

## Landslide victory of Awami League and Future of BNP?

**EBF Report:** BNP was already ‘lost in wilderness’ much ahead of the December 2018 elections with its leader Begum Khaleda Zia in jail on corruption charges and the second-in-command of the party, her son Tareque Zia in self- exile in London, also convicted of corruption and launching of grenade attacks to assassinate Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in 2004. Although it was almost certain that the ruling party would emerge with a landslide victory, the people heaved a sigh of relief when the elections results were announced. Relieved because they did not know what would happen if BNP would return to power. They did not want the repetition of the violence, killings, burning of innocent people, series of grenade attacks they witnessed during BNP-Jamaat rule in Bangladesh. “People are no more interested to take to the streets at the call of the political parties. They want peace and they want that the present economic progress of the country continues”, said a BNP leader in the Netherlands, who at the same time expressed his utter frustration at the failure of the BNP leadership in Bangladesh. He however, was critical of the elections and termed it as farce.

That BNP would not gain majority in the elections was known to all. But no one, perhaps the Awami League leadership did not expect that BNP would suffer such a humiliating defeat in the 11<sup>th</sup> Parliamentary elections. Despite criticism from some national and international quarters including the UN, Hasina government was congratulated immediately after the elections results were announced by the international leaders including the



Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, American President Donald Trump, Chinese President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Li Keqiang, Palestine President Mahmoud Abbas, Nepalese Prime Minister Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli, Bhutanese Prime Minister Lotay Tshering and many more. David Lewis, a professor of social policy at the London School of

Economics and a Patron of EBF said, “many Western countries see Hasina as "offering relative stability" and questioning the election result "would risk more instability."

BNP brought charges of rigging, threats in the elections by the ruling AL when they met the heads of the foreign missions in Dhaka after the elections, but those meetings and lodging of complaints failed to yield any results for them. According to the political observers, there were a number of factors for which BNP had such a humiliating defeat. It could not detach itself from the banned Jamaat-e-Islami, a party which is outlawed for its role in 1971. People did not appreciate that BNP allowed 22 members of Jamaat-e-Islami to take part in the elections with the election symbol of BNP. People also did not like that BNP leaders sought direct help and support from ISI agent in the Middle East and they did not like BNP leader Tareque Zia’s ‘Elections Trade’ allegedly by taking huge amount of money from the candidates contesting the elections.

On the other hand, the so-called Jatiyo Oikyo Front led by Dr. Kamal Hossain failed to make a number of points clear when the foreign diplomats asked the Front leaders 'who would be the Prime Minister if the Jote wins the elections'. Last but not the least, BNP was not clear even a week before the election day, whether it would join the elections. As a result, their workers, supporters and local leaders were not sure what to do in such a situation and most of them were utterly demoralised and frustrated. Many of them of course, were also on hiding fearing the police excesses and cases.

BNP is now like a 'shipwreck'. The party is like the remains of a ship that has been wrecked and is stranded or sunken to the bottom of the sea. There is no strong leadership in the party, there is a serious leadership crisis within the party. A party cannot be run by holding web meeting from London. In absence of a strong leadership in the party BNP utterly failed to stage any protest or demonstration even after 30 days of the elections. Their grievances, protests remain confined within the four walls of the party office and at the makeshift office of the Oikyo front (Dr. Kamal Hossain's personal chamber).



But political observers think that there should be a strong opposition political party in the country for the sake of democracy. A single-party rule leads the country to dictatorship. They opine that BNP should try to stand on its own feet and win the people's trust and confidence, as it still enjoys huge support among the people. But BNP has to be clear on the point of its connection and association with Jamaat-e-Islami. BNP has to be clear on a number of national issues such as the number of deaths in the 1971 liberation war (Khaleda Zia contradicted), accept Bangabandhu as the national leader and the four guiding principles of Bangladesh including secularism. Only then BNP can win the sympathy and support of the people. Otherwise, the political observers think, BNP might have to embrace the fate of the powerful Muslim League when it being the strongest party in 1970 conceded a humiliating defeat to Awami League and then gradually the party became a history.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has now more challenges than ever before. People want a terror-free country and a country minus corruption. Immediately after election victory Hasina reiterated her 'zero tolerance' on corruption and has inducted new cabinet ministers, mostly fresh and inexperienced. People are carefully watching her as their aspirations have risen manifold. On the other hand, Hasina has to resolve the standing issues such as Teesta water, border killings with India. People have seen that Hasina government has successfully tackled the terrorism and Islamic Jihads and they want to see that these elements are rooted out from the country once for all. The west and the big neighbour India too want this. If these issues can be addressed there is no one for AL to challenge in the coming years.



# EU assures to continue cooperation with the new government

The EU Head of Delegation and Ambassador to Bangladesh Rensje Teerink has conveyed the readiness of the 27-nation bloc to cooperate with the new government. She conveyed this message at a meeting with new Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen at the State Guest House Padma recently, the foreign ministry said.

The ambassador congratulated Momen and reiterated willingness of the EU to remain “constructively” engaged with the new government to collaborate on good governance, deeper economic partnership, Rohingya crisis, migration, climate change and development cooperation.



The EU Ambassador Teerink referred to the European Investment Bank (EIB), which is already financing a good number of projects in energy transmission, wastewater management and climate change mitigation. She also spoke about the need for a better ‘business climate’ for enhanced European investments in Bangladesh. Momen urged the European Union to do more so that the Rohingyas could go back to their ancestral homeland in safety and dignity. The ambassador reiterated the EU’s full support for the Rohingya crisis and commended Bangladesh’s significant contribution in sheltering such a large number of people which affected the local communities and environment. She expressed happiness at the “extremely valuable and successful” cooperation between Bangladesh and EU in the area of migration.

## Cyber Security Threats -New form of terror in Bangladesh

Bangladesh is among the four nations in South Asia that have experienced decline in terror attacks. While terror impact on South Asia has worsened on average, Bangladesh showed improvement in security alongside Bhutan, Nepal and Sri Lanka, according to the 2018 Global Terrorism Index.



Afghanistan, Pakistan and India are amongst the ten countries most impacted by terrorism, and these were causing deterioration to South Asia’s GTI score, per the index published by the Institute of Economics and Peace. Bangladesh climbed down four spots to the level of countries experiencing medium impact of terrorism, ranking 25th among 163 countries with a score of 5.697 out of 10. Last year, Bangladesh scored 6.181 and was placed at 21st.

“In Bangladesh, the largest recent terrorist attack occurred in 2016, when an armed assault in Dhaka killed 28 people. ISIL later claimed responsibility for the attack,” said the report. The report by the Australian think-tank emphasised the need for global investment to ensure national security, citing as example measures to prevent violent

extremism in Bangladesh. “One reason why global investment can advance national security is that the source of violent extremist threats is transnational, even when it manifests itself locally. An example is the spread of violent ideological propaganda.”

“In Bangladesh, for example, the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund is supporting training in digital literacy among madrassa students, helping promote critical thinking, and limit the traction and dissemination of online fake news and messages,” the report observed. It highlights that threats to cyber



security is the new form of terror adopted by extremist organisations, none of which can exist without funds.

“Terrorism has emerged in cyberspace as a natural response to kinetic security responses and traditional military measures.”

“Financial institutions have long been targets of terrorism, and this is true online as well. In the case of the 2016 Bangladesh Bank heist, malicious program, likely malware sent through an email, was installed on the bank’s computer system. “The malware then collected passwords and usernames, and deleted evidence of its own presence, rendering it virtually invisible. These stolen credentials were then used to access SWIFT, the most secure global money transfer system. 81 million USD were lost in four transactions,” the think-tank said in the report. (courtesy: Daily Star).

## Diplomats promise support to new government

The Dhaka-based foreign diplomats have promised to cooperate and collaborate with the new government to help fulfil its election pledges as the foreign minister briefed them about the plans. “We promised our support, our cooperation and also collaboration with the minister for the development of the country, for the progress, prosperity and peace of Bangladesh. Whatever we can we’ll do it,” Dean of Diplomatic Corps in



Bangladesh Ambassador of the Vatican George Kocherry said after the briefing recently.

Newly appointed Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen briefed the diplomatic core at the State Guest House Padma. The maiden briefing of the foreign minister was attended by 55 members of the diplomatic community including the ambassadors, high commissioners, consul generals of all the foreign missions and representatives from the UN offices based in Dhaka. “It was a friendly talk to know each other. He was speaking about his plan on how he can serve the country, people and how he can promote the new government,” the dean said. Foreign Minister Momen said he sought cooperation from international community in meeting the campaign pledges of the government.

## 250.000 Rohingyas with Bangladeshi passports went abroad: 13 detained in S. Arabi deported to Dhaka

Saudi Arabia deported at least 13 Rohingya, held indefinitely by the kingdom of Saudi Arabi, from a Jeddah detention centre on 8 Jan 2019. The Rohingyas arrived in Dhaka admitted that they are Rohingyas but they have Bangladeshi passports. Upon interrogation, they have been detained by the immigration police.



A London-based news portal covering events in the Middle East on Sunday reported that Saudi Arabia was going to deport to Bangladesh scores of Rohingyas, some of them having spent nearly five to six years in Saudi detention. Many Rohingyas locked up in the Shumaisi detention centre went to

Saudi Arabia on Bangladeshi passports, obtained via fake documents.

According to an earlier report, nearly **250,000 Rohingyas went abroad with Bangladeshi passports. Thousands of Rohingyas have used illegally obtained Bangladeshi passports to travel abroad for work.** Although the Bangladesh government holds no data on the exact number of false passports in circulation, Expatriates Welfare Minister (former) Nurul Islam said in April that about 250,000 Rohingyas had gone abroad with Bangladeshi passports. The minister said Bangladeshi workers are facing an “image crisis” as a result.

### Commission to find people involved in Bangabandhu's killing to be formed

Law Minister Anisul Huq today said the government has a plan to constitute a commission to find out who were behind the killing of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his family members on August 15, 1975. The minister however refused to disclose the timeframe of forming of the commission.

He said the government has been trying continuously to bring the fugitive killers of Bangabandhu back to the country. The minister said this while talking to reporters at his Secretariat office in Dhaka. Anisul Huq who was sworn in as the law minister for the second time recently, said that it is not easy to bring the fugitive killers of Bangabandhu back to the country as the past BNP government provided them with job in abroad. It is a very lengthy process to bring the killers of Bangabandhu back to the country, he said.



The government has been trying its best to bring them back to the country. "I will not disclose whether we could have identified the whereabouts of the fugitive killers," he said. Replying to a question he said his main challenge is to ensure justice to the people at a very shortest possible time and at a minimum cost.



# Dhaka terms Myanmar's claim of ARSA bases in Bangladesh fake & provocative

Bangladesh has blasted Myanmar's allegation of existence of Arakan Army and Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) bases in Bangladesh and termed it fake, baseless and provocative accusations, according to a news reaching here. "Bangladesh is utterly disappointed and aggrieved to note some media reports based on remarks by the Spokesperson of Myanmar President's Office on January 7 alleging existence of two Arakan Army bases and three ARSA bases in Bangladesh," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh said in a strongly worded press statement today. "The allegations are totally fake and baseless," it said adding that the current clashes inside Myanmar are outcome of its "own political and social dilemma" and "internal political puzzle".



It is not possible to operate terrorist bases anywhere in Bangladesh because of high alertness and effectively preventive measures by the security forces in line with the "zero tolerance policy" of the present government under Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, it said. Bangladesh is also firmly committed not to allow its soil to be used by any dissident group of any neighboring country.

The government has taken all possible measures, including comprehensive international engagements in counterterrorism to fully implement the commitment. "We affirm that there is no existence of any foreign terrorist groups within Bangladesh nor Bangladesh is harboring any terrorist organization within its soil," the statement said.

"Bangladesh, on several instances, proposed Myanmar to conduct joint operation in addressing claimed terrorist activities along the border area. But unfortunately, not much enthusiasm received from Myanmar side." Even Myanmar failed to provide Bangladesh with specific details and concrete evidence on the alleged terrorist elements and acts, reads the Foreign Ministry statement. "Bangladesh always stands ready to engage in comprehensive cooperation mechanism with any country including Myanmar in the combat of terrorism," the statement reads.

# Another election would set back progress

- By Duncan Bartlett

*(Duncan Bartlett is the Editor of Asian Affairs magazine and a former BBC World Service correspondent. He was in Dhaka for the December 2018 election campaign with a group of journalists led by EBF President Ansar Ahmed Ullah)*

Democracy is like a precious crop. It needs to be carefully nurtured in order to flourish. In Bangladesh – a country with a recent history of political assassinations, coups and war – democracy is still developing. Its roots have not yet grown very deep.



I am concerned that there are forces which are undermining Bangladesh's democracy, both within the country and abroad. And ironically, some respected institutions which express concern about Bangladesh's future may also be preventing the roots of its democratic system from gaining a firm foundation, exposing it to further danger.

## **Expert guidance**

I have enjoyed spending time in Dhaka, where I have discussed the recent election with journalists, politicians and lawyers. In general, I was impressed by their optimism. All of them agreed that the election on December 30th 2018 was a good way of measuring the country's mood. I was encouraged to watch the evening talk shows on television, where lively debates took place between representatives of all the parties. It was soon apparent that critical voices were not silenced and hard questions were asked.

Reading through the Bangladeshi newspapers and websites, I was also impressed by the efforts of the reporters to explain political issues to ordinary citizens. The media emphasised that even the poor, marginalised and illiterate have the right to make decisions about their country's destiny. No-one could complain that voters were disenfranchised or lacked many sources of information about politics. It was a visceral, national debate; no wonder it was often heated!

When I asked one influential Bengali journalist if he felt the vote was "free and fair," he challenged me to name a country where elections are perfect. He pointed out that even in mature democracies – such as Europe and the United States – populists and autocrats exploit the democratic system to gain power. He claimed that in Bangladesh, enemies of the state seek validation by winning seats in parliament.

## **Limited choice.**

Of course, real democracy is about more than just voting. For an election to have value, people need to be able to make meaningful choices between parties which have the capacity to manage the affairs of their country. I am not convinced that the voters in the recent Bangladesh election were presented with such a choice. One indication of this is that the leader of the Jatiya Oikya Front, Dr Kamal Hossain, did not himself stand for office. I understand that he feels the opposition were deliberately sidelined and mistreated. He has claimed that the process was "farcical". Be that as it may, the opposition struck me more as dissenters rather than potential leaders. A minority of their followers have a reputation for corruption and extremism. They do not seem to be a group who are fully committed to nurturing Bangladesh's young democracy.

## **Mixed signals**

When the newly elected members of parliament, including Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina were sworn in, the seven opposition members stayed away, further isolating them from the political process. Yet with a few days, Dr Kamal's associates from the opposition alliance – Gonoforum leader Sultan Mohammad Munsur and his party colleague Mukabbir Khan – suggested that they have had change of heart and will take their place as elected members of the eleventh parliament. I hope that they do so soon. It seems a sensible compromise and should quieten calls for another election.

## **Expensive Process**

I recognise that there are important questions about whether some ballot boxes were stuffed or whether candidates were sometimes intimidated. However, for Bangladesh to go to the polls again would be expensive, impractical – and would surely only create further social division.

If there were to be another election – this time through an entirely legitimate and transparent process – would the fundamental choices facing the voters be much different? Another election would not inspire Bangladesh's civil servants, educators and soldiers to greater patriotism and commitment. It is better to allow them to continue with their duties and help to push forward the national development agenda.

### **Shadow of violence**

The United Nations has expressed concern about the violence which took place in the election period. "There are worrying indications that reprisals have continued to take place, notably against the political opposition, including physical attacks and ill-treatment, arbitrary arrests, harassment, disappearances and filing of criminal cases," the UN said. It is entirely appropriate for a respected body such as the UN to press countries to uphold high standards in elections and to condemn violence.

Yet I am afraid that in many parts of the world – especially within Asia – elections tend to increase divisions based on religion and other factors. So, is it correct to assume that the surge in violence was political? And to put the figure of 17 reported deaths into context – more than 4,000 people were killed in traffic accidents across the country last year, according to the BUET Accident Research Institute. Only a few of those tragic deaths made headlines.

The United Nations has called for an independent and impartial investigation into the election process. I wonder if this is achievable. My hunch is that whoever is appointed to lead the inquiry, there will be plenty of critics who challenge its legitimacy. Just like holding another election, launching an inquiry into the electoral process risks creating more division and unrest.

### **Tribalism**

Bangladesh politics all too often descends into tribalism and partisanship. This sometimes feeds discrimination and violence. The country needs leaders who have the moral strength to rise above this. They must recognise that they are chosen to serve for the sake of the country, rather than for the glory of their party – or their tribe.

These leaders should formulate solutions to Bangladesh's problems, rather than focus on rhetoric or ideology. Political integrity is measured not by party loyalty but by how effectively representatives carry out their responsibilities after they have been elected. Now is the time to allow the country's divisions to heal and to support the new parliamentarians in their duties as servants of the people.

## **Jamaat should be tried**

The investigation agency of the International Crimes Tribunal yesterday expressed discontent as trial of Jamaat-e-Islami as a party did not begin even five years after completion of a probe over its role in 1971.

"My personal opinion is that the matter (trial of Jamaat)] should be settled. Jamaat has already lost registration. There are allegations and observations against it. It has been mentioned as a criminal organisation in each judgment," said Abul Hannan Khan, coordinator of the agency. "This is also my question why the trial has not started. You better ask the prosecution ... We had hurriedly completed our investigation on March 27, 2014. It is now around five years."



The Election Commission has already done its part by cancelling Jamaat's registration, he said. "So, where is the barrier to try Jamaat as a party. We all want it. But I don't know why it is not happening," he said and asked journalists to find the reason behind it. Following the unprecedented Shahbagh movement in February 2013, the government amended the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act-1973 and the agency in August that year launched a probe into the war crimes allegedly committed by Jamaat. The agency handed over the probe report to the prosecution in March 2014 with a recommendation to ban Jamaat and six other organisations, which were associated with the party in 1971. It found involvement of these anti-liberation bodies in grievous crimes committed during the war. But the prosecution could not initiate trial of Jamaat as the



government did not take initiatives to amend the act. Trial of an organisation is not possible under the existing law, which does not specify punishment in case the organisation is found guilty of crimes, some experts said. Meanwhile, the EC in October last year scrapped Jamaat's registration following a High Court verdict that declared the party's registration illegal in August 2013.

**Law Minister Anisul Huq recently said the government will take further initiatives to amend the relevant law of holding trial of Jamaat-e-Islami as an organisation for committing war crimes.** The law will be amended as per instruction from the prime minister, the minister said while talking to reporters at his Secretariat office after he was accorded a reception by the law ministry officials and staffs.

## UK media team visit Bangladesh before Elections

**London: Dhaka:** A visiting UK press & media team led by EBF President Ansar Ahmed Ullah met with Bangladeshi press on 21 December at Dhaka Club. In the meeting, Ansar Ahmed Ullah introduced the UK team to say that the UK team has come to Bangladesh to attend 'Media Dialogue with Bangladesh Press' aimed at engaging and interacting between the UK-based press & media activists and leading Bangladeshi media houses prior to the run up to general elections on 30 December 2018. They discussed the overall political scenario in Bangladesh and other specific topics such as poverty alleviation, digital & information act, social justice and issues of freedom of expression. Ansar Ahmed Ullah & Monjurul Ahsan Bulbul, CEO of Ekushey TV jointly moderated the discussion.



The UK team comprised of journalist Ansar Ahmed Ullah, Duncan Bartlett, Editor, Asian Affairs Magazine, Farhan Masud Khan, Head of Programmes, Channel S TV, Kois Miah, Photojournalist, Matiar Chowdhury, NNBcorrespondent, Writer Sebastian Dunn and Syed Anas Pasha, Editor-in-chief and local media guests included Syed Ishtiaque Reza, Editor in Chief, GTV, Farida Yasmin, General Secretary, National Press Club, Naem Nizam, Editor, Daily Bangladesh Pratidin, Rahul Raha, Head of News, Channel 24, Tasnima Hossain, Editor, Daily Ettfaq, Nurul Amin Probash, Head of News, ATN News, Manjurul Islam, DBC, Munni Saha, ATN, Joy E Mamun of Jamuna Television, Abul Kalam Azad, BSS, Shyamal Dutta, Bhorer Kakojo and Tasneem Kibria Orpa, Sub Editor, Dhaka Tribune. They also paid their respect to the founder of Bangladesh Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman by paying a visit to Bangabandhu Memorial Museum in Dhanmondi, Dhaka on 21 December 2018.

# Taramon Bibi, a fearless woman warrior

The passing away of Bir Protik Taramon Bibi quietly in her home in Rajipur Upazila, at age 61, only 16 days before the commemoration of Victory Day, is truly a tragedy for us. For she was one of our few living heroes who could tell the tale of a freedom fighter, battling against a ferocious enemy, far less equipped in terms of arms, training or experience, far more passionate in the steadfast determination to free one's motherland from the clutches of oppression.

And Taramon Bibi, a restless tomboy, managed to convince her mother to let her, a lanky young girl in her teens, to join the war for freedom. In an interview Taramon describes how she met Muhib Habildar, a freedom fighter, her mentor and godfather, who persuaded her to help his fellow Muktiyoddhas in a camp in her village home Shankar Madhabpur Kurigram.

Her initial job was to cook for the freedom fighters in the camp which she was happy to do but soon her comrades realised she was ready to take on far more serious tasks. Pretending to be a mentally challenged woman by smearing dirt on her hair, Taramon would go near the enemy camp to get information for her comrades. She would nimbly climb the betel nut trees and use her binoculars to spot the approaching enemy and alert her comrades. Impressed by her fearlessness, Muhib started to train her in how to use a rifle and stein gun—training that came to great use in various operations.



The memory of the first time she went into direct combat was always very vivid for Taramon. During one of her vigils she spotted a gunboat carrying the Pak army heading towards where they were located. Taramon got prepared for combat with her comrades, and together, they succeeded in getting rid of the enemy. After that, Taramon had to fight with arms on many occasions and was often praised by the other Muktiyoddhas for being a good marksman. In those days, she never thought about the risks involved in what she was doing. “We were fighting to free our country,” she said in an interview, “the last thing on my mind was worrying about my own safety.”

Once when Taramon and her camp mates were hiding in the bunkers when the enemy changed their strategy and started an air-bombing onslaught. The Pak army raided the camp a few times and hurled bombs killing several people. But fortunately, Taramon escaped death. She had been in Sector 11 under the leadership of Sector Commander Abu Taher, Bir Uttam.

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's government honoured her with the Bir Protik title in 1973 for her courageous role in resisting the Pakistan occupation forces with weapons. She had been given an award of gallantry yet she had no idea she had received such an honour. After the war, nobody knew of her whereabouts.

It was in 1995, 24 years after she had helped to liberate her country, that a researcher Bimal Kanti Dey found her and she received her title Bir Protik and a medal of honour from the government. Although she had helped to win a war, her personal life was one of struggle with her husband, a landless farm labourer, and two children to raise, while she battled with tuberculosis.

She was one of the two gallantry award-winning women freedom fighters. Taramon was laid to rest in her family graveyard at Kacharipara in Rajibpur with state honours. It was a befitting farewell to a brave hero who passed most of her life like many of her other fellow Muktiyoddhas, in financial hardship and poor health, but unwavering in their love for their motherland.

**Editor's note:** EBF's President named her only child, a daughter, Taraman, after this great fighter of Bangladesh liberation war. Ansar's daughter Taraman is now around 25 years old. - **by Aasha Mehreen Amin, The Daily Star.**

# Is Germany colluding with Islamic Terrorists?

Two million people arrived in Germany in 2015 and 1.8 million people in 2016. Jawed came to Germany in 2015, while Abdul had arrived the year after in 2016. Both Jawed and Abdul were Afghan Muslim migrants. Both applied for asylum and had their asylum applications rejected.

Abdul Mobin Dawodzai was recently sentenced to eight years in prison for stabbing to death Mia Valentin, a 15-year-old girl. Jawed went to Amsterdam and stabbed two American tourists at the central station. Abdul was angry that Mia broke up with him. Jawed was angry about insults to Islam and Mohammed. Jawed's German residence permit enabled him to carry out a terrorist attack in Amsterdam. He mentioned Geert Wilders, the pioneering Dutch leader who was recently forced to cancel a Mohammed cartoon contest due to violent Islamic threats, and so the media has chosen to blame the terrorist attack on Islamic cartoons rather than Islamic terrorists. But Jawed is part of a larger trend of Afghan violence.

Both Jawed and Abdul carried out their stabbing attacks in public. The victims, a 15-year-old girl and American tourists, also brought more attention to a type of ordinary terror that has overtaken Europe.

In March, Hussein Khavari, an Afghan refugee who had fled to Germany in 2015, was sent to prison for raping and murdering Maria Ladenburger, a 19-year-old German student. But Hussein wasn't fleeing Afghanistan; he was fleeing Greece, where he had thrown a 20-year-old female student off a cliff after robbing her. The Greeks sentenced him to a decade in prison, but Hussein fled to Germany instead. Like Abdul, Hussein claimed to be a minor when he was actually in his twenties. (He may not have even actually been from Afghanistan.)

Afghans, it's been noted, stand out for their rate of violence, even among other Muslim migrants. A refugee expert warned in a National Interest article that, "young Afghan men... were committing sex crimes to a much greater extent than other refugees." Among the incidents she cited was, "a gang of fifty Afghans who terrorized women in the neighborhood of the Linz train station" in neighboring Austria.

Train stations are a common venue for Afghan Muslim violence and abuses. A small sampling of sexual assaults committed by Afghan refugees recent year in Germany, collected by Gatestone's Soeren Kern, included, a sexual assault on an 19-year-old woman on a train station in Hamburg, two sexual assaults by one Afghan man on two trams in Mannheim, a sexual assault on a 14-year-old girl at a station in Munich, another assault in Munster, and two Afghans who sexually assaulted a 14-year old girl in Gera.

Not to mention the three Afghan migrants accused of sexually assaulting a 12 and 14 year old at a swimming pool, and the Afghan refugee, and repeat offender, who raped a 13-year-old girl.

Angela Merkel, Germany's open borders leader, had briefly ramped up Afghan deportations in response to public outrage, until a massive bombing in Kabul last year led to yet another change in policy.

The thousands of Taliban fighters who, according to the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF), had entered Germany and applied for asylum, could conveniently no longer be deported. Earlier this year, a German court sentenced Abdol Moghadas, an Afghan refugee, to four years in prison for his role in the death of Pfc. Christian Jacob Chandler: an American soldier serving in Afghanistan. Abdol was one of Germany's many Taliban fighters.





Why have so many Taliban gone to Germany? One answer might lie in the covert relationship between the Taliban and German intelligence. It was Germany who had pioneered diplomatic talks with the Taliban, and who had welcomed Taliban leaders onto German soil.

The end of deportations didn't just benefit the Taliban fighters, but failed asylum seekers like Jawed and Abdul who could no longer be deported even though their asylum applications had been turned down. Germany had sharply dropped its acceptance rate of Afghan asylum applications, while also dropping its deportation rate, leaving large numbers of legally illegal Afghan migrants to bum around Europe. Approximately six months later, Abdul killed Mia, and over a year later, Jawed struck in Amsterdam. "Terrorism has no borders," Merkel had declared after the bombing. But terrorism has borders. They're national borders.

Terrorism "targets all of us," German chancellor Angela Merkel had insisted. In "Manchester or Berlin, Paris, Istanbul, St. Petersburg or today in Kabul." But it's only when there's nothing stopping Taliban fighters on their way from Kabul to Berlin, from Istanbul to Paris, or from Tripoli to Manchester, that Islamic terrorism is truly a universal threat. Terrorism doesn't have to be everywhere. Especially Islamic terrorism, which is not an indigenous political movement in Europe, Canada, Australia or America, but can only spread through migration. Without open borders, the infrastructure of Islamic terrorism, from immigrants, migrants and refugees, to mosques, which generate new converts, Islamic terrorism would be an issue in Kabul, not Berlin.

Germany's open borders attracted Jawed, Abdul, Hussein, Abdol and so many other asylum seekers. And then the EU's internal open borders allowed Jawed to strike at American tourists in another European country. That's what happens to ordinary people when terrorism has no borders. Terrorism can have borders. All you have to do to save lives is protect those borders. (By Daniel Greenfield).

## Pakistan Supreme Court upholds blasphemy acquittal of Christian woman Asia Bibi

Pakistan's Supreme Court on Tuesday upheld the acquittal of Asia Bibi, a Christian woman who spent years on death row after being convicted of blasphemy, dismissing a petition filed by Islamists who have called for her execution.

The decision leaves Bibi, who has been staying at an undisclosed location under tight security, free to leave Pakistan and seek asylum abroad. "On merit, this petition is dismissed," Chief Justice Asif Saeed Khosa told the court, saying the petitioners, led by a village prayer leader, had failed to point out any mistake in the original judgement which he said had been based on false evidence. In November, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said his country was in talks with Pakistan about helping Bibi, however there was no confirmation of her whereabouts or intentions following the verdict. The case, which drew worldwide attention, shone a spotlight on Pakistan's strict blasphemy laws and the often-difficult conditions facing its Christian minority who make up 1.6 percent of the largely Sunni Muslim country of over 200 million.



Bibi, a farm worker, was convicted in 2010 of making derogatory remarks about Islam after neighbours working in the fields with her objected to her drinking water from their glass because she was not Muslim. Her conviction was overturned in October, prompting protests from religious hardliners calling for her death and demanding that the government prevent her from leaving the country. Under pressure from days of protests in the capital, Islamabad, and other cities, the government agreed to stop Bibi leaving the country until the Supreme Court considered the petition. Bibi has been in hiding since the Supreme Court freed her in October, after eight years on death row. She has always denied committing blasphemy.

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