

The Militant White Terror Attack in the US State of Virginia shows that Freedom and Democracy does not bring Harmony between People

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A car driven by a neo Nazi, James Alex Fields Jr., was driven into a crowd of counter protesters during a “Unite the Right” rally of white nationalist and other right-wing groups in the town of Charlottesville, Virginia on the 12th of August, 2017. The attack killed a 32-year-old woman, Heather D. Heyer, and injured 19 others. At least 34 people in total were reported to have been injured during 2 days of violence, and the governor of Virginia declared a state of emergency in Charlottesville. The far-right rally began the previous evening with a march through the local university by hundreds of extremists bearing torches, as a symbol of the racist violence of the Klu Klux Klan who would terrorize black people and set their homes on fire. Counter protesters gathered the next day as the “Unite the Right” were demonstrating against a plan to remove the statue of a General Lee from a city park. General Lee was a leading Confederate general from the American Civil War, which ended formal slavery in the US with the defeat of the Confederacy in 1865. The following points are worthy of note:

- The issue of race has not been settled in the US, despite the passing of 150 years since the abolition of slavery. Black people in the US are still living under the threat of racial violence. They are killed in disproportionate numbers by white policemen, and many towns and provinces in the US are divided by race. In 2015, nine black churchgoers in Charleston, South Carolina, were massacred by white supremacist Dylann Roof More. This incident led to the removal of more than 60 Confederate monuments or symbols that are considered to be a glorification of slavery and the oppression of blacks. However, the feelings of white supremacy remain amongst many, and the removal of their symbols has enraged them leading to this latest demonstration and violent attack.

- The US culture of guns and freedom tolerates militancy, and white supremacists paraded in combat clothing holding high powered assault rifles during this latest demonstration. Such a spirit of provocation by private citizens is a sign of the failure of US freedom to protect basic human values. Islam endorses a society where citizens are safe from one another. The companions of the Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, told us they were travelling with the Prophet. One man fell asleep and some of them took his rope as a joke, then he panicked. So the Prophet said, «لَا يَجُزُّ لِمُسْلِمٍ أَنْ يَرَوْعَ مُسْلِمًا» “It is not lawful for a Muslim to frighten another Muslim.” (Source: Sunan Abu Dawud 5004).

- The double standards towards black and white in the US are matched by those towards Islamist and white supremacist violence. US President Trump refused to condemn the white supremacist groups behind the violence, and he received criticism for that. However, Thomas P. Bossert, the White House Homeland Security adviser, tried to defend the president saying he had not wanted to “dignify the names of these groups of people.” It is strange that Trump did not want to name those far-right groups who commit violence and murder in the name of hate when he was elected on a campaign pledge to name Islam as the cause of terror in the world despite the fact that white supremacist attacks result in 3 times as many deaths in the US as those caused by terrorism committed by Muslims. The far-right are Trump’s power-base and he will not offend them by calling them by name or accusing them of a centuries long campaign of terror against black Americans.

- Fear is widespread in the US, and 150 years after slavery, the first black deputy mayor of Charlottesville, Wes Bellamy, is trying to remove the statue that many black people see as a symbol of hate and oppression. Mr Bellamy said, "I get hate mail and death threats every day. I've been told I will be hung from this statue. I've been told I will be hung from the trees in this park," in response to his efforts.

Freedom and democracy do not guarantee peace and harmony between nations or within the nation. The US is showing the world that its system is failing its own people, and is a source of violence and terror throughout the world, and yet the US is trying to force its way all over the planet. It threatens North Korea, then China then Venezuela in one day and other countries another day and claims that its way is the way of peace and yet there is no peace. The arrogance of such oppression was mentioned in the holy Quran:

﴿كَذَلِكَ يَطْبَعُ اللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ قَلْبٍ مُنْكَرٍ جَبَّارٍ﴾

“Thus does Allah seal up the heart of every arrogant, tyrant.” [Surat Al Ghaafir: 35]