrested Saad al-Jabri's relatives to force him to return to kingdom from Canada, son tells New York Times.

The son of a powerful former Saudi intelligence officer living abroad says members of the family are being targeted back home in a bid by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (MBS) to force his father to return to the kingdom. Saad al-Jabri, for years one of Saudi Arabia's leading intelligence officials, has been fearing for his life since moving to Canada in 2017 and has been resisting pressure from MBS to go back to the kingdom, according to a New York Times report on Thursday citing his son, Khalid al-Jabri, and associates. Khalid told the newspaper that his brother, sister and uncle have been arrested by Saudi security forces and held incommunicado since March. "It has been weeks and we don't know where they are," he was quoted as saying. "They were kidnapped from their beds. I don't even know if they are alive or dead."

There was no comment by Saudi Arabia.

Power struggle

An expert in artificial intelligence, Saad held a number of top positions in Saudi Arabia and played a key role in its fight against al-Qaeda and security coordination with its ally, the United States. His son and former US officials who worked with him say MBS wants to force al-Jabri to return to the kingdom as he fears anyone outside of his control who has access to secret information, the Times reported. Gerald Feierstein, senior vice president at the Middle East Institute in Washington, DC who dealt with al-Jabri while serving as the US ambassador to Yemen, told the newspaper that al-Jabri was acquainted with so many sensitive issues that he would know "where the bodies are buried", and possibly unflattering information about MBS.

Al-Jabri's intelligence career came to an end following the power struggle between MBS and Prince Mohammed bin Nayef (MBN), the former crown prince. He was out of the kingdom in 2017



According to the New York Times, Saad al-Jabri has been fearing for his life since moving to Canada in 2017 and has been resisting pressure from Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to return to the kingdom [Charles Platiau/Reuters]

when MBN was replaced as heir to the throne when King Salman elevated his son, MBS, to the role and gave him wide authority to become the kingdom's de facto ruler. MBN was put under house arrest at the time, according to reports. He was arrested in March this year, reportedly because he was complaining privately about how MBS was

running Saudi Arabia. Al-Jabri, seen as a very close ally of MBN, decided to not settle in the US despite his deep ties there because he was concerned that the administration of President Donald Trump would send him back to Saudi Arabia if MBS requested it, a person briefed on the case told the Times. The newspaper said when al-Jabri left Saudi Arabia, authorities began placing restrictions on two of his children who remained in the country - Sarah, 20, and Omar, 21.

They had planned to study in the US but within hours of MBS's rise to crown prince, they discovered that they were barred from leaving the kingdom, according to Khalid al-Jabri. Their bank accounts were frozen and they were summoned for questioning and told to encourage their father to come home, he said. Security forces took them from their beds in their home in the capital, Riyadh, at dawn on March 16, and the family is

growing increasingly worried as they have not heard from them since. Last week, authorities also arrested al-Jabri's brother, Abdulrahman al-Jabri, a US-educated electrical engineering.

Lobbying for release

Saudi Arabia's human rights record has come under intense scrutiny following the murder of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi at the kingdom's consulate in Istanbul in October 2018.

The CIA and others reportedly believe MBS ordered the killing of Khashoggi, who wrote opinion columns critical of the crown prince in The Washington Post. Saudi Arabia denies any involvement by MBS in the case. Khashoggi's killing has changed the situation for those who once felt safe abroad, and the al-Jabri family has now hired a Washington-based lobbying firm to

press for the release of the detained relatives.

Gulf Affairs analyst Sigurd Neubauer told Al Jazeera the detentions are tarnishing Saudi Arabia's international reputation, however, any release expected from lobbying depends on the upcoming US presidential election. "The long game is tied to the US presidential election. In the event Joe Biden wins, I think that we can see a whole sale of releases of high profile Saudi dissidents and members of the royal family," Neubauer said. "President Trump has personalised his relationship with Crown Prince Mohammed, and it is unlikely that any sort of lobbying will sway him in the immediate to long term. But these developments are unfortunately only adding to the already severely damaged reputation that Saudi has in the US."



For First-Ever Virtual Ramadan, American Muslims Are Creating Mini-Mosques At Home

USA- On April 24, the world's 1.8 billion Muslims welcomed their most important holiday with the appearance of the new moon. Usually, they would spend 30 days fasting, studying the Quran and enjoying celebratory "iftars," evening meals with tables full of food and homes full of family and friends. This year, none of that is happening in the usual ways. The novel coronavirus and COVID-19 have shuttered most mosques. Instead, Muslims are adapting their 1,500-year-old traditions and finding some unexpected benefits along the way. "This doesn't replace the mosque in our hearts, but it is what it is," said Amr Elfass, project manager for The Islamic Society of Boston Cultural Center, New England's largest mosque. Ramadan celebrates the revelation of the Quran, the Islamic holy book, to the Prophet Muhammad in 610 A.D. It is one of the "five pillars of Islam," the basic obligations all Muslims must complete. It is a mosque-oriented holiday, with nightly Quranic recitation and commentary, special prayers and the performance of service for

others. Prayer rugs in another home in Boston. Photo courtesy of Amir Elfass. Elfass said many families who would normally celebrate at the Roxbury mosque have brought the arched and bricked mosque into their homes — a twist on the proverbial "If Muhammad can't come to the mountain, the mountain must come to Muhammad." "Our families are decorating their homes for the flavor of Ramadan," he said, sharing pictures of living rooms strung with tiny lights, banners and crescent moons. "They are putting prayer rugs towards Mecca" — the direction to which Muslims must pray — "and are putting a Quran there. It is like a mini mosque at home and that is where they are praying together." Ramadan, with its swirl of fasting, family and prayers, does not usually allow for so much slowing down, he said. "There is a great beauty in the stuff we are living right now, in the self-reflection and the slowing the pace," Elfass said. "You can connect to God rather than just doing rituals we normally do."

In Chicago, Dilnaz Waraich usually spends Ramadan evenings breaking the fast with friends and praying until midnight at the Muslim Community Center, a mosque in the Morton Grove neighborhood. This year, confinement is bringing a new connection. "There would be all of these men and women leaving the mosque at midnight and we would have this feverish energy," she said. "So where in the past I would try to build that community physically, now I am trying to build a community between the Quran and myself." Another opportunity came in the return of her two sons when their colleges closed. Both would have spent Ramadan on campus, but instead are joining their parents for one more Ramadan all under the same roof. "The other day we got up at 3:55 a.m. and made eggs and bagels" for the "suhur" meal before the day's long fast. "We prayed together and we had a conversation about our day. I think before my husband and I had gotten very comfortable being on our own and this was wonderful." The Muslim Community Center in Chicago features a Ramadan animation on the homepage of their website. Omar Ricci also finds a locked down Ramadan in has its appeal. Alone most of the week in Glendale, Calif. while his wife and child care for a relative, he makes use of the time he used to commute. "I am taking that moment and just becoming a student of faith, a student of the Quran, and engage my faith on a much more quiet and deeper level," he said. "Having that solitude is, as in any faith, critical to have faith touch your soul. Ramadan is definitely different this year in that regard." Gift baskets and an indoor tent for kids in a Boston-area home. Photo courtesy of Amir Elfass. Khalid Latif is the executive director of The Islamic Center at New York University, where Ramadan is usually the busiest time of year among the center's 3,000 Muslim students, with nightly iftars, daily Quran recitations, prayers, lectures and more. Much of that programming has moved online for the duration of the pandemic — and that has brought in new visitors and opened new vistas.

"Someone said the other day that this virtual mode allows us to experience other mosque

communities they have never been able to go to before," Latif said. "Going to a mosque right now is closing one live stream and going to another."

Another pandemic plus is the spotlight it has put on what is necessary to live and what is not, and on the growing divisions of class and race. "The consumer society we live in tells us our happiness is contingent on buying what they sell, but a lot of people are realizing that is not true," he said. "And while there will be pressure on us to buy again, there has been an increase in our consciousness that our choices impact how others are able to live. I am hoping people will wake up to see the inequality in a way they have not before."

there has been an increase in our consciousness that our choices impact how others are able to live. I am hoping people will wake up to see the inequality in a way they have not before." In Sugar Land, Texas, a Houston suburb, 26-year-old Zain Khan said not being able to attend the palatial Maryam Islamic Center "totally sucks." But skipping the iftars, the hanging out with friends has allowed him to laser focus on serving others — a requirement of Ramadan.

"The advantage is right there — we won't have the distractions out in the world," he said. "So I can focus on making myself a better human being, a better Muslim." One way he is doing that is by organizing an interfaith blood drive for Muslims, Christians, Jews and others in the broader Houston area. Muslims, because they are fasting, cannot give blood, but they can greet, organize and otherwise work behind the scenes. "I feel entrapment because I can't go out, but I can encourage people to come to the blood drive and we can face this together." Kimberly Winston is a freelance religion reporter whose work has appeared in The Washington Post, The Los Angeles Times, USA Today and more. She is the recipient of the Religion News Association's 2018 award for best religion reporting at large news outlets.

<https://religionunplugged.com/news/2020/4/30/for-first-ever-virtual-ramadan-american-muslims-are-bringing-mosques-into-their-homes> ❀❀❀

From Iran to the US: Songs in times of war and coronavirus



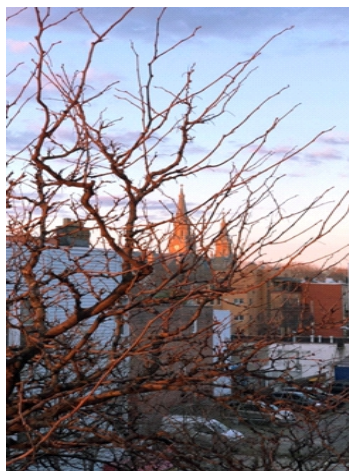
From 1980s Tehran to 2020 New York, a writer reflects on the power of music and togetherness in times of crisis.

by Sara Goudarzi



♦ I stand behind the French glass doors to the Juliet balcony of our New York apartment. Outside, the low sun signals its impending shift to another part of the globe and three storeys below a couple walks on the street holding disposable coffee cups, as though it is a normal day.

♦ In many ways it is a day like any other: the structures in our Brooklyn neighbourhood are intact, workers in orange vests and hard hats are cutting up the pavement to lay new cables, and there are hints of green buds on a tree whose dark branches have become our seasonal entertainment.



The view from the writer's Brooklyn apartment [Sara Goudarzi/Al Jazeera]

♦ "Look, look, a dove," I say to my husband Anthony, who is working at his desk in the living room. I know how much he likes mourning doves. As far as birds go, I am impartial to their muted brown and grey palette, but their visit

is yet another sign of routine, of birds being birds. And these days, we are all looking for the ordinary.

Anthony looks up and out to the railing, smiles and goes back to work. The dove takes wing and disappears but I stay upright behind the glass, yearning for more signs of normal. Another bird - even a bland dove - would be nice, but what I am really hoping is for the Phil Collins guy to drive by.

♦ Only once, last year, did I see him ride down our street. On a particularly nice day, when the sky was a brilliant blue with threads of cloud painted by the wind, and my balcony doors were wide open, his grey car blew through the sunny day and out of his windows the bass of Phil Collins' "In the Air Tonight" filled our street's airwaves for seconds - hypnotic drum machine beats, piano chords and distorted guitar building until the song burst into the iconic drum solo.

♦ My pulse quickened and I could not decide whether to grab my phone to video him or stand there and enjoy the moment before he left the intersection.

♦ I decided to take it in in real time.

♦ Up until then, I had only heard about the Phil.

Collins guy and seen videos of his drive-bys in an online neighbourhood forum. Tracking him has become part of our local culture, especially for those of us with street-facing windows.

◆ In posts, members of the online group alert one another to the real-time location of the Phil Collins guy and the direction he is heading in. He is so popular that there are even copycats. To that effect, posts now specify if the sighting is of the original Phil Collins guy

Both the war and pandemic started slowly

On the phone, my mother, one state over, is upbeat. Like us, she has been in isolation for weeks. "It's not any worse than the war," she says, referring to the eight-year Iran-Iraq war, six years of which we endured. "We don't have to go to the basement in case of a bomb drop. We just sit home." My mind travels back a few decades, to Tehran. For the first time, I think about the two experiences as parallels, about how both the war and pandemic started so slowly - one bomb at the onset, then several; a positive case in one state, then another - that no one believed either event to really be occurring. And then, one day, life as we knew it had been upended. Everything routine dissipated into ether.



The writer as a child in Iran [Courtesy of Sara Goudarzi]

The war started in 1980 - when I was just four - and ended eight years later. I left the country some two years before Iran accepted a United Nations-negotiated ceasefire.

Like my friends and classmates, we grew into, and became part of, the stitches of the conflict's landscape, often not questioning the life it asked of us.

By 1984 the strategic bombings against our cities

began, and Tehran became a raid target. The days went on as usual: We attended school, played on our tree-lined, residential street in the afternoons and even visited the neighbourhood burger joint when our allowances added up to a meal.

Once the inverted bowl of the sky was shimmering with stars, however, our world became unpredictable. Raids were possible at any moment; late in the evening, deep into the night, when I was often dreaming of a book or a song, and just before the first photons poured down from the yellow orb that erased it all.

From Laura Branigan to Phil Collins

"In the Air Tonight" was released in 1981 but the song was not in my handful of mix tapes or any friends' music collections. Maybe we were too young to know of it or the single had not made it to Tehran's black market of copied cassettes.

Michael Jackson's album "Thriller" and its title song were all the rage but I do not recall having any of his music, either. Instead, my best friend and I spent our free time coming up with dance routines to a Laura Branigan cover of Raf's "Self Control".

In the afternoons, I would stick the tape in our household's handheld Sony cassette player and press down the "play" button. Out of the small built-in speaker emanated the sound of drum machine beats set to 4/4 time, combined with synthesiser and guitar, followed by vocals:

Oh, the night is my world
City light painted girl
In the day nothing matters
It's the night time that flatters

In the night, no control
Through the wall something's breaking
Wearing white as you're walkin'
Down the street of my soul

You take my self, you take my self control
You got me livin' only for the night
Before the morning comes, the story's told
You take my self, you take my self control



The writer as a child, wearing headphones and listening to her favourite songs [Courtesy of Sara Goudarzi]

The strong high-altitude sun stretched out to every corner of the living room, Z and I, wearing T-shirts and shorts, would arrange and shift our stick-thin legs and arms in what we thought were coordinated dance moves, emulating English words we did not understand and likely only getting the Oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, Oh, oh, oh (Oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh) parts right.

Eyes closed and one shoulder up at a time, we were electrified into movement by the tune for close to three minutes until our big finish: Z standing with her legs wide while I slid on my knees and skidded between them (we rotated between the stander and slider so we could each enjoy the spotlighted moment of the slide). Rug burns on our boney knees, I would rewind the tape to the beginning and we would do this over and over again because we were kids and in the daytime we were allowed to be.

The pandemic is elusive

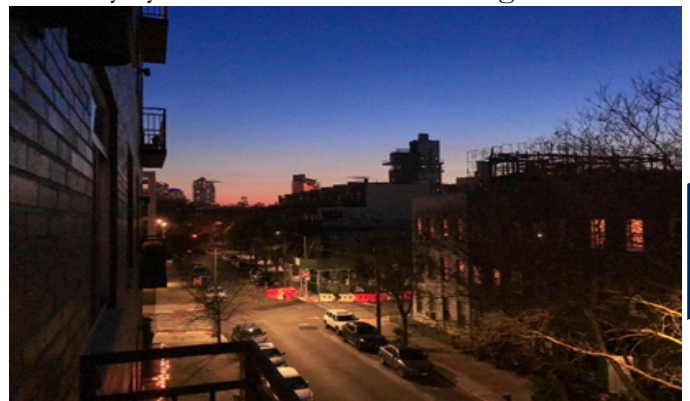
While the effects of the war run deep, indelible in the folds of every muscle, that experience does not register the same as this pandemic for me.

I had been in grade school, protected by the sense of invincibility parents provide, and thus shielded from the rations, empty supermarket shelves, statistics, logistics and continual decision making. And daily life remained routine - school, playtime, birthday parties and meals went on as scheduled, as if we did not have to run to the basement when the sirens sounded off, as if the bombs were not dropped once the city went dark, as if the destruction was not imminent, or concrete. Maybe that is what it is. Maybe it was the concreteness that made sense. The pandemic

is illusive, an invisible force that permeates every space and lurks on every surface, each small indentation, the person you love, each kiss, the air of a passing breeze. Or maybe it is something else.

Like many, I sleep little these days and in one of my countless recent wakeful moments, I realised that on those nights my parents and I sheltered in the basement, surrounded by bags of rice, dried bread and beans, we had something we are unable to surround ourselves with now - each other.

And Z and I were not denied the shared experience of "Self Control", or the chance to grab each other's hands and ceremoniously pull one another up after the big knee-slide on the rough, thin carpet. Together, we sang like we knew what we were singing, the locks of our badly cut hair swinging up and down with our bouncing heads, enjoying the groove at the same time. On the online neighbourhood forum someone posts a new sighting of the Phil Collins guy. In the corresponding comments another person notes spotting him minutes later. People were clapping, this person writes. He is doing the Lord's work right now, another commenter says in a separate post. I stand up from my desk and go to our bedroom window. Above, the sky is cobalt blue and then pink where it falls behind the buildings in view. But my eye is on the grey, ordinary street, knowing he is circulating out in the neighbourhood, giving us what we need so much at this time, not just momentary delight but a sense of togetherness in experiencing the same music. Window open now, I feel a light and chilly breeze push against my face. I close my eyes and can feel it ... "coming in the air".



Brooklyn at night, as seen from the writer's balcony [Sara Goudarzi/Al Jazeera]





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