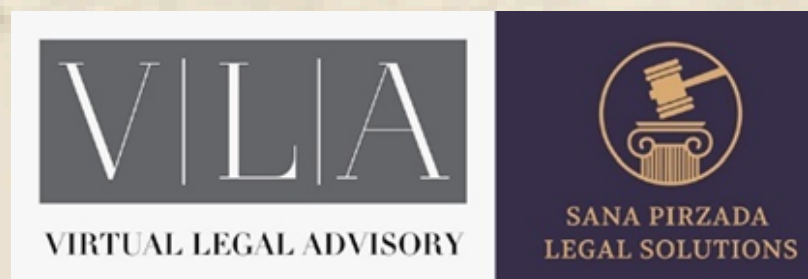


# THE REDRESS REVIEW



This week's issue of The Redress Review once again turns its gaze to the devastating plight of children dying from starvation in Gaza. In stark contrast, we find ourselves consumed by indulgences — from fleeting obsessions like the Labubu craze to the many luxuries we take for granted. It compels us to reflect on how far we have drifted into selfishness and desensitisation, turning a blind eye to suffering while remaining engrossed in our own comfort.

The Redress Review, is a weekly publication where I, Sana Pirzada, will delve into the most pressing issues of the week. Each article will begin by highlighting a grievance and will conclude with thoughtful proposals for change and pathways to justice. The Redress Review is part of the larger initiative known as VLA — Virtual Legal Advisory.



## WHILE WE QUEUE FOR LABUBUS, GAZA STARVES

Dubai is undoubtedly one of the world's most glamorous urban centres. With its gleaming skyscrapers, colossal shopping malls, Michelin-starred restaurants, pristine beaches, and world-renowned luxury hotels, it embodies a modern-day utopia. The city offers a lifestyle that many aspire to—an ideal of comfort, status, and convenience. It's little wonder that people from across the globe flock to Dubai in pursuit of this dreamlike life. The obsession with material wealth has always existed in Dubai, but it has taken peculiar new forms. We've seen the frenzy around luxury bags, limited-edition sneakers, and the latest iPhone releases. But queuing—yes, queuing—for Labubu toys marks a new cultural phenomenon.

## An Open Letter to the Government of Pakistan

To the Honourable Prime Minister, Foreign Minister, and Respected Members of the Government of Pakistan,

I write to you again, as I did before, with a heart weighed down by the unbearable suffering unfolding in Gaza—a suffering that haunts our every waking hour and pierces our collective conscience as a nation founded on the principles of justice, dignity, and compassion.

Today, as we sit at dining tables laden with the comforts of life, children in Gaza—our brothers and sisters in faith and in humanity—are dying, not just from bombs, but from hunger. From malnutrition. From silence. They are being starved not only of food and medicine, but of the world's mercy.

Their cries echo through rubble and ruin, and yet the world scrolls on, as if such horror were a distant storm.

These miniature collectibles, part of the POP MART designer toy movement, are fetching prices between AED 100 to 400. While the price tag may seem modest for those in high-earning jobs, the intensity of the craze—fuelled by social media and influencer culture—has reached the point where some fans camp outside stores for hours, if not days.

What's perhaps more unsettling than the craze itself is the emotional energy devoted to it. Labubu has become more than a toy—it is a status symbol, a trend, a collectible to flaunt on Instagram. The obsession has expanded to themed clothing, accessories, and even cakes—yes, Labubu-themed desserts now feature in Dubai's boutique bakeries. A toy originally intended for novelty or whimsy is now emblematic of a culture that thrives on consumption for validation.

But amidst the glitter, an uncomfortable truth begins to surface.

Not far from Dubai lies Gaza, a land whose name now conjures images of devastation, hunger, and unimaginable pain. It is impossible—morally and spiritually—to ignore the contradiction. As shoppers line up for Labubu toys or designer goods, children in Gaza queue for bread, clean water, or emergency aid—if such things are even available. The contrast is brutal. As we post selfies with lattes or unbox yet another collectible toy, malnourished children in Gaza gasp for air in bombed hospitals.

We must ask: have we become so self-absorbed, so addicted to spectacle, that the suffering of others becomes nothing more than background noise—easily dismissed by changing the channel or swiping to the next reel?

In the United Arab Emirates, conversations about Gaza are far more muted. Rallies, protests, or awareness campaigns are not part of the civic culture. The UAE is a highly commercialised state, geared towards preserving its image as a safe, stable, and profitable environment for all nationalities and faiths. It does not encourage public political expression or dissent, particularly regarding international conflicts. As outsiders or observers, we have no say in what the Emirati government chooses to allow or restrict within its borders.

But here in Pakistan—we still do.

Despite our challenges, we have room to speak, to question, to raise our voices. We can name Gaza. We can mourn publicly, discuss its devastation, and express solidarity without fear of severe repercussion. While protests here too have been limited or sometimes disrupted, and arrests during demonstrations have occurred, Pakistan still retains a degree of civic freedom that must not be squandered.

I appeal to you now with urgency and conviction: please initiate renewed talks with President Donald Trump, this time with a singular focus—the ongoing slaughter of the innocent in Gaza. If there is one voice in the West that holds sway over this unfolding tragedy, it is his. And if there is one Muslim nation that has stood with the United States in moments of dialogue, that even went so far as to nominate President Trump for a Nobel Peace Prize, it is Pakistan.

Leverage that gesture. Remind him of the honour you have extended to him. Remind him of the cost of silence. And above all, in the name of humanity, urge him to intervene for peace, for ceasefire, for life. But words alone are no longer enough. The people of Palestine are defenseless. The siege is suffocating. We must ask ourselves—what good is a nation of over 240 million, with military might and nuclear strength, if we cannot stand for the oppressed when they cry for help? I beseech you: offer military support to the besieged people of Gaza. Whether through protective forces, humanitarian corridors, or strategic assistance—do not let their blood cry out unanswered.

So what can we, in Pakistan, do differently?

The Labubu craze is not the enemy. It is a symptom of a deeper malaise—one where trends eclipse tragedies, and indulgence triumphs over empathy. As citizens of a country that has long expressed moral and emotional solidarity with Palestine, we must translate sentiment into action.

Proposals for Pakistani Citizens, Civil Society, Media & Policymakers:

- Demand stronger government action and accountability in global forums
- Link major events and corporate spending to Gaza donations as a moral duty
- Support digital campaigns, fundraisers, and creative resistance through civil society.
- We need more adverts on our local drama channels highlighting the plight of Palestinians and ways to raise our voice.

In a world where children waste away in Gaza while we chase toys and trends, our silence becomes complicity. Let this be a wake-up call — to rehumanise our choices, rechannel our privilege, and remember that while we indulge, others are simply trying to survive.

This is not just a political decision—it is a moral reckoning. And history will remember who stood by when the world turned away. In the name of mercy, of justice, and of our faith—I implore you to act.

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