

An Analysis of Marya Mushtaq's Article entitled "Abdul Khaliq Hazara and the ethnic cleansing narrative"

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The reason why I am writing a Note on this Post/ Article is that Ms Marya Mushtaq, the writer (in her article: <http://pakistanblogzine.wordpress.com/2011/10/22/abdul-khaliq-hazara-and-the-ethnic-cleansingnarrative-by-marya-mushtaq/> ) doesn't seem to be condemning just one individual politician, but also Hazara Democratic Party (HDP). The secular approach to the issues in Balochistan appears ridiculous to her and she can barely hide her contempt for nationalism and all nationalist Hazaras. Her attempts to draw distinction between "ethnic cleansing" and "genocide" are also quite meaningful, and deserve addressing.

**Two basic points first:**

My first point discusses the approach taken by Ms Mushtaq (as I understand it), whereas the second one discusses the approach adopted by HDP and nationalist Hazaras (again, as I understand it).

1 The writer says that **HDP is a Pseudo secular ethnic party**. HDP, she says, is dishonestly trying to project the persecution in Quetta as Hazara persecution rather than Shia persecution. She believes that Nationalist Hazaras are deliberately not connecting the dots between the target killing in Quetta, and that in Dera Ismail Khan, Kurram, Sindh and Punjab. She then lays down certain arguments on the basis of which she thinks that HDP's chairman, Abdul Khaliq is an ISI agent. She, then, goes further and condemns Hazara Democratic Party, as well as all Hazara Nationalists including those in Tanzeem (see her criticism of the role of Hazara nationalists during Soviet occupation of Afghanistan). Ms Mushtaq is also at pains trying to draw a distinction between "ethnic cleansing" and "genocide", and concludes that the persecution of Hazaras in Quetta is Shia genocide rather than ethnic cleansing of Hazaras.

A few questions that come up in one's mind while reading the above (emboldened) sentence of Ms Mushtaq are:

- a. **Pseudo**—what makes Ms Mushtaq think HDP is a Pseudo (i.e. not genuine) [secular] party?
- b. **Secular**—is Ms Mushtaq's problem with secularism? If so, perhaps she should have discussed it in some detail, rather than just jumbling it up with many other issues. Too many issues in a small Article are bound to create confusion.

- c. **Ethnic**—I wonder why she used this term rather than the commonly used term “Nationalist”, which is used by many other parties such as ANP, BNP, Pashtoonkhwa MAP, MQM etc as well.

**2 HDP is a secular nationalist party.**

- a. HDP asserts that it is a secular (and **not a pseudo**-secular) party. HDP’s constitution confirms this fact, and the statements issued by its representatives, from time to time, corroborate this fact.
- b. Like all other **secular** parties, HDP states that it believes that people from all religions should be afforded equal treatment by the state. People from any one religion should not be allowed to persecute or discriminate against people from any other religion. HDP also points out to the fact that religion can be, and has been, used as a tool by certain governments (such as Iran and Saudi Arabia) to exploit unsuspecting people.
- c. HDP is a **nationalist** party, and asserts that it endeavours to bring the deprived Hazara nation (that has been persecuted and kept deprived over a very long period) at par with other nations and communities around them. Nationalists state that their struggle is against racial as well as sectarian discrimination and persecution. In short, HDP condemns religious persecution of any kind; it is against State’s patronage of any religion; it believes that Hazara people (pre-dominant majority of whom are Shia) should not allow themselves to be used by international powers such as Iran and Hizbullah for their Pan-Islamist movements.

**Now, here is how I look at the substantive points raised by Ms Mushtaq**

**1** As stated above the writer has attempted to:

- I. Discredit and malign
- i. Mr Abdul Khaliq, chairman HDP
  - ii. HDP
  - iii. Other Hazara Nationalist organisations (presumably to belittle them in comparison to religious organisations)
- II. Prove that the persecution in Quetta/ Balochistan is driven only by sectarian motives, and what is happening is **Shia** genocide and not **Hazara** genocide or ethnic cleansing.

**2** Let’s take the writer’s allegations against Mr Khaliq first. What evidence has she furnished to prove that Mr Khaliq is an ISI agent? The writer’s opinion seems to be mainly based on four things:

- (i) Mr Khaliq’s meeting with the President of Pakistan on 13<sup>th</sup> October.
- (ii) An excerpt from the Article of Mr Farrukhzad Ali.
- (iii) An Article by Mr Ejaz Haider, a columnist
- (iv) A statement alleged to have been made by Mr Khaliq four years ago, and a similar statement made by an LeJ leader.

The main issue that I take with some of the points stated by the writer is that she presents those points as undisputed and admitted facts. I will try to discuss these points in the following lines, and then leave it for the readers to decide whether these are really undisputed facts.

The writer implies that the fact that the president met with Mr Khaliq is evidence that Mr Khaliq is an ISI agent. However, in my humble view, the meeting of Hazara delegate [Not sure why the writer calls it “so-called Hazara delegate”] consisting of Khaliq, Professor Nazir and others only took place after demonstrations in 35 countries. A few weeks prior to those demonstrations, HDP along with Mr Khaliq, MNA Nasir Shah and others, had gone for demonstration in Islamabad. However, at that time they weren’t even attended to in Islamabad. The high-ups in Islamabad were either too busy to meet their own *agent* (as per Ms Mushtaq); or perhaps they considered the violence perpetrated on Hazara community to be another facet of the wide-ranging violence that has gripped the whole country, ignoring, like Ms Mushtaq, the fact that in the case of Hazaras, the violence is very specific as well as one sided only. The Hazara community in Quetta has never been known to be involved in violence themselves despite all incitement by some saleable Mullahs. The one specific incident of 6<sup>th</sup> July 1985 has its own specific context, with some Iranian agents raising empty slogans of “turning Pakistan into Lebanon”. I would have gone into that incident, but I don’t want to focus the whole piece on just one incident at the moment.

**3** The excerpt from **Mr Farrukhzad Ali’s Article** probably doesn’t merit much discussion, because it only makes an allegation that Mr Khaliq is the “incumbent ISI blue-eyed among Hazaras” without any evidence. Coming to **Mr Ejaz Haider’s Article**, the writer seems to be blowing hot and cold in the same breath. She makes allusions about Ejaz Haider—approves the title of ‘Jhangavi’ for him; disapproves the terms ‘sectarian killing’ used by Mr Haider, though she herself believes that the violence is sectarian only, etc—but at the same time quotes sentences from his Article about Mr Khaliq and approves such points as being truthful relaying of Khaliq’s account of things. She clearly is influenced by Mr Haider. Some paragraphs in the writer’s piece, such as the second last paragraph, are almost verbatim copy of Mr Haider’s Article, without clarification that they, actually, are quotations.

In this context, the following, amongst other, questions will pop up in the mind of any neutral reader:

- i. Is there any independent proof that Khaliq said what Ejaz Haider alleges he (Khaliq) said?
- ii. Even if Mr Khaliq did say what Ejaz Haider says he did—is it correct to see those sayings the way Mr Haider (and his ambivalent fan Ms Mushtaq) sees them? Do the sentences attributed to Mr Khaliq convey the meaning that Mr Haider says they do?

**4** Let’s now attend to the **similarity between Mr Khaliq** (a secular nationalist)

**and Mr Muhammad Ahmed Ludhianvi** of LeJ (a religious extremist). The writer refers to a statement allegedly made by Mr Khaliq four years ago (when he wasn't yet HDP Chairman), and by drawing similarity between that statement and a recent statement by Mr Ludhianvi, tries to establish that they both work for ISI! The writer presents Mr Khaliq's alleged statement as an undisputed fact. However, the statement alleged has always been denied by HDP and Mr Khaliq who himself has led many Ashura processions over many years. He was also a member of Shia Conference for quite a while. The writer doesn't even refer to such frequent and consistent denials! Even if it is accepted momentarily—for the sake of argument only—that Mr Khaliq did make such a statement, does it really make him similar to LeJ? LeJ foments sectarianism, whereas Mr Khaliq opposes it. LeJ considers Shias as being their enemy, but Khaliq says HDP has no problem with ordinary Sunnis or people from any religion as long as they are not violent. LeJ's modus operandi is target killing and suicide bombing; HDP's approach is democratic demonstrations and table talks. LeJ's chief may say that the sun rises in the East, and so may Mr Khaliq, but does that mean that both of them are the same kind of persons and follow the same principles?!

However, as I said earlier, there is no proof, in the first place, that Mr Khaliq has said that Ashura processions should be banned. As far as I can remember (going back four years), he was advising against the extension of the Moharram activities beyond the period that it has always spanned. In recent years, some overly religious elements in Quetta have been trying to extend the Moharram religious activities beyond the usual period which Mr Khaliq wasn't in favour of. Mr Khaliq had his reasons for his views—views supported by many educated people in Hazara society, who may not necessarily be pro-HDP in everything. Mr Khaliq has always denied that he has called for ban on Ashura processions; however, his denial isn't even discussed by the writer. Let's leave it for the readers to decide whether both Mr Khaliq and Mr Ludhianvi are on the same side or whether they are fundamentally opposed to each other in every way.

One other factor which we should never lose sight of is that any leader—even the best ones in history—can, at times, make mistakes. [One good example is Mr Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto]. Being imperfect doesn't make anyone an ISI agent.

**5 Let us now consider Mr Khaliq and HDP together.** Mr Khaliq became Chairman of Hazara Democratic Party after Shaheed Hussain Yousafi's assassination. However, HDP does not consist just of Mr Khaliq. Unlike an individual politician, the chairman of a political party is scrutinized through a system of checks and balance. His words and actions are closely watched by his party members. It is, indeed, very difficult for Mr Khaliq to say or act merely on the basis of his own whims and fancies. If he had been an individual politician, or an MPA or MNA, it may have been easier for him to be agent for anyone (no suggestion against any other MPA or MNA), but for a party Chairman it is well-nigh impossible to work for a secret agency as he is closely watched by all those around him.

**6 The role of non-HDP Hazara nationalists:** The writer talks about Nationalist

Hazaras' role in the Soviet-US war in Afghanistan. She states that Hazara Nationalists were used in that period of time by the ISI. It may be stated that HDP did not exist at the time of the Afghan War of 1980s. The people the writer is referring to are probably some members of Tanzeem-e-Nasl-e-Nau (TNN). I should probably leave it for TNN to reply to the allegations of the writer, but my point here is that Mr Khaliq, who was Vice President of HSF back then, never supported the US war against the Soviets in which the religious elements were used in the name of *Jihad* against *godless* russians, just as they are now being used in the name of *Jihad* against *American Satans*. The fact is that at that time ISI was using more of religious organisations than the secular or nationalist ones. No need to explicate this, even a child is aware of the links between ISI, the religious organisations that waged *Jihad* against Soviets, and the Taliban that occupied Afghanistan in 1996. We also know that Iran was also supporting the religious organisations back then. If Ms Mushtaq knows that some nationalists were used by establishment of Pakistan, she would also know that Mullahs too were used by the ISI as well as agencies of foreign countries such as Iran and Saudi Arabia—and much more blatantly. However, perhaps not surprisingly, she doesn't focus on these main players

7 Now coming to the second chunk of Ms Musthaq's arguments, that the problem in Balochistan is sectarian, and that what is happening is Shia '**genocide**' and not Hazara '**ethnic cleansing**'. Before discussing the distinction drawn by the writer between the two terms, let us discuss some of the surrounding issues.

According to Ms Mushtaq, HDP says that there is no religious/ sectarian problem in Pakistan. I am not sure if Khaliq or HDP has ever said that in Pakistan religious extremism and persecution doesn't exist at all. Since Zia's time, the country has been prone to much radicalisation mainly due to the so-called Jihadi organisations. Such fanaticism has, to a degree, been installed in Pakistan and is fomented by certain so-called religious elements (so-called because Islam, in my view, is a religion based on 'peace' and doesn't support extremism or persecution. Islam says that there is no compulsion in faith, and "you can follow your religion, and I will follow mine"). HDP is only saying that the solution to the religious extremism is not to be found in resorting to religious extremism. HDP espouses "secularism" (clearly repugnant to the writer), which envisions a society where State treats all religions equally. It is in the interest of Hazaras (a minority community), and all Shias (a minority faith in Pakistan) to support a secular approach by the State so that all religions are considered equal by all. That will end the persecution, not just of people from minority Muslim faiths such as Shias, but also of people from other religions such as Ahmedis, Christians etc.

The writer insists that the motive for the persecution of Hazaras in Quetta is purely sectarian. She says that religious motive has led to persecution of Pashtun Shias in Kurram, Saraiki Shias in DI Khan, Punjabi Shias in Lahore and Jhang, Muhajir and Sindhi Shias in Sindh.

It is true that Shias and a few other religious minorities in Pakistan **are** facing persecution, and have been for quite sometime. It is also arguable that dark forces behind the persecution of Hazaras may also include those who want to "cleanse" Pakistan of

Shias. However, there are many other factors also in play in the whole mayhem. The writer herself goes on to touch at another aspect of the violence (State involvement/ complicity). Nationalist Hazaras also have a view on this issue. They think that the tide of persecution in Quetta is more specific and targeted than it is elsewhere in Pakistan. Evidence for their views can be found in a lot of incidents ranging from the Attack on a Suzuki van carrying Hazara Passengers at Podgali Kerani Road, Quetta (10<sup>th</sup> Feb 2001), Murder of eleven Hazara Police cadets on 8th June 2003, right up to the segregation, lining up and execution style murder of 29 Hazaras in Lakpas/ Mastung on 20th September 2011, and the subsequent Akhtarabad calamity. The last two of these incidents caused international outrage, but for some reason these incidents don't find deserved space in Ms Mushtaq's Article. Incident she alleges that HDP has capitalized on these incidents by befooling Hazaras, implying that the Hazara diaspora in 35 countries of the world are too thick to use their own minds. Ms Mushtaq would be well-advised to go through the LeJ leaflet also which threatens Hazaras Shias in Quetta with the same fate as they met with in Afghanistan.

(I will deal with the victims from other nationalities in Balochistan later).

The main point on which HDP and nationalist Hazaras differ with Ms Mushtaq and many other **politically** religious people is that the situation of the Hazara community in Quetta has its own facets and dimensions, and may have some linkages to their past, present and future in Afghanistan as well. Sectarianism doesn't have deep roots among the ordinary people in Balochistan. There is a lot more sectarianism in Punjab than Balochistan, but Punjabis are not facing any genocidal threats in Punjab. Also, it wasn't negotiations between representatives of Shias and Sunnis in Punjab that brought calm to Punjab, but certain other political factors (which donned many newspapers at the time)—whose detail, I have to leave for some other time to allow space for the issues in Balochistan. Balochistan situation should not be childishly linked to any other areas in Pakistan without sound grounds. The main thrust of HDP—and many Hazaras that support HDP—is that the persecution of Hazaras—whatever the motives (some of which I will discuss below) —has led to their potential genocide. The effect for Hazaras is different from that for Pashtun Shias or Shias from other nationalities—which in no way means that the persecution of any other community, on the basis of religion, ethnicity or other factors—is condonable. The effect of violence and motives for persecution are not the same for all areas of Pakistan, as different areas have different strategic, political, cultural and traditional dimensions. DI Khan is probably not as strategically sensitive as Para Chanar. The traditional and political structures of Kurram are completely different from those in Balochistan. Kurram, for instance, is a heavily armed area unlike Quetta. Similarly, any independent observer of the situation in Karachi would confirm the existence of ethnic dimensions also to the issues there. Drawing any simplistic similarities between Balochistan, Kurram, DI Khan, Karachi, and Punjab (or for that matter, between Lebanon, Bahrain or Pakistan) doesn't help the people residing in those areas, nor does it serve reason and logic. Such black and white, Taliban-style analysis is bound to prevent the writer from noticing many other intricate aspects of the matter. If she has, indeed, seen those aspects but not mentioning them, then one may ask what here motive is. In my humble view, the only purpose that such artificial links may serve is the interest of Pan-

Islamist movements such as Al-Qaeda and Hizbullah, and countries like Saudi Arabia and Iran. There, of course, are a lot of differences between these organisations and countries, and, unlike Ms Mushtaq, I will not consider Al-Qaeda to be exactly the same as Hizbullah, nor Iran to be at the same pedestal as Saudi Arabia, but the fact remains that both the above organisations, and the countries, are the torch-bearers of Pan-Islamism (one for Pan-wahabism, the other for Pan-shi'ism). And it would definitely serve their purpose if someone links the persecution in various areas by some religious factors, as it will facilitate exploitation of local and national issues by international pan-Islamism movements.

It is perhaps not surprising that Ms Mushtaq has not discussed the influence of foreign countries in Balochistan, despite a passing remark about Jundullah which has cross-border operations in Iran and Pakistan. She merely alleges that HDP only exists because it magnifies the role of Iran in Balochistan. However, to all observers of the region, it is an established fact that there is a Proxy War being waged in Balochistan—with players ranging from Saudi Arabia, Iran and many others. Omitting to properly discuss this proxy war makes the discussion very lopsided and deficient. Some might call such omission as being “intellectual dishonesty”. Let’s attend to the harmful effects on the Hazaras, of these Proxy wars waged by Pan-Islamic countries and movements. (The harmful effects on other nationalities by their Pan-Islamic movements has similar story, but there isn’t much space here to discuss their situation). Today, even Shia Ulama will admit that Iran tried to influence Hazaras through Mullahs in the past (1985)—Mullahs had direct links with Irani consulates and dignitaries—and Iran’s only medium for influence today is also Mullahs. How much influence Iran now has is a different question, but Iran, evidently, has interests in the region and wants as much influence as possible, and such influence can only be waged through sectarianism. As an honest Muslim scholar, Shaheed Ismail Balkhi once said:

به رعم شيخ اگر وحدتى پديد آريم  
متاع شيعه و سنى كساد مينگرم

“If we ignore the Mullahs (that whip up sectarian issues), all people—Sunni and Shias will be united” leading to the disbandment of those organisations that can only operate with the fuel of sectarianism. It is in the interest of certain types of religious scholars and vested interests to whip up sectarian tension. And it is in the interest of Iran and Saudi Arabia that the sectarian issue is magnified. On the other hand, if things are dealt with in a secular way, all religions will have equal status to each other, and no vested interests will be able to exploit ordinary people. This is an important aspect of the current discussion—which touches on nationalism, secularism and democracy—but the writer doesn’t seem to have opened up to this dimension of the issues. Is it odd for the following question to come up in one’s mind: Is the writer worried as to why Iran and Mullahs are not being given enough attention, since an increasing number of people want to solve the problem in Balochistan in a secular rather than a (particular) religious manner?

The writer asserts that HDP is only relevant because it magnifies the ethnic side of issues and Iran’s involvement in the proxy war. The writer is belittling and patronizing a huge majority of educated Hazaras who support HDP. She considers them too thick to see the

situation on the ground. She also ignores the effect that the persecution is having on Hazaras i.e. it has led to their potential genocide. She completely ignores Hazaras' genuine antipathy towards religious fanaticism and their inclination towards a political rather than sectarian solution of the problem. She ignores the fact that HDP represents Hazaras, so have to focus on Hazaras. HDP does not represent all Shias of Pakistan, though it has huge sympathy for all those being persecuted throughout Pakistan whether because of their race, religion or language etc.

**8** I think it is very important in this discussion to attempt to find out the answers to the following two questions:

- I. Who are behind the target killers?
- II. Why are the killers doing what they are doing?

In this regard the writer says that the killers are LeJ and they are doing it because of religious motives. But she then goes on to say that the State is sponsoring these terrorist activities. If State really is involved—at one or other level (and many would agree with the writer's opinion in this regard), then it would be safe to presume that there are political motives involved and it is not just a religious or sectarian war. The writer, however, makes a jumble of things and then moves on without explaining why the problem is not political as well. She doesn't say what ISI or State's motives are behind this problem. In my view, the problem actually does lie in this delicate distinction. I am not sure why the writer doesn't want to explain this distinction properly. Perhaps she doesn't want to help her readers. Her only motive seems to be, firstly, to defile Khaliq—this she does by drawing a baseless inference; then to, on the basis of a fundamentally flawed inference, draw other inferences about the whole party (HDP), and nationalist people. The writer seems to have spent more time lambasting Khaliq, HDP, secularism, nationalism, human right activities, established and renowned writers (discussed below), and less time on attempting to propose a meaningful solution to the problem. She doesn't seem to have the moral courage to say that—like all other analysts—things are not crystal clear to anyone. Instead she has tried to convince other people of things that she probably doesn't believe herself, as discussed above. Or, if she does believe what she is saying, then she needs to think a little more. She needs to read a little more. That is the only advice one can offer to her.

## **9 The Distinction between Genocide and Ethnic cleansing:**

The writer also seems to be at great pains trying to distinguish “genocide” from “ethnic cleansing”. The writer says that the term “ethnic cleansing” should not be used as ethnic and religious lines are not always confluent. The distinction between the two, she says, depends, among other things, on the intent. In “genocide” the purpose is “destruction of ethnic, racial or religious group”, whereas in “ethnic cleansing, the purpose is the “establishment of ethnically homogenous land which may be achieved by various methods including genocide”. Then she goes on to say that the term “ethnic cleansing” is foreign and an indigenous term should be used! All this discussion seems to be geared towards one thing: Substituting sectarian killing with “Shia genocide”, as even she seems to have realized that sectarian approach is not seen favourably by people in the 21<sup>st</sup>

century. Surprisingly, she lambasts at Ejaz Haider for using the terms “Sectarian Killing”, although she herself has been trying in the whole article to prove that what is happening is sectarian killing, but should be called Shia genocide!

To Hazaras, these are two constantly developing terms with constantly changing connotations (as admitted by the writer). The distinction between ‘ethnic cleansing’ and ‘genocide’ is purely academic and of no practical significance. If any thing, Hazaras are happy to use the term “genocide”, and, in fact, “genocide” is the term they most often use. However, it would be simplistic to call the Hazara killing as “Shia genocide” [the writer is probably thinking of “Jews’ genocide, not realizing that while all Jews are co-religious and also come from the same main bloodline—at least in theory, such is not the case with all Shias] because, as detailed above, the situation in various areas of Pakistan have many more facets than just sectarian. Insisting only on the sectarian side of the issue is not realistic, and serves only to be fuel for the Pan-Islamist movements. Hazaras don’t want to get involved in the politics between Iran and Saudi Arabia, because in the battle between the big elephants, the small ants always get crushed. It is an open secret that Iran and Saudi Arabia have always had problems with each other and have been involved in the proxy wars not just in the Middle East, but in Pakistan as well. But Hazaras’ dissociation from Iran’s international movements does not mean they do not condemn other Shia or Sunni killing; just that they do not believe in foreign powers to interfere in their local and national problems. In terms of religious closeness, nationalist Hazaras much prefer to seek religious guidance from the non-political Iraq Mujtahids instead of the Iranian political rulers. It may be not be out of place to remind ourselves that not being subservient to Iranian establishment is not the same as being against Shias or Shi’ism.

**10** The writer also says that if the problem in Quetta/ Balochistan is ethnic then there must be ethnic perpetrators for that, and so—she concludes—HDP must be blaming Pashtuns and Baloch for the ethnic cleansing of Hazaras. Once again, the writer seems to have missed the point. First, as stated above, Hazaras are perfectly happy to use, and have been using, the term ‘genocide’. Secondly, in the context of the writer’s point under discussion, ethnic cleansing doesn’t have to be carried out for ethnic reasons, although it cannot be said with certainty that other ethnicities are definitely not involved. In the past, some nationalities have tried to subjugate others in various ways. But as I said earlier, ethnic cleansing doesn’t necessarily have to come from any particular ethnicity. Ethnic cleansing, as stated above, can have political as well as other motives. Now, if we go by the writer’s own reasoning—that behind ethnic violence, other ethnicities must be involved, and behind sectarian violence ordinary people from the other sect are involved,—then the writer must be hugely misguided. Ordinary masses consider religion to be their personal matters, and not something because of which to kill people from other sects or religions. Nonetheless, it is true that some elements are doing their best to radicalise Balochistan Society. We hope the writer is not one of such elements with sinister motives.

**Who do I think the perpetrators are:**

The game—by proxies and others—being played in Balochistan is too convoluted and mixed up to analyse accurately for anyone. This is the first thing that every honest analyst will confess, as things have been changing very rapidly over the last few years. However, independent analysts believe that genocide in Quetta has close nexus with the withdrawal of NATO forces from Afghanistan in 2014. Many forces have political reasons for waging the war on Hazaras and using them as pawns. However, these forces haven't been able to push the educated Hazaras of Balochistan into any sectarian or ethnic war. Hazaras, like always, have proved that they love their country Pakistan and all its inhabitants—whether Shia, Sunni etc, or Baloch, Saraiki, Pashtun, Muhajirs etc. True, Hazaras do raise friendly complaints with other communities for not raising their voices as vociferously as they should, but the Hazaras themselves always support their Baloch brothers and others against their persecution.

**11** I am always amazed at the extent to which some people can go, when they don't want to face up to the facts which are against one's set views. Something has led the writer to launch personal attacks on independent writers, human right activists, and even Amnesty International representatives. For example, she considers one Mr Saleem Javed to be a social media operative in the servitude of HDP merely because Mr Javed also believes that Hazaras have been subjected to ethnic cleansing. She considers Mr Mustafa Qadiri of Amnesty International to be a fake activist merely because Mr Qadiri also disagrees with the writer's way of looking at things. The writer also lambasts a writer of the calibre of Khaled Ahmed of Friday Times merely because he also expresses concerns about Hazaras' genocide. The writer criticizes Mr Ahmed for not blaming the target killing on Baloch! These are unique grounds for considering someone as being subservient, fake, or dishonest!

**12** The writer seems to be a bit confused over the sectarian and ethnic dimensions of the matter as explained by some of the above writers, and nationalist parties. If genuine, this would have been an understandable confusion, as what is happening in Balochistan at the hands of the persecutors really is quite convoluted. However, the writer's confusion is geared towards a well-defined, albeit flawed, inference. She says that "whenever the religious background of the issue is invoked, the situation is presented as a 'sectarian clash' in order to deprive the Hazara of the higher moral and emotional pedestal, but when the same issue is approached more sympathetically, the massacre is called 'ethnic-cleansing' and the religious/sectarian background is conveniently ignored". As stated earlier, sectarianism doesn't have roots among the people in Balochistan. The background for the issues in Balochistan is not solely sectarian, as the target killing has always been one-sided despite the Saudi and Iran's attempts to make it two-sided. So the Hazaras don't present the issue as 'sectarian clash' either when the background is invoked, or when the issue is approached sympathetically. The foreign powers, two most relevant of which were mentioned above, do try to create sectarian rift, and such powers have, in the past also, tried to carry out their agenda through Mullahs, but they never find wide-ranging approval amongst Hazaras and more and more people are getting disillusioned with them. Similarly, Saudi Arabia has also done its best to exploit Sunni Balochistan through their saleable Mullahs. However, most ordinary Shias and Sunnis have rejected the interference of these foreign powers. Therefore, it would be simplistic

to say that there is sectarian background to the issue, or a sectarian rift in Balochistan. That, of course, doesn't mean that Iran and Saudi aren't doing their best to try to create such a situation.

**13** The writer has gone on to include the names of 4 Urdu speaking, 3 Punjabi, one Brahwi, one Baltistani and one Qandhari victims of target killing. The writer's point is that it is not just Hazaras that are being targeted, but other shias also. She, therefore, concludes that the target killing is because of their being Shia and not Hazara. Once again, the writer seems to have missed the point. There is no doubt that many other ethnicities have also been killed in Balochistan. All Hazaras, nationalist or otherwise, condemn all such killings and have deepest sympathies for all the victims, as they are all human beings irrespective of their nationality or religion. However, the Hazaras don't see the situation in Balochistan in as "black and white" a manner as the writer. The one simple thing to notice is that the target killings of Hazaras have resulted in the potential genocide of Hazaras. Hazaras have a small minority in Quetta, but over 600 hundreds of them have been killed in the last few years, and over two thousand seriously injured. For them, it has meant that there is a real risk of their genocide—as stated by some renowned writers and human right activists (whom the writer considers subservient or fake, for flimsy reasons discussed above). Such has not been the case with Brahvis and other nationalities. This, however, does not condone their death. The fact that Hazaras are raising hue and cry for their genocide, does not, in any way, mean that they take the killings of their brothers from other nationalities (Baloch, Panjabi, Brahvi, Baltistani etc) or other religions (Ahmedi, Sunni, Christians etc) lightly. Their point is that sectarian approach is not the solution to the problem. They are also saying that for Hazaras the target killing has meant their genocide. As for the motives for the killing of these people from other ethnicities, there can be many. In the killing of some settlers, BLA has claimed to be involved. In killings of some others, some elements of deep State have been alleged to be involved. Some of them may well have been killed by the religious fanatics. The point is that sectarianism does not exist in Balochistan among the ordinary masses. A few fanatics are always to be found in all societies, but because of those few fanatics, no one should think that the majority of Sunnis or Shias have any deep-rooted sectarian issue amongst themselves. In fact, as soon as the foreign hands are stopped from interfering in Balochistan, these fanatics will vanish immediately as they don't have any backing amongst the ordinary citizens of Balochistan.

I don't want to draw any particular conclusions from the discussion above. I am not a professional writer, but like many other ordinary Hazaras I am deeply worried about the situation in Quetta. My analysis of the situation, I admit, is not perfect, but my point is that we should try and analyze the situation with open mind and not with a tint in our glasses. It is evident that the writer herself has a deep politically religious tint on her glasses, and that seems to have biased her views. Let me say here that it is one thing to personally believe in a particular school of thought or political way of doing things, and another thing to let such views of yours bias your writings and independent analysis. An honourable writer is one who weighs arguments on both sides of the scales before drawing any conclusions. A writer who only focuses on one side of the arguments because of his/ her views, strips him/herself of honour. One can see that the writer's bias

has caused her to grow antipathy not just for Khaliq, but for a nationalist party, nationalist people, nationalism itself and secularism also. She has spent most of her time trying to defile these entities and concepts, and less time on trying to understand and then put forward honest solutions to the problem. I hope she desists from such less-than-honest approach, because, as she might have realized, even ordinary citizens of Balochistan, can see the inconsistencies and fallacies in such myopic analyses. I invite her, and others like her, to help their fellow human beings—irrespective of their race and religion, and not to think that the whole world, except she and her group, are either in the servitude of others, fake activists, or misguided.

I believe that people, including the writer, are inherently independent, genuine and bestowed with commonsense, and they should try to preserve these God-gifted virtues and use them for the service of humanity, not for the destruction of humanity, or for maligning people and concepts that they are blindly opposed to.