

Sectarian Clashes in Pakistan

Its Causes and Objectives

By Bilal Muhajir – Wilayah Pakistan

(Translated)

The media has reported tribal clashes in Kurram Agency, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, northwest Pakistan. The media coverage was headlined as “sectarian clashes. However, the reality is quite different. Sectarianism plays a supporting, secondary role to the tribalism that is the main reason behind the ongoing tribal conflicts. These conflicts erupted over disputed land between tribes, in the almost complete absence of the local and federal government of Pakistan. Tribal infighting, during two days of land disputes, resulted in the deaths of at least 32 people on Saturday, November 23, 2024, two days after similar infighting that killed 43 people. This brings the death toll to around 150 since the summer, due to tribal infighting in the Kurram Agency, which borders Afghanistan. Tribal clashes often erupt after minor incidents or clashes between tribes, in the absence of solutions to the disputed territories, with each side claiming to be the victim.

The Pakistani provincial and federal governments, along with their security services, are watching the situation without doing anything. If they do intervene, they fuel the ongoing conflict and feed its causes, by raising a sectarian aspect to it. “The situation has deteriorated,” a senior police officer told AFP. “Angry Shiites attacked the Bagan market in the evening, which is a mainly Sunni area,” he added, explaining that “the attackers, armed with light weapons, machine guns and mortars, opened fire for three hours, and the Sunnis responded.” A local official, who requested anonymity, said, “The violence between Shia and Sunni groups continued (Saturday) in different places, and resulted in the death of 32 people, including 14 Sunnis and 18 Shiites.” Another official, Jawadullah Mahsud, said, “Hundreds of shops and houses were burned” in the Bagan market area. “We do not have enough police and administrative staff, ”another official added. He confirmed that the provincial government had been informed of the seriousness of the situation, and the urgent need to deploy additional forces.

All the parties know that the core of the conflicts between tribes of different sects, is the issue of land, where tribal honor often takes precedence over the order that the security forces seek to establish. Yet, the government and its mouthpieces in the media, as well as the Western media, insist on portraying the conflict as sectarian, not as a tribal conflict over disputed lands. This approach is in line with the policy of the regime, which seeks to incite divisions among the various segments of society. The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, a non-governmental organization that defends freedoms, considered that the recurrence of such incidents confirms the failure of the federal and provincial governments to protect the security of citizens and control the spread of weapons in the region. It is noteworthy that during this week, the mountainous region in the northwest of the country witnessed several attacks that resulted in the killing of at least 20 soldiers, while seven policemen were kidnapped for an entire day.

Since the outbreak of the American crusade against the Islamic lands, starting with Afghanistan and then Iraq, America’s policy has been based on fueling sectarian and religious differences. This is whilst the people of these countries, regardless of their religions and sects, lived in complete harmony and peace for centuries, and the differences did not appear publicly, or even secretly. In the Indian Subcontinent, which embraces a countless number of religions and sects, the people lived under the rule of Islam for centuries without any incidents of conflict being mentioned in history between them. The people of Pakistan

and Afghanistan did not know of violence differences between Sunnis and Shia, until after America and its crusader alliance invaded the region. Then the people came to know the tribes by their jurisprudential schools, and tribal affiliations such as Hazara, Pashtun and Tajik, amongst others. America used to kill or bomb from one side, and attribute it to the other side in order to fuel the causes of hatred between the people of the same Deen. America implemented the same policy in Iraq.

The people of Pakistan and Afghanistan must realize that Allah (swt) sent the great Islam to all humanity, a Deen that is free of sectarianism and religious factionalism. Allah (swt) said, ﴿وَجَاهِدُوا فِي اللَّهِ حَقَّ جِهَادِهِ هُوَ اجْتَبَاكُمْ وَمَا جَعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ مِنْ حَرَجٍ مِلَّةَ أَبِيكُمْ إِبْرَاهِيمَ هُوَ سَمَّاكُمُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِ وَفِي هَذَا لِيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ شَهِيدًا عَلَيْكُمْ وَتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ فَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَاعْتَصِمُوا بِاللَّهِ هُوَ مَوْلَاكُمْ فَنِعْمَ الْمَوْلَىٰ وَنِعْمَ النَّصِيرُ﴾ **“Strive in the Cause of Allah in a manner worthy of that striving. He has chosen you for His task, and He has not laid upon you any hardship in Deen. Keep to the faith of your father Abraham. Allah named you Muslims earlier, and even in this Book, such that the Messenger may be a witness over you, and that you may be witnesses over all mankind. So establish Salah, and pay Zakat, and hold fast to Allah. He is your Protector. What an excellent Protector. What an excellent Helper!”** [TMQ Surah Al-Hajj 22:78] The Messenger of Allah (saw) said in the Farewell Pilgrimage, «لا فضل لعربي على عجمي، ولا لعجمي على عربي، ولا لأبيض على أسود، ولا لأسود على أبيض إلا بالتقوى، الناس من آدم، وآدم من تراب» **“There is no superiority for an Arab over an Ajam, nor for an Ajam over an Arab, nor for a white over a black, nor for a black over a white, except by piety. People are from Adam (as), and Adam was from dust.”** [Al-Bayhaqi]. Islam also ordered the resolution of differences by referring them to the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet (saw). Allah (swt) said, ﴿وَمَنْ يَقْتُلْ مُؤْمِنًا مُتَعَمِدًا فَجَزَاؤُهُ جَهَنَّمُ خَالِدًا فِيهَا وَغَضِبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَلَعَنَهُ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُ عَذَابًا عَظِيمًا﴾ **“And whoever kills a believer intentionally, his recompense is Hellfire, wherein he will abide eternally, and Allah has become angry with him and has cursed him and has prepared for him a great punishment.”** [TMQ Surah An-Nisaa 4:93].

Finally, Muslims must realize that the absence of the Khilafah Rashidah (rightly guided Caliphate) that unites their ranks and resolves differences, is the reason behind all of these conflicts. Their problems will not be resolved except by the return of Islam as a system of life, by establishing the Khilafah Rashidah that unifies their affairs and ends the injustice amongst them. It is the Messenger of Allah, Muhammad (saw), who resolved the dispute between the Arab tribes, the Aws and the Khazraj, establishing brotherhood between them and the muhajjiroon, as soon as he (saw) arrived in Madinah and established the Islamic state. Therefore, it is obligatory for every believer to work to establish the Islamic state, so that there is a Bayah to a Khaleefah Rashid behind whom the Muslims fight, and by whom the Muslims are protected, and who resolves the dispute between the people.