



Venezuela and Bangladesh: Two theatres, same actor



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Violence never arrives announcing itself as violence. It arrives wrapped in reasons and slogans, in duty, in faith, in law, in nation, and demands that you honour it as necessary. It extracts your moral consent first, and only then does it spill blood.

The actor I am pointing to is not a nation; it is the human ego that converts harm into virtue. The seed of mischief is always the same—the sticky centre called "I", long before it becomes a flag, a party, a scripture, or a border.

In early January 2026, American helicopters descended on Caracas, and by dawn Nicolás Maduro was in US custody, headed to a New York courtroom. Washington calls it law executed with military muscle; Caracas calls it a violation of sovereignty.

In the same week, in Bangladesh, a Hindu shopkeeper returning home on New Year's Eve was stopped, stabbed, drenched in petrol, and set on fire. He survived only because he threw himself into a pond. Another man, a garment worker, was lynched over a blasphemy allegation that the police found no evidence for. The Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council reports over 2,400 incidents of violence against minorities since August 2024.

One situation comes wearing the badge of the state, the chain of command, the paperwork of law. The other comes as a neighbourhood crowd, fed by rumour, intoxicated on collective conviction. The scale differs, the method differs, the language differs, but the inner permission to hurt is painfully familiar.

Violence Never Arrives Calling Itself Violence

The Crusader did not march announcing greed; he marched to save a sacred site. The Inquisition did not call itself terror; it called itself salvation. Colonial conquest did not describe itself as plunder; it called itself a civilising mission. Partition did not call itself ethnic cleansing; it called itself freedom. The pattern keeps repeating for one simple reason: the ego borrows noble words and then does ignoble things.

In Bangladesh, nobody says, "We chose them because they are vulnerable." They say, "We are defending faith, punishing blasphemy, protecting honour." In Washington, nobody says, "We are enforcing interests." They say, "We are fighting narco-terrorism, restoring democracy." The vocabulary is local; the grammar is universal.

The danger is not hypocrisy; hypocrisy at least

knows it is lying. The real danger is self-deception. The mob member can genuinely feel holy, the official can genuinely feel civilised, and the ego keeps its heroic self-image intact while bodies burn and buildings collapse.

The Weak Are Chosen, the Strong Are Invoked

Notice the selection, for violence is rarely random.

In Bangladesh, the targets are those with little protection and little power: a worker, a shopkeeper, a minority family. In Venezuela, the target is a nation that cannot retaliate in kind, cannot match the machinery brought against it. Violence prefers the exposed; it calculates before it moralises.

Empires seldom liberate equals; they move where resistance can be managed. Mobs seldom punish the well-armed; they punish the exposed. The imbalance is not incidental but the very condition that makes harm convenient, and then morality is brought in to make cowardice look like courage.

Identity Before Truth

How does a human being reach a point where burning a neighbour feels like sacred duty, and bombing a foreign capital feels like humanitarian service? Truth demands inquiry, while identity demands loyalty, and the two cannot coexist for long. The moment identity becomes sacred, inquiry becomes betrayal; when inquiry ends, violence starts looking like common sense.

In Bangladesh, identity says, "This land belongs to us; they are outsiders; their presence is provocation." In Washington, identity says, "We are custodians of global order; the leader we oppose is by definition a criminal." The statements differ; the structure is the same. Once the other becomes a symbol, harm stops feeling like harm and starts feeling like defence.

The ego is a restless, incomplete thing that needs constant proof of its own existence, and nothing proves existence like an enemy. Without the other to hate, the self feels hollow, so it keeps manufacturing others: the infidel, the invader, the rogue state, the terrorist. These are not just political categories; they are psychological necessities. The incomplete self cannot rest; it must constantly assert, defend, attack.

Crowds Outside, Institutions Inside

We draw a neat moral line between the mob and the institution. The mob looks primitive; the institution looks sophisticated. Procedure promises restraint, so we relax.

In Bangladesh, violence is visible: flames, screams, burnt flesh, a lane that smells of petrol. In Venezuela, violence is procedural: uniforms, strikes, legal filings, court dates. Words like 'precision' and 'authority' do a lot of moral work. But a life lost is a life lost. A civilian killed does

not become less dead because the mechanism was policy rather than petrol. Legality does not automatically confer morality, and procedure does not purify intent. The question is not whether the tools match, but how easily the self converts harm into righteousness, and how quickly we excuse it when done by our tribe.

Selective Morality Is the Loudest Lie

Those who condemn attacks on minorities in Bangladesh with full-throated clarity often fall silent when state aggression is discussed, or celebrate it as justice. Those who defend Venezuela's sovereignty sometimes minimise brutality elsewhere when it serves their camp.

The test is simple: can you condemn violence when your side commits it? Can you see suffering when it does not serve your narrative? If outrage appears only when the perpetrator belongs to the opposing camp, the outrage is not moral but positional-identity defending itself while pretending to defend the vulnerable.

The Core Disease: The Unexamined Self

The problem is not Bangladesh alone, and the problem is not the United States alone. The problem is that the human being has not understood his inner world.

The self that needs enemies to feel alive, that needs narratives to justify its craving, that needs identity because it lacks inner clarity, will produce violence whether it holds a stone or commands a state. Fear provides the fuel, identity provides the target, power provides the means, and justification provides the alibi. Put these together in any geography, in any century, and the theatre changes but the play remains the same.

Laws can restrain outcomes, treaties can impose costs, institutions can prevent some horrors, and none of it is enough. The impulse that keeps recreating the horror must be seen, not as theory, but as a reflex in oneself.

Watch the moment you feel righteous anger, and ask what identity is being protected inside it. Notice the moment you are tempted to excuse cruelty because it is done by your side, and ask what you are calling loyalty. The self that knows itself cannot be so easily recruited into violence; it sees the game, recognises the fear masquerading as courage, the insecurity dressed as conviction.

The garment worker lynched on a village road did not die because of a map or a flag. He died because human beings found stories that made killing feel like something other than killing. That story will keep finding new believers until the ego learns to inquire into itself. Everything else is rearranging seats while the theatre burns.



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