CITIZENS VOICES

Volume 7
Jan - Apr 2017

CRW - CITIZENS RIGHTS WATCH

CRW
CITIZENS RIGHTS
WATCH

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EDITOR'S NOTE

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SG of CRW

Last but not least we are honored to introduce a new section in our newsletter dedicated to cartoons and human rights. We are showcasing the work of Aseem Trivedi a political cartoonist and human rights defender, best known for his anti corruption campaign Cartoons Against Corruption. He is the publisher of 'Black & White', an online cartoon magazine for human rights and a founder member of Save Your Voice, a movement against internet censorship in India. We thank him for his valuable contributions and the amazing work he brings to the human rights world.

Allow me to take this opportunity to invite all of you to join us in raising our voices against injustices. Join our website, and register as a human rights activist, or subscribe to our newsletter. Start a campaign and contact us to facilitate and join forces in pushing for justice and social change. Write an article for our newsletter, or a longer article for our website. Download our new app which is available for both Android and IOS phones. Follow us on Twitter to stay updated of human rights issues. Connect with us on Facebook and let us know what do you think about human rights.

JOIN US!

We need your support and help!

OUR VOICES UNITED BECOME STRONGER

Citizens Rights Watch

- Want to become our human rights activist?
  Sign up in our website www.citizensrw.org

- Want to write an article for our next newsletter?
  Email us at newsletter@citizensrw.org

- Want to initiate a campaign?
  Contact us at info@citizensrw.org

- Want to apply for an internship?
  Apply at internships@citizensrw.org

- Are you an NGO and want to collaborate with us?
  Contact us at zoi@citizensrw.org

CRW OVERVIEW (JAN. – APRIL 2017)

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Gage Skidmore

1. USA: Trump & Human Rights

Donald Trump, who won the general U.S. election on the 8th of November 2016, becoming the 45th President of the USA, commenced his presidency with the introduction of a series of controversial and extreme policies and orders.

On 27th of January, President Trump used terrorism as a pretext to sign an executive order that suspended the country's refugee programme for 120 days and banned the entry of Syrian refugees and citizens of the following Muslim - majority countries: Iraq, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen.

Following a series of protests and after a federal court halted the order, Trump updated his order in March to exclude Iraq from the above list, denying entry to citizens of the list above for 90 days, allowing visa holders to travel to the USA and treating Syrian refugees as any other refugee or immigrant. Luckily, the revised executive order had the same fate as the first one as it was blocked by a Hawaii federal judge. Only within a few months in office, President Trump:

- Reinstated the Mexico City Policy, which is banning non-governmental organisations that advocate and provide abortions from receiving federal funding.

- Allowed the construction of the controversial Keystone XL and Dakota Access oil pipelines that had been halted due to environmental concerns.

- Signed to commence the construction of a Mexico-USA border wall which according to him, would be paid by Mexico.

- Signed to reverse the Clean Power Plan, an Obama administration policy aiming to tackle global warming.

The list of Trump's orders is excessive and is increasing day by day, raising high concerns over the human rights course of the country. The UN, world leaders, scholars, human rights and climate activists, groups and agencies have strongly criticised President's Trump's policies and orders noting their irreversible and harmful impact on crucial matters such as health care, immigration, climate change, reproductive and LGBTI rights.

2. Myanmar: Rohingya Muslims

Following the latest military crackdown against Rohingya Muslims in northern Rakhine State in October 2016, tremendous violence has erupted in Rakhine State with approximately 92.000 people fleeing their homes according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs's report. "The magnitude of violence that these families have witnessed and experienced is far more extensive than I had originally speculated", said the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar after visiting Myanmar for 4 days in February. Ms Suu Kyi, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate and Myanmar's Foreign Minister and State Counsellor has been intensively criticised for her silence over the issue and for failing to protect Rohingya Muslims. In February, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) noted in its flash report the horrifying dimensions of the issue referring to "mass gang-

Steve Gumaer

rape, killings, including of babies and young children, brutal beatings, disappearances and other serious human rights violations by the country's security forces" (UN News Centre, 2017)

3. Syria Marks its 6th War Anniversary

On 15th of March, when Syria reached its 6th year of conflict, two suicide bombings in Damascus, capital of Syria killed more than 30 people. Having left behind more than 6 million internally displaced within the country, and over 4.8 million refugees, the conflict has been described as the "worst man-made disaster the world has seen since World War II" by the United Nations human rights chief. Despite the Geneva peace talks that took place earlier in March and hosted by the UN with aim to resolve the civil war , violence has intensified making these last few months the worst for civilians according to the UN (UN News Centre, 2017).

"I urge all parties to do everything in their power to protect and spare civilians from the effects of the hostilities as required, not just requested, under international humanitarian law." said Stephen O'Brien, Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator (UN News Centre, 2017)

4. Philippines: Duterte's Drug War

Since President Rodrigo Duterte took office on 30th of June 2016, thousands have lost their lives over his so called "war on drugs". Less than a year ago, Duterte compared himself to the horrifying dictator Hitler and publicly expressed his intention to kill people involved with drugs, saying "Hitler massacred three million Jews ... there's three million drug addicts. I'd be happy to slaughter them" (Holmes, 2016). Even though President Duterte has been heavily criticised and condemned by the international community for his brutal and illicit methods to fight drugs and crime across the country, media reports suggest that the number of extrajudicial killings has risen to thousands while Duterte is stating that "[he] will continue until the last drug lord in the Philippines is killed and the pushers (are) out of the streets." (Robinson, 2017).
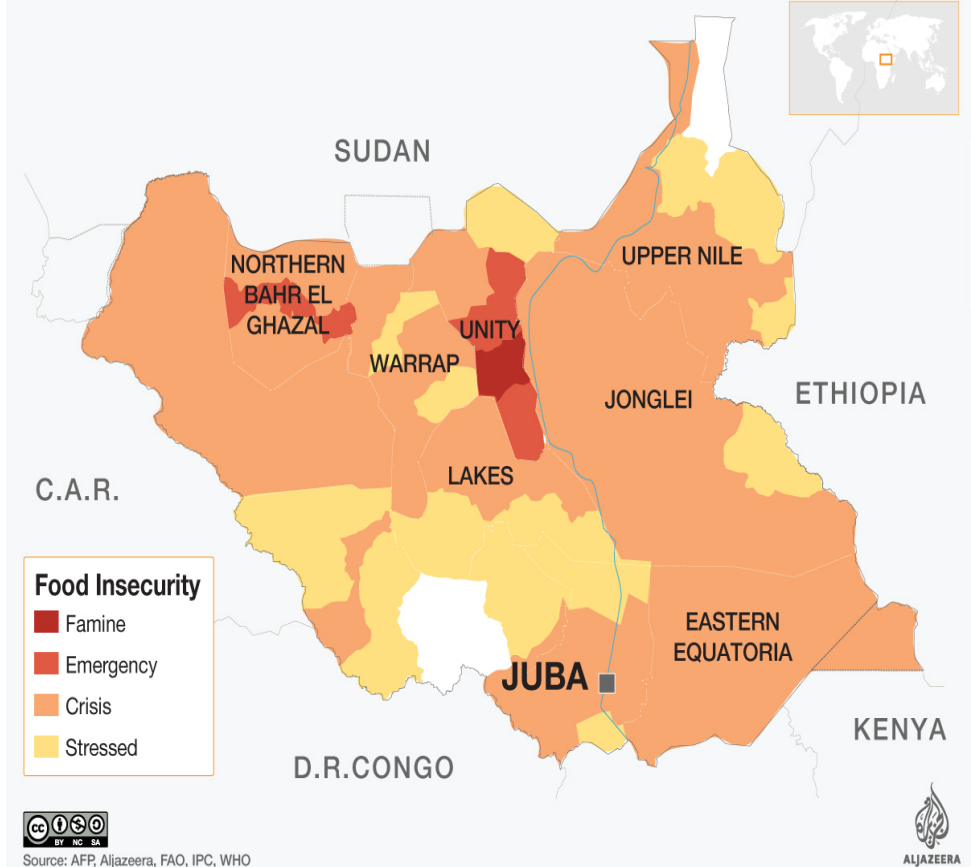
5. South Sudan

South Sudan, which became independent in 2011, has been suffering the irreversible consequences of its ongoing civil war since 2013. The conflict between the government, the Sudan Peoples' Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/SPLA) and opposition rebel party, the Sudan Peoples' Liberation Movement/Army in Opposition (SPLM/A-IO), which has turned into an ethnic fight between the Nuer and Dinka ethnic groups has resulted in the spread of famine, diseases, unlawful killings, other enormous violations against civilians. "In South Sudan, where a famine was recently declared, more than 7.5 million people are in need of assistance, including some 3.4 million displaced. The figure rose by 1.4 million since last year" noted the UN earlier this March urging the international community to take "comprehensive action" (UN News Centre, 2017).

Steve Evans

Famine in South Sudan

Map of South Sudan locating regions hit by famine and food shortages.

SUDAN

NORTHERN BAHR EL GHAZAL

WARRAP

UNITY

UPPER NILE

JONGLEI

ETHIOPIA

LAKES

C.A.R.

Food Insecurity

- Famine
- Emergency
- Crisis
- Stressed

JUBA

EASTERN EQUATORIA

KENYA

D.R.CONGO

Source: AFP, Aljazeera, FAO, IPC, WHO

ALJAZEERA

#FREEYUYEE

YUYEE HAS BEEN IN LADYAO JAIL SINCE JUNE 12TH 2014. SHE WAS ACCUSED AND SENTENCED TO 15 YEARS IN JAIL FOR TRAFFICKING WITH 0.005 GRAMS OF COCAINE (5 MILLIGRAMS).

SHE HAS NOT BEEN ABLE TO HUG HER CHILDREN SINCE THAT DAY.

SHE IS SENTENCED TO 15 YEARS IN JAIL FOR TRAFFICKING WITH AN AMOUNT OF DRUG VALUED AT 12 BAHT (ABOUT 35 CENTS).

THERE ARE TOO MANY IRREGULARITIES AND INCONSISTENCIES IN HER TREATMENT BY POLICE THAT LEAD US TO BELIEVE SHE WAS TARGETED FOR HER WORK ON ANIMAL PROTECTION.

USE THE HASHTAG #FREEYUYEE ON SOCIAL MEDIA TO RAISE AWARENESS OF YUYEE'S IMPRISONMENT AND HELP US CAMPAIGN FOR HER RELEASE.

INTERVIEW
THE BRIDGE

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The Bridge, also known in Greek as "Η Γεφυρα" is a non-profit organization based in Greece. Supporting and working with vulnerable people including the homeless, sex workers and others. The organisation has been fighting non-stop for social change by leaving nobody behind.

When was The Bridge founded and how was the idea conceived?

During the summer of 2015 a small group of people sharing common ideas, beliefs and visions created a non-profit organization called the 'The Bridge, Η Γεφυρα'. The main source of inspiration was the organization of ''Dynamo International''. Because of the financial crisis in our country the vulnerable population increased, so it was a matter of emergency for something to be done by common people. As a result, the members who conceived the idea of The Bridge joined together their willingness for help and established the team.

What does the organisation's name 'The Bridge' stand for and what is your mission and goals?

The bridge bares a dual symbol meaning. It is the safe passage to reunite two contradictory worlds that are constantly fighting each other and the chance given to make peace among them, acknowledging each other, defining there common routes and origins via equality, humanity and respect. The upper side of the Bridge stands up for the transition from one situation to another

and her basis provides the security and trust. Our goal is to create a stable ground on which encouragement and trustful relationships will be built. Through the above we try to spur homeless people to believe in themselves and gradually become independent and active members of the society.

One of the organisation's most significant initiatives and main projects is the so called "Social Street Work". Would you like to share with us a few words about this project and its aims?

As we mention before, the main source of inspiration was the "Dynamo International" which provided us the fundamental values of our action. We approach people who live on street conditions, such as homeless people, drug addicted, sex workers, refugees, children, etc. At first, we study some areas in the center of Athens and Piraeus in which the phenomenon of homelessness is vivid. Then, progressively we attempt to get to know them better through their personal history as they shared it with us.

Meanwhile, through familiarity we are informed about their needs such as custody to an authority, information related to any kind of social services, regaining communication to their familiar faces, but also more primary needs such as food, clothes and blankets and we try to accomplish them.

Moreover, it is very important to us to provide all those people we meet with psychological support so as to motivate them to stand up and fight for their rights. Our fundamental means to accomplish the aforementioned are active listening, empathy and unconditional acceptance. We are present and constantly try to get into their shoes in order to become aware of their situation, feelings and concerns. The ultimate goal for us is to become the missing link between all those people we approach and the society.

The onset of the Greek financial crisis, the extensive influx of refugees and asylum seekers seeking protection in Europe, the raising rates of poverty and unemployment and the outburst of racism in Greece are some of the main challenges that the country faces nowadays. What changes have you observed as an organisation fighting for social change throughout this period and how do these current challenges affect your day to day work?

The long standing financial crisis in Greece and the incremental unemployment changed drastically life conditions in our country and indeed affected pluralistically our work. Due to these factors it is more than obvious that depression rates and mental illness increased requiring more special handling. Our team is lucky to be staffed with people who are specialized in mental health treatment.

At the same time, Greece was asked to handle the inflow of thousands of immigrants, a circumstance that for sure the country was not able to face. The most fascinating outcomes of this condition is the outstanding solidarity and willingness for help that is observed among people who do not necessarily come from a social background field of study. Our organization helped as well to confront the immigration issue which gave the opportunity to Greek non-profit organizations to cooperate for the first time so as to provide services at the highest quality as fast as possible.

As far as the political settings are concerned, the surfacing racism holds back building healthy relationships of trust between people and therefore makes our work more difficult because we have to fight also ignorance and xenophobia. However, it is true that the majority of citizens do not truly support these extreme beliefs; it was mostly an attempt to claim their despair. The truth is that most Greeks show empathy to immigrants due to their relevant history but also their attribute of hospitality.

What should we expect from the Bridge in the near future? What is your vision for the organisation's course?

In our country it is hopeful that many non-profit organizations work with the same population with us. Being one of the newest organizations of its kind, we try to establish our presence. Through workshops we plan to communicate the situation, the enormity of the social phenomenon and the possible ways of contribution to its reduction. In the near future "The Bridge" aims to expand the social street work to new areas of Athens city and

suburbs because it has been remarked that more and more people end up living in the streets. Our vision consequently brings the necessity for this expansion. Our long term and supreme vision is to mobilize all the people that we work with to rehabilitate and gain a stable ground for their new life.

How can we and other people who wish to be a part of he Bridge's projects and activities help and who should we contact?

Nowadays, social media is a powerful tool which enables anyone to find sufficient information. Following the trends of this era we administer accounts on **Facebook** and **Instagram** as well as the **official site** of our organization.

Through all these pages and of course via email anyone can contact at any time, get to the chance to meet us and support our work.

If you could broadcast a message/advice to the whole world what would that be?

The message which emerges from our approaches and conversations with people that we come across is that we should not take anything for granted, especially at an unpredictable period of time like this not only for our country but also for the whole world. We are all equal and we share the same chances to potentially face homelessness. What is more, we would also like everyone to keep in mind that no act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted.

Thank you very much!

♥ Support Us

Are you interested in the exceptional work and activities of The Bridge in Greece?

Join them and follow their work on social media now!

For further information, please visit:

Website: www.gefyra.org.gr

Facebook: www.facebook.com/gefyra

Instagram: www.instagram.com/gefyra

Or feel free to contact them directly via email at: info.gefyra@gmail.com

“**We are all equal and we share the same chances to potentially face homelessness. What is more, we would also like everyone to keep in mind that no act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted.**

TRANSFORMING OUR WORLD:
"THERE CAN BE NO PLAN B BECAUSE THERE IS NO PLANET B".

Dervla Potter
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Sustainable development has become an even more important objective in recent weeks with the announcement that 4 countries and 20 million people face the risk of famine, disease and starvation. The UN defines famine as when 30 percent of children under age five suffer from acute malnutrition and where mortality rates are two or more deaths per 10,000 people every day. We are fast approaching this, which is being called the largest and the worst humanitarian crisis in UN history as people are on the brink of famine and starvation in Yemen, South Sudan, Somalia and northeast Nigeria.

Alongside this, hundreds and thousands of people have been displaced due to the search for food and escaping conflict zones. The current numbers account that more than 6 million people in Somalia alone are in need of food and assistance. UN expert Stephen O'Brien told the UN Security Council that "without collective and coordinated global efforts, people will simply starve to death" and "many more will suffer from disease". Since the release of this news, various questions are being raised, especially in terms of "Global Goals" and its agenda which has vowed to eradicate hunger, achieve food security, improve nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture in the next 13 years, by 2030.

What is Sustainable Development and the "Global Goals"?

Put simply, sustainable development is economic and social development that is conducted without the depletion of natural resources. It is about meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. With these principles in mind, in 2015 the UN created the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to continue the work of its predecessor, the Millennium Development Goals. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG'S) are 17 aspirational "global goals" covering a broad range of 169 targets to be met by 2030. The issues outlined in this process include eradicating poverty and hunger, improving health and education, creating sustainable cities, combating climate change, protecting oceans and forests, clean water and sanitation, gender equality and affordable and clean energy. The global goals initiative aims to include all nations to work on a global scale to create a future that everyone can benefit from. The interlinking of the SDG'S within this global enterprise ensures that all goals can only be successful if each goal is given attention individually. For example, the SDG concerning climate change can only be successful if the affordable and clean energy target is met, and therefore the poverty target needs to be met and so on.
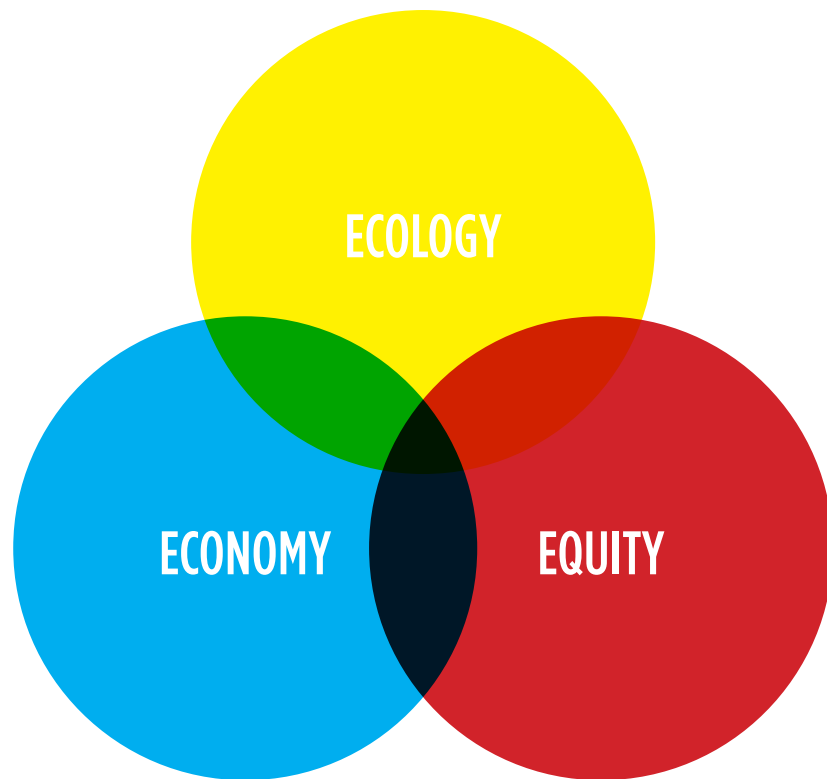

Ariel Javellana/Asian Development Bank

There is also widespread consensus that the progress of all the SDG's will be stalled if women's empowerment and gender equality is not prioritised. Goal 5 encompasses gender equality, asking for women and girls to be provided with equal access to education, healthcare, decent work and representation in political and economic decision making processes. It also firmly states that this goal will not be achieved unless women are integrated into each and every goal.

Two years after its unveiling in 2015, the SDG programme seems ambitious to say the least; especially while the news reports that the world is almost regressing with starvation and famine occurring in the world's poorest areas and conflict dominating news broadcasts. The goals vary in their specification, which makes it harder to document their prosperity.

> *The goals should address and incorporate in a balanced way all three dimensions of sustainable development (environment, economics & ecology)...*

For instance, there are concrete goals with a definite result such as "No Poverty- End Poverty in all its forms everywhere", and "Zero Hunger- End Hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture". It's like a yes no question. However, for targets like "Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions- Promote peaceful, tolerant and inclusive societies", it is harder to tell if this target is on the right path as it is slightly ambiguous.

Despite pessimistic and abortive opinions, thorough research has shown that it is possible to reach these goals, but it will not be with business as usual. It will take complete commitment from all nations to promote the goals and go beyond what is expected to ensure their success. The enormity of the goals is a challenge that can be overcome by constant planning and implementation. Other researchers seem to think that while economic growth does help the SDG's with some "easy wins", it is not as much of an essential component as previously thought. Using a tool called the Social Progress Index, they could show that economic growth aided social progress to an extent in the majority of countries, however there were some exceptions. In Russia, economic growth is high due to the natural resources found there, however there are significant social problems. Similarly, in China and India business is booming, but social problems overshadow this on the Index, especially women's and worker's rights and pollution contributing to global warming. So clearly economic success does not contribute to an equal, protected and productive society and some countries underperform despite the economic resources available to them.

On the other end of the scale, the research with this Index proved that societies like Costa Rica and Rwanda actually have higher social progress relative to their Gross Domestic Product(GDP). Costa Rica has prioritised health and education and environmental sustainability in its society but has a low GDP. Combining all nations in the world we have a total score of 61% on the Social Progress Index. To meet the SDG's, we would collectively have to reach 75% on this scale.

However, if we rely on GDP and economic growth alone we could only reach 62.4% per Michael Greene. This proves that while social progress and economic growth go hand in hand, we are not slaves to GDP and improvements are possible without it.

Written in a statement produced by the UN, it was stated that "The goals should address and incorporate in a balanced way all three dimensions of sustainable development (environment, economics and ecology) and their interlinkages." Many researchers and professionals are adamant that the holy trinity of sustainable development is Economy, Equity and Ecology. The Global Goals campaign aims to create the future we want with these three factors, which if respected will allow us to live within the planetary boundaries.

Compared to its predecessor, the SDG's were the first outcome from a UN conference that was not criticised by any NGO and the first to deal with the causes of problems and not just the problems themselves. Because of the interlinkages between goals and how they intertwine human rights into their discourse, it is hopeful that the SDG's will not have to be revisited unless they fail completely, as any minor developments can be carried from one to another. This campaign, or "Project Everyone" aims to ensure our communities prosper individually and collectively, with no one left behind. It aims to transform our world for the better before it disappears forever. To use Ban Ki Moon's words: "There can be no plan B as there is no planet B".

REFLECTIONS ON THE DECLARATION OF NEW YORK FOR REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

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In September 2016, leaders of numerous countries gathered in New York to demonstrate concern regarding the situation faced by persons in transit. The expression of said concern resulted in the adoption of the Declaration of New York for Refugees and Migrants. The Declaration presents a set of commitments that States shall comply with when dealing with migrants and refugees, and each of these groups separately, due to their particularities. Additionally, such instrument encompasses, in its annexes, a comprehensive refugee response framework and the guidelines for a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration.

This article intends to analyse a few characteristics of the Declaration through human rights lenses, in order to assess the instrument's sensitivity to human rights. The paper starts with a brief explanation about the Declaration of New York. Subsequently, two aspects of said instrument are examined: (i). the wording that refers to the situation of migrants/refugees; and (ii). the lack of reference to internally displaced persons. Lastly, it concludes that certain aspects of the Declaration should be reviewed in order to allow it to truly address the demands of large-scale migration flows in a people-centred manner.

The New York Declaration and its annexes

The New York Declaration seems to embody important measures towards the adoption of a more holistic solution in matters of large-scale flows of individuals. The Declaration ratifies human rights of all migrants and refugees, regardless of their status; besides, it represents states' commitment to search for long-term sustainable answers to the existing humanitarian crisis. Moreover, the instrument explicitly asserts the shared responsibility held by states to manage large-scale migration in a "humane, compassionate and people-centred manner". It also declares that more efforts should be put in place in order to address the root causes of large-scale population movements.

As for the annexes, in the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework, a whole set of measures to tackle the refugee crisis is presented; some of them reiterating already existing practices and others bringing a new perspective, with much attention payed to host communities. With regard to the guidelines to the global compact, it is said that a range of "principles, commitments and understandings" shall be agreed to by states to provide international migration with more order and security.

Reflections on the Declaration of New York

In spite of all the positive traits of the Declaration of New York, there are critiques that could be delineated concerning what the language adopted denotes. The commitments made by states to handle migration and refugee movements in a more humane and people-centred way is debatable or, at the very least, less progressive than it is said to be. This section presents two arguments to support such assertion. First, the language used to characterize large-scale flows of persons reflects rather a state-centred mindset. Second, omissions are as eloquent as what is explicitly stated: the lack of reference to internally displaced persons casts doubt on the intention of providing a humane character to migration movements.

A - The state-centred character

Paragraph 68 of the New York Declaration recognizes "the burden that large movements of refugees place on national resources, especially in the case of developing countries." Besides, the very same paragraph establishes that states should share burdens and responsibilities to assist refugees. The comprehensive refugee response framework states that the principle of shared burden and responsibility works as the foundations for a holistic solution to tackle the problems faced by refugees; it offers greater protection to individuals and more support to host countries.

The choice to use the term burden is quite intriguing. It spawns the question burden to whom? Given the circumstances of large-scale forced movements of persons, there are two possible involved actors who could be said to bear such responsibility: states and host communities. In occasions of humanitarian crisis, states are required to host refugees, allow them transit through their territory or even furnish funds for these individuals, which means that states have to make efforts to deal with the situation. As for host communities, they also have a role to play in the share of resources with and the integration of new incomers. Nonetheless, given that host communities lie within the territory of national states, and that states are responsible for managing said communities, it means that, ultimately, states are the agents who need to present solutions to deal with the large contingents of persons.

Even though all these endeavours by states are required, the use of the term burden to refer to humanitarian crisis lacks sensitivity. This choice of word highlights the efforts made by governments in detriment of the struggle faced by the individuals who seek shelter. It is crucial to emphasize that many of these persons have been through situations of armed conflicts, natural disasters and borders crossing in very adverse conditions, etc. No actions taken by states could be compared to the suffering and risks experienced by these individuals. As a result, the term burden eliminates the attempts to integrate a more

people-centred perspective. Flows of refugees are composed of resilient individuals; characterizing them as a burden appears to be a very state-centred and insensitive approach.

B - The omission of the New York Declaration

The New York Declaration has the merit of presenting the political will of world leaders to cope with the situations faced by refugees and migrants. Nevertheless, this instrument lacks references to internally displaced persons.

Nowadays the majority of armed conflicts are of a non-international character. Consequently, large numbers of individuals are forced to migrate within their own country, given the difficulty that encompasses crossing borders in such circumstances. During 2015 alone, whereas the number of new internal displacements caused by armed conflicts or disasters raised to 27.8 million, the number of refugees reached 21.3 million. That being said, it can be concluded that the phenomenon of internal displacements is highly relevant and, therefore, should not be neglected by a declaration that intends to deal with the effects of large-scale flows of individuals.

Once it is now proven that said phenomenon was not ignored due to insignificance – given its expressive proportion – it is necessary to wonder why it was not contemplated in the New York Declaration. One reasonable assumption has to do with the principle of national sovereignty from international law. Given that said phenomenon is closely related to domestic matters, it is convenient for states to keep it under the safeguard of their sovereignty, in order to ensure that others will not be allowed to interfere with the subject.

When it comes to the international understanding about internally displaced persons, the only applicable instrument is the so-called Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. As such, these principles have a non-binding nature, as they are mere guidelines for states' action. That is also

the case for international declarations, such as the New York Declaration, they lack enforceability. However, declarations seem to be stronger than guiding principles. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, for instance, is deemed a non-binding instrument; nonetheless, it is recognized as one of the three pillars of the International Bill of Human Rights, along with two Covenants.

Thus, the lack of reference to internally displaced persons could be understood as another point to argue that the Declaration has a less progressive character than it is said to have, with regard to a people-centred approach.

Conclusion

Many actors involved in matters of large-scale flows of persons received the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants with great enthusiasm. The achievement of at least some of the commitments made by states could indeed represent a lot of advancement of the often precarious situation faced by refugees and migrants. Nevertheless, it is necessary to examine said instrument with critical eyes.

The examples analysed throughout the article – the strong language to characterize the situation of migrants and refugees, as well as the lack of reference to internally displaced persons – offer arguments to promote reflection about the New York Declaration. In spite of the advancements that such instrument intends to encourage, it seems to offer less sensitization to the situation of the human beings involved in large-scale population flows. As it stands, the Declaration has many aspects that can be improved if its aim is really to stimulate a more humane treatment to migrants and refugees.

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EDUCATING WITHOUT BORDERS
THE OLIVE PROJECT AND SUPPORTING THE EDUCATION NEEDS OF ASYLUM SEEKERS AND REFUGEES.

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This month has seen the launch of a pioneering new course by the University of East London to directly support refugees and asylum seekers. As part of a £444,000 Erasmas+ funded project, the University of East London in conjunction with European partners, including the Central European University (CEU), University of Vienna (UV), and the European Network Against Racism (ENAR), will offer a series of free 10 week courses on accessing higher education for refugees and asylum seekers. In the case of UEL, this follows directly on from the Educating Without Borders project undertaken in the former Calais Jungle facilitating access to educational resources for those living in the Calais camp.

Educating Without Borders

This current OLIve (Open Learning Initiatives) project was born out of a project undertaken by the UEL Centre for Narrative Research during 2015. The idea for this project was born out of the growing refugee crisis in Europe and the continued growth of the informal refugee camps focused both around Calais and beyond. There was a growing concern amongst academic colleagues at the University of East London (UEL) in the lack of an evident educational and support structure for refugees and asylum seekers in these camps, especially in relation to refugee education, welfare support and the issue of human and refugee rights more generally. One of the initiatives born out of this concern was a project entitled 'University for All', initiated by Professor Corinne Squire of the Centre for Narrative Research (CNR). This was subsequently successful in obtaining civic engagement funding award from the University of East London to enable the teaching of a short university course based around `Life Stories' with the residents of the Calais Jungle.

The format of the `Life Stories' course, which was undertaken in Calais during 2015-16, was to encourage participants to read and engage with factual documented life history accounts, including for example, those published by Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King, Barack Obama and Malcolm X amongst others. The course also encouraged engagement with fictional and critical representations of stories and narratives, poetry and visual representations of stories both on film and in photography. The additional representative works of Sam Selvon, Chimimanda Adichie and the poetry of JJ Bola, Maya Angelou and others were used as part of this work, which encouraged participants to engage with substantive and critical discussion of these works. This served a dual dynamic of helping the development of the participant's English skills whilst also providing an opportunity for them to create their own written, oral and visual narratives of their own life stories.

This resulted in the creation of the Educating Without Borders website with the specific aim of helping to support the 'education, dialogue and solidarity between refugees and other citizens of the world.' The website was initially established as a means of representing and showcasing the work of the residents of the Calais Jungle as part of the CNR 'Life stories' work but its remit soon grew to incorporate issues associated with the challenges and difficulties faced by refugees and asylum seekers in accessing higher education and providing a means to bring educators and students together to help in finding solutions to these ongoing issues. This reflected the contributors' conviction to the commitment that access to education is a 'human right ... as a fundamental part of life; to education as a process involving curiosity, dialogue, awareness-building and action, for both students and educators; and to solidarity between educators and students in all their varying contexts.' (Educating Without Borders, Online). Considering subsequent events surrounding Brexit and the implications of the new administration in America, issues surrounding solidarity and the provision of support for refugees and asylum seekers now seem even more pertinent than ever.

The `University for All' project was a response to the 'widespread recognition that people who are refugees are under-served by and have poor access to university education, despite having very strong motivations and qualifications.' (Educating Without Borders, Online).

This is despite the fact that many of these refugees and asylum seekers have either completed higher education or were in the process of completing their higher education studies at the time of their departure from their home country. Many of the participants on the `University for All' were keen to continue their studies and to develop and enhance their skills, and were hoping to use this course as a possible `gateway' to future higher education opportunities. This reflects the core ethos of the project which was the overriding conviction that university and higher education should be open to everyone, facilitating access to education beyond borders, and incorporating people who do not have full or any citizenship rights.

OLIve Initiative

One of the core impacts of the `University for All' project was the collaborative approach which brought together academics, students and colleagues from a range of institutions in full support of the `Educating Without Borders' approach to cross-disciplinary engagement. This reflected a wider belief that it was important to move away from the oft encouraged auditised production of knowledge in the academic `marketplace,' in favour of an approach which favoured bringing people together in support of learning and teaching and the sharing of knowledge, as encouraged within the University of East London's civic engagement mission.

The OLIve project has been majority funded by a £440,000 Erasmus+ grant in partnership with the Central European University (CEU), University of Vienna (UV), and the European Network Against Racism (ENAR), will offer a series of free 10 week courses on accessing higher education for refugees and asylum seekers interesting in accessing higher education opportunities. The course offers an opportunity for students to find out what skills and knowledge are needed to apply for and succeed in UK higher education, and will provide information on pathways and opportunities. To facilitate this week, the authors worked together to submit an additional funding application to the UEL Civic Engagement Fund with the aim of supporting the

OLIve course through the creation of an online Information Hub bringing together open access and related documentation that would be freely available to course participants from a central online platform. This segment of the project has been designed as a collaborative project bringing together academic staff in the UEL Centre for Narrative Research and Centre for Refugees, Migration and Belonging with colleagues in the Library and Learning Service (the Refugee Council Archive at UEL) and colleagues in the UEL School of Psychology. It will also enable engagement with undergraduate and postgraduate students across academic disciplines as well as staff and students in other Universities in London, including UCL, Birkbeck and Imperial College. Both projects will also enable close collaboration between UEL and numerous refugee organisations and other community groups that work with refugees and asylum seekers in the UK, including the Refugee Support Network, Article 26 Network, Evelyn Oldfield Unit and Unite the Union. The Information Hub and all the resources that it lists will be freely accessible to anyone looking for educational support and resources for refugees and asylum and may be used by individuals looking for opportunities, resources and materials for themselves as well as organisations who are thinking about best approaches and looking for course materials for courses they may be planning.

UEL has funding to be able to offer 5 free 10 week courses over a two-year period. The framework for these sessions has been devised in consultation with our European partners and will each be run over a ten-week period on consecutive Saturdays. The course will offer modules and workshops in English Language training (at different levels) and academic writing combined with research skills, academic tutoring and introduction to academic discussions. There will also be opportunities to attend academic lectures. Students also get an opportunity to find out about educational opportunities available in the UK for refugees and asylum seekers and get one-to-one advice on their educational aspirations.

Whilst this course will not be formerly accredited by the University. A certificate of attendance will be given to all students who attend the offered workshops. Full details of the course can be found on our website at https://www.uel.ac.uk/Schools/Social-Sciences/olive

Reflections and Further Details

A new book forthcoming from Pluto Press and entitled, Voices from the 'Jungle': Stories from the Calais Refugee Camp will be published in April 2017 and this will be a co-authored work written by both the residents of the Calais Camp that were involved in `University for All' and members of the UEL Centre for Narrative Research team. A book launch for this work has been scheduled to take place on Friday 21st February at the Rich Mix centre from 7pm and Free Tickets for the event can be booked directly from the Rich Mix online store. Subsequent book launches are scheduled to take place in Calais where contributors to the work will be attending. Work from this project will also be archived as part of the Refugee Council Archive at the UEL, and reflections on the projects have also been represented by Dr. Aura Lounasmaa and colleagues at conferences and events including the UEL Voices East Civic Engagement Festival in June 2016; the East End Film Festival 2016 and the 2016 Oral History Society Conference. Paul Dudman, Archivist at the Refugee Council Archive, will also be presenting on this work at the "Refugees, New Speakers & Global Law Workshop" in Tilburg, Holland, taking place between in 23-24 March 2017. Gideon Mendel, who was involved in running photography workshops in Calais Jungle with Crispen Hughes as part of the University for All project has also published a book reflecting on the Jungle camp, called (could you add the details, I haven't even seen the book, is it good?). Professor Squire's has also written reflections on what is happening with students of the Lifer Stories course now in the Conversation on the 9 March.

The authors would be happy to respond to any questions or feedback in relation to OLIve and our contacted details are provided in the attached Bios.

Further details on the Course can be found on the UEL OLIve course website at: www.uel.ac.uk/ Further reading can be found via the references detailed below.

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A GENDER BASED APPROACH TO UNDERSTAND HUMAN RIGHTS IN SOUTH ASIA

A case study of social impediments, taboos, access to fundamental rights and empowerment of women

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South Asia remains as one of the fastest growing economic zones of the world, with traditional and modern alternating economic and its countervailing social and cultural political economy impacting on its gender divide. The hybrid nature of its developing economy corroborates unique lifestyles and practices in the big urban centres like Mumbai, Karachi, Lahore, Delhi and Dhaka, Colombo & Kathmandu; where the combined workforce in the urban areas consists of both the females and males. Paradoxically, South Asia constitutes as one of the world's poorest, most gender insensitive and economically deprived area of the globe where one quarter of the population almost live below the poverty line. It is composed of post-colonial nation states which earned their independence by the end of the Second World War. The history and politics of the region is enmeshed with the socio cultural, religious and ethno-religious dynamics comprising of a pre-dominant agrarian and feudalistic, tribal combined with urban, semi-urban, post urban lifestyles, trends and customs. Gender issues have occupied a central stage with almost usual and daily instances of discrimination in wage labour, opportunities of equal employment, as well as a hierarchical patriarchal structure rampant in almost all aspects of life and in all sectors concerned.

Yet, in majority of the cases, the issue of gender parity in terms of access to education, job opportunities, health, and sanitation, freedom of speech, movement, and overall opportunities to derive the maximum possible benefits from the given social and economic resources remain marginal. What are the factors responsible and what issues lie at the heart of the problem? This article will shed a light on understanding the impediments to a rights based approach for fair opportunities for women in South Asia.

Felix Clay/WorldFish

To begin with many countries in the arena of South Asia have had more or less similar problems, which remain partly as a justification based on religion, class, and social mobility. Apart from the rural-urban divide, lack of horizontal development, haphazard development in rural and urban areas, corruption, and lack of transparency in the distribution of resources, and in some instances particularly in cases of Afghanistan and Pakistan, terrorism related to women empowerment, education as well as the forces of tribal Islam and the role of religious orthodoxy practised in the tribal areas becomes a cause of great concern. In addition, among some of the common problems faced by women in South Asia forced abortion and female infanticide, dowry and bride burning, domestic violence, disparity in education, child marriages, in adequate nutrition, sexual harassment and domestic violence are to name a few issues if not many as common denominators. The gap between the genders is recorded to be the largest globally and almost double on a worldwide average. Urban women in South Asia earned 42 per cent less than men, compared to 28 per cent less than men in rural areas.

Across South Asia, women report doing more unpaid care and domestic work than men: 10 times as much in Pakistan; almost 7 times more in India; and nearly 3 times more in Bangladesh.

The challenges to gender parity in South Asia demand an urgent and immediate redressal. The psychosis that define "women as inferior to men," needs an urgent redressal. Unless and until there is no disposing off of this narrative, nothing substantial in terms of change in social attitudes towards women can materialize. Another very crucial point that reflects as to why most of the South Asian societies remain under the grip of gender in sensitization is the role of patriarchy. As a direct result of colonialism, patriarchy remains as the most established system of male domination, where a man has an absolute control over the life and property of a woman. Such control is magnified not only by the agrarian nature of the society but also by the distorted version of traditions. A complex combination of the effects of colonial policies, pre-existing norms of gender biases and their cumulative effects on gender identity have a deep impact on the existing norms in gender equality. Actually, this very nexus of race and gender was an idea based on the colonizer's differentiation of male and female bodies. Furthermore, often, primitive customs and practices are justified on the basis of religion in order to perpetuate the strict feudal control over the land. The concepts of women as property and honour are so deeply entrenched in the social, political and economic fabric that women murdered in "honour" killings are recorded as having committed suicide or died in accidents.

Consequentially, a myriad amount of socio-religious and class based discrimination is bolstered with age old primitive practices prevail in India, Pakistan, Nepal, and Afghanistan. Women in India are compelled to remain single after being widowed, customs like Swara, Pashtunwali, including girl child marriages to Quran and incidences of being declared Kari (culpable in crime) are rampant in many tribal areas and zones in Pakistan. According to UNESCO, more than 4.5 million girls are out of school in Pakistan.

UNESCO also says that for every 10 boys there are only 8 girls in class and that the poorest girls are the most disadvantaged.

One of the most deplorable aspects is that in some zones of Pakistan; particularly northern tribal areas, the education of girls is strictly prohibited on religious grounds. Girls still make up a disproportionate share of those missing out on education in many developing regions. Similarly, deeply compromised by wars and conflict that have lasted for more than thirty years, Afghanistan's education system remains fragile and the chances for women in acquiring education has been a grim reminder of the overall gender imbalance in the country. According to the government figures, only 26 per cent of Afghanistan's population is literate, and among women the rate is only 12 per cent. Among school age children, 38 per cent (4.2 million in real numbers) do not have access to schools, most of which are girls. In Nepal, child marriage is not the only problem. According to UNICEF, only around a third of schools have separate toilets for girls. Poor, marginalised, illiterate girls and women have little access to resources and opportunities.

In South Asia therefore, problems pertain to areas in which women suffering is aggravated to dangerous proportions and as discussed earlier, cases of forced abortion, female infanticide, genital mutilation, dowry and bride burning, domestic violence, disparity in education, child marriages and honour killings are common and rampant. The level of education in women is a great determinant of development and progress of human societies. Women constitute the backbone of any given social and cultural structure and play an effective role in building role models for generations. Any infringement on basic rights of women including fundamental rights of education, freedom of choice, decisions making, electoral rights, freedom of speech and social and political participation raise tremendous stakes for establishing a just social order.

Kristian Buus/STARS

> **" *According to UNESCO, more than 4.5 million girls are out of school in Pakistan...*

STARING INTO THE ABYSS OF DISABILITY RIGHTS IN INDIA

Dev Tyagi

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Not merely a plight, but a real situation. Not just a concern, but a glaring reality. Being disabled in India may not open your door immediately to a wealth of advantages. But change, the optimists believe, is right around the corner. Especially according to the recent events where toward mid-2016, the Mental Health Care Bill was finally passed in the Rajya Sabha.

So what does the passing of the Mental Health Care Bill in the Indian Parliament entail? Better opportunities? More traction toward the philosophy of diversity plus inclusion, a famous globe trotting undercurrent nowadays? Greater co-operation and support toward the mentally unwell from Indian society? Who knows? Rather, who is to tell? Merely asking questions, valid questions instead of vapid perspectives isn't coercing people into believing something.

Here's a real fact: until the end of 2014, both the Mental Health Care Bill as well as the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Bill were pending in the Indian Parliament. Why did it come to this level? One is ought to ask that given India is the world's largest democracy or very nearly up to that mark, why then was the situation of the disabled- no jobs, no easy mobility in society unlike others, no inclusiveness- so abhorrent that it directly makes the attitude of those responsible for civic governance simply apathetic?

Engels Mannen

But while lamenting or pure conjecture won't help the situation in any way, asking questions to a country that prides itself on being a democracy is in no way an unproductive approach. And shouldn't, hopefully be called unfair. The media back in India, has seen the passing of the Mental

Health Care Bill as a bright spot and even a game-changer in the times to come. Rather, what's most interesting is to note that the figure of the disabled in India is somewhere on the higher side when compared to the half of the population of Israel, Finland or Norway.

According to the last, 2011 census, the total number of disabled persons in India stood at a whopping 2.68 crore. This means, 26.8 million. The figure, although whopping, suddenly becomes 'staggering' by the passing of the bill that directly saw the increase in the total population of the disabled to somewhere in the higher echelons of 70-100 million. At the outset, you are more likely to grasp something in the immediate vicinity of your hands reach, perhaps a tissue box to wipe your tears. Or if sentiments don't stir you much, then a person who could pinch you, in order to make you be awake in the aftermath of this strange, almost ungodly figure.

No discussion regarding the current reality of India's disabled can be rendered complete without mentioning the categories in which these persons are clubbed. Persons falling under recognized disabilities including, physical anomalies in health is separate from disabilities rising because of acid attacks, accidents, muscular dystrophy, thalassemia, Parkinson's and other diseases that hamper cognitive learning and hamper receptivity.

Interestingly, the three-disability groups- the Orthopedically disabled, the Blind and, the Deaf are all set to gain from the new bill's passing.

A major advantage in this regard is the two-year deadline that the government in India has within which to implement a barrier-free access to transportation and physical infrastructure.

The onus now, according to social-commentators and economists lies immensely with the private-public partnership to create inclusive disabled-friendly infrastructure across cities and hopefully, touching the last mile of town, a colloquial expression covering India's widespread populace, present in both- cities, towns, districts and even the rural hinterland.

That said, it must be stated no specter concerning the life of the disabled and thus, their plight can be delved into without citing a hard, often cold-blooded fact. The amount of discrimination, often openly practiced against the physically disabled or challenged sabotages peaceful living.

Harsha Vardhan

themselves on account of very little help received from promised quarters represent plight of the mentally challenged in India, who are rattled in 'support systems' such as Child-Protection Centers, Centers for Destitute, Beggar's Home, Juvenile homes and other focal points. Other than that, openly practiced biases in everyday society, with respect to those particularly mentally challenged highlights the concern, rather the lack of it, in India. A mental problem could also be linked to depression or anxiety that further, stymies the person's overall growth or development.

But that, people either pay no heed to the others' suffering or conveniently dub the person as 'mentally challenged', often a loosely believed submission that 'now, it's all over' generally paints a tough reality in worsened colors of judgment. If India is to actually award its own people- some who may be mentally challenged or physically challenged- a place they could truly call home, it would have to foster an environment that practices compassion, patience and functions on strong moral fiber, not mere hearsay or convenient talk.

To this regard, the Government of India's stringent measure- a fine of up to 5 Lakh Indian rupees from Rs. 10,000 imposed at violators of the challenged would effectively tighten the noose around these perpetrators.

A provision of Special Courts that shall prevent the emotional malpractice against those with physical shortcoming shall preside over needful justice. Furthermore, a reservation of 3 to 4% in varied specters of government jobs - engineering, skill building, manufacturing, and trade is primed to only enhance the physiological and emotional well-being of those already challenged. If that were a string of the positives surrounding the would-be fate of the disabled in India, then an open breeding grounding of volatility surrounding their lives only confounds reality further.

Here is a simple observation from a vantage point. Most, either often subjugated or left to fend for

> **"** *According to the last, 2011 census, the total number of disabled persons in India stood at a whopping 2.68 crore. This means, 26.8 million.*

CRACKS IN THE SYSTEM:
WHAT THE ROHINGYA SITUATION TELLS US ABOUT REFUGEES IN SOUTH ASIA

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International Human Rights Lawyer

Much has been written about the migration and refugee crisis in 2015 - 16, how its scale and horror is unprecedented since World War II. In contrast to the focus on the crisis in Europe and the Middle East however, the Rohingya refugee crisis received sporadic, often cursory attention, befitting their tragic status as both the most persecuted minority in the world as well as the least wanted. Surely, these two descriptors should not, be capable of being applied to a single group, if our narrative of living in a civilized community is true. Yet, that is precisely the situation.

In a world purportedly governed by the rule of law, and an international consciousness apparently devoted to the ideals of peace and security, the situation in which the Rohingya people find themselves, should, in fact shock one to the core. With complete immunity, Myanmar's government has driven them into horrific persecution, and they are either enslaved within their country or in exploitative industries outside. The factors that lead to this horrifying scenario are numerous and complex. Understanding this requires a closer look at systemic and institutional flaws engineering the isolation of the Rohingya, as well as an acknowledgment that notions about ethnicity and nationality in the South Asian psyche are also big contributors.

Can the current model of refugee protection protect the Rohingya? The pitfalls and shortcomings of the refugee system created by the 1951 UN convention and the Protocol of 1967 are well known. While the reasons for the inability of the system to respond are exacerbated by political apathy and resounding denial from the international community, the weakness of the system is partially due to shortcomings that can be traced to its very foundation. It must be remembered, that at the time of its formulation, the regime envisioned by the 1951 Convention was not meant to handle the kind of crisis being witnessed.

The very specific regime outlined within the Convention, was in fact neither intended, crafted nor designed to deal with mass-movement, but to individual or small groups fleeing violence and persecution. Several aspects of justify this conclusion, not least of which are textual limitations found in the Convention itself. To elucidate, firstly, the original text, which applied the Convention to events occurring before January 1951, specifically highlighted events in Europe. Thus, the 1951 Convention, as a post-Second World War instrument, was originally limited in scope to persons fleeing events occurring before

1 January 1951 and within Europe. The 1967 Protocol removed these limitations and gave the Convention universal coverage, but problems remain because of its originally intended scope and ambit. Secondly, the definition in Art 2 does not actually include people fleeing war and natural disaster and is qualified by the phrase "race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion," - clearly, ethnicity and membership of a linguistic minority are not obviously listed, and although subsequent jurisprudence has made great strides in attempting to extend protection to these groups by virtue of the phrase 'membership of a social group', the fact remains that they are not one of the listed categories. Thirdly, the pivotal clause of the definition, that of having a "well-founded fear of persecution" was conventionally interpreted as requiring the presence of a direct and tangible threat of violence or persecution, specifically targeted at the person seeking asylum. Again, judicial interpretation has found that a well-founded fear need not always require proof of a direct and targeted threat, but rather that factual circumstance should support the presence of a general threat of persecution towards the group under scrutiny. Nevertheless, the original scope and intent of the clause acts as a limitation

in high-level negotiations when refugees do not fall into the specific category envisioned for them, and provokes aggrieved criticism that the 1951 Convention is ill equipped to deal with the crisis being observed today.

But why are the pitfalls of the 1951 Convention relevant to this discussion, when the common destination states of Rohingya refugees, such as India, Bangladesh, Malaysia and Thailand have famously not acceded to or ratified the Convention? Their non-ratification does not, liberate the conversation surrounding refugees in South Asia of the Convention's limitations. Refugees resettled temporarily in countries in South Asia are still accorded a pitiful minimum of rights, mandated to live in camps or restricted areas and denied the right to work or resettle.

So current discourse on refugee rights in South Asia still assumes that ratification of the 1951 Convention and its Protocol will be a panacea to the ills plaguing the treatment of displaced people in the region. But expectations of such a positive outcome may be misplaced. Refugee movements in South Asia are caused by a variety of both short lived and protracted conflicts, sustained by complex and diverse factors. The very nature of borders in South Asia have facilitated the forced movement of millions of people. A system that evaluates claims and necessity based on individual experiences is singularly ill-equipped to deal with this, and may well prove to be an obstacle rather than a resource. The way forward has to be innovative, not staid:

A notion that gives rise to considerable more animosity and antipathy towards refugees and asylum seekers in general is the notion of permanent resettlement. Undeniably, the idea of affording people fleeing war and suffering the right to freely live their lives and build better futures for their families henceforth is laudable, but in reality, strong ethnic and national identities in South Asia often present an insurmountable obstacle to the realization of this notion. A constant response to the Rohingya's attempts to seek resettlement in muslim-majority nations have often been resisted because of the fear that their absorption would upset delicate ethnic and religious balances. Deeply embedded anxieties about an 'us' vs 'them' scenario have frequently come to the fore in these discussions. This is not a problem unique to Asia, but merely to highlight the importance of designing a system that will simultaneously combat such anxieties and prejudices among local populations, and will pave the way for greater acceptable and integration of refugees. Any system for refugees that focuses on mere skeletal legal entitlements without accounting for these opinions and perceptions will not only fail to secure public, and therefore governmental support for refugee rights, but will risk becoming obsolete and exist only on paper.

Changing the situation of refugees in South Asia will require not just additional legal commitments, but a recalibration of the region's perception of itself as an entity. Admittedly, those feeling war and sustained persecution they have, generally found refuge. But in several such instances, the refuge offered was motivated less by humanitarian instincts and more by political aspirations, such as signaling their own opposition or to a particular government or power, or to pacify domestic interest groups with loyalties to the persecuted group. But this approach, based on an assumption that such crises are few and far in between, is incompatible with the commitment to rule of law and human life with dignity being espoused today.

This inadequacy is in fact exacerbated in South and South East Asia, which suffers from a lack of regional cohesion. To populations that have historically had little engagement with their governments on matters of foreign policy the plight of groups and people across borders is characterized as remote and irrelevant, and there is very little domestic mobilization on the issue. When refugees are accepted, policies have rarely focused on informing and engaging with the host population, leading to prejudicial fears about the effects of the refugee population on local livelihoods and land ownership. Accentuating these fears is the fact that South Asian populations are rarely unitary in their identities. Rather, they generally subscribe to multi layered identities, and often use multiple descriptors in reference to themselves, using religious, linguistic as well as ethnic categories. While it contributes to a diversity in culture and heritage, this also means that host populations rarely, if ever, feel an empathetic connection to refugees. Thus, the displacement of Sri Lankan Tamils did not trigger a whole-hearted acceptance by India's Tamil community, despite the sharing of linguistic history. Similarly, the Rohingya situation has not provoked a particularly sympathetic reaction from countries with Muslim-majority populations, even though, the Rohingya people are being persecuted primarily on the basis of their religion.

Thus, a more sustainable way forward would be for the region to devise and formulate its own refugee system capable of comprehending unique aspects of the South Asian refugee situation, the scale of the movement, the reasons causing said movement and the strong ethnic, national, and religious loyalties that determine integration and absorption in the region. There should be an acknowledgment of the factors that complicate the idea of a regional solution, a simultaneous attempt to deal with local and domestic perceptions of mass migration, and recognition of the flaws of the current system in place in Europe and the western world. In contrast to the sporadic and ad hoc handling of refugees in South Asia, the Rohingya situation highlights, in pitiless detail, the need for South Asia to have a united and coordinated approach to large scale movements of displaced people seeking refuge, to challenge some long-standing notions existing in current systems that inhibit protection to the deserving, and adopt strategies to mitigate and assuage anxieties and fears borne out of ethnic and national loyalties.

Steve Gumaer

> " **Can the current model of refugee protection protect the Rohingya?** The pitfalls and shortcomings of the refugee system created by the 1951 UN convention and the Protocol of 1967 are well known.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA:
ALL EYES ON ECONOMIC GROWTH?

Liza Micke

Bachelor of Laws

Sustainable development in Africa has long been and remains to be a global concern. Over the past century, African countries have recorded significant economic growth, in fact, they are among the fastest growing economies in the world. This is due to national development strategies that focus on maximising economic growth. However, notwithstanding the radiant Gross Domestic Product (GDP), the population remains trapped in poverty and social exclusion, which I was confronted with myself when travelling in African countries. This leads to the question if maximisation of economic growth really is the sole factor Africa should focus on on its path to sustainable development?

Early development theories would have supported this approach. They identified economic growth as the eradicator of poverty and social exclusion and thus as synonymous to development. Economic growth, however, has not resulted in the expected social inclusion: while a minority became significantly wealthier, the majority of the population experienced little to no difference which led to a change in development perspectives. A new approach emerged, identifying sustainable development as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs,[1] focusing on the interconnectedness of economic growth, social inclusion and environmental sustainability,

defining the challenge of sustainable development to achieve balance among these three factors.

But how can significant economic growth be translated into sustainable development in Africa? For that, Africa has to restrain from its former development strategy and adopt a strategy that focuses on the interlinkages between the three factors, having sustainability at its core and thus having the potential to put Africa on the path to sustainable development.

An agenda that recognizes the new approach and the interconnectedness of the three factors are the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). At the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit on 25 September 2015, world leaders agreed on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 associated targets. These goals follow the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that were agreed in 2000 and were supposed to be achieved by 2015. The MDGs provided an important framework for development but even though progress has been made, this progress has been uneven and a Post 2015 Development Agenda needed to be agreed based on sustainable development, which led to the adoption of the SDGs. They officially came into force on 1 January 2016 when the MDGs were concluded. The SDGs build upon

the achievements of the MDGs and intend to complete what they did not achieve. But they also intend to go further: The SDGs are committed to achieving development in the aforementioned three areas, economic growth, social inclusion and environmental sustainability, and therefore reflect the common global intent of transition to sustainable development.

The SDGs are an important agent to support Africa on its path to sustainable development. Many African countries are already aligning their development strategies with the SDGs. The main challenge, however, will now be the implementation of the SDGs in a way that transforms goals into development outcome, as effectiveness relies on the implementation of the goals.

The achievement of sustainable development in Africa is certainly not predestined, but while this is a time of immense challenges, it is also a time of immense opportunity and, by aligning its development strategy with the SDGs, African countries have shown that they are willing to follow the path to sustainable development.

[1] In 1987, the Brundtland Commission (formally: United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development) released the Brundtland Report, which included an official definition of sustainable development: "Sustainable development is development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

> " **The SDGs are an important agent to support Africa on its path to sustainable development.**

WHAT ABOUT THE MIGRATION CRISIS?

Stephania Xenophontos

Lawyer and human rights activist, LLM in International Law.

Between Trump's inauguration, his directive to build the border wall with Mexico, the travel ban, the women's marches in the US, the demonstrations and rallies across Europe against Trump's policies, the Syria ceasefire and the thousands of unarmed civilians who are still suffering from the unending struggle to defeat ISIS suffice to say that, the first two months of 2017 have been frantic. Yet, despite losing its popularity in the media, the migration crisis still persists. In fact, the European Union's migration crisis is far from over.

Accordingly, the EU took a bold step in 2016 and signed a deal with Turkey, which has been claimed by the European leaders as a success. Under the deal, migrants arriving in Greece will be sent back to Turkey if they do not apply for asylum or if their claim is rejected. Moreover, for every Syrian migrant sent back to Turkey, one Syrian already in Turkey will be resettled in the EU.

The idea behind the deal was to prevent unchecked arrivals into the European Union and supposedly to assist the Greek islands that are overflowing with migrants. Of course, Turkey is not playing the role of the good Samaritan here as, included in the deal, was the exchange of billions of Euros in aid, visa liberalization for Turkish citizens, and revived negotiations for Turkish accession to the EU. This well encapsulates the phrase 'making a deal with the devil' although it is not still certain which side is the devil.

Although both Turkey and EU have hailed the success of the deal in that, following a few months after it had been signed, there was a sharp decrease in the number of crossings from Turkey to Greece, this was not because the deal was working as agreed. Actually, the mere possibility of being sent back to Turkey reduced the daily number of Greek island arrivals. This is owned to Erdogan's increasing authoritarianism and EU's reluctance in abolishing short-term visas for Turks causing an outrage in Turkey.

Despite the fact that international law guarantees to each person fleeing persecution the right to request asylum in a safe country, the EU-Turkey agreement has set a dangerous precedent by putting at risk the very principle of the right to seek refuge. The UN Refugee Agency has already stated the deal contravenes basic aspects of the 1951 Refugee Convention. Under the terms of the Convention, refugee cases should be assessed on an individual basis, rather than being subject to a blanket policy and refugees should not be returned to countries that are unable to guarantee their rights, like, for example, Turkey.

The deal is based on the naïve assumption that Turkey is a safe third country. Thus, this deal was made against the fact that Turkey has effectively sealed its border with Syria and has shot at and forcibly returned women, men, and children fleeing violence, persecution and human rights abuse in that country. All the above have occurred in a country where its President

Royal Netherlands Navy

has undermined the rule of law to consolidate his personal power, has impeded with the freedom of the press and has undermined the judiciary by blocking access to fair trial. Following the failed attempted coup, Erdoğan has doubtlessly used it as a pretext to proceed in a total cleansing of all opposition leading to enhance Turkey's already deficient record on human rights violations.

Coincidentally, following the failed coup, the Greek authorities were raising the alarm over an increasing influx of refugees from Turkey.

In September 2016, Mr Xydakis, Greece's European minister, stated that since the EU-Turkey deal came into force, 99% of refugees arriving in Greece were claiming asylum, compared with 3% before March, to avoid being sent straight back.

Yet, it was also in September that Mrs Merkel has ordered Greece to honour the EU-Turkey deal by sending back to Turkey any Syrians whose requests for asylum were rejected. Due to Greece's migration laws Turkey is not recognised as a safe third country for refugees, meaning that they cannot be sent back there. Further to that, since 2015, the EU has largely failed to overcome its poor record in providing resettlement places commensurate with the overwhelming need and its capacity. Given that the envisioned relocation of refugees throughout the EU has failed, Greece is once again left alone in the migration crisis.

What is even more troubling is the living conditions at the refugee camps since pictures of migrants trapped in deep freeze temperatures have made news in January. Amnesty International has in fact lamented the 'squalid living conditions' that migrants endure in 'overcrowded camps' in Greece, where many remain in detention centres. In addition to that, a number of articles had made it known that sex trade in Athens has been exacerbated due to the swelling number of refugee arrivals. The picture of homeless refugees, even minors, turning themselves into sex workers so that they can earn as much as €5 - €10 undoubtedly turns the praising of the EU-Turkey by European leaders as disingenuous.

Recently, the European Commission and some member states are pressing to resume returns to Greece under the Dublin Regulation. This is despite the fact that Germany has for the past five years refrained from carrying out such transfers owing to the increasingly poor humanitarian conditions refugees and migrants endure in Greece. Moreover, for the last years Greece's economy is hanging by a thread. There are now even bigger concerns that it is heading into the worst economic crisis yet that would finally lead to its exit from the European Union. Studies show that 15% of Greeks live in extreme poverty and the rate of extreme poverty for the unemployed in recent years is around 70-75%. So how can this country even come close to support the refugees? Resuming Dublin returns to Greece clearly indicates that the EU leaders are wilfully shutting their eyes to the migration crisis in that it would exacerbate the already appalling situation for many asylum seekers in the country.

Furthermore, although the EU continues to emphasize preventing departures and combating smuggling over a coordinated approach, a couple of days ago, a boat of 93 migrants from Turkey landed in Cyprus. Concerns were expressed that the flow of migrants and refugees to the island will increase in numbers as there is an organised criminal, smuggling group which makes profit by taking advantage of desperate people in Mersin, Turkey. This leads to the assumption that there is in fact no coordinated approach to human smuggling. Cracking down on smuggling networks without presenting any viable alternatives would increase the numbers of people enduring gruelling, potentially fatal, journeys and possibly lead to more refugees stranded in third countries forced to survive under harsh living conditions. It seems that sharing the responsibility of managing the refugee flow among European countries is still far from attainable.

Ultimately, the European Union's attempts to deal with the migration crisis remain inadequate. The EU-Turkey deal, which supposedly was going to alleviate the overcrowding of refugees in Greece, in effect, treats refugees as interchangeable commodities. The EU is not exhibiting any sings that it has, up to this point, grasped the complexity of the migration crisis as an issue. The deal fails to take into account the reasons why a person might feel compelled to pay large sums of money to jump on a boat and travel from Turkey to Greece despite fears that s/he might not make it. People are fleeing their countries out of fear and uncertainty yet, they end up in European countries facing the same fear and uncertainty. Making deals with countries that do not abide by human rights law only serves to demonstrate that the EU is unremarkably paralyzed when it comes to the migration crisis and as long as the EU does not adopt a cohesive and coherent policy, more and more bodies will sink in the waters of the Mediterranean.

“*Studies show that 15% of Greeks live in extreme poverty and the rate of extreme poverty for the unemployed in recent years is around 70-75%. So how can this country even come close to support the refugees?*

CORRUPTION AND SECURITY NEXUS IN SIERRA LEONE:
A HUMAN RIGHTS PERSPECTIVE

Amidu Kalokoh

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"Corruption is an insidious plague that has a wide range of corrosive effects on societies. It undermines democracy and the rule of law, leads to violations of human rights, distorts markets, erodes the quality of life and allows organised crime, terrorism and other threats to human security to flourish."

The end of the civil war in Sierra Leone has witnessed a logical shift in security focus, from state-centric notion that primarily centred on protecting the country from external adversaries and suppression of dissents, to human security, which is premise on generating political, social, environmental, economic, military and cultural systems that fundamentally provide sustainable ways to healthy livelihood and human dignity. Based on this characterization, it is reasonable to emphasize that security is inherent to human rights but has been a serious challenge in Sierra Leone. This could be judged from the fact that the country is underdeveloped; and could be seen on the conditions of the masses who make up the bulk of the population. People are economically, socially, and politically insecure to an extent that survival has been the common agenda.

Pervasive corruption is playing a greater role to insecurity in the country and it is a recognised nemesis to its sustainable development drive, as millions of people are floundering in 'sustainable

poverty' and extremely vulnerable to insecurities of food, health, environment, and covered in economic paradox, a handful others are reeling in perpetual affluence. Take for instance, 2014

Transparency International in 2013 on bribery, 84% of respondents admitted to have given bribe. Corruption has eaten deep into the fabric of society; placing serious limitations to the realisation on human rights.

Just as stated by Iyanda (2012), corruption is an international phenomenon and could not be used to exclusively define any nation, race or section of the world; and includes situations such as slow movement of files in offices, police extortion, congestion at ports, queues at passport offices and petrol stations, ghost workers syndrome, and election irregularities Sierra Leone is not an exception. Corruption in Sierra Leone is also not the domain of any tribe, region, institution or class but generic and includes issues of embezzlement and misappropriation of public funds, substandard project execution, abuse of office, bribery, extortion, forgery and kickbacks.

Corruption does not develop in isolation; there are reasons to its occurrence. Some of these include low salary and marginal benefits to workers.

Sierra Leone scored 31 on Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index (with 0 being very corrupt and 100 being very clean of corruption). In another survey conducted by

Most workers both in public and private sectors could not live within their salaries; these are not proportionate to the cost of living in the country. In addition to that, some of these workers have little hope of attaining attractive reimbursement/pension, thus increasing their chances of being corrupt. Secondly, lack of integrity and satisfaction are key factors. This could be argued independently from personnel wage level because even the well-paid are also engaged in corrupt practices and one could bribe or forge irrespective of his/her status.

Corruption is generally known to be a key player in undermining Sierra Leone's capacity to achieve its sustainable development objectives as individuals personalise public funds and extort the penurious. In this way, people rights to food, housing, education, health and justice is being violated. Corruption has weakened effective application of the rule of law. The very law that should be used to protect citizens from abuse and promote their economic wellbeing is being used to exploit them by law enforcement bodies, justice sector and civil service. Where the rule of law is weak there is little or no protection of private property rights and contract enforcement. This leads to compromise in justice thus paving way for criminal network to flourish and fosters violence in society. In addition to that, workers' contracts would hardly be adhered to, consequently trampling on the pleasure of their economic right. Furthermore, corruption is arguably undermining people's confidence on public officials and eroding the capacity of the country to deliver services. The outcome of all these is insecurity as people becoming increasingly disgruntled, with hatred and violence. As perpetrators become economically secure, victims continue to suffer in poverty and its attending vulnerabilities thereby creating suspicions among pockets of the population which clearly interprets a situation of 'us' against 'them', thus increasing susceptibility to violent conflict and deepens underdevelopment. In all of these the masses bear the brunt of the problems. They have little or nothing to provide for quality health, education, food, housing and clothing; and their dignity as humans is exposed to ridicule and abuse.

Steps taken by the government and external actors in fighting corruption in Sierra Leone include the formation of the Anti-Corruption Commission in 2000 which demonstrates its political will. Since its formation a good number of people predominantly in public sector have been charged and found guilty of corruption. Presently there is a 'Pay No Bribe (PNB) campaign' which is an anonymous reporting platform where cases of bribery are reported for government's effective policy response. Electronic financial transactions are another step to curtail corruption in that direction. Civil servants are now paid electronically.

Regardless of this, corruption remains a challenge to Sierra Leone's security, largely as a result of the persistent nature of its causes. In addition to that, corruption is becoming an acceptable norm to many people who believe that they could not have their ways through in certain matters like, bail, processing documents, having legal representation and so on without giving a bribe. In fact to some people corruption has become their occupation, aiding people crossing borders with goods without paying taxes, and creating bottlenecks in public offices for extortion.

Achieving security in Sierra Leone calls for strong political will and citizens' commitment to fight corruption and emancipate the country from underdevelopment. By this way investors will be attracted which will lead to expanded market, hence citizens will have meaningful jobs which will contribute to their economic status and reduce disgruntlement. Government will generate more revenues and would be in place to provide much needed social services and reduce security risk factors. Citizens should uphold integrity especially law enforcement personnel. The law should not be used as a source of revenue generation for oneself but should be used to strengthen society for effective and efficient governance. By this way human rights can be protected and promoted.

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" there is a 'Pay No Bribe (PNB)campaign' which is an anonymous reporting platform where cases of bribery are reported for government's effective policy response.

TRUMP ON IMMIGRATION AND DEPORTATIONS

Miguel Rodriguez Glaudemans

Lawyer and CRW human rights researcher

On January 27th of 2017, the president of the United States of America Donald Trump, issued an executive order which temporarily blocked the entry of citizens of seven countries which have a Muslim-majority. The countries affected by it were Iraq, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen. The effects of the so-called by the media "Muslim Ban", has separated families and blocked VISA applications in the targeted countries. On February 3rd, a federal Judge in Seattle issued a restraining order, which halted the executive order across the United States. On February 9th, a federal appeals court officially declined to reinstate the executive order, thus, banning that particular order for good, unless the administration battled it out in court; but a plan B was on its way.

President Trump's administration and inner circle of advisors and the majority of his base supporters, are openly against former immigration policies, which seemed to be more understanding of the reality which immigrants to the US endure. Muslims and Mexicans –or Latinos in general- seem to be the main target of the immigration policies which are viewed by many as being unfounded, xenophobic and relentlessly promoting anti-Arab and anti-Islam thoughts.

The previously mentioned executive order ban was seen as a partial defeat of the intolerant policies promoted by Trump, ever since the beginning of his campaign. The building of a Wall on the Mexican-United States border, along with

irrational tagging of Mexicans all being "rapists and drug dealers" may have been very indicative and ominous of the future plans of the then unlikely candidate billionaire Donald Trump, but if fewer thought he would ever be president, perhaps even fewer of us cared to believe he would ever get his way. Although due to the recent development of events, it is highly unlikely that the foretold

wall will be built by Mexico, President Trump has insisted in the idea and said that the construction is programmed for later this year.

On February, the 21st the administration of Trump, through the Department of Homeland Security ordered an immigration crackdown, by means of expanding the principle concepts for

immigrants targeted for deportation. Previous of this order an illegal immigrant which had been convicted of a crime, or had been in the country for less than 14 days and was within 100 miles of the border were subject to "expedited removal", but now immigrants which are charged or suspected of a crime fall under this category as well. Ever since the last week of February, the "ICE" (IMMIGRATION AND CUSTOMS ENFORCEMENT) have conducted dozens of raids with an increased number of deportation activity. This has led to fear of a very large portion of illegal immigrants in the United States, where reportedly some children have stopped going to school, and families have ceased to attend church out of fear of deportation. Some of the stories of the circumstances of ICE arrests are truly mind-blowing and chilling; just to mention some, the arrest of a brain tumor patient at the hospital she was in, a pregnant mother of four, and a transgender abuse-victim after her hearing. But it seems this may very well have been the tip of the iceberg.

President Trump signed a revised executive order on March 6th, which includes changes to the first executive order which it also revokes, takes Iraq out of the seven countries list.

The Trump administration told that they were careful in drawing out these modifications and did a lot of consulting previous of the making public of the order, which is supposed to go into effect on March 16th if not challenged. Although the text has undergone some changes, some of which may have been the ground of the restraining order of the first ban, it is basically the same executive orders, and lawmakers are confident it will again be stopped before it becomes effective. This revised version attempts to keep the 120-day suspension of the refugee program. Also, it lowers the cap of immigrants accepted into the US to 50.000, from the 100.000 pledged by former president Barack Obama.

More on Trump

The notorious drawing of a continued state of fear and the building of the Trump administration on it may be what is so bluntly blinding about the current situation. The form of populism which has gotten President Trump to the White House has been openly violent, discriminatory and promoting and endorsing of hate of minorities. Human Rights and civil and social organizations in the US are campaigning hardly, preparing for more animosity on the streets, and the validation of racism in some institutions has been notorious. Additionally, LGBT rights organizations are worried about roll-backs of their partially recognized rights and the impact of the hatred wave encouraged by supporters of Trump.

Along with a series of executive orders and arduous policy making, the immigration issue is the top of the iceberg on other matters. There is, for example, the intention of congress to make a rollback on internet privacy rights, which may derive in the selling by Internet Service Providers - usually, the company you pay for the internet- of their client's data on geolocation, financial status, children, and other information considered.

Likewise, the intention of privatizing prisons, and removing their Federal support has received harsh critique and negative outburst of both, lawmakers and human rights activists.

This also has a double repercussion on the aforementioned immigration policies, as county jails have been increasing the number of assets for accommodation capabilities, which may indicate preparation for the intensification of the deportation raids.

Another key issue is the one regarding gender, of Trump's sexist remarks and his tendency to objectify women, and demeaning the female gender in various opportunities.

It is very clear that civil liberties and social rights may suffer greatly under President's Trump term, which is not even 100 days old yet. The role of local and international organizations will be valuable, encouraging people to fight for their freedom, right to privacy, and freedom of expression. The character and performance of conscientious media, shall have to share the burden with such organizations, to resist the weight of a yet unknown future.

John Englaert

" The form of populism which has gotten President Trump to the White House has been openly violent, discriminatory and promoting and endorsing of hate of minorities.

SPEAKING UP FOR THE VOICELESS

Charalambos Georgiadis

BA Political Science, blogger (www.politispect.wordpress.com)

'I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it'. This statement, often attributed to Voltaire as a summary of the values the Enlightenment philosopher stood for, is used to underline the importance of the democratic right of freedom of expression. In modern western societies, we take pride in protecting and promoting this liberty. However, could one claim that we are all able to exercise this right equally? Can we say that we all have our opinions treated equally, and if not, who can help people promote their views or interests?

In order to claim that freedom of expression is equally distributed within the society, we have to first ensure that this right goes hand in hand with an equal level of accessibility to the communication media. Because, practically, expressing a thought, an interest or an idea is of little use, if nearly no one is able to hear about it. Unfortunately, there is a significant number of people whose voices are being muffled by the deafening volume of the more privileged ones.

For instance, a minimum-wage young worker cannot exercise this right in the way a middle-aged publisher of a prestigious newspaper does. It is a fact that indicates that the gap between rich and poor is also a gap between different levels of exercising the fundamental freedom of expression. As a matter of fact, any person who could not afford a higher level of educational training has very restricted – if any at all – means for sharing his opinion with the rest of the community.

Encouraging all social groups to participate in any form of public dialogue and promoting the aspects of all of them is of utmost importance for any society. The democratic values of equality and freedom of speech cannot be denied to anyone, neither on the theoretical nor on the practical level. Moreover, justifying this kind of social exclusion with a scale of 'expertise and higher education' standard, is substantially a downright insult to the principle of equal opportunities and it also undermines any attempts to build a cohesive society.

Another example of this discriminative exclusion is the notion many women share, that their opinions often receive less respect than those of men. Especially in political and economic issues, a woman's point of view is taken far less seriously than that of a man. It is clear to see that, despite the progress of western societies in gender equality, the pre-existing social structure discourages women of expressing their thoughts and, even more, having their voices being heard.

It can be argued that, over the past two decades, more and more people are able to freely express their thoughts in public, by dint of the internet. However, the worldwide web is mainly an environment where people care more to speak and less to listen. Therefore, the internet, as a vehicle of personal expression, is even less effective than sending private letters to governmental authorities.

On a global point of view, there are people, entire tribes and hundreds of different social groups who cannot enjoy the so-called universal human rights. Being substantially deprived of their right to speak and be heard, they are in dire need of activists and human rights advocates to raise awareness about the problems those people have to deal with in their daily lives. This is the truth that motivates human rights' activism all around the world.

Understanding that speaking up for the people who have no access to these liberties, activism strives to counter this unjust situation in order to raise awareness, inspire and contribute to any form of humanitarian aid.
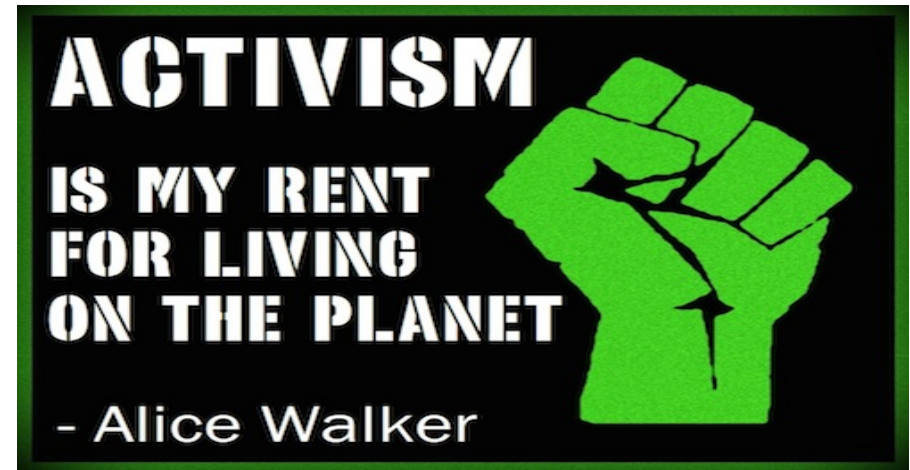
Using their own right to freedom of speech, through any stream of mass media they can have access to, activists try to become the voices of all those people who are obliged to remain silent. It is a noble cause that needs to be substantially supported, in order to not be confined by economical restrictions. As mentioned before, being able to express a thought, a warning or an argument is of little worth, unless there is an audience able to receive the message. Therefore, it is important for a non-profit organisation to have access to influential sources of mass media, so that they can inform as many people as possible of their cause and get all the support it takes to change the world.

Activism is not charity, in the context of instead of temporarily relieving a problem, an activistic movement or organisation channels all of its effort to the very roots of an unjust socio-political phenomenon. Consequently, it can be said that there is a social necessity for such attempts to be supported, so that they can keep on promoting the democratic humanitarian values within the various human societies.

Beyond financial support, humanitarian causes have to be promoted within the country. Raising awareness on fundamental justice issues should be taken seriously by any government, as these issues have a strong impact to people, regardless if they directly concern them or not. Because it is true that any form of violation against the rights of a social or ethnical group is also a direct offense against humanity as a whole.

Also, with the contribution of the mass media, the NGOs can have the opportunity to bring unjust truths to the surface and raise awareness to a whole new level. Publishing can be a demanding task for a non-profit organisation, unless they could cooperate with the press due to the fact that they share the same values and interests. Were journalism and activism, in the form of influential news sources and human rights NGOs, to work together to unveil the ugliest part of human societies, then democracy and its core values would be substantially protected.

Living in times of isolationism and the rhetoric of hatred and fear, the socio-political structure has to embrace any effort aspires to keep the society united. Racism and populism had expanded once again to the extent that people see themselves divided, while exclusion rises as well. This fact has proven too many times to pose a serious threat to the cornerstone of society's cohesive character. Activism is the alarm that reminds people of the truth which exists beyond human borders and any closed doors. It is up to their power and democracy's inclusive methods that can maintain the balance societies need to function fair and effectively.

> **"** *Activism is not charity, in the context of instead of temporarily relieving a problem, an activistic movement or organisation channels all of its effort to the very roots of an unjust socio-political phenomenon.*
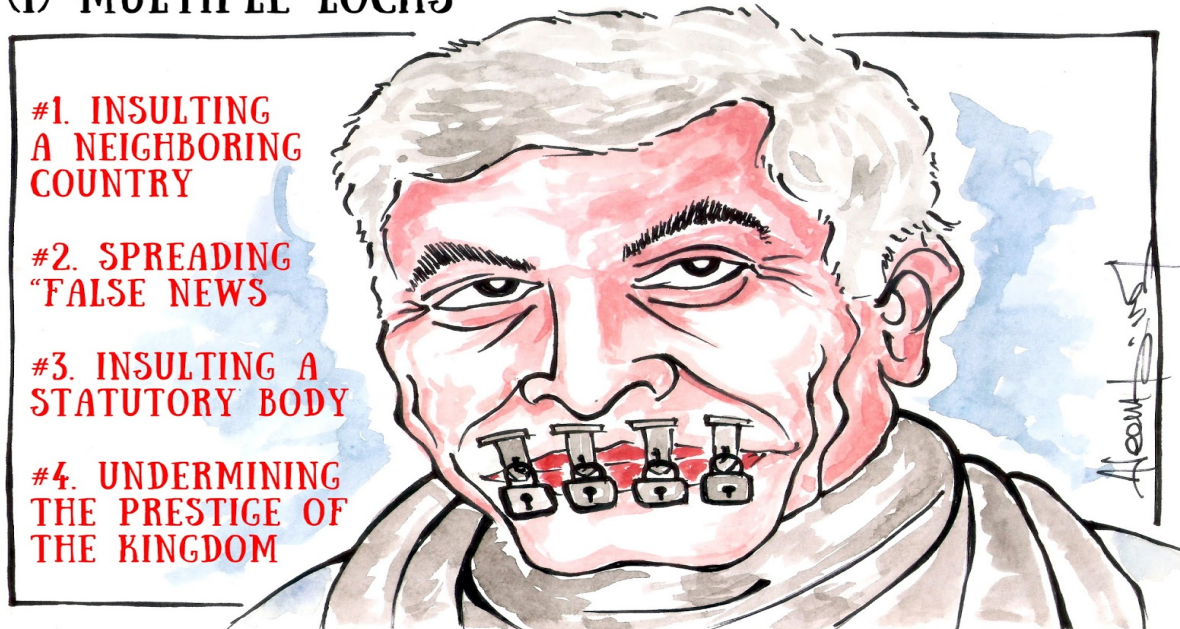
CARTOONS for human rights

Aseem Trivedi

Aseem Trivedi is a political cartoonist and free speech activist. His website was blocked and he was arrested for his anti corruption cartoons in 2012. He seeks to support writers, artists and others facing injustice, tries to create awareness and mobilize social media users to participate in campaigns demanding the end of injustice. You can contact him about the cases you think should be supported through his cartoons and see more of his work at his website: www.bandw.in/p/about.html
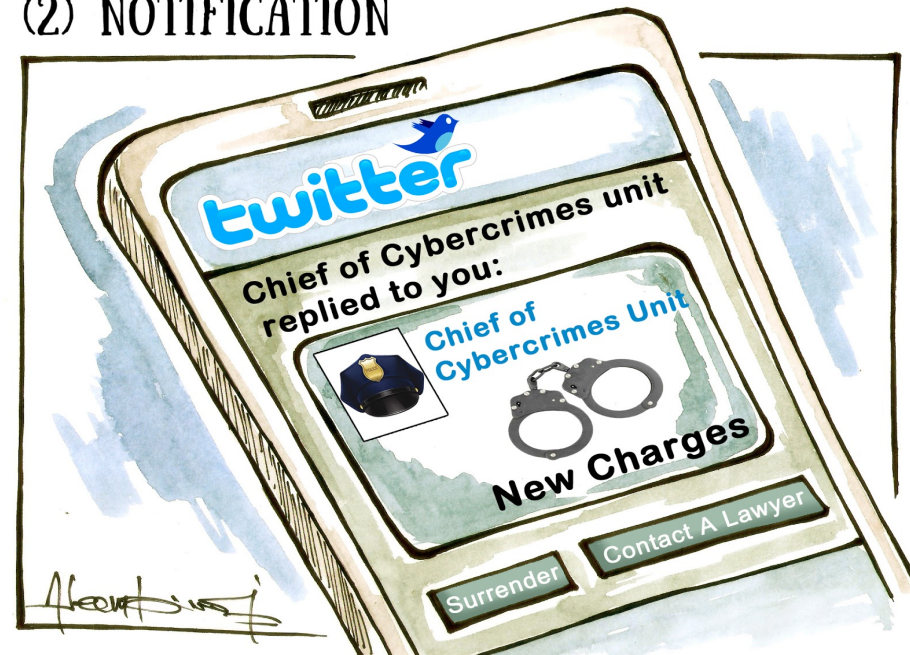
15 CARTOONS AGAINST THE ARREST OF NABEEL RAJAB AND THE HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN BAHRAIN

The cartoons demand the immediate release of Nabeel Rajab and the protection of human rights and free speech in Bahrain.

(2) NOTIFICATION

twitter

Chief of Cybercrimes unit replied to you:

Chief of Cybercrimes Unit

New Charges

Surrender   Contact A Lawyer

(1) MULTIPLE LOCKS

#1. INSULTING A NEIGHBORING COUNTRY

#2. SPREADING "FALSE NEWS

#3. INSULTING A STATUTORY BODY

#4. UNDERMINING THE PRESTIGE OF THE KINGDOM

(3) SOLITARY CONFINEMENT

TORTURE LEVEL 2

CARTOONS for human rights

Aseem Trivedi

15 CARTOONS AGAINST THE ARREST OF NABEEL RAJAB AND THE HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN BAHRAIN

This cartoon series is an artistic protest against the unlawful arrest of Nabeel Rajab and the human rights violations in Bahrain. Nabeel Rajab is a human rights defender and President of the Bahrain Centre for Human Rights. He is one of the most prominent Arab human rights defenders and has been a leading voice in the Arab Spring in Bahrain. He has faced physical intimidation, arrest, detention and travel bans as a result of his work and has been sentenced to prison in violation of rights of assembly and expression. Bahraini police detained human rights defender Nabeel Rajab on 13 June 2016. Many false charges have been framed against him for his online posts. Recently a new charge of "undermining the prestige of the kingdom" was filed against him for just an opinion piece, he wrote in New York Times exposing the poor condition of human rights in Bahrain.

The cartoons demand the immediate release of Nabeel Rajab and the protection of human rights and free speech in Bahrain.

(4) MONARCHY

(5) THE CUTTER

(6) THE SENTENCE

FOR ORDINARY CRIMES

FOR DISSENT
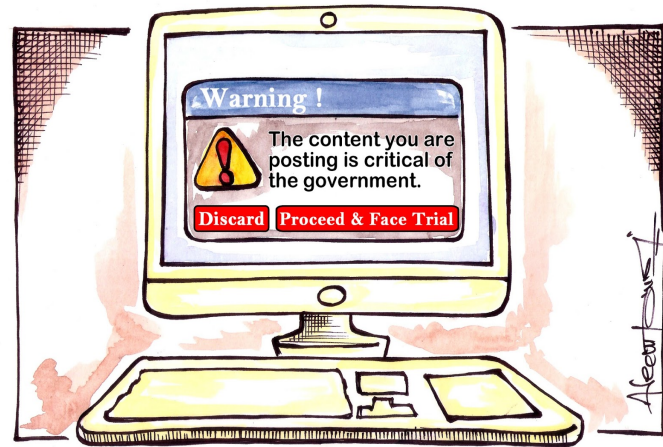
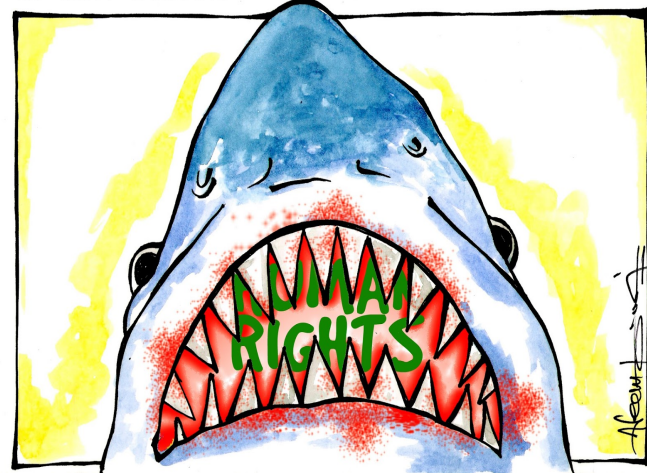## (7) ROYAL DINNER

yummy

58

59

CARTOONs for human rights

Aseem Trivedi

15 CARTOONS AGAINST THE ARREST OF NABEEL RAJAB AND THE HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN BAHRAIN
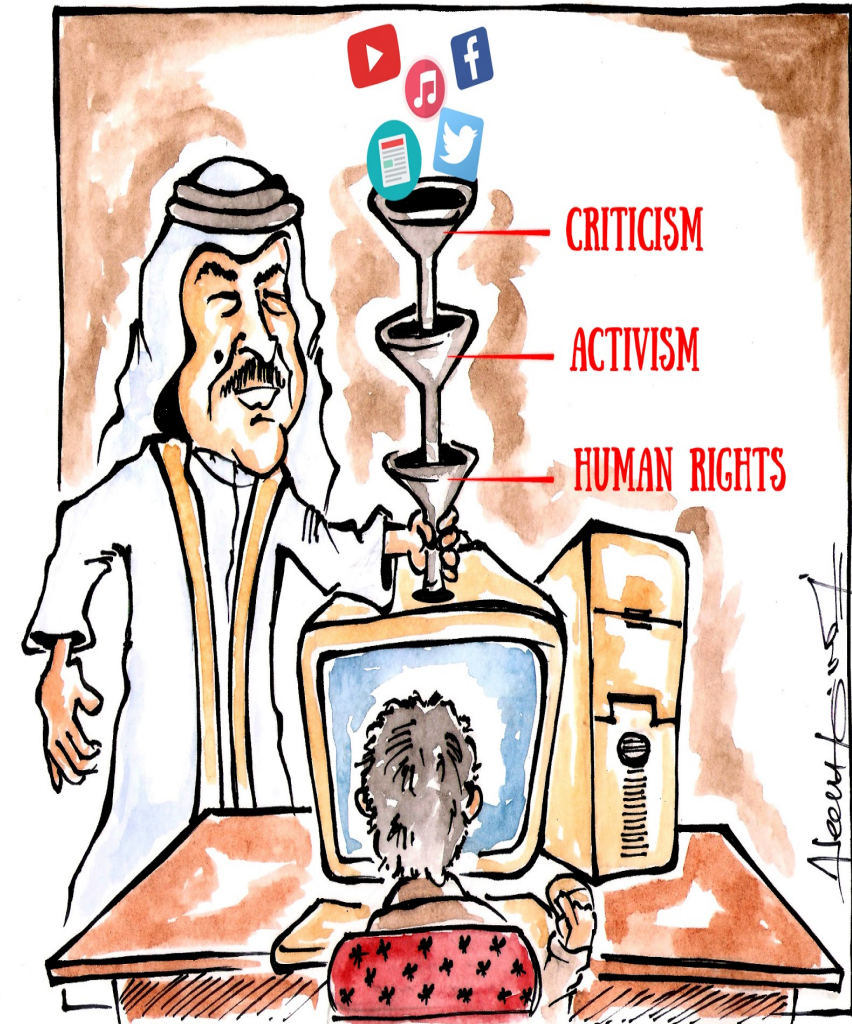
(8) CHOOSE CAREFULLY

(10) VEGAS OF BAHRAIN

(9) JAW PRISON

(11) IN THE NAME OF TERRORISM
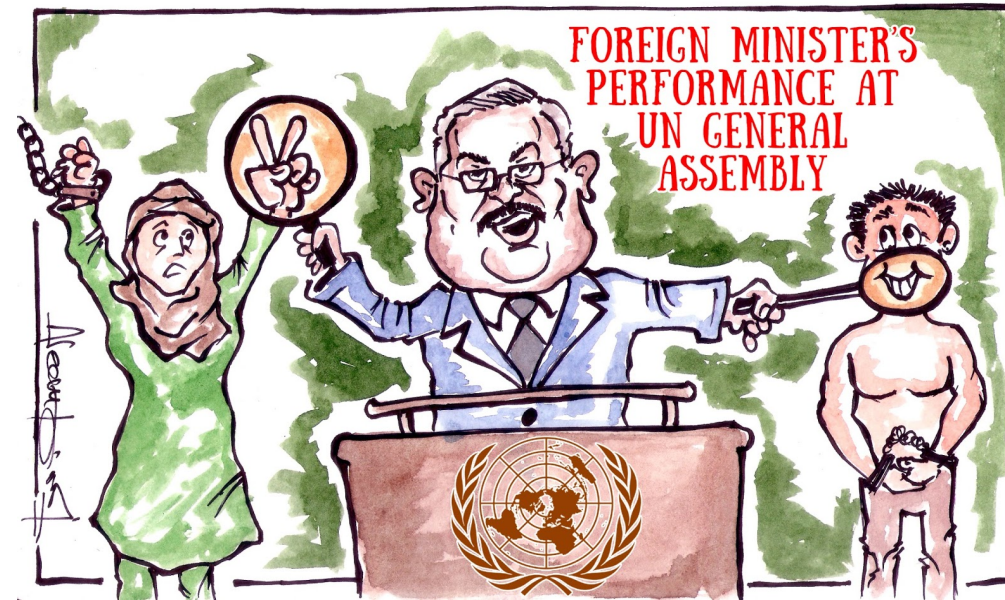

(12) CENTRALIZED FILTERING SYSTEM

CARTOONS for human rights

Aseem Trivedi

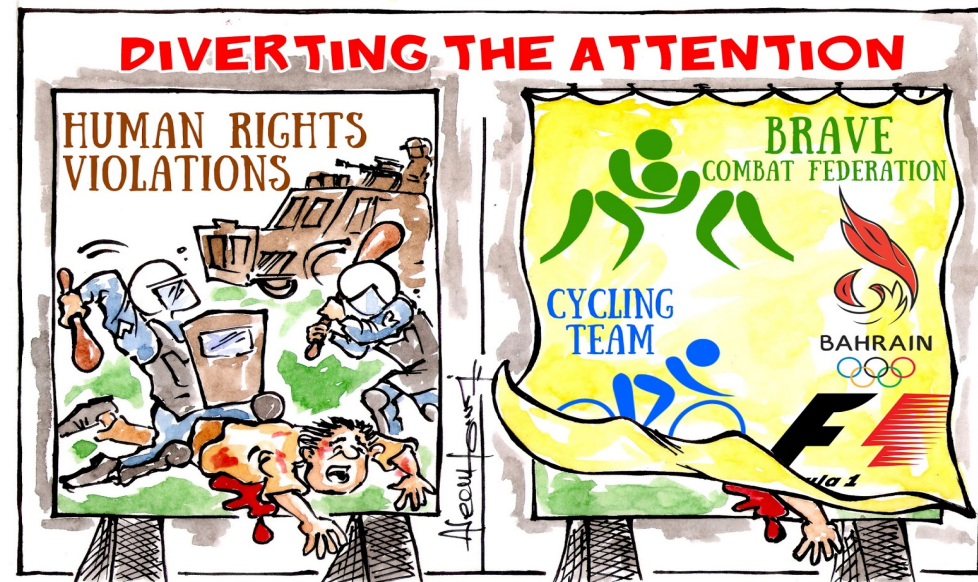15 CARTOONS AGAINST THE ARREST OF NABEEL RAJAB AND THE HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN BAHRAIN

(13) DEAD NEWS

NEW RESTRICTIONS ON LIVE BROADCASTING AND VIDEO REPORTING

(14) MAGIC SHOW

FOREIGN MINISTER'S PERFORMANCE AT UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

(15) SPORTS DIPLOMACY

DIVERTING THE ATTENTION

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

BRAVE COMBAT FEDERATION

CYCLING TEAM

BAHRAIN

#FreeNabeel   #ReleaseNabeel

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Write an article on a human rights issue and email it to us at:

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CITIZENS RIGHTS PARTNERS

We support & collaborate with the following NGOs, and we are open to collaborations with any human rights organization. In solidarity!