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BANGLADESH : Genocide in Bangladesh, the politics of disinformation

Genocide in Bangladesh, the politics of disinformation

By Paulo Casaca (*)

SADF (25.03.2022) – <https://bit.ly/360mpMY> – For the whole eleven years during which I have been actively engaged in South Asia, nothing touched me more than the Bangladeshi

people's struggle for memory, justice, and accountability regarding the Genocide perpetrated against Bangladesh by the Pakistani military authorities. This genocide, organised in tandem with Islamic fanatic organisations from both West and East Pakistan, was meant to destroy the Bengali identity by murdering elites, destroying religious diversity, and raping women.

From the successive events and writings throughout both Europe and Bangladesh, my most vivid memories are those written in the wake of the visit to the Burn and Plastic Surgery Unit of the Dhaka Medical College Hospital – where countless victims of the Islamist terror actions were being dealt with. At face-value, the issue was related to the supposedly faulty conditions of the coming elections; however, as 'Zead-Al-Malum – public prosecutor of the ICT – explained in a public conference on the 7th [December, 2013], 'protests would vanish if the Government was to accept demands to dissolve the Tribunal' [International Crimes Tribunal of Bangladesh (ICT)] ([Casaca, 2013a](#)). All the protests regarding the lack of those elections' democratic credentials were nothing but a smoke screen used to hide the fundamental goal by Islamists to obtain impunity for the genocide's culprits.

None of these facts were ever available in the Western press, and I would have certainly not understood what was going on had I not been in Dhaka myself, speaking to doctors, magistrates, academics, or simple citizens. Quite the contrary, a meticulously built, fictitious reality wherein this genocide's master minders were presented as 'opposition leaders', 'businessmen' or 'religious entities' – mercilessly persecuted by an authoritarian government – was shamelessly hammered throughout the western press (and most in particular by some NGO such as 'Human Rights Watch'; [Casaca,](#)

2013b; Casaca, 2018).

Realising to what extent reality was turned upside down, how the very same organisations supposed to 'watch' for the respect of 'human rights' were actually working for providing impunity to genocide perpetrators, was extremely shocking. In fact, I would not have been able to cope with it had I not witnessed before, in Iraq, a similar action from this very same 'Genocide Cleansing Incorporated' organisation – aiming at purging responsibilities from the Iranian Islamist authorities regarding the genocide committed in 1988 against their own opposition. The same modus operandi was followed in both cases: blaming victims of genocide for human-rights violations. (Brie et al., 2005).

In SADF's latest contribution dedicated to the Bangladeshi genocide (Uddin, 2022), Professor Uddin quoted 'The Ten Stages of Genocide' as described by Gregory Stanton in 1996 (classification, symbolization, discrimination, dehumanization, organization, polarization, preparation, persecution, extermination, and denial).

The last twenty-five years taught us that we must add a completely new stage to that process: reversal. For the denial stage has been transformed into a more complex category of disinformation.

Disinformation is not so much about lying (or at the very least, simply, outright lying). It is rather about creating doubts; magnifying distorted, secondary points and denying on this basis a whole narrative; distorting a context and –

perhaps the most modern technique – disinforming in the name of ‘the fight against disinformation’ ([SADF, 2021](#)).

This last disinformation strategy is itself a reversal: one that is also used on narratives relating to genocides. As I predicted at the time: ‘No degree of appeasement short of complete surrender to a talibanised Bangladesh would do the trick’ ([Casaca, 2013a](#)). This prediction became more worryingly closer to reality after the re-talibanisation of Afghanistan ([Casaca, 2021b](#)).

Six months after the Taliban take-over of Kabul – in the now famous words of the Pakistani Prime Minister on the occasion, the date where Afghans had broken the ‘shackles of slavery’ ([SADF, 2022](#)) – we witness inaction by the international community regarding the role of Pakistan in this major crime (against human-rights in general and women rights in particular). The timely ‘[Afghanistan Counterterrorism, Oversight, and Accountability Act of 2021](#)’ introduced by a group of US representatives was ignored and indeed reversed by the Biden Administration.

In fact, in complete contrast with this inaction, we did see the Biden Administration distinguishing Pakistan as a democracy and Bangladesh as a non-democracy, coupling this stamp with a set of sanctions ([US Department of Treasury, 2021](#)).

Human-rights violations cannot be accepted anywhere in the world, and of course no exception is to be made ever. Notwithstanding, the real issue is whether whatever excesses

allegedly committed by Bangladesh's security forces can ever be compared with the human-rights catastrophe of the re-talibanisation of Afghanistan.

Can this condoning of the re-talibanisation of Afghanistan, the whitewashing of Pakistan's responsibilities on this disaster, and the simultaneous diplomatic war on Bangladesh be interpreted in any other way than as condoning the Islamic, fanatic attack on the largest secular Muslim country in the World?

Can we forget that this is simultaneous with the [praising of the radical faction of Wahabism \(the Qatar Emirate\)](#) and the [war on the first Saudi leader](#) with the [courage to dissociate his country from Wahabism](#)?

Can we downplay the Biden Administration's siding with the Iranian aggression against the Arab World by aiming at a [nuclear deal](#) while whitewashing Iran's terror outfits such as [Ansar Allah](#)?

Can we forgive this administration for, instead of apologising for its past cooperation with the Genocide perpetrators – so courageously exposed by US diplomats like [Archer Blood](#) – siding once more with these very same genocide perpetrators, in a strategy that aims at the talibanisation of Bangladesh?

No, we cannot. Both because of the respect we owe to the victims of the Bangladesh's genocide and for the sake of freedom, democracy, and human rights everywhere in the world –

starting with the United States itself.

In these circumstances, nothing would serve less the interests of the real human rights defenders than turning a blind eye on the horrendous crimes against humanity perpetrated by the Russian invading forces in Ukraine in the name of whatever simplistic, dichromatic geopolitics. The heroic resistance headed by President Zelensky is achieved despite the Western appeasers, not on behalf of an imagined NATO threat to Russia.

The Ukrainians heroically resisting the imperial onslaught on their country, the Mozambicans resisting the Jihad developed in their country to knock-down the country's gas potential competition ([Casaca, 2021a](#)), and the Bangladeshis fighting for their identity, honour and life all deserve the very same respect.

As these lines are being written shortly before the 25 March celebration of the Bangladesh Genocide Memorial Day ([Foreign Service Academy Bangladesh, 2022](#)), human rights defenders should be hopeful for some apologies by those engaged in genocide information reversal.

Reading the Human Rights Watch's website on the occasion of the Genocide Memorial Day of 2021 ([Human Rights Watch, 2021](#)) gives us little hope this will happen. Instead of any apologies or change in attitude, we can see the continuation of the same policy of reversing the role of victims and aggressors.

Using as pretext the drama of fire victims in a Rohingya refugee camp in Kutupalong, the text – dated exactly from the 25th of March, 2021, whereas the fire happened days before – is mis-constructed to erase the fact that Bangladesh offered refuge to over one million victims of genocide. In fact, Bangladesh was forced to set barriers in the camp because of actions by Islamic extremists. Human Rights Watch's text had the effect, once more, of reversing the role of genocide perpetrators and genocide victims, in the case of the Rohingya, also blaming Bangladesh, the only country that assisted the victims of this modern genocide.

And, therefore, it is so important, on the 25th of March 2022, for all genuine human rights defenders, to get together with Bangladeshis and together with them say: remember the genocide and demand responsibilities from perpetrators!

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