

Speech of Malalai Joya in Australia

March 2007

In the name of Democracy and Peace,

Dear friends,

First of all I would like to thank UNIFEM who invited me for the tour of Australia and regards to all other friends who worked hard to organize events and many different programs for me so I could share the painful voice and sufferings of Afghan people with you.

By inviting me here and providing this opportunity for me to speak about the terrible crisis in Afghanistan and disastrous conditions of its people and particularly women, you have in fact given a helping hand to pro-Democracy and anti-fundamentalist voice of Afghan people. You play your role in raising awareness on what is going on in my devastated country.

Honorable friends,

Five years after the collapse of the misogynist and anti-democracy regime of the Taliban, and after almost five years of the US led attack on Afghanistan; you may expect that I describe the achievements and positive outcomes in Afghanistan, but I am sorry to tell you that Afghanistan is a land still burning in two-fold fire.

The US government did remove the medieval-minded regime of Taliban and their Al Qaeda masters. But instead they brought back the "Northern Alliance" to power who are brothers-in-creed of the Taliban and as brutal and anti-democracy as Taliban and even worse.

Today Afghan people are hostage in the hands of the most brutal enemies of democracy and human rights and many evil men responsible for killing of tens of thousands of innocent people in the past 2 decades are in power and hold the key positions. A recent report by Human Rights Watch about war criminals in Afghanistan and hanging of Saddam Hussain scared Afghan criminals and now they are trying to block the way for their prosecution. Few days ago the warlord MPs, presented a bill in the parliament according to which no one can file a case or prosecute anyone for committing war crimes in the past 25 years. I and few other MPs voiced against it but

as the fundamentalist warlords who hold over 80% of the seats, approved the bill easily which will provide immunity to all criminals. This bill is an abuse to Afghan people who have suffered terribly in the past 3 decades and according to a survey conducted by Independent Human Rights Commission of Afghanistan, over 80% of Afghan people are for prosecution of those responsible for the past crimes and brutalities and see to it as the only way to experience a bright future in Afghanistan.

In December 2003, as a representative to the grand assembly, I talked about the criminal “Northern Alliance” and the danger they would pose to Afghanistan. But today, most governments and world institutions accept that Afghanistan is a fail state which goes towards disasters.

I must tell you that unfortunately there has been NO fundamental change in the plight of Afghan people. When the entire nation is living under the shadow of gun and warlordism, how can its women enjoy very basic freedoms? Unlike the propaganda raised by certain Western media, Afghan women and man are not “liberated” at all. Today even some important world organizations confirm this fact.

Last year the UN announced that Afghanistan under the US troops can become a narco-state but now the UN Office of Drugs and Crime reported that Afghanistan produces 92 per cent of the world’s supply of opium. And all of it happens under the very nose of the thousands of foreign troops and high ranking officials like ministers and deputy ministers etc. have links with the drugs mafia.

Today, we have a mafia system in Afghanistan and our so-called government is deeply implicated by drug mafia and warlordism. US-supported Karzai and its westernized intellectuals have joined hands with the fundamentalists of any brand to impose this mafia-system on our people.

This is the main reason for today’s problems and deadlock in Afghanistan, but media and Western governments try to underestimate it and concentrate on second degree issues as main reasons for Afghanistan’s crisis.

Let’s describe the tip of the iceberg on the reality of life in my crying country:

According to the United Nations it is a land that is facing health disaster worse than Tsunami. 700 children and 50-70 women die on daily basis owing to the lack of health

services. Child and mother mortality rate is still very high as 1,600 to 1,900 women among each 100,000 die during childbirth. Life expectancy is below 45 years.

Women's rights situation is as catastrophic as it was under the Taliban. The number of suicide cases by Afghan women was never so high as it is today: A month ago eighteen year old Samiya, hung herself by a rope as she was supposed to be sold to a sixty year old man. Another woman called Bibi Gul locked herself up in the animals' stable and committed self-immolation, later her family found nothing except her bones.

According to recent UNIFEM survey, 65% of the 50,000 widows in Kabul see suicide the only option to get rid of their miseries and desolation, and that majority of Afghan women are victims of mental and sexual violence.

The crimes and brutalities of the fundamentalist warlords are still going on even under the nose of the US and ISAF troops. "Northern Alliance" gunmen raped fourteen-year old Fatima and her mother, 11 year old Rahima and 60 year old grand mother, a land where 30 year old Amina was stoned to death, where Nadia Anjuman easily became victim of her husband's violence because he is sure that he has the support of warlords of the misogynist "Northern Alliance", where 11 year old Sanobar, the only daughter of an unfortunate widow is abducted, raped and then exchanged with a dog by warlords. A land where human dignity has no price and killing someone is as easy and normal as killing a bird.

Under the Taliban, the vice and virtue department became a notorious symbol of arbitrary abuses, particularly against Afghan women and girls, but today Afghan cabinet once again decides to reestablish this dreadful department instead of focusing on more acute needs of the Afghan society.

In a country which needs much reconstruction efforts, 40% of its workforce is unemployed and a gross-majority is living bellow the poverty line. Afghanistan stands 175th out of 177 countries of the UN Human Development Index.

This is happening in a country that has received 12 billion dollars while another 10 billion more have been pledged. But this money will mainly fill the pockets of warlords to better suppress our nation more severely.

The so-called "freedom of speech" in Afghanistan is another joke with our people. US-

based Committee to Protect Journalists, in a statement stated last year. "Afghan journalists are facing severe pressure from the Afghan authorities, including threats, intimidation, even imprisonment and murder."

Let me describe my own recent experience: In early February this year, on the passage of infamous bill for amnesty of war criminals in the parliament, I had an interview with a local TV channel; they had interviewed some other people including Sayyaf, who is a wanted criminal and member of the parliament. The TV broadcasted the advertisement of the program a number of times in which they showed some parts of my interview, after which Sayyaf himself calls the TV station and threaten them that if Joya's interview is broadcasted, the consequences will be dangerous for the director, so they resort to censorship and exclude me from the program. And this is not the first time that I am being censored in the media, many journalists are too afraid to report my comments.

Those who speak for justice are threatened by death, on May 7, 2006, I was physically attacked by pro-warlord and drug-lord MPs in the parliament just for speaking the truth --crimes of Northern Alliance. One of them even shouted "prostitute, take and rape her!"

President Hamid Karzai instead of relying on people to bring the criminal warlords to trial appoints these criminals to higher posts. Due to his criminal-fostering policies people of Afghanistan hate him as someone equally responsible for the current catastrophe. Even CIA admitted in its report recently that he has lost people's support and has no control out of Kabul.

It is due to the tragic situation in Afghanistan that returning to Afghanistan is an unattractive option for the 4 million registered Afghan refugees living in Iran and Pakistan.

Afghan government is perhaps the most corrupt and unpopular in the world, the UN Security Council mission to Afghanistan recently announced that if serious steps are not taken, Afghanistan will become a failed state.

Dear friends,

The US government keeps promising not to repeat its past mistake in supporting the

fundamentalists. But agonizing truth is that US is committing the same mistake. She is generously supporting the fundamentalists more than ever. The US is relying on “Northern Alliance” who turned Afghanistan into a hell from 1992-1996 and still is a great threat to the stability and peace in my country.

Kathy Gannon, an expert in Afghanistan justly states that “the US is not interested in peace in Afghanistan. The people who killed thousands, who patronized the drug business are in charge of the country.”

Afghans, all justice-loving people, and international human rights organizations are demanding the trial of warlords and former pro-Moscow puppets. But they are not brought to justice but rather shamelessly were offered higher positions and were given opportunity to find their way into the parliament with the support of US and its allies.

The US government puts Gulbuddin Hekmatyar in the list of most wanted terrorists, but his party has 34 members in the Afghan parliament which was elected in an undemocratic and fraudulent election. US could work with pro-American fundamentalist, but oppose only anti-American fundamentalists. This is the reason that people make mockery of the “war on terror”.

The parliamentary election itself was a shame to democracy while the Western media called it a great success. According to HRW the parliament is packed with more than 70 percent elements accused of war crimes, including members of Russian puppet regime, drug dealers, Taliban and “Northern Alliance” killers.

Dear friends,

The USA is not concerned with the main cause behind terrorism in Afghanistan. That is why our people don't consider the US as “liberator” of our country. Even they have killed thousands of our innocent civilians during its so-called “war on terror” and continue to target civilians.

I hope you have realized from the small parts of problems that I just shared with you that my country is still in chains of bloody and terrorist fundamentalists. The situation in Afghanistan and conditions of its ill-fated women will never change positively, as long as the warlords are not disarmed and both the pro-US and anti-US terrorists are removed from the political scene of Afghanistan.

I think that no nation can donate liberation to another nation. Liberation is not money to be donated; it should be achieved in a country by the people themselves. The ongoing developments in Afghanistan and Iraq prove this claim. People of other countries only can give us a helping hand and support.

I think that Australia could play a great role. If Australian policy-makers really want to help Afghan people and bring positive changes, they must align their policies according to the aspirations and wishes of Afghan people, rather than follow the policy of the US and try to act independently. They must recognize the needs of Afghan people and stop any kind of support to the warlords and reactionary and ignorant element within the system. Only by such policy, they can gain people's trust and will prove themselves as real friends of Afghan people.

Unfortunately the US government always relies on the most dirty and brutal bands in Afghanistan. But all other peace-loving countries must prove to our people that they are relying on poor Afghan people and its democratic-minded individuals and groups. This is the only correct policy that can help Afghan people and guarantee a bright future for Afghan people. True friends of Afghan people must care to the voice of our men and women for justice; they should realize that existence of the fundamentalist groups of any brand as political and military forces, is the core and main cause of all the problems in Afghanistan. They should know that bringing the Northern Alliance to power was the key to all the disasters that we are experiencing today.

The effectiveness and usefulness of the ISAF troops is very much dependent on policies of all those governments who have troops in our country. I urge Australia once again to act independently.

I want to ask all real friends and well-wishers of Afghanistan people to stress on the fact that criminals like Sayyaf, Rabbani, Qanooni, Mohaqiq, Fahim, Dostum, Mullah Rakiti, the former Russian puppets should be removed from power and put on trial.

I am well aware of the hardships, challenges, and death from anti-democracy forces, but I trust my people. One day they may kill me as they have gun and power and support of the US government, but they can never silence my voice and hide the truth. I am proud to be a beacon of hope for my people and enjoy strong support from their side in my mission for democracy and freedom. I expect from Afghan young generation living everywhere else in the world that they must not forget their people and by supporting democratic-minded anti-fundamentalist forces and individuals, who work inside Afghanistan with huge difficulties, they can play their due role in pushing their motherland towards a prosperous future.

Your moral and material support gives me more power and determination to fight the enemies of democracy and humanity in my devastated Afghanistan.

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