



Islamabad-based research think-tank MUSLIM Institute organized a round table discussion on "Independence Day of Somalia: A Question of Socio, Economic and Political Independence". Former Ambassador to Kenya Shafqat KakaKhel and Usman Hassan Research Associate MUSLIM Institute, were the Speakers in the Round Table Discussion. Representatives from different Think Tanks, Universities and Media participated in the Discussion.



Usman Hassan

Research Associate MUSLIM Institute

Usman Hassan, Research Associate MUSLIM Institute, made a presentation on the history and current state of crisis of Somalia. He informed that Somalia forged better relations with USA in 1980s after having differences with Soviet Union.

USA supported Somalia in defense and also provided financial support despite the fact that Barre's dictatorship was against people's will. Therefore civil war started in 1980s and Barre's regime ended in 1991. Since then, no strong central government has been established in the country. As a result of weak government and civil war, infrastructure and agriculture were destroyed, causing outbreak of famine in 1992, that killed about 0.2 million people. UN and USA sent peacekeeping missions in Somalia. According to many analysts, the apparent purpose of this mission was peacekeeping and strengthening the federal government but in fact it was aimed at occupying natural resources of Somalia. This further aggravated crisis in the country. International organizations failed in controlling famine, strengthening government and restoring peace.



In 1995, all peace missions were pulled out of Somalia. Political stability could not be achieved in the country and Somalia had war with Ethiopia in 2006. United States also carried out bombardment and drone strikes during this period wherein mostly civilians were victims. Due to weather conditions and war, Somalia faced worst famine in 2010 and food was scarce. In a period of two years more than 2.5 million people died among them majority was of children.

Usman Hassan said that death of people due to hunger at a time when according to an estimate, developed countries waste 222 million tons of food per year which is equal to total production of Sub-Saharan Africa, should be an eye-opener for world powers. Today millions of people in Somalia are waiting for assistance from international organizations. They want to enjoy not only territorial independence but also political, social, economic emancipation and distinct identity. They want a homeland where neither world powers dictate their policies nor do clans and tribes fight against each other, causing eruption of civil war. In that country Somali people define their own future and can live along international community with honor and dignity.



Shafqat KakaKhel

Former Ambassador to Kenya
Ambassador Shafqat Kaka Khel speaking on the occasion said that Somalia is facing severe human crisis. Its solution is very necessary and no one will come to solve that issue from outside. Muslims are responsible to solve this problem. Somalia has trade potential and it was trade center historically.

Somalia was a hub of trade between Asia and Africa in the middle ages. People of Somalia played vital role to promote Islam in Africa. In Africa there is hardly any state that does not have Muslim population and this credit goes to Somalis. Somalia was the colony of British Empire and Italy after Second World War. At the time of independence, British Empire gave Somali parts to Ethiopia and Kenya. Therefore after Somalia's independence, it has disputes with Ethiopia and Kenya.



He further said that in Somalia specially and in Muslim countries generally, political elite is more concerned with serving personal interest than serving people at large and this is a major reason for crisis in Somalia. Political failure in Somalia caused human crisis. There are warlords, who are

busy in civil war and every one of them wants to get power and be the President of Somalia. Warlords are selfish and do not agree on national alliance. During peace keeping missions, some US troops raped women of warlords after that warlords attacked UN forces in which 23 Pakistani soldiers also lost their lives. Despite killings of Pakistan soldiers, Pakistan continued its peacekeeping mission in Somalia and ran two hospitals for which Somali people are thankful to Pakistani soldiers.



Ambassador Shafqat Kaka Khail opined that external interference and patronage of warlords has to be checked to control situation in Somalia. Further, leading Muslim countries should play vibrant role in bringing warring factions to negotiation table to evolve a national consensus for restoration of peace and stability in the country and for formation of effective central government. Simultaneously, urgent measures on the part of Muslim world as well as other international agencies are warranted to address human crisis prevailing in Somalia

to contain loss of human lives on large scale due to hunger and diseases.

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