

VFJ World Forum
2nd International Conference 2010
Cardiff, UK

*Justice and power
must be brought
together, so that
whatever is just may
be powerful, and
whatever is powerful
may be just*

French
Mathematician
Blaise Pascal



VoiceForJustice.org



Conference Proceedings

Edited by

Dr. Hasanat Husain, MBE

Dr. Nazrul Islam

Dr. Hasan Zillur Rahim



VoiceForJustice.org

**VOICE FOR JUSTICE
WORLD FORUM**

2ND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

**Cardiff City County Hall
The Atlantic Wharf, Cardiff Bay
Cardiff, CF10 4UW
Wales, United Kingdom**

WEDNESDAY, 28TH JULY 2010, 10am-5pm.

Conference Themes:

- **Human Rights violations and Justice**
- **Immigrant workers in the Middle East and their rights under ILO Convention**
- **Climate Change and UN Convention**
- **Poverty Alleviation and loan sharks**
- **Racism and Inequality as barriers to progress and/or any other urgent issues of the day**

VOICE FOR JUSTICE WORLD FORUM 2010

Conference Programme

10:00 Arrival

10:30 REGISTRATION AND COFFEE

11:00 OPENING PLENARY SESSION

- Welcome by Conference Chairperson **Dr. Hasanat Husain MBE**, Convenor, Voice For Justice World Forum
- Welcome by **Councillor Keith Hyde**, the Rt. Hon. Lord Mayor of Cardiff
- Keynote Address by **Prof. Abdul Moyeen Khan**, Former Minister for Planning, Science and Information and Communication Technology

11:30 PANEL ONE

Speaker

PROTECTING MIGRANT WORKERS AND MAXIMIZING BENEFITS FROM INTERNATIONAL LABOUR MOVEMENT: WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THE PHILIPPINES?

Dr. M.G. Quibria

Professor of Economics, Morgan State University, Baltimore, MD, USA

Q&A Session

12:00 PANEL TWO

Speaker

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF BAHA'I PERSECUTION IN IRAN AND AHMADIYYA PERSECUTION IN PAKISTAN

Ms. Rudabeh Shahid

Research student of global religious persecution, CA, USA

Q&A Session

12:30 PANEL THREE

Speaker

INCITEMENT AGAINST DEMOCRACY: THE FRAGILITY OF PRESS FREEDOM IN BANGLADESH

Mr. Bulbul Hasan

Journalist and a political analyst, London, UK

Q&A Session

13:00 BUFFET NETWORKING LUNCH

14:00 PANEL FOUR

Speaker

SAVING THE REMNANTS OF CULTURE AND LANGUAGE ON A REMOTE INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY, AUSTRALIA

Ms. Michele Rowe

Teacher, NT, Australia

Q&A Session

14:30 PANEL FIVE

Speaker

ISRAEL'S ILLEGAL BLOCKADE OF GAZA

Dr. K.M.A. Malik

Academician and Author, Cardiff, Wales

Q&A Session

15:00 PANEL SIX

Speaker

CLIMATE CHANGE: THREATS AND CHALLENGES FOR SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES

Mr. Aliar Hossain

Business and Management Consultant, London, UK

Q&A Session

15:30 PANEL SEVEN

Speaker

PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE LIGHT OF RELIGIOUS HATE CRIME - CONTEXT THE UNITED KINGDOM

Mr. M. A. Muid Khan

Barrister of the Honourable Society of Lincoln's Inn, UK

Q&A Session

16:00 PANEL EIGHT

Speakers

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN BANGLADESH

Mr. Shaukat Mahmood

President, Bangladesh National Press Club

Q&A Session

16:30 Concluding Remarks and Close

Message from the Convenor, VFJ World Forum

VOICE FOR JUSTICE WORLD FORUM



VoiceForJustice.org

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It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to the 2010 Voice For Justice World Forum Conference at the Cardiff County Hall of Wales Parliament. For this, I am grateful to the Rt. Hon. Lord Mayor of Cardiff and his team.

Voice for Justice has been in existence for only four years and has grown faster than anyone had imagined. It owes its existence to the extraordinary generosity of everyone involved in working with it. It is an organisation built on people's kindness to others and on a shared belief in human dignity, justice and freedom. Voice for Justice's work relies on a unique and exciting collaboration between people, community, community leaders, campaigners, professionals and volunteers.

As Convenor of Voice for Justice World Forum, my experience has been that we live in a culture in which people are being treated unjustly and this is happening locally, nationally and internationally. It is hurtful to those involved and it violates their dignity as human beings. The problem is not only that people are perceived as being of less value, it is that they also come to be treated as such. While working with people, we regularly encounter and share experiences of injustices, discrimination and abuse on a scale that is saddening and frightening. I see Voice for Justice's work as reminding ourselves that we must treat all people with equal value, not just for those people's sakes, but for the sake of our society, nation, country and the world.

Voice for Justice's one and only goal is to promote justice anywhere in the world where it is denied or delayed. We believe in working at the grassroots level through local chapters and in acting as a catalyst for justice to flower in all corners of the earth.

Our membership is extended to all, irrespective of race or religion. There is no formal requirement for joining VfJ. There is only one requirement for joining VfJ: A burning passion to promote justice anywhere it is trampled. As long as you are passionate about it, you are a member of VfJ.

The best way we can go about serving the cause of justice under the banner of VfJ is to first do what we can locally to create a VfJ Chapter with like-minded people of all nationalities, faith, colour and race. If there is a cause that we can do something about, by all means let us take it up. VfJ as an organization will provide all the moral and logistic support needed. Wherever you are, you can track our progress through the VfJ website and call to our attention any issue that you feel strongly about. We leave it to you to organize a local chapter. As long as it is free of any political ideology or dogma, we will work with you.

We have had some successes in seeking justice-in some areas and in some countries. In a very short span of time since our formation in 2006, we have raised awareness of some local and global problems. You will find that our way of seeking justice is based on facts, rational-thinking and balanced judgment.

At Voice for Justice, we listen. The presenters presenting papers in today's conference are merely drawing our attention to some of the many global concerns. They are not necessarily our official positions or statements. At VfJ, when we act, we act collectively, democratically and by peaceful means. Please visit our website www.voiceforjustice.org. If you feel that you can give something back to the needy, contribute to the cause of equality, peace, justice and fairplay; then join us and help us build VFJ globally.

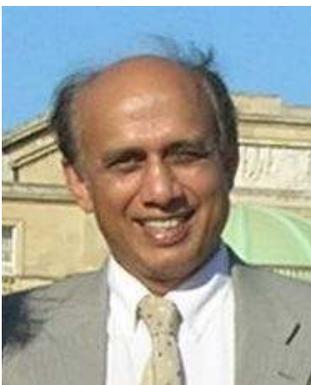
If you can promote any activity in your area that relates to justice, and if you can promote it in the name of VfJ, that will be the best contribution you can make to Voice For Justice. You can also suggest ideas and draw our attention to worthwhile projects related to justice around the world, that you can yourself then take charge of.

What we need at VfJ are doers.

Voice For Justice is expanding with a simple democratic idea that people power can stand up and win against powerful special interests. Whether it be countering corruption, supporting authentic democracy movements, fighting for a global climate deal or protecting whales, we are coming together to bridge the gap between the world we have and the world most people everywhere want.

I hope that this conference may give some insight into the scale of injustices we encounter and why we need good conscientious people to work selflessly for human dignity, justice, freedom and peace.

I welcome you all and look forward to your contributions.



Dr. Hasanat M. Husain

Convenor,

Voice for Justice World Forum

Ph.D. (Exeter University)

Post.Doc.(Sussex University), PGCE (Greenwich University)

Member Institute of Physics (MInstP.), Chartered Physicist (CPhys.),

Associate International Centre for Theoretical Physics (AICTP, Italy),

Member of the Order of the British Empire

Message from the Lord Mayor



**Councillor Keith Hyde, the Rt. Hon.
The Lord Mayor of Cardiff
Municipal Year 2010/11**

I am delighted that Voice for Justice International has chosen Cardiff for its 2010 Conference. This year's event will touch on topics as diverse as the rights of migrant workers; the role of big lenders in Poverty Alleviation ; climate change and human rights with a list of eminent guest speakers who sure to provoke thought and meaningful discussion amongst delegates.

I hope that the Conference is successful in its aims and that delegates have an enjoyable stay in Wales' Capital City.



Lists of Abstract

PROTECTING MIGRANT WORKERS AND MAXIMIZING BENEFITS FROM INTERNATIONAL LABOR MOVEMENT: WHAT CAN BANGLADESH LEARN FROM THE PHILIPPINES?

Dr. M.G. Quibria

Abstract:

Labour export is an important element of the current development strategy of both Bangladesh and the Philippines, two major labour-exporting countries in Asia. It is widely acknowledged that this strategy has yielded considerable economic success in both countries—they have been able to increase their GDPs, the rates of savings and investments, and foreign-exchange earnings; reduce their poverty and foreign dependence; and improve their social indicators. However, despite the pivotal role of international labour migration in their respective economies, the two countries' performance has been far from uniform in protecting their migrant workers or channelling remittances through formal financial institutions or directing remittance to productive investments. In all these dimensions, Philippines' performance has been discernibly superior to that of Bangladesh. In this paper, we will argue that this divergence in performance in two countries can be traced to differences in institutions and policies with respect to international labour migration and remittances. This paper highlights differences in two countries in the regulation of the recruiting agencies; transparency in the migration process; presence of support infrastructure to ensure the welfare of the migrants at home and abroad; orientation and briefing of workers; and management of the wage earners' welfare fund. Similar differences exist also in remittance arrangements and the regulatory framework; remittance access at the 'first mile' and the 'last mile'; access to financial information; and availability of innovative financial instruments. This review identifies a number of areas where Bangladesh can borrow a page from the Philippines to improve its policy and institutional framework to protect the welfare of its migrant workforce and maximize the benefits from international labour movement.



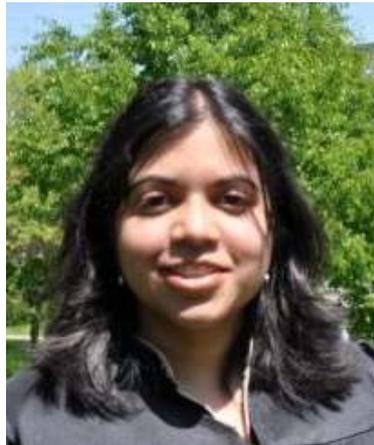
M.G Quibria is currently Professor of Economics at Morgan State University, Baltimore, MD, USA and Distinguished Fellow at Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh, Dhaka. He previously worked in Asian Development Institute in Tokyo and Asian Development Bank in Manila for more than twenty years and held various positions including Senior Advisor and Assistant Chief Economist (Director). He also held teaching and research positions with University of Dhaka; Nuffield College, Oxford; Boston University, FASID-GRIPS graduate program in International Development, Tokyo; and Singapore Management University. He is the recipient of a number of awards and scholarships including Ford Foundation Graduate Fellowship, Senior Commonwealth Academic Fellowship, Senior Fulbright Fellowship and National Merit Scholarship. He was educated at University of Dhaka where he received his BA (Honours) and MA in economics with first class; Princeton University where he received MA and PhD in economics; and Nuffield College, Oxford, where he did his post-doctoral education.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF BAHAI PERSECUTION IN IRAN AND AHMADIYYA PERSECUTION IN PAKISTAN

Ms. Rudabeh Shahid

Abstract:

This paper studies the persecution of heterodox minorities in Muslim societies, taking the examples of the Baha'is in Iran and Ahmadiyyas in Pakistan. The latest study on *Global Restrictions on Religion* by the Pew Research Centre's Forum on Religion & Public Life found that nearly seventy percent of the world's 6.8 billion people live in countries with high restrictions on religion. While restrictions on religious practices affect every citizen to some extent, the brunt of these restrictions falls on religious minorities. The situation gets more complicated as we look at heterodox groups, i.e. religious groups who consider themselves part of a religious community but whose divergent practices put them outside the fold of the mainstream religions. This study looks at the literature relating to the Baha'i and Ahmadiyya communities from a comparative standpoint and tries to find reasons behind their marginalization and persecution in Iran and Pakistan. The study also considers the increasing political influence of orthodox *ulama* (Islamic scholars) and their close association with the creation of a "purist Islamic" state in Iran and Pakistan, which have led to the persecution of these groups.



Ms. Rudabeh Shahid hails from Bangladesh and is a resident of California, USA. She recently completed her undergraduate studies at Middlebury College, one of the leading institutions for liberal arts in the United States. Her academic interests lie in history, politics and spirituality of South Asia and the Middle East. Her recent publication, *The Mystic Contribution: Khan Jahan Ali and the Creation of Bagerhat*, investigates the Islamization of Southern Bengal and analyzes the spiritual and architectural contributions of the celebrated Sufi saint, Khan Jahan Ali. Shahid intends to pursue a career in International Politics and wants to develop an accurate system for measuring global religious persecution.

INCITEMENT AGAINST DEMOCRACY: THE FRAGILITY OF PRESS FREEDOM IN BANGLADESH

Mr. Bulbul Hasan

Abstract:

The right to freedom of expression has become obligatory to the endurance and existence of democracy. Central to freedom of expression, is the freedom of the press. Regrettably, this fundamental aspect of democracy has frequently been destabilized by several governments in Bangladesh over the years.

This paper, therefore, is aiming to uncover the necessity of establishing an autonomous media regulatory commission in order to avoid the repressive government action as well as ensuring the institutionalization of civil liberties and justice. It would also have a fresh look at the changing order of state, of power relation, emerging factor of political economy, democratic malpractice along with media ownership structures.



Mr. Bulbul Hasan is a freelance journalist and a political analyst, currently working as Head of Communications in a London-based community television channel.

SAVING THE REMNANTS OF CULTURE AND LANGUAGE ON A REMOTE INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY, AUSTRALIA.

Ms. Michele Rowe

Abstract:

This paper looks at an attempt to save the remnants of culture and language on a remote Indigenous community in the Northern Territory, Australia. The community is one of the few in Australia where Aboriginal people are still living on their ancestral lands, as a result of human rights intervention between the 1940's and 1970's that established Aboriginal reserves. The paper outlines an educational programme that has been developed with Elders in the community to integrate cultural knowledge alongside a western curriculum, so that children learn about their own heritages. By recognising that the technology of the boomerang is as remarkable as the technology of the wheel, and that the navigational knowledge of reading the dark spaces between the stars is as remarkable as reading the patterns mapped by conventional star constellations, the aim is not only to secure Indigenous knowledge but also to bring these knowledge systems together. Finally, this paper also looks at how the struggle to maintain language rights now means the community is one of the few places that is still officially running a Bilingual Programme to teach children one of the few remaining Indigenous languages in Australia alongside English. The talk is presented with a Power Point presentation that was presented at a national conference in Australia to consider issues of how Indigenous knowledge of ecology, the arts, navigation and many other ancient wisdoms can be integrated into mainstream Australian schools, so that non -Indigenous children can learn more about the rich cultural heritages of the First Australians and establish a richer identity that connects them to these origins.



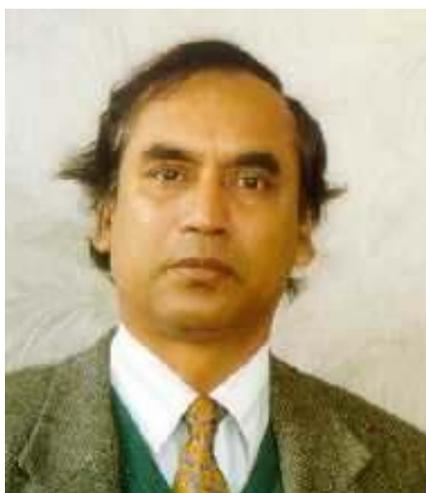
Michele Rowe has taught in Tower Hamlets-London, Amsterdam and Australia. She is currently on study leave in the Northern Territory, Australia studying for a Master's of Applied Linguistics after working four and a half years as a teacher-linguist on a remote Indigenous community. Her role in supporting the school's bilingual programme to support Aboriginal teacher's teach their Indigenous language and develop a cross-cultural programme to support two-way learning will be the main focus for presentation.

ISRAEL'S ILLEGAL BLOCKADE OF GAZA

Dr. K.M.A. Malik

Abstract:

The attack on the Gaza bound relief flotilla on May 31, 2010, in which 9 Turkish human rights workers were killed by Israeli commando forces, highlighted, once again, the plight of the Palestinian people in their homelands under Israeli occupation. The incident brought condemnation from all over the world except the US administration allegedly under the influence of AIPAC and other Zionist lobbies. But such brutality on the part of Israel is neither the first nor the last of its treatment to the people whose land the Zionist state has conquered and occupied. The list of crimes against the Palestinian people is long and well-known but often ignored by the western governments. It is high time that justice is done to this long-suffering people so that tensions and wars in the Middle East are reduced.



Dr. K. M. A. Malik has retired as an academician after nearly 35 years of distinguished career of teaching and research in Birkbeck College (University of London), Queen Mary University (London), Hackney Technical College (London), Cardiff University (UK) and Dhaka University (Bangladesh). As a successful researcher in X-ray crystallography and structural chemistry, he has published about 370 research papers in different international journals. He has won several prizes and medals for significant contributions in education and research.

Dr. Malik is also interested in different social-political-human rights issues. For more than a decade, he has been contributing articles on different topics in several print and internet media. His published books are: *Bangladesher Rajniti – Mookh O Mookhosh* (Bangla, 2003), *Challenges in Bangladesh Politics – A Londoner's view* (2005) and *War on Terror – a pretext for new colonisation* (2005).

CLIMATE CHANGE: THREATS AND CHALLENGES FOR SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES

Mr. Aliar Hossain

Abstract:

‘One of the greatest environmental and development challenges in the twenty-first century will be that of controlling and coping with climate change (Kofi Anan, 2005)’. In this paper, the researcher will discuss significance of global climate change on Small Island developing States (SIDS). For more than 50 years, the World Bank, donor nations, various aid agencies, governments, civil society and many other international organizations have tried their best for environmental sustainability issues but the situation has not changed (Chee and Harris, 1998).

The researcher will discuss business ethics and its bearing on climate change, environmental sustainability and corporate social responsibility. Global warming can cause sea level to rise by three feet by 2100. It can cause heat waves, drought, increasingly intense tropical storms, loss of plant and animal species, decreased crop yields, decreased water availability, and spread of infectious diseases. Due to greenhouse gas emissions, atmospheric concentration of carbon dioxide has increased by more than 30 percent since the time oil was first produced on a commercial scale

This paper will guide policy makers and governments of Small Island Developing States to implement strategies with legislations for climate change issues and sustainable development to protect future generations and practice environment-friendly activities.

The researcher will mainly focus on Bangladesh & Maldives as case studies.



Mr. Aliar Hossain (BSc, MIBA, Dip SD, Cert LD, MIBC, MEAIE, MRCAA), a member of the Institute of Business Consulting, European Association of International Education (EAIE). He has consulting and corporate training experiences in various organisations and sectors related with business and management issue and have several papers published to his credit.

PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE LIGHT OF RELIGIOUS HATE CRIME - CONTEXT THE UNITED KINGDOM

Mr. M. A. Muid Khan

Abstract:

The proposed article will investigate the level of protection given by the International Conventions on Human Rights against the Religious Hate Crime and their application in the domestic law of the United Kingdom. Focus will be on the Human Rights Act of 1998 which incorporates the Council of Europe's Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) into UK law, including its guarantee of freedom of religion or belief. Despite such guarantees, few Britons know much about religion other than their own. Such ignorance at times can turn into discrimination against individuals of other religions. Religious discrimination still exists in individuals' thoughts, attitudes and actions. This paper will examine the impacts of the recent proposed hate march planned by the English Defence Party targeting the UK's High Profile Muslims Communities in the light of existing International Conventions on Human Rights and the domestic laws of the United Kingdom. Legislation alone will not be enough to combat hate crimes. Political leaders, law enforcement agencies, community leaders of all races and religions and public interest groups must join together to reduce both religious and racial intolerance.



Mr. M. A. Muid Khan is a Barrister-at-law of the Honourable Society of Lincoln's Inn. He has completed Bar Vocational Course (BVC) from the prestigious Inns of Court Schools of Law (ICSL), City University, London. He has First Class grade in LL.M. and High 2.1 in LL.B. He is also an advocate of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh. He is a defender of human rights and fundamental freedoms and regularly contributes articles for various national and international newspapers on various national and international issues. At present, Mr Khan is working as an Appeal Consultant and Practice Manager at Rest Harrow & Co Solicitors, London, United Kingdom.

VFJ World Forum Cardiff 2010 Conference

Acknowledgements:

Dr. Hasan Zillur Rahim, Convenor VFJ San Jose/Santa Clara, CA, USA
Mr. Ana Miah, Convenor VFJ Wales Chapter, Wales.
Mr. Ali Akbor, Joint Convenor, VFJ Wales Chapter, Wales
Mr. Dilabor Husain, Joint Convenor, VFJ Wales Chapter, Wales
Dr. Nazrul Islam, VFJ Cardiff University, Cardiff, Wales
Dr. KMA Malik, VFJ Cardiff, Wales
Mr. A. Majid, VFJ Cardiff, Wales
Mr. Ali Ahmad, VFJ Cardiff, Wales
Mr. Mostafa Saleh Liton, VFJ Cardiff, Wales
Mr. Jahangir Hossain Qureshi, Joint Convenor, VFJ Sunderland Chapter, England
Mr. Syed Jamal Miah, VFJ Sunderland Chapter, England
Mr. Sadiqur Rahman, VFJ Joint Convenor, London, England
Mr. Mahmud Hasan, Convenor, VFJ Toronto Chapter, Canada
Mr. A. Sulman JP, Convenor VFJ Oxford Chapter, England
Mrs. Shahida Husain, VFJ Joint Convenor, London England
Mr. Bulbul Hasan, VFJ London, England
Mrs. Saima Ahmed, VFJ London. England

For wishing a successful VFJ Conference 2010, messages were received from:

Prof. Shamsul Islam Choudhury, VFJ Convenor, Chicago, USA
Prof. Tony Booth, VFJ Cambridge, UK
Prof. Juan Monoroy, VFJ London, UK
Prof. Taj Hashmi, VFJ Convenor, Honolulu, USA
Dr. C. S. Karim, Former Adviser - Care Taker Government, VFJ Dhaka, Bangladesh
Mr. Sabihuddin Ahmed, Former High Commissioner of Bangladesh in the UK.
Mr. Luthfur Rahman Choudhury, VFJ Convenor, Bangladesh
Mr. Enam Choudhury, VFJ Convenor, Sweden
Dr. Abdur Rahman, VFJ Convenor, Ireland
Dr. Zakia Rahman, VFJ Limmerick, Ireland

VFJ Theme Song – produced and directed by:

Sadiqur Rahman, VFJ Joint Convenor, London, UK
Hasan Mahmud, VFJ Convenor, Toronto, Canada

Voice for Justice World Forum 2010 Cardiff International Conference

CARDIFF: On Wednesday, 28th July 2010, Voice for Justice (VFJ) World Forum held its Second International Conference at Cardiff City 's County Hall. This year the forum covered themes such as Human Rights violations, Rights of Migrant workers in the Middle East, Global Transparency, Racism and Global Warming.

VFJ is a global community organization whose mission is to prevent acts of injustice, and to actively seek and ensure justice against any action of an individual, group or entity deemed illegal, unfair or discriminatory. Although the majority of its members are Bangladeshi professionals living in Western Europe and the United States , the organization seeks the support and cooperation of individuals belonging to all nationalities, races and gender. Its membership is free and invites support and co-operation of all global citizens.

The Conference was chaired by VFJ World Forum's Convenor, Eminent Academic and Member of the Order of British Empire Dr. Hasanat Husain MBE and was attended by Keith Hyde, Rt. Hon. Lord Mayor of Cardiff, Wales and Rt. Hon. John Griffith, the Counsel General and Leader of the House of the Wales Assembly.

The Keynote Address was by Prof. Abdul Moyeen Khan, Former Minister for Planning, Science and Information and Communication Technology, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh . The conference was attended by many British Bangladeshis and was aired on Sky News Network. The key strengths of the conference were that it provided a platform for dialogue on a number of global concerns, while not reflecting the VFJ's official positions.

Honorable Lord Mayor of Cardiff congratulated VJF for highlighting global human rights violation and being the voice for the marginalized. He thanked the guest speakers for taking time off and coming to Cardiff to present their research work. He further stated that their presentations would lead to deep reflections and rich discussions amongst the delegates.

Dr. Hasanat Husain, MBE said that Voice For Justice World Forum is an organization, which is built on people's kindness to others and on a shared belief in human dignity, justice and freedom. He stated that the uniqueness of the organization's work lies in the platform that it provides for the collaboration between individuals, society and community leaders.

The two key papers at the conference were presented by Prof. M.G. Quibria, Chairman of Economics Department at the Morgan State University in the USA and Dr. K. M. A. Malik, a retired Lecturer of Chemistry at Cardiff University. Dr. Quibria's presentation highlighted the lessons that Bangladesh could learn from the Philippines in regards to protecting its migrant workers, while Dr. Malik gave the audience an overview of Israel 's human rights abuse in the occupied Palestinian territories.

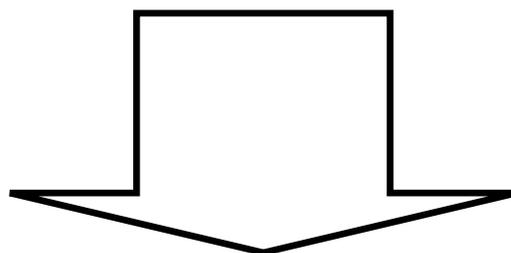
Dr. M.G. Quibria compared Bangladesh and the Philippines ' labor exporting sector. He affirmed that the Philippines ' migrant labor sector was recognizably better to that of Bangladesh . He argued that this divergence in performance among the two nations were because of the differences in national institutions and policies in regard to international labor migration and remittances. He pointed out numerous approaches that Bangladesh could drawn upon from the Philippines to improve its policy and institutional framework, in order to protect the welfare of its migrant workforce and maximize the benefits derived from exporting labor.

Dr. K. M. A. Malik, the author of *War on Terror – A Pretext for New Colonization* (2005) presented a comparative study on the plight of the Palestinian people in their homeland under Israeli occupation and the similar situation faced by the Jewish people under Germany 's Nazi Regime. He stressed the fact that the list of crimes against the Palestinian people is long and well-known but disregarded by Western governments, which in turn acerbates political tension and violence in the Middle East .

The other presenters at this year's conference were Bulbul Hasan, a freelance journalist and political analyst, based in London, UK who presented a paper on 'Fragility of Press Freedom in Bangladesh'; Rudabeh Shahid, a researcher from California, USA who presented a comparative analysis of 'Religious persecution in Iran and Pakistan'; Michele Rowe, a researcher on Australian aboriginal culture from the Northern Territories, Australia on 'Saving the remnants of culture and language of indigenous community in Australia'; Aliar Hossain, a Business and Management Consultant based in London, UK on 'Climate Change and its adverse effect on developing countries' and Shaukat Mahmood, the President of Bangladesh National Press Club on ' Human rights and democracy in Bangladesh'.

All the presenters stressed the importance of global justice and fairness, whether in reference to religious conflicts, political transparency, global warming, minority rights or protection of indigenous communities.

Flashbacks of VFJ International Conference 2010, Cardiff, Wales, UK











Flashbacks of VFJ International Conference 2009, August 9 London School of Economics, London







Left: **Rt. Hn. Stephen Timms MP**, Finance Minister UK;
Right: **Prof. Tony Booth**, Head of International Education, University of Kent

CLIMATE CHANGE IN SOUTH ASIA: FOCUS ON THE TIPAIMUKH DAM

Dr. K.M.A. Malik

Former Professor, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh
Former Lecturer, Cardiff University, Wales, UK

Abstract:

The whole world is concerned with the effects of climate change. The impacts of rising temperatures, sea level rise, increased climate variability such as more intense floods, droughts and storms, disappearing forests and environmental changes, as well as other natural hazards are gradually becoming more acute. While no country will remain unaffected, the countries in South and South East Asia would be the worst victims. The economic performance of these countries including the lives and livelihoods of millions of poor people in these regions would be seriously affected.

Bangladesh is especially vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change. The country occupies the low-lying deltaic regions of the three great river systems (the Ganges, the Brahmaputra and the Meghna, which flow into the Bay of Bengal), and any significant rise in the sea level would make the southern districts of Bangladesh uninhabitable for about 40 million people who live in this region. In recent years, the coastal region has also witnessed increased onslaughts of cyclones and tidal waves. The Sundarbans, the largest mangrove in the world, with its unique environment and ecology, has already suffered irreparable damage due to climate change.

Bangladesh is also a country of rivers. From time immemorial, the people of this region have built up their lives and civilization depending on hundreds of rivers (big and small). In recent times, however, human intervention on the natural flow of river waters, for irrigation and power generation, has caused already visible bad effects. India's diversion of water from the Ganges by Farakka Barrage has brought near ruin to the river Padma and its distributaries in the southern Bangladesh. India's ongoing Tipaimukh Dam project may result in similar disaster in the Manipur state as well as in north east Bangladesh by obstructing the natural flow of the Surma and Kushiara rivers (life support of the Meghna). A brief account of the Tipaimukh Dam project and its potential impact on the economy and environment of the region would be presented.

CLIMATE CHANGE & LOOMING ECOLOGICAL CATASTROPHE:
THE VULNERABLE CASE OF BANGLADESH

Prof. Abdul Moyeen Khan

Former Minister for Planning, Information, Science and information & Communication Technology,
Government of Bangladesh

Abstract:

Bangladesh -- located in the “newly” formed deltaic plain of the Rivers Padma, Jamuna, Bramhaputra & Meghna -- is one of the most ecologically vulnerable countries in the world. Largely a consequence of human “developmental” interventions, albeit with the objective of enhancing the quality of life in the world. A few degrees’ rise in global temperatures is feared to cause an increase in the sea level by a few feet, resulting in:

- Inundation of an estimated one-fourth of the land area of a country having the highest population density in the world
- Complete loss of one third of the country’s agricultural production capacity

Needless to say, this impact to ecology and means of subsistence is hardly of Bangladesh’s making but a consequence of the extravagant lifestyles & misdemeanor of the other countries of the world. Bangladesh, as a lower riparian, has already witnessed severe consequences of the unilateral construction of the “Farakka Barrage” on the Ganges withdrawing almost the entire flow of water during the lean (dry) season resulting in:

- Increased desertification in the Western Part of Bangladesh
- Intruding salinity in the South West extending all the way up from the Bay of Bengal

Long term irreversible ecological disaster to our flora and fauna as well as total annihilation of the livelihood of millions of Bangladeshis upturning their centuries old life styles and natural setting

- Total destruction of Bio-diversity as well as the river morphology of the region
- Even more serious ecological implications for North Easter part of India where massive resistance to this Project has already been built in Mizoram and Manipur of India

Migrant Workers' Rights in Arab States

Azfar Khan and Rola Abimourched (ILO)

Presented by Dr. Mahbub Khan

(VFJ Los Angeles, CA, USA)

The labor mobility in the Arab world, particularly during the last 4 decades, have been a very significant part of the Labor mobility in the world. The source countries are some of the countries of Asia and Europe, and the destination countries are the Gulf Cooperative Council (GCC) States (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and UAE), the Maghreb States (Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia), Jordan and Lebanon.

This presentation will address the International Legal Framework for the Migrant Workers' Rights as addressed in various ILO conventions. This will also address the issues that remain in the actual practice of these rights, including the following: (a) Retention of Passports, (b) Non-payment and underpayment of wages, salary deductions and delay in payment, (c) Adverse working and living conditions, (d) Physical, verbal, and sexual abuse, (e) Limited ability to organize, and (f) Other problems. The challenges and opportunities in promoting the Migrant workers' rights will be addressed including the Policy Coherence and limited enforcement.

The paper will conclude with a set of key recommendation including the following: (a) Advance the ratification of the ILO Convention 97 and 143, (b) Reform of the labor law towards international harmonization, (c) Prioritize the Institutional protection of the migrant workers, (d) Promote workers' representation, (e) Encourage Social Dialogue, (f) Promote regional and international dialogues and agreements on basic rights, (g) Promote Bilateral and Multilateral agreements.

Introduction of Presenter:

Professor of Physics (Adjunct Faculty) at California State University and Colleges. The IEEE Chairman of the Western USA for Awards and Advancement. The IEEE is the largest professional organization of Engineers and Scientists in the world with over 350,000 members.

Formerly, Senior Scientist at IBM, CDC/MPI, Stolle/ALCOA, Applied Materials, Jazz-Semiconductor/Rockwell-International, Principal Scientist at Tyco Electronics, Director of Research and Development at Seagate Technology.

Women's Rights in Islam

- Hasan Mahmud
- Former President of Muslim Council of Canada,
- Director of Sharia Law of Muslim Canadian Congress.

Historically, patriarchy tactfully and successfully manipulated dress, food, literature, culture, tradition, state, law and religion to enslave women. Everybody agrees that Muslim society is no exception. Women oppression in the name of Islam is one of the major roots of current Islamophobia as well. Concerned Muslim scholars always protested against it because it insults and destroys Muslim women and brings bad name to Islam.

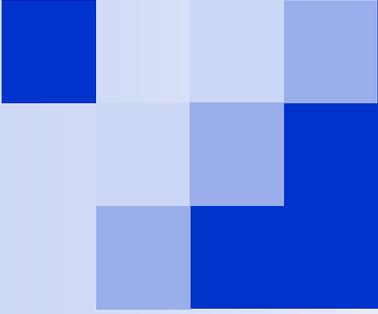
Our study shows that the most effective way to end such oppression is to create public awareness with a better interpretation of the same religion. Such interpretation always existed in Muslim societies identifying the flaws of the mechanism of women-oppression in the name of Islam. We have compiled their proposed better interpretation from core Islamic sources and trying to educate common Muslims about it.

Muslims are important members of human society. In today's Global Village human societies are moving forward like a caravan. Speed of a caravan is the speed of its weakest camel. Muslim societies can never progress leaving Muslim women behind. Similarly, human progress cannot be sustainably achieved leaving Muslims behind.

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"Man's capacity for justice makes democracy possible; but man's inclination to injustice makes democracy necessary" - Reinhold Niebuhr