



#GreaterKarachi

An Autonomous Home for Urban Sindh

The Mohajir rights’ campaign was launched in Washington, D.C, last year by a US-based advocacy group, Voice of Karachi, under the title of #FreeKarachi on the Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

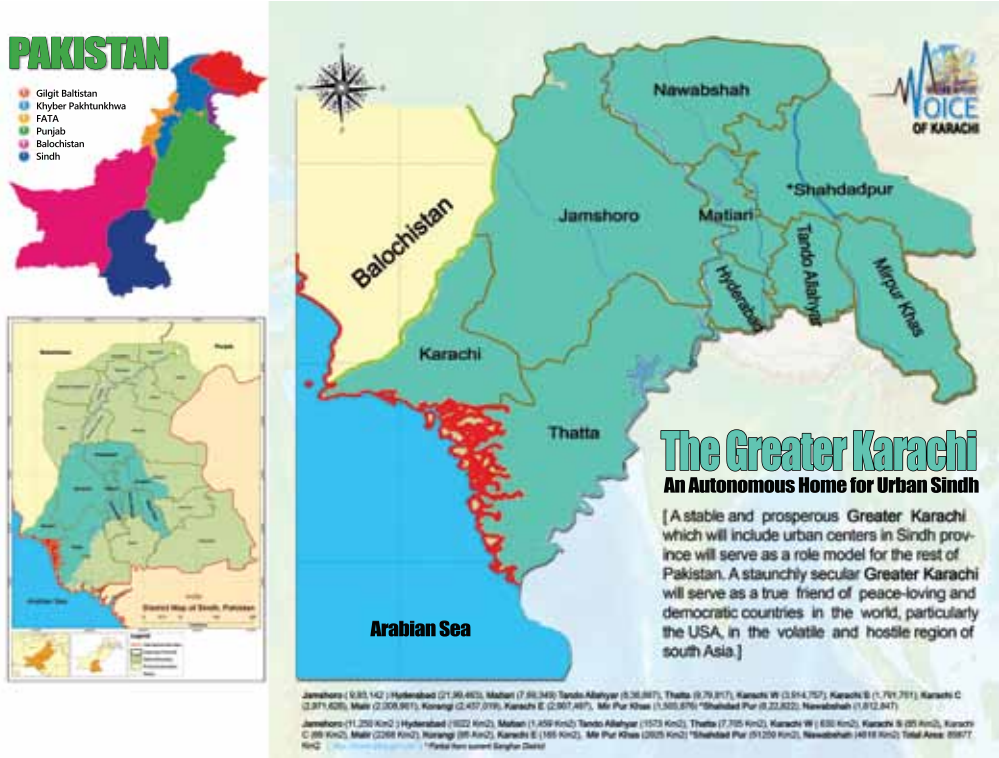
- Mohajirs are those whose forefathers had migrated from India’s Muslim-minority provinces after the partition of Indian Subcontinent in 1947.
- Successive military and civilian governments have disenfranchised tens of millions of Mohajirs in urban areas of Sindh through gerrymandering and systematic manipulation of census figures. More than half of Karachi’s population was wiped off in the last census figures.
- Widescale human rights violations in Karachi and other urban centers of Sindh province are a daily occurrence.
- Pakistani security forces, majority of them from Pakistan’s Punjab province, have killed thousands of ethnic Mohajirs in Karachi since 1992.
- Ali Raza Abidi, a US-educated Mohajir former lawmaker and a known critic of Pakistan’s military establishment, was assassinated in Karachi on 25th December 2018.
- Mohajirs demand the United Nations to constitute a high level commission to probe extra judicial killings, enforced disappearances, arbitrary arrests and inhuman physical torture in custody of security forces.

In terms of numbers, the nearly 70 million Mohajirs are the second largest ethnic group in Pakistan. They are also the single-largest ethnic group in Karachi.

Karachi, which holds an important geo-strategic location in South Asia and whose large secular Urdu-speaking population is a natural US ally, has been turned in recent years into a safe haven for jihadist and anti –US forces by Pakistan’s military establishment.

The people of Karachi are now demanding creation of Greater Karachi. The proposed plan of Greater Karachi includes Karachi and Sindh province’s other urban areas. Once a reality, it will be home to all those Pakistanis who believe in true democracy, co-existence, freedom of religion and expression, equality and supremacy of constitution and law.

The world community, the United States of America in particular, must support the idea of Greater Karachi. They should also invest in educational, human development and civic projects besides forging a strong relationship with the people of urban Sindh. A prosperous and stable Greater Karachi will certainly be vital for peace in South Asia.



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voiceofkarachi.org

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Karachi is among the five most-populous cities in the world. Situated in the south of Pakistan on the shores of the Arabian Sea, Karachi serves as a transport hub and gateway to Central Asia, and is home to Pakistan's two largest seaports, the thriving Port of Karachi and Port Bin Qasim.

- Since 1947, at least a dozen Mohajir-majority towns have been subjected to massacres in Sindh province leaving tens of thousands of Mohajirs dead, but not a single culprit has ever been punished.
- Mohajir intellectuals, scholars, and political and human rights activists are particularly targeted by the security agencies and their proxies.
- Karachi's local population has no representation in the city's law enforcement agencies

70 million ethnic Mohajir community faces gross human rights violations in Pakistan.

- On 25th December 2018, — ***A prominent former Mohajir lawmaker and graduate from Boston University USA, Ali Raza Abidi was assassinated in Karachi.***



- Dr. Hasan Zafar Arif, a PhD from Harvard University and Deputy Convener of MQM, was extra judicially killed in January last year.
- This history of repression and denial of rights is what tells Mohajirs that like killers of Pakistan's first Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan, a Mohajir, and Prof. Zafar-Hasan Arif, killers of Ali Raza Abidi and thousands of other innocent Mohajirs will never be apprehended.
- Mohajirs have high hopes that the USA, as a beacon of individual and religious freedom as well as a defender of human rights, will take up their cause and hold Pakistan's Punjabi-dominated military establishment accountable for its crimes against humanity.



- Karachi contributes between 65-70 % of revenue to the country's treasury, but both the federal and provincial governments have deprived this mega city of even the basic civic needs.
- Thousands of legally owned homes and shops in Mohajir dominated areas have been demolished recently under the false pretext of anti-encroachment drive.

Karachi and other urban areas of Sindh need administrative autonomy to run their affairs. Prosperity, development and subsequent stability brought by administrative autonomy will benefit all those forces who want to establish long term peace in this region.

Saving Karachi is in the interest of international community, US in particular, due to this great city's strategic importance and its economic and industrial potential.



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Karachi, once the ‘Bride of the East,’ endures vicious campaign of terror



By Nadeem Nusrat

When Benjamin Franklin wrote in a 1789 letter that “in this world, nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes,” he had no idea how unashamedly modern-day Pakistan would defy his prophecy.

Pakistan today is a country where only death seems a certainty. As for taxes, only about 1 percent of the adult population has to pay. To put it more bluntly, 99 percent of the country’s adult population escapes the burden of taxation.

Taking into account the fact that there are more than 200 million people in the country, the disparity seems particularly daunting. Pakistan may still be largely an agrarian economy, but its wealthy, influential, landowning elite pay no taxes on agricultural income.

The result: Karachi and the city’s thriving seaport contribute a staggering 65 percent toward the national exchequer, effectively driving Pakistan’s economy.

But this strategically located city, once known as the “Bride of the East” because of its clean, brightly lit streets, is today deprived of even the most basic necessities.

Multiple power outages are daily occurrences. Trash collection and disposal are almost nonexistent. Access to potable water is a luxury for city residents — except for those living in posh areas run by the Pakistani military. Street crime rates have hit an all-time high. Karachi may be the only major city in the world that does not have anything even close to a central commuter system.

Most independent international bodies rank Karachi as one of the most populous cities in the world. A 2016 World Bank Group report commissioned by the Sindh government put the figure at 16 million, though Pakistan’s 2017 census showed Karachi’s population at just 14.9 million.

The same report noted that Karachi “accounts for one-third of Sindh’s population and one-fifth of the country’s urban population.” But Karachi’s representation in Pakistan’s national

legislative bodies and Sindh province’s legislative assembly does not reflect even the heavily rigged census figures. This is why representatives from rural Sindh, which pays less than 10 percent of the taxes to the province’s treasury, have always ruled over Karachi.

In Pakistan, everyone rules Karachi except its own people. Some 20 agencies across federal, provincial and local levels are vying for the control of the city, leading to chaos. These agencies also control nearly 90 percent of the land in Karachi but are reluctant to make it available for development. As per the findings of the World Bank Group, “A highly complex political economy, highly centralized but fragmented governance, land contestation among many government entities and weak institutional capacity have made it difficult to manage the city’s development.”

Karachi’s lucrative land has made the city a prime target for the country’s corrupt property mafias, including military-backed and military-

left Karachi’s mayor with no control over the city’s resources and administration. The Sindh government retains substantial control over various city services and functions in Karachi, including master planning, building control, water and sewage issues, solid waste management and development of nearby land. Taxes paid by Karachi may finance Pakistan, but the city’s own finances are in a weak position, relying almost solely on meager funding from a rural-dominated provincial government to meet budgetary needs.

Experts agree that Karachi is at a high risk of natural and man-made disasters. World Bank Group analysts estimate that Karachi needs \$9 billion to \$10 billion in financing over the next decade to meet infrastructure and service needs in urban transport, water supply and sanitation, and municipal solid waste processing.

But infrastructure spending by the public sector is well below these requirements. With Pakistan gradually slipping into a financial

Karachi is not just blessed with a strategic location, but it is also home to an educated and religiously tolerant ethnic group, the Mohajirs. Descendants of those who migrated to Pakistan after the British partitioned the Indian subcontinent in 1947, these Urdu-speaking Mohajirs are the ones who transformed the city into the region’s industrial powerhouse.

But the Mohajirs soon lost their eminence to Pakistan’s Punjabi-dominated military establishment, who turned to Sindhi nationalist Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in the 1970s to nationalize Mohajir-owned industries, banks and educational institutions. Despite census-rigging and gerrymandering, Mohajirs still make up the majority population of the city.

Pakistan’s Punjabi-dominated military has carried out multiple security operations in Karachi to weaken the power of Mohajirs in Karachi. One operation, begun in 2013 and supported by the province’s rural-dominated government, has resulted in the arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings of hundreds of Mohajirs. The Mohajirs’ political party has also been fragmented under intense pressure from Pakistan’s intelligence agencies.

Since the government of Prime Minister Imran Khan has taken over, a vicious campaign to terrorize, displace and financially cripple Mohajirs has been launched. Thousands of homes and businesses legally owned by Mohajirs have been demolished in Karachi. Rightful owners, some with claims dating back to the 1950s and 1960s, have been evicted with only a few days’ notice and without any compensation. Pakistani courts have failed to provide justice to Mohajir victims.

Clearly, Pakistan has failed to address even the most basic issues of Karachi, as growing unemployment, a large youth population frustrated by deteriorating conditions and rising religious extremism pose major problems for peace in the region.

The Voice of Karachi, therefore, is launching a campaign to have Karachi declared as an autonomous city -called Greater Karachi-within Pakistan, similar to the Kurdish region in Iraq. A stable and prosperous Greater Karachi which will also include other Mohajir-dominated urban centers in Sindh province, would serve as a role model for the rest of Pakistan by treating all its citizens equally and ensuring freedom of religion and speech for all.

A staunchly secular Greater Karachi will also serve as a true friend of all peace-loving and democratic countries in the world, particularly the U.S.

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run real estate businesses and cantonment boards. A recent newspaper report found that less than 32 percent of Karachi is now under the administrative control of the city’s local government, the Karachi Municipal Corp.

Sindh’s provincial government, which is dominated by the region’s rural population, has

meltdown, the possibility of getting funds for Karachi’s crumbling infrastructure is becoming slimmer every day. The growing civic deterioration, unemployment, poverty and frustration are only strengthening well-funded extremist forces looking to lure youths into their deadly trap.

Pakistan’s oppressed eye U.S. intervention



By Wasay Jalil

Pakistanis observe a national holiday on Dec. 25 every year. It’s not because Pakistan, a Muslim-majority country, celebrates Christmas. Nor is it because Jesus’ birthday is celebrated on that day. The reason for Pakistanis to take a day off work on Christmas is to celebrate the birth of their country’s founder, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, who happens to share his date of birth with Jesus.

Like most other Christmas days in Pakistan, the most recent Dec. 25 was passing peacefully, but things changed that evening. Pakistani news media reported that two gunmen on a motorbike had gunned down 46-year-old Ali Raza Abidi right outside his house in Karachi.

Abidi, who was a member of Pakistan’s National Assembly until May, was a hugely

popular social media activist.

Like Jinnah, Abidi was a Shia Muslim. More important, he was what is known as a Mohajir, a descendant of those who migrated to Pakistan after the British carved the subcontinent into two independent states — India and Pakistan — in 1947. Shias and Mohajirs are now facing ever-growing persecution in Sunni Muslim-dominated Pakistan.

Even by Pakistani standards, where suicide bombings, targeted killings, military operations, kidnappings and enforced disappearances are not uncommon, Abidi’s cold-blooded assassination was a shock. He was a fierce critic of Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan and the ruling PTI party. He spared no opportunity to tease Mr. Khan and his army of social media trolls with a series of sharp-witted tweets. He routinely called the prime minister “Taliban Khan” because of Mr. Khan’s relentless defense of the radical Islamic movement and his opposition to U.S. drone attacks on their training sites. He was also a known critic of the powerful Pakistani military establishment’s anti-democracy policies and its overt and covert ties to religious extremists.

Abidi’s social media posts, however, were never abusive or defamatory, and he never resorted to personal attacks.

Abidi was a brave individual who repeatedly defied Pakistan’s powerful military agencies. He refused to comply when he was asked to stop defending his party, the MQM, on social media. He also defied Pakistan’s brutal intelligence machinery when a high-ranking

official of the Pakistani spy agency summoned him to his office three months ago and ordered him to shut down his Twitter account.

Abidi was assassinated at the doorstep of his house. Closed-circuit television footage at the compound shows that two men parked their motorbike next to his car. One got off the bike and shot four bullets into Abidi’s head from less than a meter away. Abidi stood no chance. He died well before receiving any medical treatment.

Abidi’s house was located in one of the most expensive — and well-guarded — residential areas of Karachi, the Defense Housing Authority. Consulate offices of a number of foreign missions are located around his house, and the paramilitary Rangers service has a permanent post there.

Yet somehow the killers were able to pursue him, kill him and get away without any resistance. Some media reports suggest that paramilitary Rangers on duty were absent from their posts at the time of the attack.

Given the history of persecution of ethnic Mohajirs in Pakistan since 1947, it would be hoping against hope to expect that Abidi’s killers will be apprehended. After all, those who masterminded and executed the assassination of Pakistan’s first-ever prime minister, Liaquat Ali Khan, a Mohajir, in 1950 were never caught. Since 1947, at least a dozen Mohajir-majority towns have been subjected to massacres in Sindh province, leaving tens of thousands dead. Not a single culprit has ever been punished.

Abidi’s death was not the only outrage targeting a high-profile Mohajir figure in Pakistan in 2018. In January, Harvard-educated professor Zafar-Hasan Arif was kidnapped by plainclothes personnel, tortured and left dead on the outskirts of Karachi. In fact, it was the tragic killing of Arif that led to the launch in the U.S. of the Voice of Karachi and the Free Karachi campaign on Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

Few in the West realize that it was the Mohajirs who took the lead in Pakistan’s creation in pre-partition India and that those living in what is now modern Pakistan had no interest in seeking freedom. Pakistan was conceived as a way to provide India’s Muslim minority a true homeland and a safe place to live in peace, but their dream has turned into a nightmare. In the 1990s, two federal governments in Pakistan were toppled on charges of Mohajir killings, yet not a single perpetrator of Mohajir-targeted violence was ever identified, let alone punished.

This history of repression and denial of rights have led many Mohajirs to conclude that — like the killers of Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan and Arif — Abidi’s attackers will never face justice. Pakistan’s Mohajirs, along with the country’s moderate Muslims, Christians, Balochs and other religious and ethnic minorities, have high hopes that the U.S., long a beacon of personal and religious freedom around the world, will take up their cause and hold Pakistan’s Punjabi-dominated military accountable for its actions.

America’s First Amendment



By Puneet Ahluwalia

“Azadi 1” is the new license plate of my friend Tom Garrett, a former congressman from Virginia who has steadily become the voice of the voiceless.

Mr. Garrett recently traveled to Syria to highlight the plight of the Kurds, he’s heralded the hardship of Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar and he has stood strong for Muhajirs suffering at the hands of an ineffective Pakistan.

Tom’s license plate reminds me of my family’s link to **Azadi, which means freedom.**

In 1970, my dad’s elder brother, Prithipal Singh Ahluwalia, was honored with the title of “Azad,” for he daringly gave speeches against the human rights abuses during “the Emergency’ in India. It was a controversial period in the history of independent India where civil liberties were curbed, the press was censored, political opponents incarcerated and elections suspended. He was imprisoned for 2 years, my father and cousins pleading for his release.

Even though I was very young at that time, I saw him as my hero and a source of inspiration along with Shaheed Bhagat Singh and Subhash Chandra Bose, leader of the Azad Hind Fauj (Free India Army), both were valiant freedom fighters of India’s Independence struggle against the British colonial rule. My love for history and liberty made me romanticize about those who fought for India’s freedom and other places in the world.

Azadi inspires us all. It empowers all Americans as free thinkers to seek their fundamental rights such as Life, Liberty and Pursuit of Happiness. The Bill of Rights in the US Constitution has also perfected and secured the freedoms we all cherish today, and often take for granted.

Regardless of faith or which country we hail from, we all strongly support minority rights and religious freedom worldwide. **The right to religious freedom is America’s First Amendment.** It may surprise few, Presidents Trump’s foreign policy adheres to promoting American idealism and values around the world, as it is a positive force of good. It helps to develop strong, peaceful, and successful societies around the world. It is a movement which has taken center stage in his administration.

In July 2018, United States Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom Sam Brownback hosted the Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom at the State Department. Greg Mitchell, IRF Co-Chair has consistently put together roundtables and built coalitions to address various issues. There

have been targeted efforts in support for Yazidi Christians and Kurds in Iraq and Syria, Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar and Uyghur Muslims, Buddhist and Christians in China.

Throughout the world, we are seeing a surge in deadly attacks on religious minorities. Oppressive regimes are violating individual rights and squashing the rule of law. Their leaders in the guise of democracy apply underhanded pressure tactics and threaten the freedom of the press. They unleash the government machinery in maintaining tighter control on social media and other news outlets. But they should be wary. We will not sit silently in the face of

record on human rights abuse towards Christians and Muslims. In our dialogue, I conveyed that it is imperative to demonstrate respect towards the rule of law, basic human rights, religious tolerance and media freedom. These should be the corner stone of their trade practice along with other important factors in doing business with the USA.

It is not hard to be an ally to the United States, provided you believe in American values. The partnership between the United States and aspiring partners strengthens and benefits all, as it brings about a direct political and economic impact. These exchanges help

bad loans and infrastructure and development projects. We promote free will and stand up against oppressive choking arrangements, which stifles nations’ economies and the local population. Having a strong stable partner like the United States ensures prosperity and stability of the economy and overcomes threats of fragility from all sides.

On January 16, 2019, we celebrated our nations long-standing commitment to freedom of conscience and the freedom to profess one’s own faith. I strongly and proudly believe that our nation will always remain a beacon of hope and freedom for all. We will champion basic human



evil. We will isolate them internationally and hold them accountable for their atrocities.

My participation in South Asia issues has given me a front-row seat to the hardship of the region’s minorities, especially in Pakistan.

The recent tragic killing in Karachi of young bright Mohajir leader, Ali Raza Abidi, 46, in front of his home by two murderers on a motorbike is yet another example of persecution of Shia minorities. Murderous actions like these are aimed at dashing the hope of seeing a bright stable future of Karachi and Pakistan. He had been elected in 2013 to Pakistan’s National Assembly, which is equivalent of the House of Representatives. After receiving multiple death threats, Abidi pleaded with the authorities for security but was denied.

Asia Bibi, a Pakistani Christian woman accused of blasphemy, spent nearly 10 years in jail under a death sentence. The reversal of her conviction due to lack of evidence led to a series of threats to her and her community. The entire country was paralyzed by hardline Islamist groups. During the course of her trial, leaders were assassinated and judges intimidated by death threats.

I was recently approached by a business and political leadership group of an African nation who wanted representation in US. They were eager to enhance their political clout and grow trade relations with our nation. I realized their state had a checkered



in long term direct improvement and impact in the daily lives of the people. The self-reliance and pride is felt by the future generations, thus securing the advancement of our common interest and values.

Importantly, our nation does not impose its values on partners but identifies a mutually beneficial path to help our partners to mobilize their own resources to achieve growth and stability. We promote free market principles with fair and open trade while protecting the rights of intellectual property. We are an alternate choice for nations struggling under the influence of autocratic leaders or indebted to our rivals or in a hostage situation from

values and stand up to rogues and bad actors. Our founding principles inspire and guide the new generation of Americans like me and many others. We will call out on those who do not respect their citizens, mercilessly see them burnt alive, allow rape and abuse of women, create orphans and break families forever.

Let not the passion of your faith get from your heart into your head, that one loses sight of basic humanity. The true faithful of God sees the beauty of all faiths, caste and color and accepts all with love. And then he is truly Azadi!!!

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By Former Rep. Thomas A. Garrett Jr., Virginia Republican

Azadi means freedom.

Freedom is something that some take for granted. This isn’t a luxury that most people in the world share.

My name is Tom Garrett. I served as an artillery officer in the United States Army and deployed to the Balkans following the massacre at Srebrenica.

I served as a prosecutor, noted for record

The challenge of ‘Azadi’

sentences handed down to those who preyed on children.

I’ve been a Virginia State Senator, drafting and passing the bill that struck Virginia’s draconian “crimes against nature” laws that criminalized certain acts between consenting adults.

Most recently, I served in Congress representing Virginia’s Fifth Congressional district, one first represented by James Madison. In this capacity, I was able to extract two men from prison in Sudan, who had served two years for rendering aid to their starving neighbors.

I first learned the word ‘azadi’ from members of the Kurdish Regional Government on a trip to Iraq and Syria. It stuck in my mind. All people, regardless of their race, religion, or national origins have the right to certain freedoms in their homes. I couldn’t begin to articulate these freedoms as succinctly or eloquently as Jefferson and Madison and Locke already have, so I will not try.

Later I learned that ‘azadi’ doesn’t just mean freedom in Kurdish, but also in roughly a

dozen other languages spanning various linguistic families. Like the Kurds, Persian, Urdu, Hindi, Pashto, Baluchi, Luri, Azeri, Punjabi, Bengali, and Armenian speakers who know the word ‘azadi’ means freedom. These people live in areas that reach from the Mediterranean to the South China Sea. Fully one in seven people on earth would recognize this word in their native tongue. That’s three for every native English speaker on the planet. The irony is that these diverse people know a word, but they have almost never been able to experience it.

That is precisely why I started Azadi Consulting, LLC.

Influence in D.C. is wielded too often by monied elite. These monied elite include nation states. China and Russia come immediately to mind, but who would think that Erdogan’s Turkey spends ten million a month to influence US opinion and policy? Who looks out for the oppressed? Who works to espouse a policy that focuses on basic rights and free-

doms? This is what Azadi Consulting will do. This is what I will do.

For these reasons, I am delighted to announce my relationship with Voice of Karachi and the South Asian Minority Foundation. Joining Puneet Ahluwalia of New World Strategies and Pakistani American civil rights activist Nadeem Nusrat is a perfect first step. These groups and individuals work to be a voice to the oppressed. They each also represents millions of people who know the word, ‘azadi,’ but do know the experience of ‘azadi.’

The US is uniquely positioned among nations to demand that those who oppress these minority groups reform their horrific human rights records as a precondition to economic and security relations with the United States. This could be done without spending a dime of taxpayer money, and if our government consistently applied these principles, the world would literally change for the better.

Can this be done? Can ‘azadi’ become not just a word, but an experience? We believe it can.

It starts today.

Tom Garrett Jr. can be reached at azadillc@protonmail.com.