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Hope died in Afghanistan

Tuesday, 24 August 2021



By **Gregory H. Stanton**

This is an opinion article by an external contributor. The views belong to the writer.



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Zainab, a 27-year-old Hazara woman from Bamiyan, Afghanistan gave birth to her first baby in a Kabul maternity clinic run by **Doctors Without Borders.**

She joyfully named her baby Omid, "Hope" in Dari. Her mother-in-law, **Muhammadi, explained,** "We gave him the name Omid. Hope for a better future, hope for a better Afghanistan, and hope for a mother who has been struggling to have a child for years."

Four hours after Omid's birth, three gunmen disguised as police opened fire in the maternity ward, murdering sixteen mothers, two newborns, and a Doctors Without Borders midwife. Omid lay dead on the floor covered in blood.

Muhammadi wept, "I brought my daughter-in-law to Kabul so she would not lose her baby. Today we'll take his dead body to Bamiyan."

This May in the same Hazara neighborhood, Dasht-e-Barchi, 85 schoolgirls were murdered in a triple bombing as they left the Syed Al-Shahada school. Most of them were Hazaras.

Since 2015, Islamist terrorist attacks have killed **at least 1,200 Hazaras**. The attacks deliberately target their hospitals and children. These are war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Because they are intended to destroy a substantial part of the Hazara ethnic and religious group, they are also acts of genocide.

The Taliban have **“kill lists”** with names of Afghans who oppose them. The "kill lists" are posted online.

One ethnic and religious group has been on the Taliban's "kill list" since the 1990's: the Hazaras.

The Hazaras live in central Afghanistan around Bamiyan, the place where the Taliban notoriously blew up two huge Buddhas carved into the face of a cliff.

The Hazaras were victims of genocide under the Iron Emir, Abdur Rahman Khan, in 1888-1893, when they resisted his consolidation of Afghanistan. **Over half of the Hazara population died.** The Hazaras are again in grave peril of genocide.

The Taliban targeted the Hazara minority when the Taliban ruled Afghanistan. They will do so again. This time, the Islamic State -

Khorasan Province (IS-KP)
will join in the genocide.

The Taliban and IS-KP are
Sunni Muslims and the
Hazaras are Shia Muslims.
The Taliban and IS-KP
condemn Hazaras as
heretics. The punishment
for heresy is death.

The Hazaras are ethnically
distinct from other
Afghans. They speak their
own dialect of Dari.

The coming Hazara
genocide in Afghanistan is
preventable. The U.S. and
NATO must warn the
Taliban that if the Taliban
or IS-KP commit any more
massacres against the
Hazara or any other ethnic
group, U.S. and NATO
forces will return to
protect them.

Press reports from
Afghanistan portray the
Afghan conflict as a
"forever civil war." The
"conventional wisdom" is
that America should stay
out of civil wars. This
isolationist "wisdom"
ignores the fact that most
genocides occur during
civil wars. It assumes that
civil wars cannot be won
with support for local
forces opposed to tyranny.

If we ignore the clear
warnings of the coming
Hazara genocide with
apathy, we will abandon
our moral duty to people
who have loyally supported
Americans for twenty
years. America will again

become a Bystander to
genocide.

If we abandon Afghanistan,
we will forget the horror of
Khmer Rouge Cambodia, a
nation we also abandoned.

I was one of the first
Americans to live in
Cambodia in 1980 after
Vietnam defeated the
Khmer Rouge. One of the
first to walk through the
mass graves. Among the
first to listen to the
survivors.

I will never forget a woman
named Gai Maryam, who
asked me, "Why did you
abandon us?"

I didn't have a good
answer.

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*This article was prepared
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