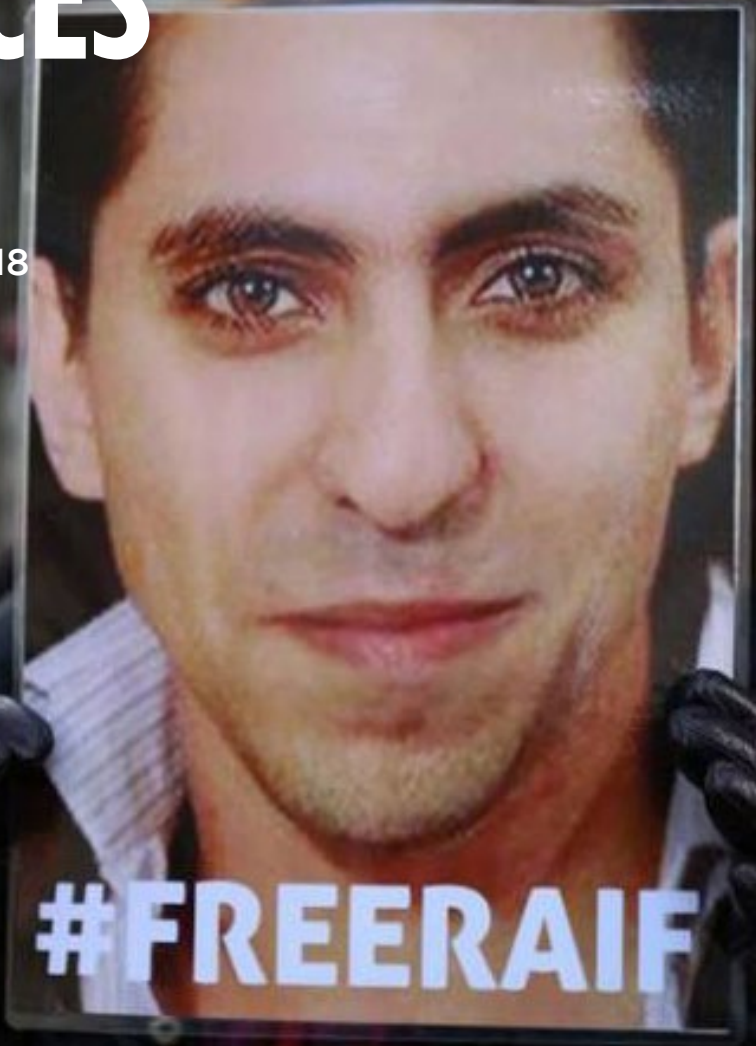


CITIZENS VOICES



Volume 9
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EDITORIAL

Dr. Zoi Aliozi

CRW S/G



2017 was not a good year for human rights. The refugee crisis that unfolds around the world is a fountain of injustices, human rights abuses, and an indiscriminate attack to the dignity of victims, refugees, asylum seekers, and stateless people, proving once more the inefficiency of the UN and the inability of states to fulfil their role in providing safety and security to their citizens.

It is a fact that human rights are being violated in every country around the world. This is the truth! Human rights were put on paper, and became laws, in order to protect the citizen from the arbitrary and unlimited raw state-power. Governments are the number ONE human rights violator in the world as we know it! The state who is called to protect the rights of its citizens —is



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paradoxically— the protector but also the biggest threat to those rights! This is why we need to keep fighting for human rights, but at the same time recognize the duties that co-exist in every claim right. This is why we all need to know our rights and must fight for our freedoms, but also recognize and fulfil our duties as active citizens. It is a constant fight for finding a balance, between the disproportionate forms of power, between the private and public spheres, the dual role of the state, and the inherent existence of duties within the rights of humans! However, we need to remember that every human being is also entitled to liberty rights which exist independently from any form of duty to any other party. States need to function by honoring those rights, since [a liberty right is a right](#) which does not entail obligations on other parties, but only freedom or permission for the right-holder.

2017 was not a good year for human rights, and all the human rights reports published globally, unfortunately support that statement. You can find some of the most reliable and well-researched human rights reports following these links: i) [Freedom House—](#)

[Freedom of the net 2017](#); ii) [European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights—Fundamental rights report 2017](#); iii) [Amnesty International—Annual report 2016/17](#); iv) [Human Rights Watch—World report 2017](#); v) [OHCHR's annual reports & plans](#); vi) [Front Line Defenders—Annual Report on Human Rights Defenders at risk 2017](#).

Some of the worst human rights violations found in the following countries:

- [Mexico](#), where security forces during the mandate of President Enrique Peña Nieto have been involved in gross violations of human rights, such as “extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, and torture”.
- [Ukraine](#), where citizens were subjected to serious abuses, like attacks on journalists by nationalist groups, while in

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Crimea, Crimean Tatars also face human rights abuses although they peacefully oppose the Russian occupation in Ukraine.

- [Nigeria](#) with Boko Haram's barbaric attacks on women.
- [Mali](#) with major human rights violations in central and northern part of the country.
- [Lebanon](#) where detainees suffered ill-treatment and torture in the hands of their government.
- In [Pakistan](#), around 85 people were sentenced to death in 2016, which were controlled by secret military groups. Women, religious minorities, and LGBTI were amongst the many people that faced violent attacks, while their government failed to provide protection and fulfil their rights.
- In [Myanmar](#), the open conflict between the armed forces and ethnic armed groups has only brought human misery to an unbearable level, and as a result there were many cases of abuse against citizens and massive displacement. The government troops have been responsible for "serious abuses, including extrajudicial killings, torture, sexual violence and destruction of property" ([HRW—World Report 2017](#)).
- Conflict in [Afghanistan](#) between Taliban and government forces left citizens and most vulnerable groups desperate.



While deadly attacks in Kabul by ISIS take place, thousands of Afghans are internally displaced. Women are on the top of the most vulnerable and abused groups of citizens.

- In [Democratic Republic of Congo](#), armed groups and government security forces attacked civilians, while government banned opposition demonstrations, fired teargas and live bullets at peaceful protesters. They also silenced the media, and opposition leaders have been arrested in undemocratic manner.
- [Burundi](#)'s conflict caused severe political and human rights crisis that started in 2016. Security forces and intelligence services were responsible for numerous



killings, disappearances, abductions, torture, rape, and arbitrary arrests.

- [China](#)'s human rights record is rather weak and problematic in many fronts. Freedom of expression, assembly, association, and religion are delicate subjects in this society. Over 16 [human rights lawyers and activists were the victims](#) of the government who held them in undisclosed locations while violating their basic human rights for fair trial, and access to justice since they were not allowed to communicate with their relatives or attorneys.
- The war in [Yemen](#) caused over 3 million displaced people, 17 million who are food insecure and more than 10,000 that were killed. Human Rights Watch

has documented 58 apparently unlawful coalition airstrikes which have killed "nearly 800 civilians and hit homes, markets, hospitals, schools, private businesses, and mosques." Additionally, some of the weapons used were internationally banned.

- [Libya's](#) civil war caused a humanitarian crisis with around a million internally displaced people. Citizens couldn't fulfil basic human needs for healthcare, fuel, and electricity. Militias and armed forces made tortures, unlawful killings, indiscriminate attacks, abductions, and enforced disappearances.
- [Central African Republic](#), where sectarian violence and attacks on citizens are mostly recorded in central and western regions. Also, armed groups raped and sexually assaulted women and girls. Around 384,300 are displaced.
- As a result of the long-running conflict, citizens in [Somalia](#) are enduring abuses and are in brutally bad humanitarian conditions. There were many targeted attacks on citizens, particularly by the Islamist armed group Al-Shabab. Over 1 million Somalis remain internally displaced.
- [South Sudan's](#) civil war that started in

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2013 and continued in 2016 brought many human rights abuses against civilians in the light. Moreover, according to Human Rights Watch Report government soldiers “killed, raped, and tortured civilians as well as destroying and pillaging private property during counterinsurgency operations in the southern and western parts of the country.” Around 2.4 million people are displaced.

- **North Korea** is considered to be one of the most cruelly oppressive authoritarian regimes. The government led by Kim Jong-Un restricts almost every human right including freedom of expression, assembly, and association, and freedom to practice religion. Moreover, it prohibits organization of political opposition, independent media, free trade unions, and independent civil society organizations.

According to all reports published so far for 2017, **worst or heinous human rights’ violations for 2017 are found in Syria**. The war has been a fountain of atrocities and human rights violations. According to the [Syrian Center for Policy Research](#), the death toll in 2016 was 470,000. This conflict led to a humanitarian crisis with 6.1 million internally displaced people and 4.8 million seeking refuge abroad.

It is not a secret anymore, that governments have tried to redefine human rights in their favor, but at the end of the day the essence of the **UDHR** is that “all human beings deserve dignity, justice and equality”, and

this simple statement carries an unbeatable force of fairness and as such overcomes the double standards of governmental power. On Human Rights Day 2017, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights *Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein* reminded everyone that the Universal Declaration was written for **all**. And it is up to each individual to protect and advance those rights, by standing up not just for oneself but also for others. He warned us all that:

“If we let our commitment to uphold human rights drift, if we turn aside when they are abused, they will slowly shrivel and die. If that happens, the cost in human life and misery will be immense, and the whole of humanity will pay a heavy price.”

CRW couldn’t agree more with this statement. This is why we underline these words, and we urge you to take action with us in which ever way fits your circumstances. Take the opportunity to become a human rights defender through online activism. Write an article on human rights, or start a campaign, a petition, you could write letters to your government, or ask questions by monitoring your representative’s promises and policies, and at the end of the day: “Think globally, act locally”. Change can come through small acts of fairness!

This is where this publication can also be utilized for contributing to the progressive

realization of human rights. This is because Citizens Voices No. 9 brings together human rights activists and includes articles on human rights issues from all around the world. Our volunteer authors are human rights advocates and concerned citizens that raise their voices with us in order to highlight human rights violations and push for the restoration of justice and the protection of the rights of citizens around the globe. This is why our motto is “*[Our Voices United Become Stronger](#)*”.

[Citizens Voices](#) is a human rights e-magazine. It serves as a tool for human rights advocacy, and its main purpose is to raise awareness about human rights issues that are neglected by the mainstream media. It offers a platform to human rights activists for highlighting rights violations, inform the public about urgent human rights issues, mobilize civil society, and push governments into keeping their promises for human rights protection, by monitoring their human rights policies. Join us in our work for human rights and become a human rights activist.

In solidarity,
Zoi



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



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CRW OVERVIEW (SEPT. - DEC. 2017)

Athanasia Zagorianou

CRW Researcher & Content Editor of "Citizens' Voices"

Myanmar: UN Special Rapporteur has been denied access to the country.

With the violence against Rohingya Muslims escalating and thousands of people fleeing their homes seeking for safety, the situation in Myanmar against the Rohingya people has raised serious concerns in the international community. In a statement in September, Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights raised his concerns over the situation warning it amounts to ethnic cleansing (OHCHR, 2017). Recently, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar Yanghee Lee has been denied access to visit the country by the government of Myanmar. However, the government did not only refuse her access to the country but also refused to cooperate with Ms. Lee in general. "Now I am being told that this decision to no longer cooperate with me is based on the statement I made after I visited the country in July," said Ms. Lee pointing out that the government's failure for cooperation implies "that there must be something terribly awful happening in Rakhine, as well as in the rest of the country" (UN News Centre, 2017).



USA: Trump threatens the UN.

The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) voted this December, rejecting Donald Trump's declaration to recognise Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. US ambassador Nikki Haley threatened the UN that they will refuse to give aid noting they will not forget the countries who did not

support this declaration. "The United States will remember this day in which it was singled out for attack in this assembly [...] We will remember it when we are called upon to once again make the world's largest contribution" (as cited in CNN, 2017). Likely and despite the threats, 128 countries voted against this extreme declaration. Out of 193 countries only nine supported the United States

including the USA, Israel, Togo, Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, Marshall Islands, Guatemala and the Honduras and 35 countries abstained (Gaouette, 2017). According to the UN "The 193-member Assembly expressed "deep regret" over recent decisions concerning the status of Jerusalem and stressed that the Holy City "is a final status issue to be resolved through negotiations in line with relevant UN resolutions" (As cited in the UN News Centre, 2017).

Yemen: The plights of civil war.

The ongoing civil war in Yemen has had irreversible consequences for the civilians, many of whom are suffering from acute malnutrition and have to deal with the recent terrifying outbreak of cholera. The plights of the civil war have left the country in great humanitarian need, lacking infrastructure, medical facilities, food, fuel and medical

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supplies. In December, the U.N. urged the Saudi-led coalition “to fully lift its blockage of Yemen’s Red Sea ports, warning that unless commercial imports are resumed, “the threat of widespread famine in a matter of months is very real” (As cited in the UN News Centre, 2017). Despite the partial lifting of the blockage, the country faces the risks of an enormous humanitarian crisis with the UN warning that “all [this partial lifting] does is slow the collapse towards a massive humanitarian tragedy costing millions of lives”. Recently, WHO reported almost 1 million cholera cases “urging greater efforts to tackle the outbreak and deal with the deteriorating health situation in the war-torn nation” (as cited in the UN News Centre, 2017).

Syria: Facing The Irreversible Consequences of War.

With the numbers of internally displaced people reaching more than 6 million and over 4.8 million refugees seeking safety out of the country, the civil war has been plaguing Syria since 2011. The ongoing conflict which has been described as the “worst man-made disaster the world has seen since World War II” by the United Nations human rights chief, had irreversible consequences for the country. “Violence has provoked a 67 per cent reduction in the country’s gross domestic product (GDP) and severely undermined food security. About 70 to 80 percent of Syrians now need humanitarian assistance, while 50 percent require food assistance” said the UN. Noting the difficulties in reaching besieged areas and delivering humanitarian aid, Jan Egeland, Special Advisor to the UN Special

Envoy warned that “in many months [they] reached only 10 or maximum 20 percent of people in besieged areas. In December, [they] haven’t reached a single soul,” pointing out that this is not happening because people were evacuated but “because they [have] died” (as cited in UN News Centre, 2017)

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HRD [Atena Daemi](#) is facing new charges after submitting mistreatment complaint against agents of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards.
#FreeAtena

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FREE AHED TAMIMI

Ahed Tamimi was dragged out of her bed in the night and arrested.

Ahed is a child, and like thousands of Palestinian children she could be humiliated and abused if we don't get her out fast.

Ahed's been on the frontline defending Palestine since she was 7 years old. Now Ahed needs us to stand up for her.

[Add your name](#) to free Ahed and all child prisoners, it will be delivered to leaders worldwide and to Ahed's lawyer, to give to Ahed in prison to give her strength as she faces the Israeli military's terrifying interrogation tactics.

#FreeAhedTamimi

#FreeAhed

#HumanRights



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WOMEN HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

Dervla Potter

CRW intern & Activist

2018 marks the 20th anniversary of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders. In its official title, the *Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms* aims to promote the values of the UDHR as well as consciously marking the importance of protecting the rights of activists and defenders of human rights in their crucial work to develop and maintain social and political justice to create a fair and equal society where human rights are protected by both citizens and governments alike. However, in the two decades since the Declaration the significant growth of the global human rights movement has not been matched by the commitment and resolve of governments to protect human rights. Across the globe, governments continue to pledge support for human rights and human rights defenders (HRD's) at international level while undermining them at every opportunity at home.

In a report by *Front Line Defenders* released on January 4, 2018, 312 known HRD's were killed in 2017, while the actual figures

could surmount this due to limited official information during the research for the report.¹ The report finds that 80% of the killings were situated in 4 countries – Brazil, Colombia, Mexico and the Philippines and that two thirds of those activists were working on issues such as land, environmental and indigenous people's rights. The report also outlines that in 84% of the killings the defender had previously received a threat made against their safety, their family or their own life. An increase in gender specific threats was also noted in the report, with Front Line Defenders stating that female human rights defenders in particular are increasingly reporting "hyper-sexualised smear campaigns and defamation" which aim to limit their activism by eroding local support networks. There is a lack of drive on governments behalf to investigate threats issued to HRD's and this has led to a number of killings that may have potentially been avoidable had the accusations been taken seriously by authorities.

¹ <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/resource-publication/annual-report-human-rights-defenders-risk-2017>

Human Rights Defenders around the world put their lives on the line to challenge dictators, destructive multi-national corporations, religious conservatives and oppressive regimes however they are met by a well-resourced and coordinated strategy of defamation, criminalisation and violence deployed to intimidate, marginalise and silence, peaceful and powerful activists. The human cost of silencing HRD's has been high, and the additional and gendered dynamic to the targeting of Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRDs) has become more prevalent in regions across the world in 2017. Furthermore, WHRDs met discrimination within the human rights movement itself as they challenged cultural and social norms in the course of their public engagement with human rights work. We here at Citizens Rights Watch (alongside many other advocacy groups) would like to commemorate all Human Rights Defenders that have lost their lives through their dedicated and tireless work for the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms.



Berta Cáceres Flores :

Berta Cáceres Flores was a Honduran environmental activist, indigenous leader of her people and co-founder and coordinator of the Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations of Honduras (COPINH). She won the Goldman Environmental Prize in 2015 for a "grassroots campaign that successfully pressured the world's largest dam

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builder to pull out of the Agua Zarca Dam and the Río Gualcarque.

Cáceres was born into the Lenca People in La Esperanza, Honduras, and grew up in the 1970's during a time of civil unrest and violence in Central America. She was inspired by her mother Austra Bertha Flores Lopez who was a midwife and social activist who took in and cared for refugees from El Salvador, who served two terms as Mayor of their hometown La Esperanza and who acted as a congresswoman and governor of the Department of Intibucá.

In 1993 as a student activist, Berta founded the COPINH, supporting indigenous rights in her country. She led campaigns on a wide variety of issues including protesting illegal logging, plantation owners, and the presence of US Military bases on Lenca land. She supported feminism, LGBT rights, as well as broader social and indigenous issues.

In 2006, Cáceres was asked by a group of indigenous Lenca People to investigate the arrival of construction equipment to their area. The investigation found that the equipment belonged to a joint project venture between the Chinese company *Sinohydro*, the World Bank's International Finance Cooperation and Honduran company *Desarrollos Energéticos S.A* (also known as DESA), who planned to construct a series of four hydroelectric dams on the Gualcarque River.

The developers of the project had breached international law by failing to consult with the local Lenca people on their proposed

project and the Lenca were concerned that the dams would compromise their access to water, food and materials for medicine, therefore threatening their traditional way of life. Berta and the community worked together to organise a protest campaign, community meetings and legal action against the project, and took the case to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights which resulted in them including her on its list of "people under threat during the 2009 Coup d'état in Honduras to protect her after acknowledging reports of military forces surrounding her home.

In 2013, she told Al Jazeera:

"The army has an assassination list of 18 wanted human rights fighters with my name at the top. I want to live, there are many things I still want to do in this world, but I have never once considered giving up fighting for our territory, for a life with dignity, because our fight is legitimate. I take lots of care but in the end, in this country where there is total impunity I am vulnerable... When they want to kill me, they will do it."

From 2013 Cáceres led COPINH and the local community in a year long protest at the construction site to prevent the companies from accessing the blockade. Protestors were regularly removed by security personnel. On 15 July 2013, the Honduran military opened



fire on protestors, killing one member of COPINH and injuring three others. Despite the regular complaints of threats and attacks by the company employees, security guards and the military on the Lenca and COPINH, further attacks took place in May 2014 killing two and injuring others.

The perseverance and strong will of Berta, the Lenca and COPINH led to Sinohydro and the International Finance Corporation withdrawing from the project in late 2013, however DESA continued, moving the project to another location to avoid the blockade. Criminal charges were filed against Cáceres and two other indigenous leaders for "usurpation, coercion and continued damages" against DESA for their roles in the protest. In response to these charges, Amnesty International stated that if the Cáceres was

imprisoned along with the other activists, Amnesty International would consider them as prisoners of conscience. Other regional and international organisations backed this opinion and called upon the Honduran government to stop criminalising the defence of human rights and to investigate the threats made against the HRD's. Further arrests of Berta and her colleagues sought to tar her reputation and intimidate them into stopping their work.

Cáceres was shot dead in her home by armed intruders on the morning of the 3rd

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of March. Mexican environmental activist Gustavo Castro Soto was also injured in the attack, visiting La Esperanza to help out in finding alternatives to the hydroelectric project. Despite the precautionary measures recommended by the Inter-American Commission to the Honduran government, there was no forces of protection near her on the day of her death.

The immediate family of Berta and her surrounding community hold the companies who wanted to build the dam responsible for her death, and her death was widely condemned with incessant calls for its investigation. In November an International Advisory Group of Experts (GAIPE) convened to investigate the circumstances of Cáceres' murder. Their published report found that there was a link between high level state and non-state actors in her murder. Entitled *Dam of Violence: the plan that murdered Berta Cáceres* constitutes an analysis of more than 40,000 pages of telephone records as well as chats, text messages, GPS coordinates and emails extracted from mobile phones seized during the investigation. A plan to assassinate Berta was hatched in November 2015, and there was attempts made on her life on the 5th and 6th of February 2016. A former soldier with the US trained special forces units of the Honduran military asserted that her name was on a hitlist months before her assassination to "control, neutralize and eliminate any opposition".

Although eight people are facing trial for the murder, the Public Prosecutor's Office has not shown any progress in relation to intellectual authorship, despite the fact that it has

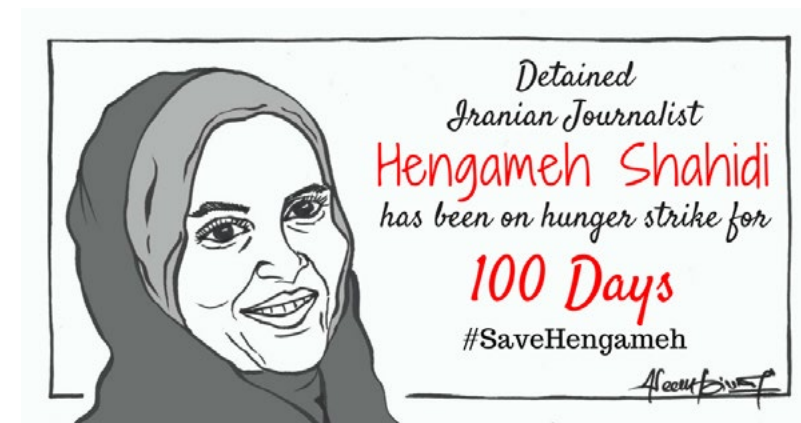
sufficient evidence to promote new lines of investigation. GAIPE also points to the role of international financial institutions, which, despite having prior information about the actions of DESA and its repressive behaviour towards communities in opposition to the dam, failed to ensure that the rights of the affected communities were respected.

Berta Cáceres once said "they are afraid of us because we are not afraid of them" and this is crystal clear in her work with the Lenca people and her determination to uphold the rights and dignity of her people over the oppressive fists of multinational companies looking to extort resources with no consideration over the environmental cost or the cost of human suffering it would entail. Honduras is one of the worlds most violent countries for environmental activists, with at least 109 HRD's murdered between 2010 and 2015, however it is not the only country ignoring its responsibility to protect human rights activists.

Governments and States must take responsibility of the protection of its people as per their international and regional agreements, and to stop picking economy, power and control over ethics. Berta Cáceres contribution to the human rights world is too large to be covered within the wordcount of this article and also too substantial to be even described with words at all. Her humanity is an inspiration to us all and her story has encouraged HRD's around the world to promote State accountability and respect for international human rights standards.



Even a year after having served his baseless 5-years prison sentence, [Mohammad Ali Taheri](#) is still in jail without new hearing. **#FreeTaheri**
#Iran



[#HengamehShahidi](#) has been on hunger strike for 100 days. She is in critical condition. Please urge **#Iran** to **#SaveHengameh**
#FreeHengamehShahidi

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ASHISH SHARMA'S STORY

Dev Tyagi

Content writer and Contributor to What's Up Life, Sportskeeda & Trendmantra, India.



His beard has grown thick; a bit too thick perhaps even for his closest family members to recognise him from a distance. His eyes look slightly swollen albeit never tired of seeing the vision in sight; the goal he has set out to achieve. His feet, during the course of the last two months have made more space for blisters than they have made for any sizeable rest.

Still, the bloke seems incredibly tireless.

He marches on, preferring to let go of the severities that lie in his path. There's not plenty of choice when you switch from the limited stack of cotton T-shirts and shorts you have once you set afoot on an incredibly life-changing sojourn.

Armed with nothing more than a backpack of mere basic utilities, holding the Indian tri-colour in one hand and a broad smile at all times- Ashish Sharma is a man on a mission.

But one that is utterly selfless and pure in its endeavor to eradicate evil that has fractured hundreds and thousands of underprivileged children in India: child-begging.

Having tasked himself to walk a gargantuan distance of 17000 km across the country- with one goal in mind and one alone- that of raising awareness about the menace of child-begging so that it can be uprooted completely- Ashish Sharma has been on foot for nearly the last quarter of this year.

For those who come to seek in India a spiritual experience- the country is the enchanting home of priests, hermits, sages, gods and goddesses. You can bathe in the holy waters of a Haridwar and immerse in the purity of the Ganges at Benares. Those who are captivated by India's cultural exuberance- set out to discover the boundless joys at the Taj Mahal in Agra and the many hordes of palaces and fortresses in Rajasthan and Gujarat.

But to those who are shaken by an India that presents itself in a hapless form every single day during mornings at busy traffic signals and one that lurks around aimlessly at nights as one descends from work to home- child-begging- is a curse like no other. It is a sight of dismay and a poison that is gradually consuming so many of our children who deserve to lead better lives.

But at a time where much of India and its successes are measured through sales of high-end luxury cars, owning of sky-reaching duplex apartments and the rich and famous who travel to St. Moritz and the Bahamas and send their kids to pursue the finest education in the developed west, **the heart gushes with pride in knowing there are youth like Ashish Sharma.**

He's not a rich guy. He doesn't drive a Mercedes. He clearly doesn't own the latest

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smartphone circulating the nearby market and his dad didn't send him to a college whose fee was several times more than the cost of your alluring solitaire.

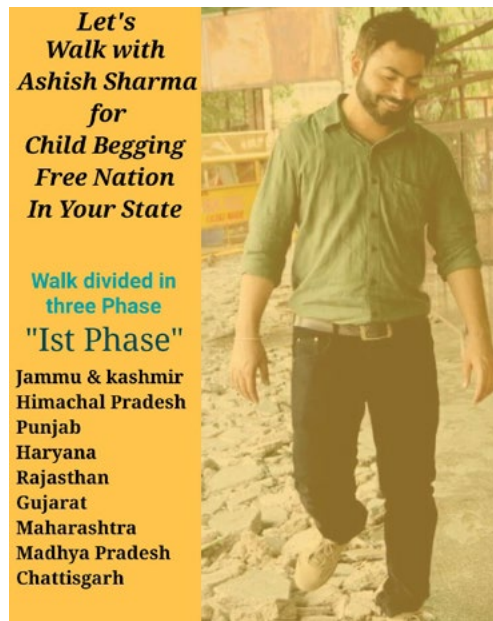
Yet, despite having a respectable engineering degree and a stable job in a multi-national, Ashish Sharma surrendered it all in a drive for something quite unusual.

He insists that, "there will be a day when India will be absolutely child-begging free". "This problem is not indicative of the urban decay in Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata or Bangalore alone. This is a pan-India epidemic where many young lives are forced to beg on streets, depending on people's pity and forced to lead a sad, marginal existence; we cannot afford to see the trend rise. Not one bit".

You cannot tear his enthusiasm down in tiny smithereens as he confesses, "the real problem with those who claim to clamp down on child-begging is that they are focusing on the wrong area". When asked to elaborate, Ashish shared with his customary zest for communication, "the solution about child-begging doesn't lie in alleviating the problem. Governments need to stand up, politicians, state actors need to come together to completely eradicate it. We are poisoning the lives of our children."

"Is this the India we had dreamed of?"

In an era where being a human rights activist is often equated to being a pseudo-intellectual, Ashish insists, "I am only doing a duty to the society. We need to change the



psychology of the people. They need to be discouraged to offer alms or financial help to roadside beggars. This is an organized industry and its tentacles reach every nook and corner of the country".

You cannot help but think of the kind of vanity that often highlights our everyday

lives where on one hand, we often go to posh movie theaters, driving big cars, clubbing in expensive lounges while on the other hand, there are driven youth like Ashish Sharma- so giving, so utterly dedicated- who are spending precious years of their life to combat a dreaded evil; almost single-handedly".

Even as Ashish, who hails from a middle-class Delhi-based family has found support in the form of tons of journalists and radio jockeys who are admirably speaking and writing about him with zest- the real help, one is compelled to think- needs to come from the government.

Sometimes, it seems, there's a lack of drive on the governments' part to help reignite India's youth that is now found begging for mercy on traffic signals. For Ashish, the moment of change happened when he encountered a nine-year-old beggar walking around helplessly on a busy New Delhi signal.

Later, he would discover upon some research that 97% of beggary in India is owing to an operational nexus that preys on innocent young lives with somewhere close to 45 million children exploited annually, compelled to beg and enter the sex trade. "Begging is only the front of the problem; there is a rancid nightmare that hides underneath".

So far, Ashish's solo-heroics have seen him cover diverse geographies, beginning his march from Delhi, going to horticulture based, agrarian state of Punjab, moving to Rajasthan, leading up to the heart of Central India- Madhya Pradesh.

There's a growing feeling that the schools and colleges, district bodies and associations with whom Ashish spends quality time lecturing on the menace of child begging are rising to introspect about a problem against which the entire nation has to fight collectively.

Meanwhile, it must be said, all funds and resources that Ashish has been able to acquire – with pure sweat and elaborate effort are dedicated to raise awareness through a not-for-profit: Duayen Foundation whose motto is : One Go One Impact.

One only hopes that more of India's youth can join Ashish to wage a successful battle toward making India child-begging free.

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CLIMATE CHANGE AND CLIMATE MIGRATION: ARE HUMAN RIGHTS BEING VIOLATED?

Fabián Villeda Corona

Lawyer

Is it possible for people to develop fully in their status as human beings living in a polluted and damaged environment that threatens all aspects of their life?

Human rights are classified into first, second and third generation. It is in the third generation of human rights that we find that a healthy environment is a human right and must be protected and guaranteed for the full development of a person's life.

Human rights do not depend on the recognition of any State. Although some constitutions do not contemplate in their guarantees the right to a healthy environment, it is inherent to any human being, even if it's not stated in the constitution. And according to the theory of human rights, strictly speaking, any violation of these rights gives solely responsibility to the State.

That is why the State must take measures to protect and fulfill those rights for its citizens. In many specific areas of human rights, one can see efforts of the international community to try to solve the problems that arise in the systematic violations of these rights.



However, when it comes to climate change, it is observed that it has been difficult for countries to commit themselves in a binding way to take measures to counteract its effects. That was exactly what happened in Paris during the COP21 back in 2015, where the

hard work of diplomacy was necessary in order to come to an agreement.

Climate change and its effects

According to experts in the matter, climate change is here to stay. However, it is not clear what the effects that it may have over the population could be because the information available is based on estimations without a solid basis (it is almost impossible to be precise when it comes to climate due to a myriad of factors that may vary its effects favorably or negatively) yet it helps us to get an idea on what we can expect in the years to come.

When it comes to climate change we must know that its meteorological effects are divided into *climate processes*, such as sea-level rise, desertification, salinization of agricultural land and growing water scarcity; and in *climate events* such as flooding, glacial lake outburst floods and storms.

These effects represent a serious situation for human beings who are completely dependent on a stable climate situation that

does not damage their quality of life with dire consequences such as the loss of their homes due of flooding, crop loss especially when it represents a source of income for their families, water shortages, etc.

Among some estimations that have been made, it is highlighted that by 2050 large areas are expected to become drier and the proportion of land in constant drought is expected to increase from 2% to 10%. By the end of the 21st century the proportion of land suffering extreme drought is predicted to increase from 1% to 30%. Besides by 2099 temperature is expected to have an increase between 1,8°C and 4°C.

With these forecasts, which as we said, are nothing more than estimates- it is inexplicable the lack of commitment of some States to improve conditions expected in the future and try to backpedal and minimize the

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effects that harm the quality of life of people and therefore violate among others, their right to live in a healthy environment.

Migration due to climate change: consequences in Central America

This is quite a controversial topic. It has not been recognized by any international treaty or convention, nor is there a single state which has set a specific precedent in relation to climate migration. Similarly, there is no international body to be responsible for them or carry statistics of this problem. There is even an intense debate over whether the term refugee should be extended and applied to people who migrate for climate issues which would originate a new category of environmental refugee.

According to reports, Central America is one of the most exposed regions to the consequences of climate change and paradoxically is one of the smallest contributors to the production of greenhouse gases that cause climate change. This region is affected by recurrent droughts, cyclones and El Niño. The indicators show that climate change will adversely affect its weak economy and strengthen its socio-economic vulnerabilities given that activities such as agriculture and hydropower generation, depend largely on the stability of the climate.

It is estimated that the average temperature in Central America has experienced an increase of approximately 0.54 ° C over the last fifty years. Overall it is estimated that the effects of climate change will adversely affect the economic and social aspects of the region.

According to studies carried out, it is expected that by 2050, more than 200 million people will have migrated for climatic reasons. Given the predictions, which may vary to a greater or lesser extent, it is quite incomprehensible the lack of public policies that countries should manage in order to plan migration either in the same territory or another for those in a vulnerable situation.

While other regions such as South Asia and East Asia, are more vulnerable to large-scale migration due to climate change, Central America could have a significant share of these migrants.

States, and in this particular case, Central American countries, are breaching and systematically violating the human rights of its people by ignoring the problem and not setting a clear route to follow to mitigate the problems that have arisen and that will arise due to climate change. Its already weak economy per se does not help establish standards of quality of life to its citizens – again a human rights violation– their lack of policies regarding the effects of climate change will ultimately be a disastrous consequence for the future of its population.

Conclusion

The United States granted eighty thousand Hondurans who came to this country an immigration status after Hurricane Mitch greatly affecting several areas of Central America. It is a precedent that is about-but it is not definitive or conclusively to protect people migrating for environmental causes.

Climate change exacerbates the current damaged economic, social and environmental situation in the region. The international community must explicitly recognize the problem and must start taking action. Developed countries should fully support developing countries –the most affected– to establish policies to prevent, mitigate and anticipate the consequences of climate change.

States should develop such policies. Otherwise, it will be difficult to advance and the living conditions of its inhabitants can worsen significantly. Human rights of its citizens would be abused significantly.

Once the international community recognizes the problem and is present on the international agenda, it should propel the investigation of the phenomenon of climate migration and obtain statistics for the sake of attempting to control the situation and make the best and timely decisions to solve the problem.



United Nations
Framework Convention on
Climate Change



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THE CULTURE OF A NEW “BATTLE FIELD” IN THE NIGERIAN CRISES

Temitope Akinleye

Writer, Obafemi Awolowo University, Nigeria

Human Rights issues have been a common trend in Nigeria, with the country having experienced several conflicts and crises; ranging from ethno-religious, insurgency campaigns orchestrated by Boko Haram, clashes between local farmers and herdsmen, political violence to the IPOB crisis. However, the feature shared by each of these conflicts is that they are mostly fought on a new “battle field” – women’s bodies.

It is widely recognized that sexual violence in conflict is used as a weapon/tactic of war, a deliberate military strategy to demoralize an enemy. It is important to make a clarification that, sexual violence as a war crime is different from sexual violence as a criminal act, even though this heinous crime attacks victims’ individual identities, social relationships, status and culture. Sexual violence against women is a grave human rights issue, yet it remains pervasive in the 21st century, both in conflict and outside conflict.

Sexual violence in conflict is not a new trend. When we talk of sexual violence, we talk of highest form of dominance on women, girls and community. Sexual violence in conflict

is not limited to mutilation, sexual slavery, sexual abuse, torture and rape. According to Amnesty International, sexual violence is “systematically employed for a variety of purposes, including intimidation, humiliation, political terror, extracting information, rewarding soldiers and ‘ethnic cleansing.’”

Despite the fact that sexual violence is a general practice during armed conflict, it is no longer treated as spoils of war, rather as a war crime. On 19 June 2008, the UN Security Council unanimously passed Resolution 1820 on the issue of sexual violence in war, stating that “rape and other sexual violence can constitute a war crime, a crime against humanity, or a constitutive act with respect to genocide.”

Amnesty International reported that “sexual violence is often used in ethnic conflicts as a way for attackers to perpetuate their social control and redraw ethnic boundaries”. A look at the culture of this new “battle field” in and Nigerian crisis clearly indicates that what motivates armed militias/ terrorists/Fulani herdsmen as the case may be, to attack and sexually abuse women goes beyond remapping

ethnic boundaries but is deeply rooted in patriarchal social norms.

In the case of the Mambilla massacre in Plateau state, it was reported that over 250 women and children were killed by armed militias and 120 houses razed in simultaneous attacks carried out on Fulani herdsmen. The statement made by the Acting General Officer Commanding (GOC) 3 Division of the Nigerian Army, Jos, after visiting the scene of the killings, clearly indicates the level of brutality in the attack. He said “Even Boko Haram did not slaughter women and children but here I saw young children and pregnant women killed.” Among the women and children killed in the Mambilla massacre, two were reported to be pregnant. This inhumane act reflects the height of human rights issues in Nigeria and calls for gender justice. Although there was no documented report that the women and children were molested before being slaughtered, the inevitable fact that the armed militias couldn’t restrain from stepping on the new “battle field” reflects the idea that in a patriarchal system, a war is never fought until it is fought on the new “battle field”. Thus, conforming with Aris et.

al (2011) that sexual violence in conflict is legitimized by belief systems.

The hapless rural women in eastern Nigeria have occupied streets, roads and state houses to express their grievances mostly revolving around issues such as the incessant attacks by Fulani herdsmen and the perpetual danger over their lives as they were being molested daily, maimed and raped. Here, sexual violence in conflict is occasionally viewed as a way to humiliate men who cannot protect their women, but attacking and molesting rural women on their farms is far from a conflict being fought on conventional battle field, rather on women’s bodies.

It is a known fact that during armed conflict, women and girls suffer different degrees of sexual violence. In a report on the violent conflict in Benue state, the data gathered shows that several women and girls were

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sexually abused. For instance; 2 women were abused on their farms; a widow was gang raped when the herdsmen stopped her fetching water in the evening; 3 women were forcefully taken and abused after an attack; a widow was abused after inflicting her with injuries and cuts; 7 Girls (age bracket 11-14) were kidnapped during an attack and outside the attack, they were gang raped, tortured, abandoned in the bush after sustaining severe injuries; and a married woman was also abused by herdsmen who lay in ambush on a market road.

These situations depict the growth in the culture of this new 'battle field' in conflict and outside conflict, even when sexual violence outside conflict is committed under the almighty umbrella of 'in conflict zones'. Conversely, the patriarchal social norms in Nigeria have contributed to the inevitable growth of using women's bodies as a battle field in conflict and in 'supposed conflict' situations. This stern human rights issue is also a key problem in refugee and displacement camps (another conflict zone) in Nigeria as security forces and officials deliberately keep waging an 'unknown' war on women and girl's bodies.

As a result of weak justice systems; there is lack of official data on sexual violence in the Nigerian crisis and due to social stigma, many cases of sexual violence in the Nigerian crisis have gone unreported. It is however, imperative to point here that mere statements condemning sexual violence in conflict without action is more or less like condoning the act. The inaction of the Nigerian government to halt this severe human rights

issue and prosecute all perpetrators has allowed the culture of the new "battle field" in the Nigerian crisis to flourish. Aside from United Nations Security Council resolutions and all other anti-sexual violence declarations as well as treaties; more needs to be done to effectively address this hazard as "women's bodies have been the unacknowledged casualties of war for too long" Irene Khan (Secretary General of Amnesty International).

Like Maj. Gen. Patrick Cammaert, 2008, (former UN Peacekeeping Operation commander in DR Congo) concluded, "It has probably become more dangerous to be a woman than a soldier in an armed conflict", especially during conflict and 'supposed conflict' in a patriarchal system like Nigeria.



["Journalism is not a crime"](#) **#FreeDenizYücel**

#FreeRaif



5 years of the arrest of [@raif badawi](#), who was detained on 17 June 2012 and was eventually sentenced to 10 years in prison and 1000 lashes.

#FreeRaif

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FREE & OPEN INTERNET

THE NEVER-ENDING BATTLE FOR NET NEUTRALITY

Miguel Rodriguez Glaudemans

Lawyer, CRW Trustees member

* What is Net Neutrality?

The basic concept of Net Neutrality is that "All and every piece of data and information which travels through the internet is equal and travels fairly, without any kind of impact or interference of any kind of group, public or private institution, company, network, trademark, website, application, program, and other related parties, towards themselves or other of the aforementioned third parties."

A non-technical explanation of what Net Neutrality means is that the internet should not be manipulated in favor of either private or government instances to weigh in for their own or third party's interests.

* How is the internet manipulated?

The internet of the average consumer may be manipulated by both governmental or private institutions. Even although it is definitely scarier that government meddles with the internet to control what people read, do, use or exploit, this falls a bit more in the MASS SURVEILLANCE category. Currently we are facing risk due to new regulation which will impact in favor of Internet Service Providers ("ISPs"). These are the company we pay that provide internet connections. Nowadays they are still controlled by regulations, particularly those of the FCC, which interprets the internet to be a utility. Therefore, the services speeds, costs, and the overall quality of the internet was not easy to manipulate for the ISPs, but now there is a new proposed rules which will enable ISPs to prioritize and manipulate the speed and accessibility to parts of the internet.

* Care to give an example?

For example, if a particular set of ISP users in a particular geographic location use a lot of YouTube™ and the ISP partly owns a company which directly competes with YouTube™, such ISP may cause the website and connection to YouTube™ to lag, to be slow, or to lower its quality. The unhappy users would then seek alternatives, benefiting the ISP's interests. Also, the same ISP may require from YouTube™ a special "access" fee for YouTube™ to keep being as accessible or to keep its speed. As the ISP is the intermediary between the websites and companies on the internet and its consumers and users, they will have control over what data is privileged. So this is negative in much ways, because users will just follow on to places which are more accessible and hold high speeds. Additionally, and this is already been set out in the market and named as "perks" they may try to convince their users not to use YouTube™ because when the users enter their website they do not use up their mobile data, or they are granted privileged speed for using a particular website or app.

* Does it only affect online streaming or are there other examples?

The above mentioned was just a made-up example of what may happen, but perhaps if one sets one's mind where this happens not only with the streaming of online videos, but extends to searches, email services, and online news, one can perhaps foresee the danger of letting the ISPs meddle with our access privileges.

For example, VERIZON™ a known ISP in the United States, has bought Yahoo!™ which is among other things, an online news service, email server, and search engine. If VERIZON™ decided that users of Google™ would have limited bandwidth speed when they accessed the site, or if their email service were inaccessible most of the time, they may consider changing to a different provider of those services. If Yahoo!™ happened to offer a great "perk" offer their website access for VERIZON™ users at 3 times the normal speed, including email services and all other of their features, most users would very probably move to Yahoo!

* Does the abolition of NET NEUTRALITY principles only affect ISP users?

Not at all. The scenario is even more dire for Startup Companies, which are trying to make their way into the market. Without deep pockets to pay for privileges, their websites, web or mobile applications or cloud services, might not make it if they are not usable by the users. Even more, if they offer an alternative or an improvement over current services ran directly or indirectly by ISPs.

Also, some services such as NETFLIX™ and SPOTIFY™ may endure having to pay important sums of money to ISPs to keep the speed of their users' access to their Apps and Websites. So they would either have to increase the prices of their services or, more probably, be unable to keep offering their services.



* How does this affect Human Rights?

In the last decade, the Internet has played an important role in the reporting of Human Rights transgression, and for vulnerable groups to organize, such as LGTB activists and minorities. If the access to the INTERNET is limited to certain websites, Human Rights activists and victims may have a harder time to draw attention to certain issues, in particular if the reporting affects the best interest of companies or governments. Last year a non-binding resolution of the United Nations Human Rights Council construed that the access to Internet was key for the protection of human rights and freedom of expression, and that Governments should make their citizens able to access the INTERNET for all of their needs.

Thus, it is our duty here in CRW to fight and advocate for NET NEUTRALITY and all the related principles and concepts that keep the INTERNET open and free, since we base our human rights advocacy on digital tools.

For more information and action on this topic you may visit:

1. www.eff.org/es/issues/net-neutrality
2. www.savetheinternet.com/net-neutrality-what-you-need-know-now
3. www.battleforthenet.com/

LET'S ALL MAKE AN EFFORT TO PRESERVE AN OPEN AND FREE INTERNET FOR ALL!

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SIERRA LEONE'S FORTHCOMING ELECTION: SHOULD VIOLENCE BE A STRATEGY?

Amidu Kalokoh

Coordinator, Franziska Agricultural Farmers' Association, Sierra Leone

Elections have become a norm to national leadership ascendancy and democratic good governance practices across West Africa. There is no country in the region that has not had electoral experiences, either good or bad. While elections are meant to be a peaceful and democratic path to power, some elections have been marred by violence such as the 2003 federal and state elections in Nigeria¹ and the 2010 elections in Ivory Coast between President Gbagbo (Ivorian Popular Front) and opposition, Alassane Ouattara (Rally of the Republicans).² Electoral violence can occur at any stage of the electoral cycle – pre, during and post and in varying forms, from expressing invectives, assault, riots, kidnapping to killing, destruction of presidential posters and electoral materials like ballot boxes, and ballot papers. Electoral violence is physical violence and coercive intimidation directly tied to a pending electoral contest or to an announced electoral result.³ This could be structural in nature whereby activities are machinated by engaging and motivating supporters to achieve set objectives. Electoral violence threatens human rights diversely such as the right to assembly, movement, rights to life, speech and

disenfranchises electorates which can lead to discredited elections and overt political instability. This has plummeting effects on developmental strides, plunging countries into crises.

Electoral violence in its different forms is possible in Sierra Leone's forthcoming elections judging from electoral experiences and present political gimmicks going forward, but whether it should be a strategy to electoral success or not remains a question to be answered. It is another multi-tier election with presidential, parliamentary, mayoral/ chairpersons and councillors positions up for race by old and new political parties. The two main political parties, Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) and the All People's Congress (APC) have dominated the country's political landscape for most of the period since independence in 1961. Both parties have ruled two terms of ten years apiece since the 1996 multi-party elections which restored the country to democratic rule and all general elections since then onwards have manifested some forms of violence such as assault and disruption of political party programmes. With new political parties joining the quest

for the top seats, impending general elections which have been organised for for 7 March, 2018 is predicted to be closely contested. New political parties which are splinters of old political parties have gained popularity across the country, though without strong political strongholds based on regions and tribes as already the case, compared to the two existing traditional political parties (SLPP and APC). This has developed new hope for a new direction among the electorate and heightened tension among political parties and some of their supporters.

There is a high stake in Sierra Leone's politics as the society is widely politicised including the civil society landscape, with youth groups, musicians, communities and unions all expressing their political support for political parties and candidates. These groups have significant influence on elections outcome in the country. Music for instance, played a vital role in educating the masses on development issues, playing a key role in the campaign against the SLPP in the 2007 general elections which contributed to the success of the opposition APC. Other informal sets of social networks such as ethnicity, tribalism

and regionalism have direct impacts on the country's political scene, with certain tribes and regions clearly identified with the SLPP and APC parties. Hiring of gangs, ex-combatants and discharged inmates by politicians to persecute oppositions during elections, and weak control of media stands as a serious human right and security matter that has manifested requires serious attention.⁴

The APC has completed two successive constitutional terms of ten years, but there is still popular call for political change and new direction amidst rising economic difficulties with the hike in staple food prices – 60% increase on 50kg bag of rice between 2015 and 2017. In a bid to combat the rising economic difficulties, government placed austerity measures in 2016; but this effort is being professed by members of the electorate as unsuccessful to some extent as evidenced by high inflation and government's continued

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struggle to decisively control the economy to this moment, raising many questions. Consequently, Sierra Leone ranks as the third hungriest country out of 119 countries in 2017 in the Global Hunger Index.[5] As in past elections, some of these issues have been supporting factors to growing political restlessness among the electorate.

Evidently, electoral violence in Sierra Leone is not new especially between the two main political parties. There have been evidences of disruption of political meetings, attacks on candidates and threat on close followers of politicians, destruction of posters of aspirants and personal attacks on supporters for which some people have been imprisoned,[6] which tells that violence and mistrust has already begun ahead of the forthcoming election between supporters of the two main political parties. Some people have already suffered abuses like assault and insult for putting on party colors. In addition to that, there is pressure on the National Electoral Commission from both the ruling party and the opposition over accusations of inefficiency and ineffectiveness of electoral management due to many reasons including missing voter registration data which the Commission has recovered and political allegiance of the Commissioner. It is a view among the electorate that the pressure on the Commissioner is a gambit by political parties to either influence electoral decisions or disregard the election outcome if results do not go in their favour. In recent case between the SLPP Publicity Secretary and the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation for alleged assault, misbehavior and threatening language among others for which the former was

initially denied bail and incarcerated for a week and later released on self-bail,[7] there is public uproar by the opposition supporters of political witch-hunting, police biasness and injustices. These are clear indicators of electoral violence heading to the March 7, 2018 multi-tier elections.

There are many lessons to why Sierra Leone's forthcoming election should be peaceful. In recent elections, clashes between political parties especially SLPP and APC have only helped in nurturing grievances and further expanded tribal and regional divide in the country, which further undermine strides to addressing national pressing issues.

Electoral violence undermines realization of democratic dispensation and impedes human rights. There is usually loss of lives and property, limited freedom of movement and speech, right to public assembly and people's right to vote and be voted for are threatened. This can undermine the conduct of free, fair and peaceful elections and questioned the credibility of elections outcome, hence plunging the country into widespread unrest.

With these indicators it is important that appropriate measures be taken to ensure peaceful, free and fair elections like continued stakeholders' and community engagements to deepening peace and electoral education among the electorate especially young people. This also requires total commitment of party leadership to educate their supporters so that elections are not moments of exhibiting violent behaviour but a civilized contest for life decisions that will promote democratic good governance in the country.

Conclusively, violence could only be a strategy in Sierra Leone's forthcoming elections if political leaders and their constituents fail to strictly adhere to electoral rules and regulations and determine to inflict misery in the lives of the citizens. It is appropriate to state that there is no win-lose in elections but a win-win if only citizens could put country above self, party lineage, ethnicity and regional divide.



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INTERVIEW WITH 4EVER FILMS PRODUCTIONS & ISSUES WITHOUT BORDERS

Athanasia Zagorianou

CRW Researcher & Content Editor of 'Citizens Voices'

On November 10th, FITT Timisoara, 4Ever Films productions and our partners Issues Without Borders (IWB) held and organised the first International Human Rights Conference (IHRC) in Timisoara, Romania.

The Timis County Youth Foundation (Fundatia Judeteana pentru Tineret Timis – FITT), an umbrella organization for youth NGOs and student unions, 4Ever Films productions who created the inspiring and touching short film – **Refugee D Amour** – and Issues Without Borders (IWB), a youth human rights organisation, came together to raise refugee awareness and discuss refugee rights in Europe.

We are very excited to discuss with the conference's organisers and participants and learn more about their experience, goals and challenges from the preparation to the delivery of this great initiative.

1. This year's IHRC's theme was refugee rights and was explored through dynamic presentations, workshops and aspiring discussions on the topic by human rights experts, scholars, activists and agencies.



Why did you choose to focus on refugee rights in particular? How was the idea conceived?

IWB: Adina (vice-president of Issues Without Borders) and I (Patricia Papuc president of Issues Without Borders) were talking on Skype. Adina lives in Holland and was taking Dutch lessons at the time. She told me that

she met many refugees during her classes and that something needed to be done about their situation, they were facing so many difficulties. This is how, our project, IWB for Refugees was born!

4 Ever filmsproductions: Living in a metropolis somewhere on Earth (Paris, occasionally Buenos Aires) and starting to see

the world, the media, the art, the street, life as it is transforming in a corn of needs, demands, overpopulation, refugees, prejudices, you feel the urge to be of use, to make a statement, use your professional skills in developing an idea which has the power to change a thought, a feeling, a concept.

2. How did the collaboration among FITT, IWB and 4everfilm productions start?

IWB: Yolanda from FITT was an IWB member and a supporter of our cause. She called me in February and asked me if I want to organize a conference on human rights and refugee issues in Timisoara and I said yes, without thinking twice, it was a dream come true for me. So thank you FITT, Yolanda Florescu and Mihai Adrian Vilcea for organising this conference!

4 Ever filmsproductions : We have heard

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Timisoara is OpEN about Issues Without Borders

IHRC Timisoara 2017

Let's talk about REFUGEES

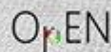
INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS CONFERENCE
NOVEMBER 10-12 2017 | TIMISOARA
CASA TINERETULUI

FRIDAY - 10.11.2017

10:00 - 10:30 Introduction by the hosts (OpEN & IWB)
10:30 - 11:00 "Stateless refugees" by Aleksandra Semerlak Gavrilencok (presentation)
11:00 - 11:30 "The Refugee Crisis and Romania", by Eduard Nicolae Popa (presentation)
12:00 - 12:45 "Is refuge a home?", by Aleksandra Semerlak Gavrilencok (workshop)
12:45 - 13:30 "The asylum system in France", by Gaelle Anne Fouere (presentation)
14:30 - 15:10 "Refugees in Denmark and the conundrum of rights", by Emilie Olgaard (presentation)
15:10 - 15:50 "Current immigration in Malta", by Blerta Zenelaj (presentation)
15:50 - 16:30 "What really happened last night in Sweden", by Erika Lundqvist (presentation)
17:00 - 17:30 "How to build a story regarding the refugee crisis", by Eduard Nicolae Popa (workshop)
17:30 - 18:00 "Refugees and migrants in the media: media coverage and public perceptions of vulnerable groups", by Erika Lundqvist (workshop)

SATURDAY - 11.11.2017

10:00 - 10:45 "Human Beings Trafficking, a new form of slavery for migrants?", by Laura Negura Spataru (presentation)
10:45 - 11:30 "The woman's body in the German debate on asylum – dynamics of protection", by Hanna Krueger (presentation)
12:00 - 12:30 "Inviolability of Human Rights in the migration phenomenon", by Laura Negura Spataru (workshop)
12:30 - 13:00 "The right to health for migrants", by Blerta Zenelaj (workshop)
13:00 - 13:30 "Refugees as their own agents", by Emilie Olgaard (workshop)
14:30 - 15:10 "Racist tensions in the context of asylum", by Hanna Krueger (workshop)
15:10 - 15:50 "Helping refugees with the power of tech services", by Razvan Daniel Ursachi (workshop)
15:50 - 16:30 "My experience with refugees", by Gaelle Anne Fouere (workshop)
17:00 - 18:00 "Refugee D'Amour", by Victor Daniel Pop, Oana Merdarius, Waed (documentary & testimonial)
18:00 - 18:15 Conclusions & Good-Bye



about the projects conducted by Issues Without Borders and the refugee issue is a cause in which we believe in; that's the reason for which we approached them for a collaboration.

3. What do you think was the biggest challenge in the coordination of the first IHRC in Timisoara?

IWB: One of the challenges for me personally was that of not being able to bring Waed, the Syrian refugee living in Paris. She was our actress in the clip Refugee D'Amour and because she changed her residence and Romania is not in the Schengen space we could not bring her this time, but we will bring her to Romania for sure next year.

Another challenge was that of bringing all these IWB members in the same place, at the same time. People had to take leave, had their own problems at home and one of our colleagues Hanna was even pregnant! So lovely to see all these amazing people being part of our conference!

4 Ever filmsproductions: Due to the fact that this was our first experience at a human rights conference, our greatest challenge was that of showing our clip in premiere, seeing how the audience reacts to it, seeing the impact of our work.

One of the challenges that we faced was owed to the fact that we could not obtain the documents required to bring the main actress, Waed, the Syrian refugee from Paris. Romania is not yet in the Schengen space and she currently changed her address.

Another challenge was that we were supposed to prepare and finish the clip in a short time since we were supposed to present it in Timisoara in November but we only got the chance to start filming in September.

4. At the end of the conference, 4everfilms productions premiered the short artistic film on refugee rights – Refugee D'Amour -. The film portrays the story of a Syrian refugee in Paris, France tackling issues around refugees' integration in European societies.

Would like to share with us a few words about the film?

IWB: What I mostly like about this short clip is the fact that the approach towards the refugee issue is different. It is a short clip presenting a true story, but the emphasis is on love and freedom, not on war or blood. So I think it gives us all hope that the world can change.

4 Ever filmsproductions: Paris represents a city of freedom and human rights. It is a place where people are connected regardless of their language, sex, religion or skin color. The story that we show in the clip is a true story, the story of a Syrian refugee who lives a peaceful life and enjoys her freedom in Paris, freedom she lost back home. Meeting by accident a street performer allows her to freely express her feelings about being home

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sick, she experiences freedom and after that she encounters a European man /refugee in his feelings/, man who will guide her towards a connection where love could have an imaginary refuge.....or is it all real?

5. What challenges did you face throughout the film's shooting and production?

How do you think FITT's and IWB's support helped you during the production of -Refugee D Amour-?

IWB: This part was handled by 4ever filmsproductions. They did a great job and I was really happy to help them with whatever they needed. Congrats Daniel Pop and Oana Merdariu for creating this amazing short clip!

4 Ever filmsproductions: Making this clip was possible by bringing all these different people from different places with amazing ideas together (Targu-Mures, Paris, Buenos Aires, Bucharest, Madrid, Andaluzia).

There were no issues with the directing and production of the short clip because there was great chemistry between everyone in this project; we shared the same vision and we had the same goal.

While filming the short movie, as well as in post-production we received a lot of support from Issues Without Borders. They helped us with the legal part included in the clip, as well as with selecting the best moments of the interview we conducted with Waed.

6. What should we expect from you in the near future? What is your vision about this

partnership?

IWB: This is just the beginning! We plan to make a documentary about the refugee issue, raise national and international campaigns, become more visible online, recruit more people, engage in different cultural and social activities to integrate refugees!

4 Ever filmsproductions: This is just our first project together, but there are more to come.

We would like in the future to coordinate all the media exposure of Issues Without Borders, which would include many events, with different formats.

The clip /Refugee D Amour has already been finalised.

A tour show with all the actors from the clip, where we would involve also refugees from different asylum centres across Europe to create a documentary about the life of a refugee in a European society

7. How can we and other people who wish to be a part of your projects and activities help?

IWB: Any contribution is more than welcome! We are constantly recruiting people with different backgrounds who want to support our cause.

This is our website: www.issueswithoutborders.com. If you want to apply, please send us a Cover letter + CV at: issues.w.borders@gmail.com and we will get back to you.

4 Ever filmsproductions : We will always need more help and we highly appreciate any type of support, from a financial , legal, administrative, marketing, media or field work point of view. Because of our urge to face this controversial subject, the refugee issue, the entire Project represented a challenge for all the parties involved.

This is our website: <https://www.4everfilmsproductions.com/>

If you have questions please drop us an email at: 4everfilmsprodu@gmail.com



First, we would like to thank the conference's organisers for sharing their amazing work and activities with us. Let's now hear from the IWB researchers who helped in the conduction of the first IHRC in Timisoara.

1. Many of the IWB researchers travelled across Europe to present their research on refugee rights and attend the IHRC in Timisoara.

How was this experience for you? Would you participate again next year?

Emilie Sloth Oelgaard: As a young professional, it was an amazing experience to be able to both write and present my own research as part of a project that I care very much about. Participating in the conference was a unique opportunity to speak as an independent researcher while sharing an interactive space with peers from all over the continent. I found it particularly rewarding to know that the country reports and presentations form part of a wider project in refugee rights in Europe in which we will all continue to take an active part. So naturally, I would be more than happy to join in any future event or conference held by the organisation.

Aleksandra Gavrilienok Semeriak: From my point of view, any activity or conference that brings together academics, researchers or

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professionals from different backgrounds, specialisations, experiences and countries is an opportunity to share knowledge and improve the strategies to achieve our common aim, which is improving the protection of human rights and fighting against inequalities.

At the IHRC in Timisoara I had the opportunity not only to meet finally in person my colleagues from IWB and learn about their work, and share our insights on the topic of asylum system in Europe, but also to talk about other relevant topics that were related to the broader refugee topic. For instance, one of my presentations was about the issue of statelessness, and concretely how the risk of an increasing number of statelessness cases might become a reality in forced displacement contexts.

If IHRC is organized again next year, I

would be delighted to participate, to share my expertise and learn from my colleagues. Seeing that there are other professionals, with different approaches but same goals only confirms my personal belief that a positive change is possible if you pursue it and share it with others.

Erika Lundqvist: The IHRC was a really nice experience for me. It was great to meet the other presenters and have a chance to discuss our experiences amongst like-minded people. It was also my first visit to Romania – I'll be sure to be back to see more of the country. I would happily participate again.

Laura Negura Spataru: I must confess that I am very connected to IWB, I have been connected to this platform even before it was created due to my friendship with Patricia, therefore this experience was a special event

for us. We have dreamt a lot of it. I consider that organising an international conference is more difficult the first time but I am convinced that next year it will be easier. I have travelled from Bucharest, but for sure I would participate again next year. I consider that the refugee issue is a topic that we can't stop talking about and we should do our best to change something in the world!

Blerta Zenelaj: Personally, I really enjoyed the conference, everything was well prepared and there was a nice warm welcome from FITT and from the representatives of IWB. Everyone was so helpful and supportive towards new ideas. I would appreciate it if I could participate in other conferences in the future. I strongly believe that special attention should be given to various issues related to refugees.

2. If you could suggest the three most significant issues that refugees face and we all need to draw our attention to in Europe, what would they be?

Emilie Sloth Oelgaard: 1) Access: this may sound simple, and it is, but unfortunately it has not been the case for everyone during the current crisis. Refugees coming to Europe need to have proper access to seeking asylum and enjoying protection but in too many instances people have been trapped in countries at the outer border of the continent, experienced extreme waiting times because the authorities of the countries where they claimed asylum were not properly prepared, or simply lost their lives at sea before they even reached European shores. Europe must be proactive in providing safe and legal

routes for those in need of protection, and European countries must work together to distribute refugees fairly between them while prioritising effective asylum procedures that have the rights of the individual at the core.

2) Integration: refugees often leave their home countries illegally and do not keep entitlement to old citizen rights such as many economic migrants do. While some refugees do return later on when a given threat has passed, even so they will many times have spent up to decades in exile. During this period they have a right to live as normally as possible. Unfortunately, many states are starting to go in the opposite direction, wanting refugees to integrate as little as possible into society in the hope that it will make them leave again sooner. This is a very unfortunate tendency. Refugees must as far as possible be given the opportunity to participate in daily life in the states that host them, including involvement in civil and political processes.

3) Understanding: regrettably, fear has been a major catalyst in both public perception and policy making during the 'refugee crisis' in Europe. Actions and decision-making have been influenced by myths and misinformation around the concept of being a refugee. States have a responsibility to live up to their international obligations, and to fuel understanding among their populations of the

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importance of these obligations. In too many cases, not only have states allowed populism to spin for the anti-refugee agenda without challenging it; they have even taken an active part in encouraging it. In order to secure fair protection of any vulnerable group in Europe, this trend must be turned and reversed

Aleksandra Gavrilienok Semeriak: I believe it is a hard question to reduce the challenges that asylum seekers and refugees face during their journey and after arriving to Europe to only three issues, but I would say:

A lack of safe and legal routes to arrive to the European Union (it is unacceptable that we are still witnessing deaths at our borders, forcing people to risk their lives to arrive to a territory where they are entitled to protection and refuge).

Lack of equal/equitable access to basic rights such as housing, labour market, healthcare or education. Despite the laws and treaties which guarantee equal rights, in practice refugees and asylum seekers face discrimination and difficulties accessing fundamental rights.

The erroneous perspective of the European Common Asylum System, which is mainly based on the principle of security, instead of human rights, and drafted as a temporary reception program instead of a long term solution. Moreover, the problem is also the lack of common criteria applied in each member-state.

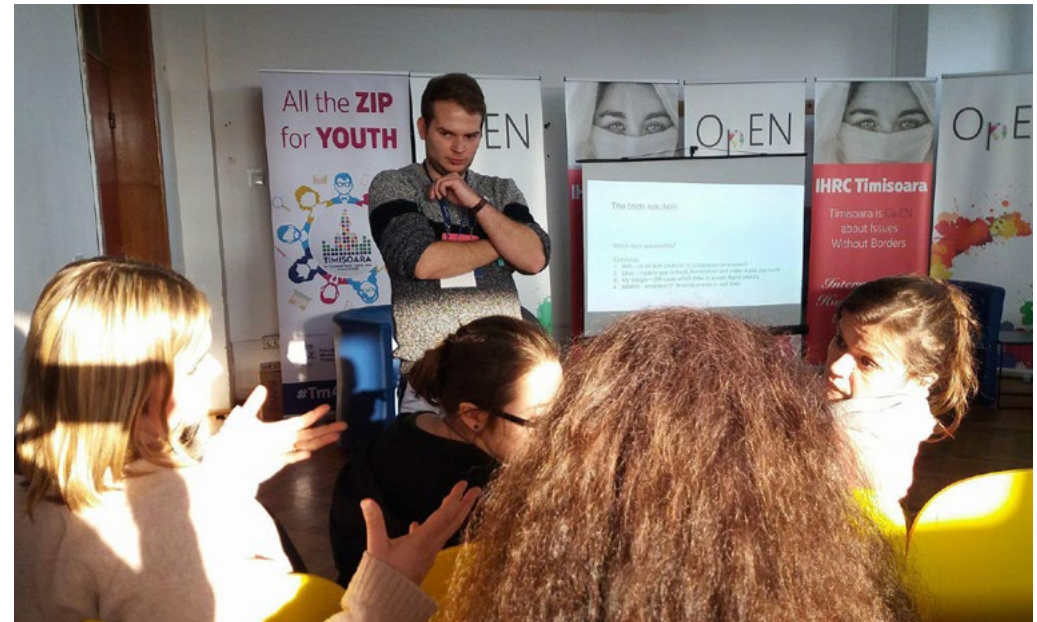
Erika Lundqvist: Unfortunately, I find the biggest issue to be a lack of support – that is emotional support – or a lack of willingness

to understand the situation at hand. At this point in time, we find those who don't understand, spending their time arguing against aid out of the fear of the unknown – instead of learning about that unknown. Too few are taking a moment to look at the world around them and realizing that their world as they know it could just as easily take a 180° turn, tomorrow, as is happening every day to people that we may never know. This of course is only one issue, but its effects lead into many more.

Laura Negura Spataru: I think the most significant issues that refugees face are:

1. Discrimination
2. Isolation due to the cultural barriers (difficulty in speaking and learning the language of the host country, passing from a society where traditional support structures within communities are strong to a Western country where individualism is often prized over family), which raises another significant problem – raising children and helping them succeed in school;
3. Securing work, housing and adequate food.

Blerta Zenelaj: The most significant issues that the refugees face according to my research are the violation of their human rights, including civil, political, cultural, economic and social rights. These rights are not violated at the same level all around Europe but there are problems still around them. Secondly, the inclusion, stigma and discrimination towards refugees are representing a huge problem still. Thirdly,



we need more awareness campaigns all over Europe in order to tackle all the difficulties that refugees face in their daily life. Better support should be offered for everyone.

3. What were the biggest challenges you faced during the preparation and conduction of your presentation?

Emilie Sloth Oelgaard: Transforming a written report into a living presentation is an interesting activity because you have to capture the attention of an audience and make it flow in one coherent session in a way that written pieces of work typically don't.

I had to challenge myself to think creatively and move sections around for it to come together as an oral presentation.

It required more thought and effort than I

had perhaps first anticipated but in the end I think it was a beneficial exercise for me because it brought me even closer to the topic and made me make new and additional connections and conclusions.

Aleksandra Gavrilienok Semeriak: The challenge in any conference with a public of a diverse (academic) background is to accomplish an understandable presentation for each and any person in the room as well as to keep their interest, even if the subject is new or too specific for them.

Other than that, I believe all of the

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presentations went very well and were interesting to all of the participants, so I hope to count with more public for next year's IHRC.

Erika Lundqvist: There weren't many challenges during my preparation – of course time is always an issue, but I managed to put together a presentation on-time. It was a little difficult not knowing what the audience would be like, and their level of knowledge concerning the issue at hand – I think my workshop took half the time that it was meant to because everyone was so bright!

Laura Negura Spataru: The synergy between the participants, some of them having a refugee background.

Blerta Zenelaj: My biggest challenge was that of finding updated information about different issues, such as human trafficking, children trafficking, and organ trafficking. There are still no updated data on these topics.

4. What would you advise other young researchers and human rights activists who would like to get involved in human rights and particularly refugee rights? What steps should they follow?

Emilie Sloth Oelgaard: You need to be focused on what you're interested in and open to new things as well. You never know where the next interesting opportunity lies hidden! Think about what you are hoping to achieve (is it working on a specific topic or perfecting a specific skill?), talk to others about when you can (human connections are, as we know, gold) and follow all relevant pages on social

media. Do also listen to and help others progress when you are able to – we are human rights activists after all and we are here to work together! Good luck!

Aleksandra Semeriak Gavrilienok: I believe that one of the most important things to keep in mind when starting to get involved in human rights activism, and concretely refugees' rights, is to always have a broader perspective of the issue itself, avoiding to only look into the international or European context. I really like to use the term “glocal” here, because what is happening on a local level, maybe in your own neighbourhood, is a reflection of the national, regional and international issues.

My advice is to first look into what is happening next to you, getting to see which challenges refugees and asylum seekers are facing in your city, how you can help them and what needs to be changed to improve their situation because seeing facts and realities will help you to understand the broader picture, the issues that are talked about on the European and international level. Also, it is very important to know all the ways one can be contributing to a cause: it might be through research, on-ground volunteering, awareness-raising, fundraising, etc., and it is ok if you try all of them or just one – the important thing is that you feel comfortable with your task and that you feel that you add value with your actions. That is what activism and the protection of human rights is about.

Erika Lundqvist: There are many ways to get involved, it simply depends on how much

time or energy you are willing to put forward. At the bare minimum it's most important to keep informed – at the most difficult, it's most important to persevere.

Laura Negura Spataru: I would advise them to open their eyes and to try to help them. What if this would happen to them? Governments guarantee the basic human rights and physical security of their citizens, but this safety net disappears when talking about refugees. Refugees are very vulnerable, and they have no protection from their own state (especially that very often it is their own government that is persecuting them). If other countries do not protect them (and even let them enter their territory), then they may be condemned to an intolerable situation where their basic rights, security and even lives are in danger. They need our help and every information channel is great to follow in order to find out more. Stay connected to the UNHCR, and to NGOs dedicated to refugees and try to make a difference!

Blerta Zenelaj: My suggestion is that everyone who wants to support refugees and wants to be part of our mission is more than welcome. We are eager to meet and share new experiences and we as IWB members welcome everyone who believes in human rights.

Thank you very much!

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TERRORISM AND COUNTERTERRORISM

Dervla Potter

CRW intern & activist

The last year has shown to be one of the most detrimental to the idea of a peaceful, safe world that we can live in. Terrorist attacks and counterterrorism measurements have headlined our news and have been in public discourse for a long time now. It is becoming common for tragedy to cover the front page of our newspapers, outlining the numbers dead and injured and the possible motivations of attacks. From a stadium in Paris, to a café in Dhaka, a beach in Côte d'Ivoire, airports in Brussels, a concert event in Paris, a beach in Nice, the diplomatic quarter in Kabul to mention a few. Not to mention that six of the multiple attacks over the last year have resulted in 100 plus deaths.

However, are the counterterrorist measures that governments are taking overstepping what is necessary to ensure security while forfeiting the preservation of fundamental rights of citizens and their dignity?

Also in the news is the influx of people eastward to contribute to the Islamic State (ISIS) cause on middle eastern battlefields and some returning to their homes around the world perhaps intent on carrying out attacks

on their native soil. With mass migration also making headlines, fear is gripping some audiences and leading to the paranoia of lone wolf attacks and about the intentions of refugees instead of feeling empathy and compassion for those fleeing their war-torn homes. This is not to mention the deadly attacks carried out on civilians by armed groups including Al-Shabab in Somalia and Al-Qaeda in Maghreb that obliterate their targets.

In response to these challenges, governments across the world are adopting an array of counterterrorism laws and measures that are separate to their planned or potential military operations. States are struggling to find a balance between their responsibility to protect their populations from harm and creating useful security policies. Many of the national laws that have been introduced are dangerously broad, vague and intrusive. Instead of providing more security, they risk violating basic rights, incarcerating innocent people and alienating minority populations that already are under pressure from stereotyping and scapegoating. In the last year the proliferation of counterterrorism laws aimed at “Foreign Terrorist Fighters” and



the declaration of states of emergency have become frequent and numerous initiating concern for the guardianship of rights.

In most cases, it is a rushed government decision, with more thought put into “doing something” rather than what that something is. France is a perfect example of a country that has built up a number of laws and continued their state of emergency five times between November 2015 and July 2017. Simultaneously they expanded already police powers of search, seizure and detention. In July of this year, they toughened even more their provisions to re-instate warrantless seizures of computer and mobile phone data that the Conseil d’État had previously struck down as unconstitutional adding safeguards that still fall short of proper judicial oversight. The French government has often been

criticised for curbing freedoms.

A French commission of inquiry into the Paris attacks concluded on July 5 that the state of emergency had “limited impact” on improving security. The panel described important failures in analysing intelligence that could have helped prevent the attacks. In a May review of France, the UN Committee against Torture expressed concern about excessive use of force by police when carrying out house searches in the context of the state of emergency, as well as during demonstrations.

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Between November 2015 and July 2016, under the emergency law, police carried out nearly 4,000 warrantless raids and placed 400 people under house arrest, yet those actions led to only six terrorism-related criminal investigations. Those measures targeted mostly Muslims and led to abuses of the rights to liberty, privacy, freedom of movement, and non-discrimination.

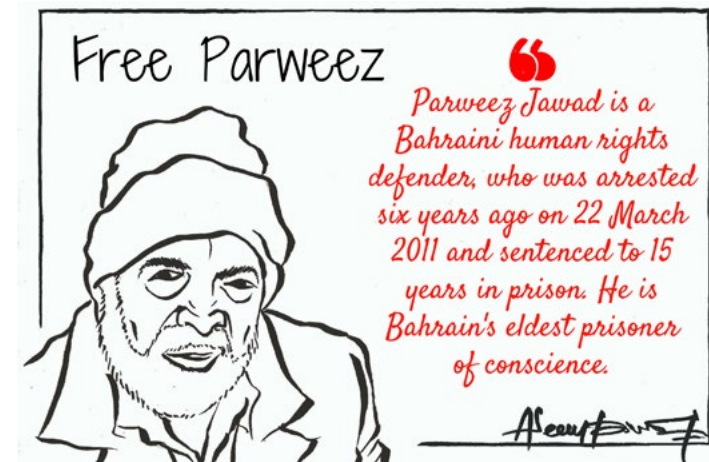
Those who bear the brunt of such measures include not only the potential suspects but also peaceful protestors, journalists, political opponents, human rights defenders and the religious groups they target. In operations against Islamist armed groups, many of those who risk being wrongfully targeted or stigmatized are Muslims.

In August 2016, mayors in about 30 towns adopted decrees prohibiting women from wearing full body covering swimsuits (known as “burkinis”) or any other skin concealing outfits on the beach, arguing that they may

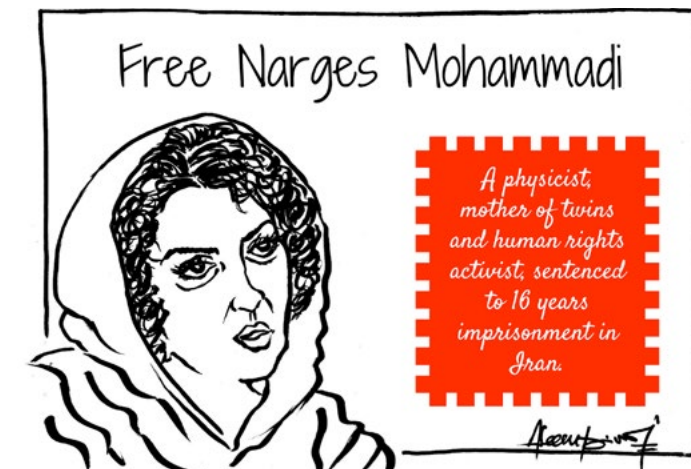
pose a risk to public order.

A 2016 UNICEF survey of unaccompanied children in the Calais and Dunkirk camps found they were subject to sexual exploitation, violence, and forced labour. In the last week of October, French authorities dismantled the camp. Between October 24 and 26, nearly 5,600 people were relocated to reception centers across France, with some unaccompanied children brought to the UK (see below). Arbitrary age assessment meant that some unaccompanied minors were left out of the specific process put in place for children.

If properly conceived and implemented, many of the recent counterterrorism measures could advance both security and fundamental values. Yet too often they are framed or implemented in ways that could erode the rule of law and human rights, including in democratic governments that should be at the vanguard of protecting them.



HRD [#ParweezJawad](#), Bahrain's eldest prisoner of conscience, is serving a jail term of 15 yrs. Join [@EBOHumanRights](#) campaign to [#Free_Parweez](#)



[Narges Mohammadi](#) should not be jailed for her peaceful activism and advocacy for Human Rights in Iran. She must be released asap. [#FreeNarges](#)

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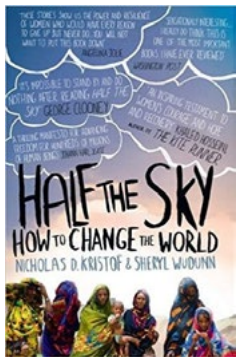


ON THE SHELF – Reading human rights

Human rights book recommendations

Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide

Nicholas D. Kristof & Sheryl WuDunn



Pulitzer Prize winners Kristoff and WuDunn take us on an expedition through Africa and Asia to meet the remarkable women struggling against their oppressors. Among them is a Cambodian teenager

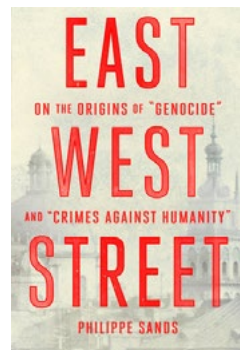
sold into sex slavery and an Ethiopian Woman who suffered devastating injuries during childbirth. The world depicted in this story is one filled with anger, sadness, clarity and ultimately hope. Hope comes in the form of a little bit of help that transforms the lives of the women and girls described in the novel and the message Kristoff and WuDunn want us as their audience to visualise is that the key to the economic progress our governments crave lies in unleashing women's potential. Allowing women, a seat at the economic table is intrinsic to countries that want to succeed,

and it's also the best strategy for fighting poverty.

Deeply felt, pragmatic, and inspirational, *Half the Sky* is a passionate call to arms against our era's most pervasive human rights violation: the oppression of women and girls in the developing world. It is essential reading for every global citizen.

East West Street

Phillippe Sands



Leading Human Rights Lawyer Phillip Sands has been involved in many key cases that have been presented to the international criminal court. His experiences gave him the inspiration to begin this story

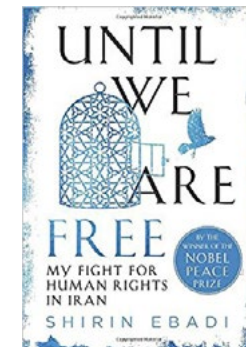
in Nuremburg, the location that put human rights laws on the global map. While the history and significance of Nuremburg is explored, the other strand of this book is of

a family memoir dedicating to uncovering the life of Sand's maternal grandfather, Leon Buchholz and his wife Rita. This profound and profoundly important book explores the creation and development of a world-changing legal concepts that came about as a result of the unprecedented atrocities of Hitler's Third Reich.

East West Street looks at the personal and intellectual evolution of the two men who simultaneously originated the ideas of "genocide" and "crimes against humanity" – Rafael Lemkin and Hersch Lauterpacht. Sands looks at who these very private men were and at how and why, coming from similar Jewish backgrounds and the same city, studying at the same university in his grandfather's home town, and how they developed their theories. This is a book that will change the way we look at the world, at our understanding of history and how civilisation has tried to cope with mass murder.

Until We are Free: My fight for human rights in Iran

Shirin Ebadi



Shirin Ebadi was the first woman to receive the Nobel Peace Prize and has inspired millions around the world through her work as a human rights lawyer defending women and children against a brutal regime in

Iran. In *Until we are Free* Ebadi tells her story of courage and defiance in the face of a government set out to destroy her, her family. Her mission: to bring justice to the people and the country she loves.

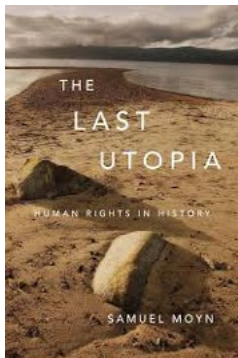
This is a deeply personal account of the

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oppression and suppression Ebadi faced between her phones being wiretapped, spies following her, the detention of her daughter and the arrest of her sister on trumped up charges. However, she is a testament to us all in standing up and speaking out for human dignity in the face of adversity. Despite what the Iranian takes from her throughout the novel, the one thing it could never steal was her spirit to fight for justice. This is an incredible and at times harrowing story of a woman's determination to never give up. *Until We Are Free* is a promise that women's aspirations can never be vanquished.

The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History Samuel Moyn



Today's interpretation of human rights is often perceived as an idealistic representation that its realism is often questioned. It is a vision of international justice. Moyn in this book recounts the transformation of

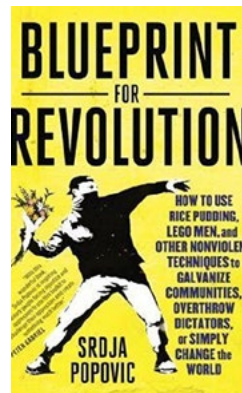
human rights from its conception and asks what this reveals about the ideal's troubled present and uncertain future. *The Last Utopia* explains that for the most part, human rights became more crystallised in the 1970's (contrary to the tradition of post-world war two) as social activism and political rhetoric moved it from the UN to the global forefront. It was on the ruins of earlier political utopias, Moyn argues, that human rights achieved contemporary prominence. But as the ideal

of human rights enters into rival political agendas, it requires more vigilance and scrutiny than when it became the watchword of our hopes. Controversially (compared to Sands), Moyn ignores Nuremberg's crucial contribution to the development of the modern human rights movement.

At the same time, Moyn overestimates the extent to which human rights today take precedence over the sovereignty of states. He offers persuasive arguments that will question traditional teachings. It almost seems that the title is controversial to the arguments. It is a book about human rights in history only in the sense that it argues that they are not to be found in history at all, until Jimmy Carters presidency. Moyn makes the shoulder-shrugging assertion that "human rights cannot be all things to all people". But if they really are universal, why not?

Blueprint for Revolution: How to use rice pudding, Lego men and other non-violent techniques to galvanize communities, overthrow dictators or simply change the world

Srdja Popovic



In the late '90s, Popovic was a founder of the Serbian activist group Otpor!, armed with only a hammy sense of humour and the goal of toppling dictator Slobodan Milosevic, whose ceaseless campaigns

of war, terror, and repression through that decade had brought his country to economic and cultural ruin.

Rather than attempt to assemble armies and fight Milosevic head on, Popovic used tactics that were resolutely nonviolent (that is, less brandishing, more branding). In just two years, and under the ubiquitous emblem of a clenched fist, Otpor! grew from a ragtag protest group into a full-blown nationwide movement that used humour, irony, imagery, and imagination to unite scattered factions of the populace against the regime, effectively overthrowing Milosevic in 2000.

For Popovic, salt, tea, and cottage cheese serve as far more effective tools of revolution than blades, bullets, or bombs. In "Blueprint for Revolution," he offers a short history of nonviolent protest (from Gandhi's marches to the sea to harvest salt in defiance of British taxation, to the Putin-punking performances of Pussy Riot) as well as an ideological starter kit for understanding how nonviolent movements can be effective against highly militarized regimes.



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HUMAN RIGHTS CINEMA – WATCHING HUMAN RIGHTS

Because human rights films can change the world!

Ukraine on Trial

Documentary, Drama, History



In one of the first films about the European Court of Human Rights, top human rights cases reflect human dramas which brought the applicants to the Court.

Director: Slavik Bihun

Stars: Jean-Paul Costa, Lucius Wildhaber, Volodymyr Butkevych, Myroslav Marynovych

Between Hell and Paradise (2017)

Documentary, Short, Drama



A family settles in a picturesque place. Next, a living monster grows next to their house: a 60-meter-high burning slag-heap, an ecological bomb. The fight for their rights brings them to the European Court of

Human Rights in Strasbourg. Soon, a mine is built next to their house. They say it will get them jobs. But, instead, they get a living monster growing next to their house: a 60-meter-high constantly burning slag-heap, an ecological bomb. The fight against it and authorities bring them to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg. They learn how to fight for their rights, in the name of their children. Meanwhile, the EcoBomba keeps ticking.

Directors: Slavik Bihun, Dmytro Tiazhlov

Stars: Alla Vakiv, Yaryna Ostapchuk, Nazar Kulchytskyi, Yelyzaveta Alekseyeva

Stopping Traffic (2017)

Documentary



Stopping Traffic explores the pervasive reach of sex trafficking, especially of children in the U.S. and worldwide. Through commentary by victims and activists and investigations into practices in the

U.S. and abroad, the film traces insidious links among child sexual exploitation, pornography, social media, and sex trafficking. It calls on the viewer to join the movement to end sex trafficking.

Director: Sathvi Siddhali Shree

Stars: Susanne Dietzel, Carolina Douthit, Cecilia Flores-Oebanda, Mario Garfias



MUST SEE!

What is it that makes us human? Is it the ability to love? Is it because we are able to show different emotions and express different feelings? Is it how we join religious groups and how we fight for the ideologies that we believe?

Filmmaker Yann Arthus-Bertrand wanted to understand why humans are different to other living beings, so he spent three years collecting stories from thousands of men and women from 60 different parts of the world. The stories capture the realities of life: sexual identity, anger, poverty, war, love, happiness, and the plethora of emotions that human beings experience.

[Watch it now, by clicking here.](#)



Check out the 10
Films Every
Human Rights
Advocate Should
Watch

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CARTOONS

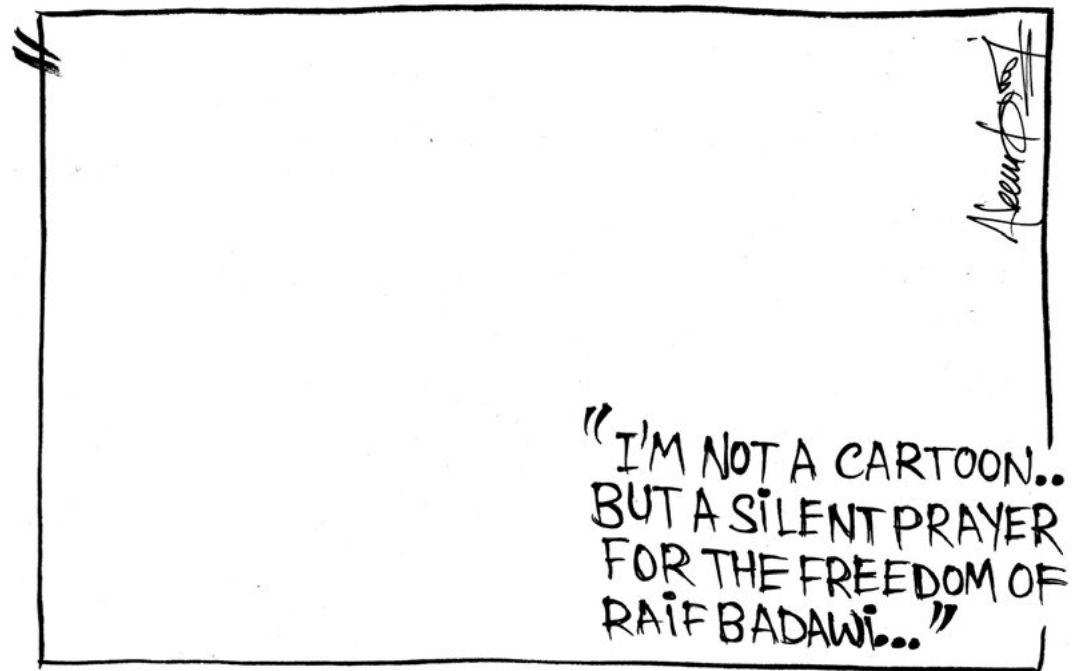
Aseem Trivedi

[A Cartoon against Every Lash](#) is a series of 50 cartoons created by Aseem Trivedi, supporting Raif Badawi as a symbolic protest to the 50 lashes, he was flogged publicly on Jan 9. Raif was arrested in 2012 on a charge of insulting Islam through electronic channels and brought to court on several charges including apostasy. He was sentenced to seven years in prison and 600 lashes in 2013, then resented to 1,000 lashes and 10 years in prison plus a fine in 2014. The lashes were to be carried out over 20 weeks. The first 50 were administered on January 9, 2015. The second set has so far been postponed.

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:

<http://www.bandw.in/p/about.html>

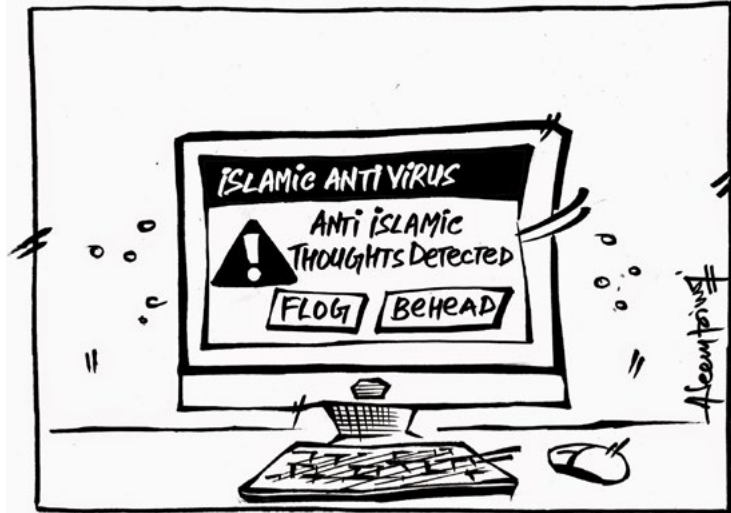
A CARTOON AGAINST EVERY LASH (50) #FreeRaif



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A CARTOON AGAINST EVERY LASH (3) #FreeRaif



A CARTOON AGAINST EVERY LASH (4) #FreeRaif



A CARTOON AGAINST EVERY LASH (5) #FreeRaif



A CARTOON AGAINST EVERY LASH (7) #FreeRaif



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A CARTOON AGAINST EVERY LASH (12) #FreeRaif



A CARTOON AGAINST EVERY LASH (14) #FreeRaif



A CARTOON AGAINST EVERY LASH (33) #FreeRaif



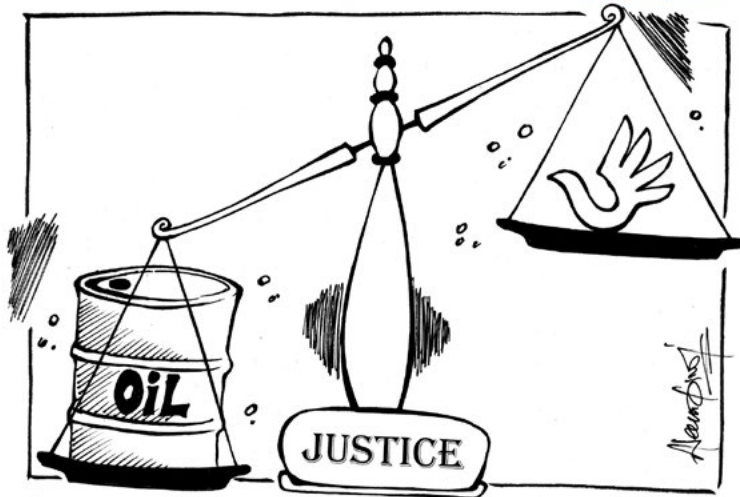
A CARTOON AGAINST EVERY LASH (40) #FreeRaif



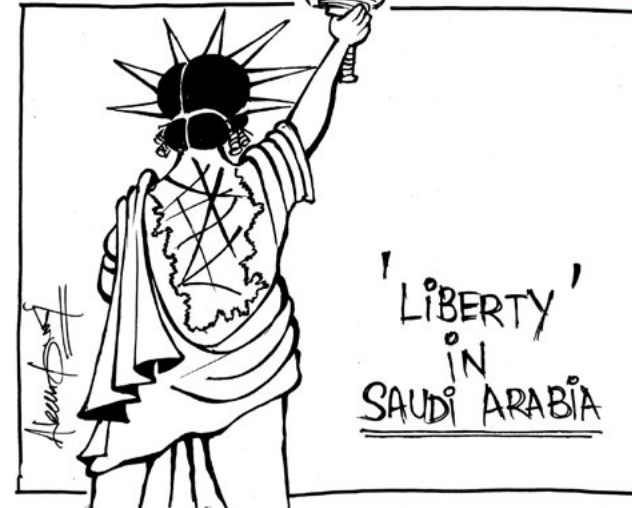
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A CARTOON AGAINST EVERY LASH (41) #FreeRaif



A CARTOON AGAINST EVERY LASH (42) #FreeRaif



A CARTOON AGAINST EVERY LASH (45) #FreeRaif



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2017 IN TWEETS

Devla Potter
CRW intern & activist

TWEET
TWEET

TWEET!

TWEET

Another year has come to an end and the eagle eyed, ever observant users of twitter have once again mastered human rights opinions and events in 140 characters or less. The dark events of 2017 such as the Rohingya Crisis were marbled with thin slivers of good news, such as Taiwan became the first country in Asia to honour same-sex marriage and the Women's March in January that was a fitting opening event for 2017 that set the tone of women's rights activists intentions for the following 365 days culminating in the trending #MeToo movement that kickstarted 2018.

Women's March on the World: Women's rights featured prominently in 2017, and the year saw broad issues being dealt with from reproductive health care, Trumps Global Gag Rule, abortion and the use of women's bodies as weapons of war. One of the most used hashtags of 2017 is shown here by Andrew Stroehlein. The March on Washington became a March on the World, with events held across the globe.

Audrey Kawire Wabwire
@akawire
#womensmarch Nairobi earlier today.



6:10 PM - 21 Jan 2017

1,827 Retweets 4,770 Likes

Alexandra Kotowski
@kotowska
When asked why they're marching: "Honey, we lived through the 50s. We know what it's like and we won't go back."

#WomensMarchOnWashington



3:32 PM - 21 Jan 2017 from Washington, DC

1,011 Retweets 1,781 Likes

Andrew Stroehlein
@astroehlein
Women's rights are human rights - #WomensMarch



1:18 PM - 21 Jan 2017

14,266 Retweets 26,307 Likes

189 14K 26K

Andrew Stroehlein
@astroehlein
#WomensMarch Antarctica ind.pn/2jAVNIQ



3:46 PM - 21 Jan 2017

4,477 Retweets 7,993 Likes

Andrew Stroehlein
@astroehlein
No free media, critics jailed, women 2nd class, a leader who never won a popular vote: In Saudi Arabia, Trump finds his political ideal.



2:57 PM - 21 May 2017

Kenneth Roth
@KenRoth
Spirits, if you hear us, please exorcise the curse of a free press, dissent & all who criticize our autocratic ways.



9:53 PM - 21 May 2017

1,006 Retweets 1,315 Likes

72 1.0K 1.3K

Trump Watch: Since his election as President of the United States, eyes have been scrolling twitter threads of Donald Trump to see how he is using his 140 characters to insult people in some way or generally plague us with

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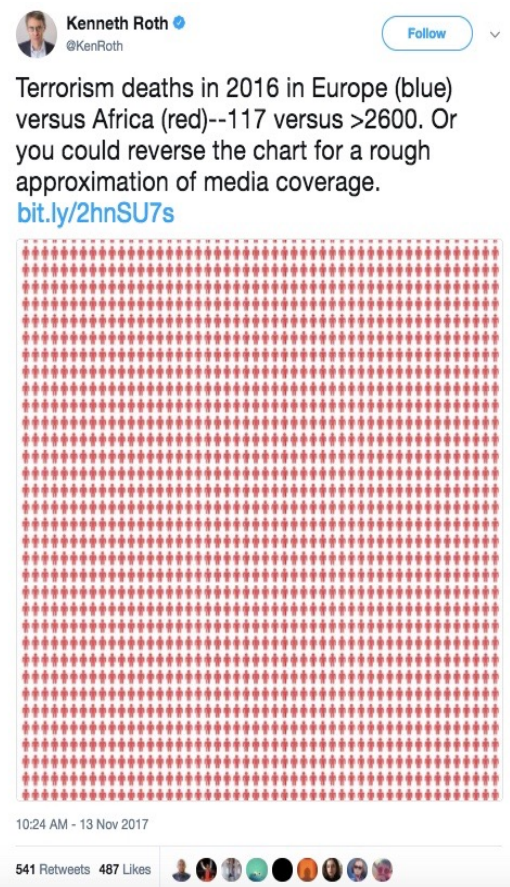


his poor opinions. Andrew Strohlein and Kenneth Roth summarized the 2017 Trump perfectly with their views on the US- Saudi Arabia meet during the landmark Riyadh summit in May 2017.



Refugee Crisis: Judith Sunderland, an associate director of Human Rights Watch summed up the need for better collective action as millions of refugees fled famine,

oppression and war in search of better opportunities. The degrading treatment of refugees and asylum seekers and the living conditions they faced was also in the spotlight in the run up to the new year as shown here by Eva Cossé.



Counting and Reporting Terrorism: Executive Director of Human Rights Watch Andrew Roth challenged the biased media coverage of terrorist attacks in 2016.

The Philippines: 2017 marked a fearful violence filled year in the Philippines, with President Duterte openly vowing to ignore human rights to succeed in his war against drugs.



Rohingya Crisis: The disgraceful treatment of the Rohingya people dominated twitter in 2017, but this issue is not a new one, and the systematic abuse and ethnic cleansing of the Rohingya People should not be stood for any longer.



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[Find out how to submit an article here!](#)

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

In solidarity!



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