

Farewell to Afghanistan

A few days ago I was in a crowded bus on my way to the gym. A woman was standing in the aisle, talking with some other women. They were talking about the dire situation in Afghanistan, and how almost everyone wants to leave the country.

One of the women said that if someone killed our president, they would not be committing a crime. You could tell from her eyes and her voice how utterly tired she was of everything. She and her family had wanted to leave the country several times, but hadn't been successful so far. They were still planning to leave, but not until spring when the weather would be warmer.

One day, a former colleague called me to say goodbye. She studies law at the university and has a job there as well. She also used to work in television. Yet she was feeling hopeless. She told me that she could not see the point of studying when there is no hope for the future – not here, in Afghanistan. She said that she felt her life going to waste if she continued to study in Kabul.

Many of my friends and former colleagues have left Afghanistan this year. That is why I feel so lonely. I sometimes wonder if I am the only one left; all the others have gone or are at least planning to go.

I cannot condemn those who have left. In the case of one friend, I warned her of the dangers that facing people when they go to Europe. She told me that travelling to Europe is no more dangerous than travelling in Afghanistan; here we cannot travel safely even from one province to the next, here too we can be taken to prison or we may even be executed and beheaded. It is better to drown in the Mediterranean on the way to Europe than stay in the misery of Afghanistan without any hope for a better future.

I didn't know what to say to her.

As an Afghan, I am concerned about the situation of our country. My life might be good, but it is burning up; it is scorched by all the wrongs and injustices, by inequality, inequity and corruption. Perhaps death might be a hundred times more preferable than this life; a life where we cannot know from second to second what the future will bring.

It disheartens me to hear news about innocent people being murdered or young people falling prey to drugs or domestic violence or youngsters dying in war.

It is painful to be a mother in this country. I was much calmer when I was not a mother. How can I sleep my nights in peace when I have a daughter? I would like to give her a good life in a country where people are equals and live in peace. Children are everything to their mothers.

Life in Afghanistan is so harsh and hopeless that mothers are now sending their children abroad. It is painful, but they accept the pain because they want a better future for the children.

A report published recently suggests that over the past ten years Afghans have lost their hope for the future. Every day is filled with bad news.

Every day, when I open my Facebook, I see videos of hanged people; of beheaded people; of people stoned to death. Violence, violence, endless violence.

Afghans have lost their hope.

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