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Abrar

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Women need to look to religion for salvation

The sad predicament of modern day women has been highlighted by a recent report produced in London in the middle of last month. A report, commissioned by Home Secretary Priti Patel in the wake of the murder of Sarah Everard, demands a "radical shift" in the way crimes against women and girls are prioritised. Stopping violence against women should be considered as much of a priority for the police as combating terrorism, a major report has found.

These findings are steps forward in the strife to protect women, but are they enough? In male-dominated culture laws alone are not enough to provide real security to the women who have been the subject of unlimited exploitation, violence and persecution. Even if the findings of the report and its recommendations were implemented, male-dominated societies will always find ways of undermining the dignity and social status of the weaker sex. The report has found extremely worrying trends in police behaviour towards complaints by women who were subjected to violence. These include "grave concerns" about the number of cases closed without charge, "major gaps" in the data recorded on offences, and the "staggering variation" across police forces in England and Wales with regards to dealing with domestic abuse.

The report by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) is a useful tool to initiate a campaign of awareness to safeguard women safety and rights. But is it enough? The decades-long culture of abuse is a clear evidence of the need to remould the human mind and psyche against violence of any kind in particular against women. The problem is embedded inside people who harbour little respect to life in general. There is a serious need to create more positive attitude towards life in general. Love must not be confined to personal choices but must be made to embrace the natural world as a whole. Women is at the top of the list of this love list. Codification of women rights is a good step but is not enough. It is un-

fortunate that after decades of struggle to achieve women rights, the discourse still begins with the right to life which is the most basic.

The "modern" world has yet to awaken its conscience and stop the culture of abuse and exploitation of the physically weaker sex. Women are not toys, commodities, sex objects or slaves. No man has the right to treat female body as a "thing" that needs marketing for financial ends.

A woman is a breathing soul with human outlooks, needs and values. Any abuse or exploitation must be criminalised. Modern day marketing tactics and ways that overwhelm TV screens and social media outlets must not be remain acceptable. A new culture of protecting the dignity of women and respect her humanity must replace the present chauvinist attitudes that consider women a commodity for sale and use every effective marketing tactic to sell her as a body. Islam and other religions have totally different appreciation of women and value them as equal to men without discriminatory prejudices. Women have played major roles in the history of Islam and reached the highest levels of authority in countries like Bangladesh, Pakistan, Turkey, Iran and Iraq. From the inception of the new religion, they were at the forefront of the battle of minds and hearts. They were tortured, starved during long periods of economic siege and sanctions and killed. Their social status was preserved through hard work and self-realisation. Names like Khadija, Fatima, Sumaya, Asmaa bint Abi Bakr, Asmaa bint Omaish were carved in this history.

These days are dedicated to the memory of Zainab, the strong woman of Karbala who stood, her head sky-high and challenged Yazid. He was the khalifi ruler who was sending his troops deep into Asia and Africa. Yet she humbled him with her wise and powerful words at a time of her greatest calamity following the martyrdom of her brothers and relatives. Women are urged to look to seek empowerment from those great historic examples and embrace Islam for salvation.



UK's future world role

On 14th September a joint online seminar was organised by the Open Discussion and the Gulf Cultural Club titled: Post Brexit UK: A World role marred by US unilateralism. It was chaired by Shabbir Razvi and addressed by three speakers.

Stephen Bell said: The ending of NATO's war on Afghanistan is a defeat for US imperialism. The Taliban has returned to government, despite the war's aim to exclude them.

The reactionary character of the Taliban will limit the social progress that can be achieved through the establishment of an independent state in Afghanistan. It also threatens the viability of that state, as a genuinely national and inclusive policy is vital to avoid a break up of the state. The impact of the defeat has been even greater in Britain, given its glaring international isolation. This was highlighted by Boris Johnson's failure at the G7 conference, and elsewhere, to create some sort of alliance to maintain the intervention. This confirmed the collapse of a major plank of the foreign policy pursued by successive British governments since 2001.

To weigh this impact we have to consider comparisons like the Suez debacle of 1956, which demonstrated the inability of the British government to pursue a foreign policy in the Middle East and North Africa independent of the US. Or the defeat experienced by British imperialism in Aden and South Yemen which led to withdrawal in 1967; the abandonment of military bases east of Suez, and the independence of some Gulf states.

Most of the social "gains" under the occupation were confined to the cities. The trumpeted growth in education, health services, and involvement of women were confined to urban areas. Many facilities recorded by western powers had the same ghostly character as the Afghan security forces. These facilities were mostly paper expressions of overseas finances dis-

appearing into government aligned networks of warlords and militias. Documentation of this corruption is abundant and available.

Stop the War has raised the demand "no more foreign wars". Immediately there must be an end to the British government support for the war and seige of Yemen. This must include a freeze on arms to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates - and withdrawal of British armed forces from Yemen, and the Saudi command centre. Equally, the British government's support for Biden's shift to concentrate on the cold war against China must be rejected.

There must be no cover up for the failure of imperialist intervention. The people of Afghanistan need our continuing practical support.

Claudia Naomi Webbe: UK's current policies cannot be separated from the enduring legacy of the British empire which left a legacy of instability which continues to this day. Military intervention must be seen within the historical context in which Britain and other Western countries still believe that they can act with impunity in a region from which they have violently extracted resources over the centuries.

The time has come for former empires to take responsibility for the countries and individuals who have endured their cruelty. No where is this more apparent than in Afghanistan. The rapidly accelerating crisis has been heart breaking. Even more heart breaking has been the cruel and ignorant response of the UK. They have been one of the key architects of the disaster. Due to the UK's role in destabilising Afghanistan and the wider region we now have a unique obligation to welcome as many refugees as possible and to support Afghan asylum seekers in the UK. There is no reason why Afghan asylum seekers should be suffering to this day in immigration deportation centres.

It is also vital that UK government calls on the international community to put pressure on the new regime in Afghanistan to be fair to all religious minorities, trade union leaders and also to provide a

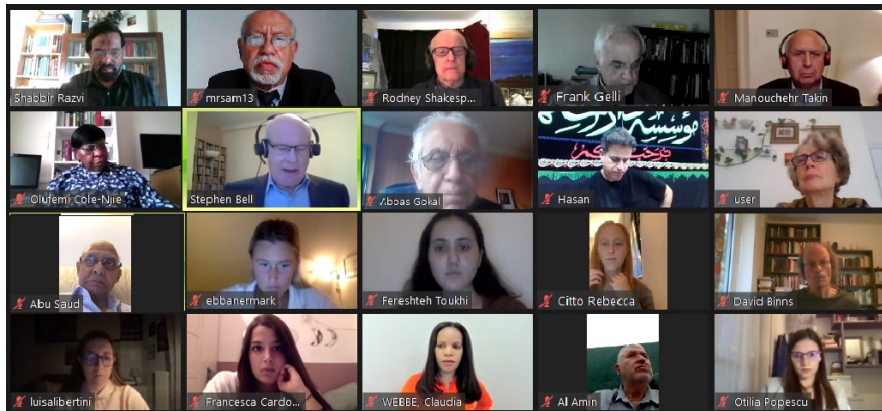
safe escape route. We have a humanitarian role to play in making sure that the UK government is consistent in its condemnation of human rights violations. It is commendable that the discriminatory practices of the Taliban have been condemned yet the same condemnation cannot be found when it comes to Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and other Gulf oil states who have an equally shocking record on human rights. The Yemeni conflict has spiked during the pandemic. It is now more than six years since the start of the Saudi-led invasion of Yemen began. The Yemen conflict is not only the world's worst humanitarian crisis. It is also one of the worst atrocities of the modern era. Eighty percent of the population need aid and protection while a third of the population are relying on food aid to survive. Ten million people are facing food insecurity. The conflict has displaced over four million people. Twenty million people lack access to clean water making disease prevention almost impossible.

We must follow the lead of Joe Biden which calls for an end to American intervention in wars across the world. I take issue with many things that have happened under Joe Biden's watch but the withdrawal from military intervention is a great policy shift which is deserving of our full support and of a similar recognition from the UK government. It is time we abandoned the legacy of the British empire. So thank you for inviting me, solidarity to you all. Long may this forum continue.

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*On Thursday 23rd September the weekly Abrar meeting was dedicated to two events; the martyrdom anniversary of Imam Ali ibn Musa Al Rida (AS) and the 20th Safar anniversary to mark the 40th day after Imam Hussain's martyrdom in 660AD. Dr Mohmmad Hussain Abboud from the University of Karbala in Iraq talked about the long journey of the family of Imam Hussain from Karbala to Kufa and then to Damascus and the places they passed through. He mentioned the names of several mosques built on those sites subsequently.

Imam Rida's martyrdom was presented by Sheikh Rashad Al Ansari who delivered lamentations on both anniversaries and highlighted Imam Rida's life



UN chief warns China, US to avoid Cold War



Warning of a potential new Cold War, the head of the United Nations implored China and the United States to repair their “completely dysfunctional” relationship before problems between the two large and deeply influential countries spill over even further into the rest of the planet.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres spoke to The Associated Press this weekend ahead of this week’s annual United Nations gathering of world leaders — a convening blemished by COVID, climate concerns and contentiousness across the planet.

Guterres said the world’s two major economic powers should be cooperating on climate and negotiating more robustly on trade and technology even given persisting political fissures about human rights, economics, online security and sovereignty in the South China Sea.

“Unfortunately, today we only have confrontation,” Guterres said Saturday in the AP interview.

“We need to re-establish a functional relationship between the two powers,” he said, calling that “essential to address the problems of vaccination, the problems of climate change and many other global challenges that cannot be solved without constructive relations within the international community and mainly among the superpowers.”

Two years ago, Guterres warned global leaders of the risk of the world splitting in two, with the United States and China creating rival internets, currency, trade, financial rules “and their own zero-sum geopolitical and military strategies.”

U.S. House approves \$1 billion for Israel's 'Iron Dome' system

The U.S. House of Representatives voted overwhelmingly on Thursday to give \$1 billion to Israel for its Iron Dome missile-defense system, two days after objections from the most liberal Democrats forced leaders to remove it from a broader spending bill. The measure passed by 420 to 9 - eight no's from Democrats and one from a Republican - with two members voting present. That sent the measure to the Senate, where leaders have not yet scheduled a vote.

A handful of progressive House Democrats, who have accused Israel of human rights abuses against Palestinians, had

objected to the provision's inclusion in the broad spending bill. That threatened the bill's passage, with Democrats only narrowly controlling the House, because Republicans opposed the plan to fund the federal government through Dec. 3 and raise the nation's borrowing limit.

The House passed the broader bill on 21 September. But the removal of the Iron Dome funding angered centrist Democrats and led Republicans to label the party as anti-Israel, despite a long tradition in the U.S. Congress of strong support from both parties for the Jewish state. The House's Democratic leaders said they would introduce a standalone bill to provide the Iron Dome funding.

Saudis supports efforts to prevent nuclear Iran



Saudi Arabia's King Salman bin Abdulaziz told the United Nations General Assembly on Wednesday that his kingdom supports efforts to prevent Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons, as world

leaders prepare to resume talks with Tehran to reinstate a 2015 nuclear pact.

"The kingdom insists on the importance of keeping the Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction, on this basis we support international efforts aiming at preventing Iran from having nuclear weapons," he said in a pre-recorded video address to the annual gathering.

Iran and Saudi Arabia, leading Shi'ite and Sunni Muslim powers in the Middle East, have been rivals for years, backing allies fighting proxy wars in Yemen, Syria and elsewhere. They cut diplomatic ties in 2016, but have been holding talks this year aimed at reducing tensions.

"Iran is a neighboring country, and we hope that our initial talks with it will lead to concrete results to build confidence ... based on... respect of sovereignty and non-interference in internal affairs," King Salman said. His remarks followed a call by Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi to resume nuclear talks with world powers that would lead to the removal of U.S. sanctions. [read more](#)

On 21 September, the Saudi foreign minister met with his Iranian counterpart during the General Assembly, according to Iran's semi-official Mehr news agency.

Vaccine inequity comes into stark focus during UN gathering

The inequity of COVID-19 vaccine distribution will come into sharper focus

Thursday as many of the African countries whose populations have little to no access to the life-saving shots step to the podium to speak at the U.N.'s annual meeting of world leaders.

Already, the struggle to contain the coronavirus pandemic has featured prominently in leaders' speeches — many of them delivered remotely exactly because of the virus. Country after country acknowledged the wide disparity in accessing the vaccine, painting a picture so bleak that a solution has at times seemed impossibly out of reach.

“Some countries have vaccinated their populations, and are on the path to recovery. For others, the lack of vaccines and weak health systems pose a serious problem,” Norway’s Prime Minister, Erna Solberg, said in a prerecorded speech Wednesday. “In Africa, fewer than 1 in 20 people are fully vaccinated. In Europe, one in two are fully vaccinated. This inequity is clearly unfair.” Countries slated to give their signature annual speeches on Thursday include South Africa, Botswana, Angola, Burkina Faso and Libya.

Germany searches for post-Merkel government

Germany is embarking on a potentially lengthy search for its next government after the center-left Social Democrats narrowly beat outgoing Chancellor Angela Merkel’s center-right bloc in an election that failed to set a clear direction for Europe’s biggest economy under a new leader.

Leaders of the parties in the newly elected parliament were meeting Monday to digest a result that saw Merkel’s Union bloc slump to its worst-ever result in a national election, and appeared to put the keys to power in the hands of two opposition parties.

Both Social Democrat Olaf Scholz, who pulled his party out of a years-long slump, and Armin Laschet, the candidate of Merkel’s party who saw his party’s fortunes decline in a troubled campaign, laid a claim to leading the next government.

Whichever of them becomes chancellor will do so with his party having won a smaller share of the vote than any of his predecessors. Who gets the job looks



likely to depend on the decision of the prospective junior partners, the environmentalist Greens and the business-friendly Free Democrats — parties that traditionally belong to rival ideological camps.

Arbaeen: To become more than the objects of tyrants' desire

By Catherine Shakdam

Tehran Times, October 9, 2020

I did in fact partake in the Arbaeen Pilgrimage several years ago and I can still recall the impact it had on me - both spiritually and intellectually. It is not often that one is confronted with History in such a vivid and powerful way. I wonder still how so very few people outside the immediate Shia community have come to appreciate the powerful message that lies between Najaf and Karbala.

While it would be easy to blame those who still view Shia Islam as both a threat and a stain on their belief system, I would rather see communities take ownership of their stories so that they could be told and thus become part of the world heritage. Maybe that is also one of the lessons of Karbala ... that victimhood is neither a crown nor a poisoned chalice, that martyrdom is better served in one's empowerment and decision to overcome adversity. And if not all tyrants can be defeated, quiet acquiescence would equate to treachery, that against the sovereignty of oneself.

Long ago, when Rome led over the known world unchallenged, a tribe hailing from what we call now Denmark, left its icy landscapes to find refuge under kinder climates. As they traveled ever closer to Rome, the Empire decided to teach those they view as barbarians a lesson. Trapped and betrayed somewhere in modern Northern Italy thousands of men, women, and children were slaughtered. Those who could escape Rome's swords decided to commit suicide - so unwilling they were to become Rome's slaves.

Since the dawn of time Men have yearned to live free and sovereign ... for many, such freedom warrants the ultimate sacrifice: death. Such tales have populated our history books. However, none has been more potent than that of Karbala. Maybe simply because there lie all of our tales, all of our struggles, all of our hopes of redemption, and belief that should we be one day asked to do what is right we would. Karbala and its commemorative pilgrimage are more than just tragic bravery before unjust tyranny. Karbala I have come to understand lately is not about martyrdom, but an understanding that we exist beyond ourselves, beyond the limitations we teach ourselves for we fear to



think ourselves more than the objects of tyrants' desire.

Arbaeen is the one Story which, beyond all cultural difference and belief systems, speaks to us, and moves us all. Arbaeen encompasses so many archetypes, it echoes so much of our struggles and pretty much speaks of the very essence of our humanity. How

we can in the same breath prove capable of the noblest of deeds and yet fall prey to the very worst of our nature.

If the Arbaeen Pilgrimage lies central to Shia Islam's faith and tenets, I have come to believe that it belongs to no one and should be shared with everyone. One needs not to be religious to treasure its lessons or see the beauty in the millions, who, every year come together to commemorate. It is rather humbling actually to witness how so many different communities successfully congregate to share in a moment of quiet unity.

If I could summarize the whole experience in a few words I would say that it still follows me - a spiritual haunting of a sort to remind me that I am a lot more than my circumstances. I am my choices! I think the message of the Arbaeen has always been the same, that before tyranny ought to resist. And yet I would argue that it is not an allegory of martyrdom. And though for a time I did think that martyrdom was in fact central to Karbala and Arbaeen I think that my visit to Iraq made me look at it from a perspective. Yes there was immense suffering and yes many brave men, women, and children were martyred, but it is not their death which is mourned rather the ideals and morals they lived for, embodied, and defended to the bitter end. There is an inspiration to be drawn from that.

It is also obviously a beautiful exercise intolerance, compassion, and generosity. Iraqis have made a point to open up their land and their homes to cater to pilgrims' needs. I don't think that there is anything quite like it in the world today.

Well, evidently things are very different this year. Many people have chosen to stay away for fear of contracting the virus and spreading it to their respective communities and families, but then others have decided to pay little heed to the pandemic to attend anyway. It is hard to say which is better. It very much depends on one's perspective and understanding of the disease.

Personally I think it could be a health gamble to many with Iraq at a time when state institutions and resources have been under a great deal of pressure. But then many will argue that faith and their need to worship by far outweigh the risks at hands.

I guess we will see. But in any case, I don't think that geographical proximity is necessary to feel part of this greater whole which is the Arbaeen Pilgrimage. Whether from home or in Karbala, people can still experience a sense of communion.

I would never be as bold as to advise people on what they ought to do this year, I am not a doctor and the knowledge I have of the virus is that gained from the media. Needless to say that it amounts to very little ...

The last point is the functions of mainstream media in Arbaeen coverage. If I intended to talk about this a few years ago, I would have told that such media silence speaks of prejudice and bias both the Western world and Sunni Islam harbor against Shia Islam. I would have told you about Wahhabism and its war against all those who chose to defy its tenets and how for centuries Shiites have embodied all which Wahhabism wishes to destroy.

Today I will say that beyond such organized silence, beyond this battle of ideologies and a call from Shiites to be seen and recognized lies Shia Islam's responsibility to take on that mantle.

To sit in victimhood waiting for vindication only serves our nihilistic tendencies. The Onus is on Shia Islam and its people to speak of their faith, their culture, and their beliefs.

It is not so much that the world ought to pay attention but rather that the world be given a reason to pay attention. I think the lack of awareness is a reflection of a collective failure to connect. This is not meant as a criticism, merely an observation. Catherine Shakdam is a political analyst and author who has written for many publications among which Foreign Policy Association, Russian International Affairs Council, Your Middle East, Open Democracy, the Middle East Monitor, and The Guardian.



The next generation of British Muslims The role of the Quran School in their development

By Musharraf Hussain

Here I examine the ancient institution of Madrassa that Ibn Battuta the great Moroccan traveller found in all places in the medieval Muslim world from Mali to Malaysia. In fact, its origin can be traced to the Prophet's masjid in Madinah, where the blessed Messenger (peace be upon him) would teach the disciples and selected disciples were authorised to teach others. The four million strong Muslims in the UK have invested in this amazing institution since they know it's the guarantor of the faith of future generations. Let's see what this wonderful institution is all about. "Each second we live in a new and unique moment of the universe, a moment that never was before and will never be again. And what do we teach our children in school? We teach them that two and two make four and that Paris is the capital of France. When will we teach them what they are? You are a marvel. You are unique. In all the world there is no other child exactly like you. In the millions of years that have passed there has never been another child like you...you have the capacity for anything...we all must work to make this world worthy of its children" (Pablo Casals in 'joys and sorrows').

Islamic education is about teaching children who they are, how special they are, the khalifatullah, the Vicegerent of Allah, the chosen creation with a place in Paradise. The aims of the Quran school should be:

To encourage children to love and obey Allah and build the sense of Allah consciousness.

To follow the beautiful Sunnah of the blessed Messenger (peace be on him).

To teach children to read the Quran with Tajweed.

To nurture the moral values of kindness, patience, honesty, and generosity.

To educate children on how to worship their Lord properly.

Over the past 45 years, I have been teaching and developing a curriculum called 'Let's learn Islam'. This curriculum aims to teach children the key skills that will help them to become good Muslims, it covers:

Reading the Quran accurately

Learning the beliefs of a Muslim

Learning about the importance of good manners

Developing Islamic morals

Discovering the beautiful Sunnahs of the blessed Prophet

Learning the rulings of prayer, cleanliness, fasting, zakah etc..

Memorising key Arabic prayers

It is a response to the need of teachers and children in the Quran School, enabling teachers to help their students explore their beliefs and attitudes that will shape their worldview.

The Quran School Curriculum



Let's learn Islam is a comprehensive syllabus for Islamic studies, it is compiled in a set of four beautiful textbooks and workbooks, a child-centred and attractive Qaida in four parts, a Tajweed book, a book for moral, social and spiritual development, a Salah diary to encourage children to pray regularly, an array of educational posters for the classroom/bedroom. To monitor the progress of the pupils, we have a simple

personal learning record for each child that tracks their progress, which is sent to parents on a termly basis.

We aim to teach children the key skills to become good Muslims from reading the Quran accurately through learning their beliefs, manners, morals and the beautiful life example of the blessed Prophet (peace be on him). The teachings of morals and manners will help children to build healthy relationships at home, at school and with their neighbours.

Future of UK's role in the world *Continued from P 2*

Professor Rodney Shakespeare: The first thing to notice since Brexit is that the UK has become even more American than it was before. It had to happen like that because once you go out alone in a big nasty, world you go from people with whom you have associated to what you hope is protection and cover. So you get all this nonsense about American being in a position to help the UK with its economy. Look at the consequences in the last two or three months. The UK sends a destroyer into the Black Sea to show the Ruskies what is what and who is who. When bullets were fired in front of the destroyer it turned round and rushed out.

The UK then sent a brand new aircraft carrier the Queen Elizabeth up into the China Sea. It turned round and withdrew. In respect of that aircraft carrier the UK is forgetting that the aircraft carrier was a very successful weapon of war seventy five years ago.

That sums up American global policy to which the UK is inextricably linked. If you go to the West Asia region America and UK invaded Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya. They are in Syria. They back the barbaric medieval regime in Saudi Arabia which is slaughtering the Yemeni people and they back the killer Khalifa in their aggression against the people of Bahrain.

So whether the UK likes it or not something is happening. The tectonic plates

of world geo politics are changing. Afghanistan is in fact is an indication of that change. The effects of economic sanctions are forcing the Shanghai Corporation Organisation into a much tighter unity. Iran is probably going to be welcomed into that military and economic organisation. In particular nobody has said now trust the USA to keep its word on anything. And that lack of trust even extends to Saudi Arabia.

The USA has just removed its missiles from Saudi Arabia to send them off to fight China. If you betray your Afghani supporters as the Americans have done do you think the Saudis are sleeping securely in their beds at night.

America is continuing in the old ways but the tectonic plates are set to change. I don't think that either America or the UK is capable of making that change and I want to say why. At the heart of all this, behind all this, behind American and British policy is the global financial and economic system. Me and my colleagues have identified that it is based on 59 false assumptions. These assumptions are all interlinked. And the chances of the USA and the UK really changing their policies or understanding that their policies are misguided and wrong and are producing disasters even for the UK and the USA are pretty slim. The UK and America are very interlinked. In a bone headed way they are carrying on in a way that is likely to produce disaster

'Take me as I am': Halima Aden announces comeback with a new di-

By Nadda Osman, 17 September 2021

After a dramatic exit from the fashion industry last year, Somali-American supermodel Halima Aden announced her comeback this week, emphasising that she would be working on her own terms.

Speaking at a conference in Istanbul on Wednesday, the model announced that she is now the global brand ambassador for modest fashion retailer Modanisa, where she will design two new collections and be part of the brand's marketing efforts.

In her speech in the Turkish city, Aden expressed her excitement and gratitude for working with a brand that respects her faith and values Muslim women - something she said needs to be the norm in the fashion industry.

"This is such an exciting time, and the global expansion of the brand has been remarkable," she said.

"We want women to pursue their dreams and goals without compromising their beliefs. This is for stronger women and a stronger tomorrow," she added.

The announcement coincides with the online retailer's 10-year anniversary, with Samim Surel, Modanisa's brand development director, saying the partnership with Aden was a perfect fit, and that he would like to see Istanbul become the modest fashion capital of the world.

"Her creative energy and positive connection with young Muslim women from all backgrounds will be a fantastic asset for us as we drive forward with our global plans," he said at the conference.

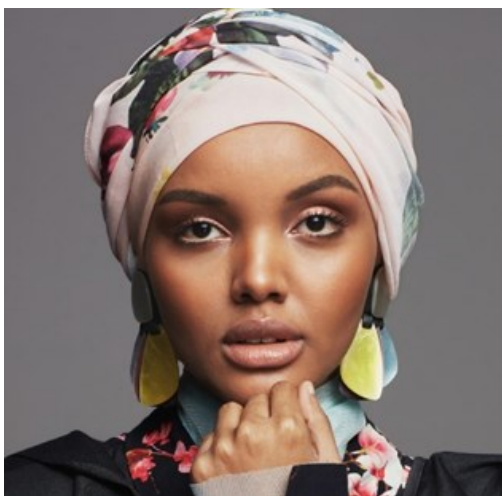
Speaking at the event, Aden advised any upcoming hijabi influencers, models and content creators to be mindful of the partnerships and business opportunities they accept.

"My message to anyone following this path would be that you don't have to take every single job. I have turned away many jobs, so I would say you have to be very intentional with the partnerships that you choose," she said.

'Take me as I am'

In November last year, Aden put out a series of social media posts in which she said she would be cutting ties with a number of brands in the fashion industry, and declining partnerships she felt would force her to compromise her religion.

Aden - who rose to fame in 2016 following a Miss USA beauty pageant where she was spotted and later signed to the global modelling agency IMG - emphasised that she would now be very careful about who she worked with.



The posts resonated with Muslim women online, many of whom praised her for speaking out about being pressured to conform with mainstream fashion standards.

Despite quitting fashion and calling out brands and campaigns she felt uncom-

fortable working with because of a perceived pressure to alter her "traditional hijab", the model says she received widespread support from her peers in the industry, including from model sisters Gigi and Bella Hadid, designer Tommy Hilfger, supermodel Naomi Campbell and singer Rihanna.

"Surprisingly, I got a lot of support when I quit. There were so many other bigger names that reached out to me and congratulated me for speaking out. Other models also experience similar issues, so lots of people told me they were glad I spoke out about it," she told Middle East Eye, via telephone.

Since her decision last year, the model says she has been very selective with any events and partnerships that come her way. "I was actually invited to the Met Gala this year but didn't go," she said. "I thought it would be too awkward running into everyone after I had quit," she said, laughing.

Women's voices at growing UN General Assembly

With cascading crises casting a pall over the proceedings at this year's United Nations General Assembly, Slovakian President Zuzana Čaputová had this reminder on the first day of debate: "We cannot save our planet if we leave out the vulnerable — the women, the girls, the minorities."

But gender parity at the world's preeminent forum of leaders still seems far out of sight. Eight women are set to speak at the U.N. General Assembly on Friday. That's more than double the number — five — of women that spoke across the first three days of the summit.

On Friday, three vice presidents and five prime ministers — including Bangladesh's Sheikh Hasina and New Zealand's Jacinda Arden gave their address in a prerecorded video.

"As the first female president in the history of my country, the burden of expectation to deliver gender equality is heavier on my shoulder," said Samia Suluhu Hassan, the president of Tanzania. When it comes to such equality, she said, "COVID-19 is threatening to roll back the gains that we have made," Hassan was the lone woman to address the General Assembly on Thursday.

Despite those 13 women making up less than 10% of speakers over the first four days, the 13 represent an increase from last year, when just nine women spoke over the course of the session.

There are also three more female heads of state or heads of government — 24 — than there were at this point in 2020.

"There can be no democracy, no security and no development without one-half of the humankind," Estonia President Kersti Kaljulaid said Wednesday, also underscoring women's vulnerability in society.

The theme of vulnerability has been at the forefront during a week haunted by the ever-looming specters of climate change, coronavirus and conflict. Most of the speeches have taken on the tenor of pleas issued at the precipice, battling away the summit's theme of "building resiliency through hope."

Dire predictions were not limited to the General Assembly. At a U.N. Security Council meeting Thursday, the high-level officials urged stepped-up action to address the security implications of climate change and make global warming a key part of all U.N. peacekeeping operations. They said warming is making the world less safe, pointing to Africa's conflict-plagued Sahel region and Syria and Iraq.

Scores of leaders have already spoken, and many have left New York altogether. But some of the most anticipated countries have yet to deliver their addresses: North Korea, Myanmar and Afghanistan — all perennially but also lately much in the news — are expected to close out the session Monday afternoon.



The War on the Uyghurs

China's campaign against Xinjiang's Muslims

By Sean R. Roberts

This eye-opening book reveals how China has used the US-led Global War on Terror as cover for its increasingly brutal suppression of the Uyghur people. China's actions, it argues, have emboldened states around the globe to persecute ethnic minorities and severely repress domestic opposition in the name of combatting terrorism.

Within weeks of the September 11 attacks on New York and Washington, the Chinese government announced that it faced a serious terrorist threat from its largely Muslim Uyghur ethnic minority. Nearly two decades later, of the 11 million Uyghurs living in China today, more than 1 million have been detained in so-called re-education camps, victims of what has become the largest program of mass incarceration and surveillance in the world.

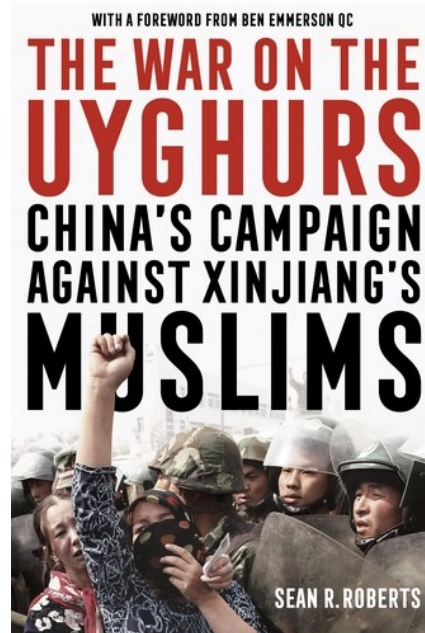
Drawing on extensive interviews with Uyghurs in Xinjiang, as well as refugee communities and exiles, Sean Roberts tells a story that is not just about state policies, but about Uyghur responses to these devastating government programs.

Providing a lucid and far-reaching analysis of China's cultural genocide, *The War on the Uyghurs* allows the voices

of those caught up in the human tragedy to be heard for the first time.

REVIEWS

'This book should act as a wake-up call for policy-makers worldwide. Armed with the piercing and detailed analysis of the recent past in East Turkistan, and the graphic accounts of the present, no one has any further excuse for failing to



grasp the full reality of the human tragedy that is taking place. Roberts demystifies the background, debunks the false excuses of the Chinese state, and presents the reality of the persecution unfolding before our eyes. None of us can afford to look away.' Ben Emmerson QC, Former UN Special Rapporteur on Counter-Terrorism 'Sean Roberts has done an immense service for all those who need to put headlines about Chinese repression of Uyghurs in recent years in proper context. Describing how the rhetoric and practices of the "Global War on Terror" since 2001 have led to the mass internment, persecution, and surveillance of the population, Sean Roberts shows that the Chinese campaign has chillingly aimed at nothing less than the destruction of Uyghur identity. This account is masterful, educational, and enraging by turns.' Samuel Moyn, *Professor of Law and History, Yale University, and author of Not Enough: Human Rights in an Unequal World*

Sean R. Roberts is Associate Professor of the Practice of International Affairs and Director of the International Development Studies Program at George Washington University's Elliott School of International Affairs

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Bread and Freedom

Egypt's Revolutionary Situation

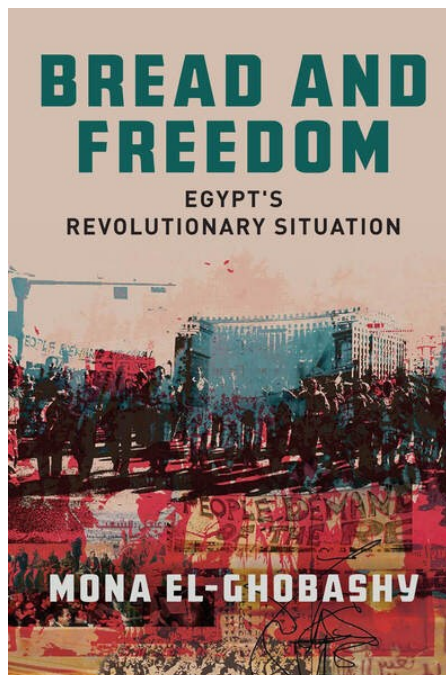
By Mona El-Ghobashy

A multivocal account of why Egypt's defeated revolution remains a watershed in the country's political history.

Bread and Freedom offers a new account of Egypt's 2011 revolutionary mobilization, based on a documentary record hidden in plain sight—party manifestos, military communiqués, open letters, constitutional contentions, protest slogans, parliamentary debates, and court decisions. A rich trove of political arguments, the sources reveal a range of actors vying over the fundamental question in politics: who holds ultimate political authority. The revolution's tangled events engaged competing claims to sovereignty made by insurgent forces and entrenched interests alike, a vital contest that was terminated by the 2013 military coup and its aftermath.

Now a decade after the 2011 Arab uprisings, Mona El-Ghobashy rethinks how we study revolutions, looking past causes and consequences to train our

sights on the collisions of revolutionary politics. She moves beyond the simple



judgments that once celebrated Egypt's revolution as an awe-inspiring irruption of people power or now label it a tragic failure. Revisiting the revolutionary interregnum of 2011–2013, *Bread and Freedom* takes seriously the political conflicts that developed after the ouster of President Hosni Mubarak, an eventful thirty months when it was impossible to rule Egypt without the Egyptians.

"Mona El-Ghobashy adds a new perspective to the canonical view of the Arab Spring with the immensely readable and thoughtfully constructed *Bread and Freedom*. Starting from Charles Tilly's insight that revolutions are more like traffic jams than eclipses of the sun, El-Ghobashy revisits how an Egyptian protest became a revolutionary situation."

—Sidney G. Tarrow, Cornell University

Mona El-Ghobashy is Clinical Assistant Professor of Liberal Studies at New York University.

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The Desert Thief

By Muhammad Yakub Khan

1. GLORY TO (ALLAH) WHO DID TAKE HIS SERVANT FOR A JOURNEY BY NIGHT FROM THE SACRED MOSQUE TO THE FARTHEST MOSQUE, WHOSE PRECINCTS WE DID BLESS, - IN ORDER THAT WE MIGHT SHOW HIM SOME OF OUR SIGNS: FOR HE IS THE ONE WHO HEARETH AND SEETH (ALL THINGS).

2. WE GAVE MOSES THE BOOK, AND MADE IT A GUIDE TO THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL, (COMMANDING): "TAKE NOT OTHER THAN ME AS DISPOSER OF (YOUR) AFFAIRS."

3. O YE THAT ARE SPRUNG FROM THOSE WHOM WE CARRIED (IN THE ARK) WITH NOAH! VERILY HE WAS A DEVOTEE MOST GRATEFUL.

4. AND WE GAVE (CLEAR) WARNING TO THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL IN THE BOOK, THAT TWICE WOULD THEY DO MISCHIEF ON THE EARTH AND BE ELATED WITH MIGHTY ARROGANCE (AND TWICE WOULD THEY BE PUNISHED):
(AL ISRAA)

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This is our website. Have visited it: It will put you face-to-face with an alternative world, full of spirituality, morality coupled with modern outlooks and perspectives. We want to hear your views on its contents, layout and general quality.

Join us in our Noon and Afternoon prayers
Everyday
at 13.00

Once upon a time there lived in a lovely oasis in Arabia a man named Ahmad. He was the head of his clan and was therefore known as the Sheikh. The Sheikh was a very good man. His fame had spread far and wide. Wayfarers found his hospitable door ever open, by day as well as by night. He would do sundry little things for the blind and the cripple. For old women, he would draw water from the well and was ever at the service of those who needed his help. Never did an untruth pollute his lips.

Now the Sheikh had a steed of the purest Arab breed. Throughout the length and breadth of the land wherever there was talk about horses of the finest breed, the name of the Sheikh's animal was invariably on everybody's lips. People from far and wide came to see it. The Arabs were very fond of horses and every now and then held horse fairs. On these occasions huge crowds would come to witness the feats of the Sheikh's steed. Many were the well-to-do chiefs who offered huge sums for it. But the Sheikh refused to sell it.

It so happened that like the Sheikh's steed, there was one more object whose fame had spread. There was a pretty girl, named Layla, who came of a nomad tribe and whose matchless beauty was the gossip of the tribes. Many a young man was attracted to seek her hand. When the fame of the Sheikh's steed reached her ears, she simply could not resist the temptation to obtain possession of it. She yearned for it and was bent upon having it at any cost. But the Sheikh, she was told, was not going to part with the animal for any price. So she hit upon a clever stratagem. She had it announced that she would give her hand to the man who might get her the Sheikh's steed.

Qasim, an enterprising young lad set out to try his luck. After a long and wearisome journey across the desert, he arrived at the Sheikh's villa. The Sheikh, as was usual with him, treated him with all hospitality. But he would listen to no talk about the steed and refused big offers that Qasim made him. Disappointed to get the horse by fair means, Qasim thought of trying a trick. All, he said to himself, was fair in love and war.

It was the Sheikh's wont to have a ride in the evening and to come back home after sunset. One evening as he was returning from one such ride he came across, by the wayside, a man wrapped up in a blanket and crying in pain. The Sheikh pulled up the reins of the

horse and stopped by the side of the man.

"What is the matter with you?" he asked the fellow on the ground.

"I am ill," the man replied. "Pray, have pity on me and take me along to that hamlet."

The Sheikh dismounted and helped the man to the animal's back, himself holding the reins and walking along in front.

"Wait a bit, please," said the man on horse-back, as they had gone a dozen paces. "You have left my blanket on the ground. Please pick it up."

And as the Sheikh left the reins to go back for the blanket, the man spurred the horse and bolted off. Looking back, the Sheikh saw that he had been tricked. It was Qasim who turned back and shouted: "Goodbye, Sheikh! I am off. You see how I got the steed you wouldn't give for money?"

"Just one word before you bolt off!" replied the Sheikh.

"Yes, come along. What is it?" shouted Qasim, stopping a short distance away.

"Just one word," rejoined the Sheikh, "and if you promise me that, I wouldn't regret the loss of my pet. Should someone ask you how you got the steed, for God's sake, don't tell him you tricked me. It would mean a blot on the good name of Islam and Muslims. A Muslim is above underhand dealings and you must not spoil that reputation."

Though blind in love, this appeal to his higher self went home to Qasim. There and then he dismounted.

"Here you are," he said, handing the reins over to the Sheikh. "A son of Islam, I will do nothing to sully the name of Islam."



It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change.

CHARLES DARWIN

Progress is impossible without change; and those who cannot change their minds cannot change anything.

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW