

POPULATION EXCHANGE BASICS, and COMPARISON with 1923 TURKEY GREECE EXCHANGE overseen by THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

The idea of a population exchange is a delicate subject to talk about. Some people will react very quickly and yell 'that's ethnic cleansing!' However, we want to resolve the non-ending and ever-growing conflict with a population exchange that is not forced, but will be chosen because of financial incentive and the obvious reality that people can have a safe and more productive future.

It is a project that will take acceptance of reality, discussion, planning, money from other countries, and participation by other countries and world bodies. It, however, should not include the OIC (Organization of Islamic Cooperation) because of its overwhelming bias and total affiliation with one side only. The Rakhine people will take the moral high-ground, and conduct this with fairness, and humanity - as long as they are not targeted with more violence.

Let's compare with a population exchange between Greece and Turkey in 1923. It was authorized by the League of Nations (predecessor to the United Nations) under the leadership of Fridtjof Nansen, an experienced Norwegian diplomat, with expertise in settling Russian refugees and others, after World War 1. The exchange involved about 2 million people - about the same number that may be the case in Arakan / Bangladesh.

In Turkey (as the Ottoman Empire, until its abolition in 1922, and then the Republic of Turkey) there had already been some of the most horrific massacres targeting non-Muslim Armenians, Assyrians, and Greeks in 1915. These were the massacres that lead to the new term of 'Genocide'. It was an absolute Jihad - a 'holy' war by the Muslim Turks against the infidels (non-believers of Islam; derogatory term) which resulted in 2-3 million deaths. Somewhat parallel situation considering the Bangladesh War of Independence in 1971, with 3 million killed.

Now, back to 1923, there were still well over a million Greeks in parts of Turkey, who did not have any reasonable, or safe future - similar to the Buddhists, Hindus and Christians in Bangladesh. The intolerance of the Turks toward any non-Muslims, and the absolute supremacy of the Muslims was simply going to kill or drive out all infidels, and that would never change. Look at Turkey right now, and look at Bangladesh right now. (I do want to say, I know Turks here in the US, and Bengalis, who are great reasonable and tolerant people - they left their countries to leave their religion, and its hatred, and they do not represent their countries of origin).

As the country of Greece was receiving waves of refugees streaming in from Turkey, with horrifying stories of death and destruction, the Greeks wanted to get rid of its own problematic Turkish Muslim population, of about 354,000. What the Greeks did NOT do is massacre them as the Turks had been doing again and again.

The population exchange agreement had provisions for people to register and assess a value to their home or property that they will leave if they could not sell it, register and protect the belongings that they would carry with them, and their belongings that they could not take would be listed and submitted to both governments so that the people could be compensated with equivalent goods. This is a very very important part of a population exchange. With guarantees and incentives, tax breaks, and cash to start a business people can realize that this is an opportunity to have a safer, better, happier, life and future - not only for themselves, but their families and their culture. Everything did not go perfectly of course, but considering the genocides that could have happened, and would have happened, the exchange was the better course of action at that time.

An exchange would result in no real population gain by either Bangladesh or Myanmar, negating Bangladesh's argument that it cannot take in more people.

There is no way for the Buddhists to live with a Muslim majority - or even a large minority. No matter what 'peaceful living together' methods are tried or suggested the sad truth is that the Muslims will kill all others again and again, as they have again and again, and as their Qu'ran instructs them to do again and again.

As I mentioned earlier, the Rakhine people can and should get their leaders to start this dialog and action, and do it with fairness and humanity.

If the situation breaks down into all-out war, then we have to fight an all-out war that is not our choosing. But, if it is their choosing, then we have to fight, and in war one must fight to win, and to eliminate the danger, so that peaceful life can resume again without the threat of violence again.

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