

Deradicalisation of the society urged

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Ahmer Bilal Soofi, the President Research Society of International Law, has said that it is duty of Interior Ministry to deradicalise the society and hurried efforts, like made in legislating PPO to change the situation, would create problems.

Mr Soofi was speaking at a seminar on 'Rule of law and counter-terrorism: roles of public and private sector,' organised by Centre for Research and Security Studies here Monday. Interior Minister Ch Nisar Ali Khan was scheduled to be chief guest but he did not turn up on the occasion.

Mr Sufi said that under proposed PPO, an SHO can put any crime under terrorism act. He said it needs administrative procedure to guide where a challan had to go. He said that provincial government should handle it after the passage of 18th Amendment.

He said that judges, government servants and military have indemnity to take actions. He said that superior judiciary regrettably did not pronounce limits of jurisprudence whereas SC should have guided state organs on limits of indemnity.

He said that international agreements Pakistan ratified are also part of our law and a state is duty bound to inform its people about legal parameters and nabbing any violator becomes responsibility of the state. He said that release of a person working against a state is a failure of State.

JUI leader Hafiz Hussain Ahmad said that terrorism cannot enter a state having law and justice. He said that treating anybody above law will lead to lawlessness. He said that "killer of his province was allowed to visit Karachi in a plane yesterday." He also referred to deaths in Red Mosque.

Hafiz Hussain said that Osama bin Laden was nabbed not from an Islamic Madrassa but from 'Madrassa-tul-Kakul'. He said that Mama Qadeer Baloch walked from his province to Islamabad but if my people are not provided justice, what will be the option left." He regretted that the Constitution was not allowed to enter Fata. He said that tens of millions of rupees change hands in getting appointment in Fata.

Dr Shoaib Suddle, former Director, Intelligence Bureau, has said that 9/11 did not change police or the 1861 Police Act. He said that there is confusion as federating units have different versions of Police Law. He said that rule of law will not come if we continue with outmoded practices. He said that high police appointments should be made through National Safety Commission to depoliticise police.

Toaha Qureshi, Chairperson, Forum for International Relations Development, UK, said that radicalisation is a phenomenal challenge his country is facing. He said that Muslim community in UK worked hard to control radicalisation by engagement, early preventive efforts and rehabilitation. He said that despite being in minority in UK, Pakistani expatriates enjoy everything.

Imtiaz Gul, Executive Director, CRSS, in his welcome address said that according to UN, indicators of rule of law include public confidence in police and judiciary, impartiality of legal system, competence of law enforcers and degree of prevalence of crime in society. He said that bail granted to a 4-month child in attempted murder case and non-payment of salaries to KPK police for the last four months speaks volumes of "rule of law."

In the question hour, when Hafiz Hussain referred to NRO, a lady participant quipped that "holding dialogue with Taliban is also an NRO" and Hafiz could only say "yes" in response. She also referred to "chartered aeroplane" and "chartered helicopters." Answering a question, Mr Qureshi said that "attackers of Hamid Mir must be arrested howsoever powerful he is." A women rights activist criticised different modes of laws promulgated in the country in parallel. Dr Ishtiaq from Quaid-i-Azam University called for reviewing role of religion when people are being killed in the name of Islam.



‘Peace talks should not violate international law’

IFTIKHAR A. KHAN April 22, 2014

ISLAMABAD: Former caretaker law minister and international law expert Ahmer Bilal Soofi on Monday said the government should ensure the outcome of peace talks with Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) did not violate any international laws.

He was speaking at ‘Rule of Law and Counterterrorism – Role of Public and Private Sector’, a seminar organised by the Centre for Research and Security Studies (CRSS) on Tuesday.

Others who spoke on the occasion included Stockwell Green Community Services, UK, Chairman Toaha Qureshi, former Intelligence Bureau director general Dr Shoaib Suddle and CRSS Executive Director Imtiaz Gul.

Mr Bilal, however, took the audience by surprise when he said that proscribed organisations could take part in elections. “As far as I think, banned outfits are not prohibited from contesting elections,” he maintained.

With regard to the expression of ‘rule of law’, he said it had to be interpreted in accordance with the constitution.

He was of the view that the courts should hold in-camera proceeding of cases of a sensitive nature.

Speaking on the occasion, Toaha Qureshi said Britain’s de-radicalisation programme could be replicated in Pakistan if rule of law was to be upheld.

The speaker from the UK said it was a decision by the election tribunal to disqualify a PML-N lawmaker and notify Maulana Mohammad Ahmed Ludhianvi, chief of the outlawed Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat (ASWJ) as the member of the National Assembly from the NA-89 Jhang.

Former Sindh inspector general Dr Shoaib Suddle warned that the attempt to revive executive magistrates was contrary to the constitution.

“We have all sets of rule except rule of law,” he regretted and said peace without justice was not possible.

Mr Suddle said Swat in 2009 was a classic example of absence of rule of law when the state lost control over eight out of 12 police stations in the area.

He warned that a Swat-like situation might emerge in other areas as well if a collective voice was not raised for rule of law.

Other speakers stressed that the elimination of terrorism and establishment of rule of law were imperative for socio-economic development of the country.

“If there is rule of law, nobody will choose the path of terrorism,” they said, adding Pakistan is facing multi-faceted challenges which need to be addressed on priority basis.

They were of the view that poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, prejudices, class distinctions and discrimination were the root causes of radicalism.

Speakers stressed the need of rehabilitating thousands of people who were in internment centres.



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RULE OF LAW
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THE EXPRESS TRIBUNE WITH THE *International New York Times*

Rule of law: Deradicalisation initiatives be linked with economic incentives, says Soofi

By Our Correspondent

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Pakistan's police and prosecution systems are professionally and logistically incapable to uphold the rule of law and help with counter-terrorism in the country, according to legal and public safety experts.

The experts were speaking at a seminar on "Rule of Law and Counter-terrorism: Roles of Public and Private Sector," organised by Centre for Research & Security Studies (CRSS) at a local hotel on Monday.

Criminal justice and police reforms expert Dr Shoaib Suddle said Pakistan is still stuck with an "outmoded, anachronistic" police system, which mostly borrows from a British-era police act and now suffers from rampant politicisation and corruption.



“ If the talks result in an outcome that violates international law, it can be a serious problem
Law expert Ahmer Bilal Soofi

Suddle said if September 11 gave one opportunity, it was for Pakistan to "strengthen its (police) laws, harmonise and standardise them." But Pakistan failed to seize the opportunity, he said.

"The system is not only broken, it is broke as well," Suddle said. "The whole system has completely collapsed."

He said police will never be able to deliver on counter-terrorism strategies unless the police model is changed. He urged for the police to be depoliticised.

Suddle also advocated for the empowerment of the lowest cadres of police, merit-based recruitment, accountability and professional trainings for officers to achieve a criminal justice system that provides relief to the citizens.

“We need a system that works for us where the common man can get justice in a reasonable [amount of] time,” he said.

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Criminal justice and police reforms expert **Dr Shoaib Suddle**

In the same vein, law expert Ahmer Bilal Soofi said prosecutors in Pakistan are ill-equipped logistically to take on what might be the most ambitious prosecution project in the world.

Soofi said the government would need at least 100 special judges, more than 100 investigators and a similar number of prosecutors to pursue cases against the over 5,000 people detained in connection with terrorist activities, including suspects arrested during the Karachi operation.

“[With around 50 Anti-Terrorism Court judges] we are not ready for it in terms of logistics,” he said.

Soofi suggested a two-dimensional approach in which prosecution and de-radicalisation co-exist.

He said the Interior Ministry has the responsibility of devising a mechanism of de-radicalising the hundreds of terrorism suspects in Pakistani jail so they don't turn in to hardened terrorists. He recommended that de-radicalisation initiatives in Pakistan should also be linked up with some economic incentives.

“If the talks result in an outcome that violates the international law, it can be a serious problem,” Soofi said.

As an example, he said if Pakistan gives haven to militants, it would be akin to “noncompliance” of the United Nations Security Council’s Resolution which prohibits member states from providing haven to people who “finance, plan, support, or commit terrorist acts.”

Hafiz Hussain Ahmed of Jamiat-e Ulema-e Islam-Fazl took digs at the military in connection with disrespect for laws while making references to the conflict in Balochistan and to the long march of the Voice of the Missing Baloch Persons