



The Diplomatic Envoy

U.S. APPEALS COURT RULES IN FAVOR OF NET NEUTRALITY ROLLBACK

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Opinion Editor

The United States Court of Appeals for the DC Circuit ruled against states being able to pass their own net neutrality laws, reports Reuters. This decision comes two years after the repeal of laws that disallowed providers from slowing down internet connections, opening the floodgates for favoritism of some websites over others. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC), however, may consider the rollback’s impact on first responders and those relying on government-subsidized broadband internet. One example of this includes Lifeline, a government program that provides internet access to those earning low-incomes, re-

ports Los Angeles Times. The FCC can also block individual state laws on a case-by-case basis. Another aspect of this decision allows the FCC to repeal net neutrality rules. Verizon Communications Inc. issued a statement saying the decision “underscores the need for Congress to adopt national legislation that provides protections for consumers while avoiding a disruptive, inconsistent patchwork of state Internet regulation.” As a result of the decision, the price of internet connection could raise for consumers. According to The Hill, this suit was brought by internet companies, consumers, and over 20 states angered by the repeal who argued that the FCC misjudged the severity of rollbacks it could impose. The Trump adminis-

tration appointed a “more industry-friendly” FCC Chairman, former Associate General Counsel at Verizon Communications and Senior Counsel at the Department of Justice Ajit Pai. According to USA Today, Pai has a record of fighting against net neutrality rules, most recently arguing that they decrease the likelihood of investment in certain networks and impede companies’ right to competitive practices. Net neutrality is a hot topic of debate and has been for the last decade. Congress remains unable to pass any legislation that protects internet connection for U.S. citizens, as the issue has slowly become partisan. House Democrats recently voted to reinstate Obama-era rules on net neutrality, but this has not been pre-



Net Neutrality Supporters after the Ruling.

Courtesy of Flickr.

sented to a majority-Republican Senate and the White House, which is threatening to veto the bill, reports The Hill. One example of the issue this could impose on society are the California wildfires in 2018. According to Human Rights Watch, one fire department’s ability to fend off fires was impeded by limited data access, which their internet provider purposefully slowed until

the department switched to a more expensive plan. As a result, California, Colorado, Maine, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Vermont, and Washington composed their own net neutrality laws in addition to pre-existing federal laws. Eric Null, a senior policy counsel at New America’s Open Technology Institute, argues that administrations have been debating net neu-

trality and it is time to put an end to it with specific, protective legislation. He states, “broadband providers have been on good behavior while rules have been up in the air because of the lawsuit and that without federal regulations there is nothing keeping them in check.”

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EGYPTIAN POLICE WEAPONIZE SOCIAL MEDIA AGAINST ANTI-GOVERNMENT PROTESTORS

Emma Reed
Staff Writer

Across the streets of Cairo, demonstrators, study abroad students, and school children alike face detainment and torture by Egyptian security forces. Police instituted the harsh crackdown following an outbreak of anti-corruption protests four weeks ago, the first mass movement against President el-Sisi’s administration in years. While police arrested

many people at the protests themselves, they also detained a significant number at checkpoints, with officials searching phones for any “political” material. According to The Guardian, security forces add the names of those detained at checkpoints to a single charge sheet, a formal police record of a list of names of those arrested and their charges. The charges include aiding terrorist groups, spreading false information, misuse of social media, and participation in an unauthorized protest. Since 2013, unauthorized gatherings of 10 or more people have not been permitted by the Egyptian gov-

ernment. Of the 3,120 people detained since the protests started on September 20th, 111 were children between the ages of 11 and 17. If all these charges were to be brought to court, it would be the single largest criminal prosecution of protesters in Egyptian history. Well-known activist Alaa Abdel Fattah is among those arrested by the government in recent weeks. Rising to prominence in Egypt during the 2011 Arab Spring, Alaa served five years behind bars for an unauthorized protest in 2014. Recently paroled, he was again arrested at a Cairo police station where he was required to remain for 12 hours every night as part of the conditions of his release, according to Al Jazeera. A tweet by Alaa’s sister

and fellow human rights activist Mona Seif details that he was stripped of all clothing except for the underwear he was wearing during his arrest and tortured at the hands of security forces during his imprisonment. Like many other protesters and activists, Alaa faces charges of belonging to a terrorist organization and using social media to threaten national security. Alaa is not the only voice of dissent who has been silenced by the police in recent weeks – his lawyer was also detained when he arrived at the detainment site to represent Alaa. Many human rights lawyers have gone into hiding fearing arrest, according to The Middle East Eye. One lawyer, who represents hundreds of political detainees and spoke on condition of

anonymity, said that he no longer slept at home with his family to protect them. Amr Imam, a lawyer of the Arabic Network for Human Rights, told The Middle East Eye that recently terror over activism efforts has multiplied: “In the past years, being a human rights lawyer was like being an outlaw.” The New York Times credits a military construction contractor named Mohammed Ali with originally sparking the protests. Despite living in Spain, Ali utilized his previous ties to the el-Sisi administration for credibility and amassed a large social media by criticizing government corruption and calling for el-Sisi’s removal. Despite Facebook repeatedly removing his videos, Ali’s content still receives many views, which encourage

more protests. His use of social media marked a new beginning to how protesters organize and share information, as well as how governments track them and silence dissent. Given the increasing use of social media in organizing demonstrations, the Egyptian government now targets human rights lawyers, activists, and journalists with more tech-savvy approaches than simple checkpoints and random stops on the street. A recent report by Amnesty International describes how the government intends to deploy an “indiscriminate” mass-monitoring system of social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter. This system will look for 26 so-called violations, including mentioning walk-outs, sit-ins, and other

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Angry protestor at a rally. Courtesy of Geostrategists.

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UNITED STATES RESTORES DIPLOMATIC TIES WITH SOMALIA, REOPENS EMBASSY

Harshana Ghoorhoo
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Nearly three decades after its closure following the outbreak of civil war, the United States has officially reopened its embassy in Somalia, according to Al Jazeera. In a statement released on Wednesday, October 9, U.S. Ambassador to Somalia Donald Yamamoto affirmed that the reopening reflects recent progress made in the Horn of Africa nation. The Ambassador stated that the move will serve to strengthen the relations between the American and Somali people as well as to normalize U.S. diplomatic engagement in Mogadishu, Somalia's capital city. He further asserted that the reopened embassy will "enhance cooperation, advance U.S. strategic interests, and support our overall security, political, and economic development goals and objectives," VOA reports. The statement came at a time when the Soma-

li Partnership Forum, a two-day meeting between global representatives and Somali leaders, took place in Mogadishu for the first time. During the meeting, the U.S. Agency for International Development announced the funding of about \$257 million in humanitarian assistance to Somalia. After the breakout of the 1991 Somali civil war resulted in the overthrow of then-President Siad Barre's military regime, Washington took a step down from maintaining diplomatic ties with Somalia, shutting down its embassy and airlifting the U.S. ambassador to safety. As stated by Military Times, the U.S. attempted to recreate political connections as it established a permanent diplomatic presence in Mogadishu in September 2018, but main operations continued in neighboring Kenya. President Trump's administration continues to make considerable efforts in improving the political and military situation in

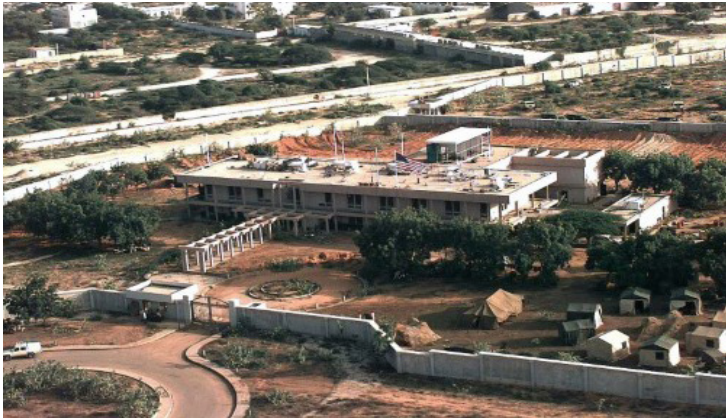
the East African country. As reported by the BBC, America greatly increased aid and military engagement in Somalia and makes it a priority to defeat Islamist terrorism in the Horn of Africa as part of its global anti-terrorism efforts. However, amidst the positive aspects of re-establishing the U.S. Embassy, Somalia still faces a significant threat from the insurgent terrorist group Al-Shabaab. On Monday, October 7, Al-Shabaab militants launched a raid on the U.S. special forces military base in the town of Baledogle, the Guardian stated. The U.S. Army uses the base to train Somali special forces and as a launching ground for drones and airstrikes. On the day of the Somali Partnership Forum, Al-Shabaab militants also carried out attacks about 30 kilometers away from the base, killing at least six Somali soldiers. The U.S. carried out countless airstrikes in Somalia to combat Al-

Shabaab forces in recent years, forcing them to retreat from the major population centers. In an address to the BBC, the U.S. military said that its efforts are supported and encouraged by the Federal Government of Somalia, and "precision airstrikes support our partner security forces' efforts to protect the Somali people from terrorism." According to former head of the United Nations Mission in Somalia Michael Keating, recent events show that Al-Shabaab militants are regaining a stronghold in rural areas. BCC News reports that the group's influence again spreads to major cities and towns. Statistical evidence shows that the Al-Shabaab conflict has killed over 1200 people in 2019 so far, compared to less than 400 people in 2015. The United States, the biggest international do-

nor to Somalia, expressed its commitment to helping in stabilizing the region. The reopening of the embassy in Mogadishu is a positive step in strengthening bilateral relations between the two countries. As reported by the Council on Foreign Relations, this is especially important because it represents a win over the assumption that risk-aversion should be prioritized over actually creating diplomatic ties, which require presence in the region and a multi-layered understanding of the political dynamics that shape the decision-making process on the ground. At this point, it is un-

deniable that the U.S. will remain a strong partner to Somalia in its effort to build a stable, democratic country. A big component of that assistance lies in helping Somalia rid itself of the extremists, who continually afflict great pain to the population and pose a detriment to economic progress. As the two countries resume their diplomatic relations, the world hopes that progress will continue to be seen in the Horn of Africa.

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U.S. Embassy in Mogadishu, Somalia. Courtesy of Wikipedia.

ETHNIC PAPUANS FACE ESCALATING VIOLENCE IN INDONESIA

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Deadly violence erupted in Indonesia after intense protests in the country's Papua region, forcibly displacing approximately 16,000 residents, according to Al Jazeera. Protests and protest-linked conflict in Papua have been growing rapidly since August – nearly three dozen people were killed last month due to violence in Wamena city. Because of the unrest and rumors about further military action, ethnic Papuans continue to flee Wamena, with some finding refuge in churches, military posts, and police stations while others seek sanctuary in other regions. Racism against the indigenous people of Papua is to blame for these protests. Before August, tensions rose over a teacher allegedly making racist comments towards students. Human Rights

Watch reports that this incident and similar tensions sparked the current series of protests, with demonstrators marching in 30 different cities against the mistreatment of Papuans. A specific issue of concern is the harassment of students by Indonesian militants. Protests against this particular issue quickly turned violent and shifted to demands for full independence. With the most severe and deadly violence concentrated in Wamena, the Indonesian government shut down the internet for five consecutive days in September. During one protest, demonstrators waved the Morning Star Flag, a representation of independence in Papua. The call for independence is not a recent development. As stated in the New York Times, the initial incorporation of Papua into Indonesia happened though a referendum

brokered by the United Nations in 1969, a vote that many believe was falsified. The decades-long struggle against racism towards the indigenous



Protest for justice for Ethnic Papuans. Courtesy of the Conversation.

Papua bolstered this call for independence. The New York Times notes that Indonesia has struggled to create kinship between its diverse ethnic groups. Despite the hopes of the state, many attempts to promote inclusion and diversity end in violence. The Papuans face harassment with dehumanizing slurs

from migrants to Papua, and many protesters attempt to bring specific attention to these slurs. A majority of the people who migrated to Papua settle there because of the region's wealth of natural resources, specifically minerals and gold. The timing of these protests negatively impacts the current and future rule of Indonesia's current president Joko Widodo and his administration. Indonesia Tribune reports that students in Papua call for Widodo to

give more consideration to the plight of ethnic Papuans, with residents raging at the injustice against the Papuans and growing frustrated at the lack of action taken to punish these acts. Despite President Widodo giving Papua specific attention since his inauguration almost 5 years ago and hope among residents that he would be able to alleviate tensions, Widodo has now lost favor with those demanding restitution. These protests come just in time for his next inauguration in October. Those who speak out against the discrimination face immense risks. The government arrested four residents of West Papua on treason charges after they engaged with the protests. The Guardian reports that protesters decorated a flotilla with symbols of West Papuan freedom to bring attention to the human rights abuses. After being arrest-

ed and taken into detention, they were given to choice to be imprisoned for treason or released on the condition that they report to a police station two times a week. Other protesters have also been arrested on similar charges. Accurate reporting on the situation in Papua remains limited, with violence preventing journalists from reporting on the ground. Additionally, the BBC states that false social media accounts promoting misrepresentation and opposition to Papuan independence have popped up in recent months. Despite the sentiments of these accounts being in accordance with the government's agenda, the government continues its efforts to remove these accounts and prevent them from further distorting the truth.

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forms of protest. However, because the full list of violations has not been released yet, many are uncertain as to what the program will really look for.

The Committee to Protect Journalists says that since the protests began, many social media platforms and news outlet websites like Facebook Messenger, BBC, and Al Jazeera are harder to access. In addition to this, cyber threat investigation group Check Point Research found that there was a much more targeted attack against civil society in Egypt that has been going on since 2018. A “handpicked” list of journalists, activists, and members of non-governmental organizations were the victims of cyberattacks meant to spy on their accounts and monitor activity. Much of this was done through phishing pages, fake Gmail or Outlook websites, and even applications meant to track the physical location of a device and its communications. While nothing definitively points to the Egyptian

government, Check Point Research's investigation found that the “perpetrators are Arabic speakers, and well familiar with the Egyptian ecosystem.”

The response from Western countries, if any, has been muted. The UK and the U.S. have yet to officially respond to the violence taking place and instead have taken a path of praising President el-Sisi. According to The Independent, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson lauded el-Sisi's leadership at a bilateral meeting and did not address the violence or protests taking place. U.S. President Donald Trump also did not address the events taking place in Egypt, rather stating, “Where is my favorite dictator?” while waiting for a meeting with President el-Sisi at the Hotel du Palais during the G7 Summit, says The Independent.

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The Argentinian economy is struggling once again, reports the Wall Street Journal. Even after President Mauricio Macri implemented currency controls and almost thirty aid packages from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the country remains the most volatile emerging market and has the highest inflation levels in its recent history.

Meanwhile, opposition presidential candidate Alberto Fernández announced a plan to end hunger in the country. According to the Buenos Aires Times, his plan, entitled “Argentina sin Hambre,” was created after the release of data that indicated a 35.4 percent increase in poverty across the country. Fernández stated that Argentina produces enough food to feed 400 million people, so it is the country's responsibility to feed the 15 million people that are in poverty.

Rising food prices led to protests across the country, reports Reuters. Politicians struggle to find a balance between the need to cut spending and the need to help find a solution to the growing hunger crisis. Miguel Pichetto, Macri's running

STRUGGLING ARGENTINIAN ECONOMY COULD SPARK SEVERE HUNGER CRISIS

mate, suggested that the best way to eradicate hunger would be to attract foreign companies to Argentina that could generate greater employment.

Currently, the biggest concerns for the economy are persistently rising inflation, the falling value of Argentinian peso, and the decrease in domestic production and spending. Together, these factors have decreased consumers' spending powers, income, and employment opportunities at the same time as the country experiences substantial increases in food prices.

This crisis represents the second collapse of the economy just in the last decade. President Macri attempted to fix the economy by cutting taxes and liberalizing markets but the impacts of these efforts are yet to become clear. Argentina's debt grew at a rapid pace, which created a mix of debt, a high government deficit, and unsound monetary policy, says the Guardian.

Given the current economic conditions, President Macri is delaying payments on approximately \$100 billion worth of debt, reports CNBC.

Since a market crash in August, the country suffers from a major debt crisis. Nonetheless, according to a Treasury spokesperson, the country still used \$1.9 billion of money it received from the IMF to pay off debt on short-term dollar-denominated Treasury Bills. The original intent of the IMF loan was to increase the country's reserves.

Argentina is wary of the IMF, reports the Council on Foreign Relations. The last loan that Argentina received from the IMF was in 2001 during the country's worst recession. As such, the Latin American country blames the international lender for helping the country fall

into an economic crisis. Nevertheless, given the weaker peso, Argentina has several big payments to the IMF due in the next presidential term and \$30 billion worth of debt that will be due in 2019.

The political uncertainty from the upcoming elections also contributed to the financial crisis, says Citywire. Claudio Zuchovicki, the secretary-general of the Iberoamerican Stock Exchange Federation, suggested that while Argentina endured stronger financial crises in the past, the lack of a growing local market is hurting prospects for growth.

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Scenes of poverty in Argentina.

Courtesy of Telesur.

FAILED NEGOTIATIONS THREATEN TO REIGNITE NAGORNO-KARABAKH CONFLICT

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Armenian-Azerbaijani negotiations over the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region are reportedly at a standstill, according to New Eastern Europe. Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov addressed the United Nations General Assembly on September 28, stating that the negotiations had made no progress. He added that “negotiations cannot last forever,” hinting at a possible next round in an already 3-de-

cade long ethnic conflict.

While Azerbaijan's political community shares the foreign minister's views on conflict de-escalation, Armenian leadership changed their previously positive rhetoric midway through the latest round of negotiations. When Armenian President Ilham Aliyev and Azerbaijani Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan first met on September 28, both leaders ‘vowed to de-escalate tensions and create a direct hotline between the two sides,’ according to New

Eastern Europe. However, former Armenian National Security Director Arthur Vanetsian later declared “No one will surrender even an

inch of land,” and Prime Minister Pashinyan called for the absorption of Nagorno-Karabakh into Armenia.

Armenian political leadership is not alone in their provocative rhetoric. President Aliyev himself stated that the concept of ‘the people of Nagorno-Karabakh’ does not exist, according to AzerNews. In this same speech, President Aliyev noted Armenia's failure to comply with four UN Security Council resolutions for more than 25 years and its ethnic cleansing of Azerbaijani people in the “occupied territories of Azerbaijan.”

These recent escalating tensions are nothing new, but rather the reopening of old wounds. The Economist says that although Azerbaijan and Armenia's long history of conflict over the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict formally began in the ear-

ly 1990's, their divide runs even deeper. Azerbaijan shares an ethnic identity with neighboring Turkey, the same country responsible for the disputed 1915 Armenian genocide.

This history only makes the recent flare-up in tensions all the more concerning, reports Emerging Europe, especially considering the intensity of the conflict only three years ago, during the April War of 2016. Armed confrontations between Azeri and Armenian forces killed over a dozen and wounded many more in the nearly four days of fighting, according to Geopolitical Futures. Given the rhetoric of Armenian and Azerbaijani leaders and the history of the region, an escalation to full-scale conflict is a serious possibility.

The strategic significance of the region Armenia and Azerbaijan inhabit – the Caucasus –

also makes this rise in tensions concerning. A new conflict in the Caucasus could have far-reaching effects on international politics. Though the region is often ignored by the West, it is a strategically important location to Russia, Turkey, and Iran.

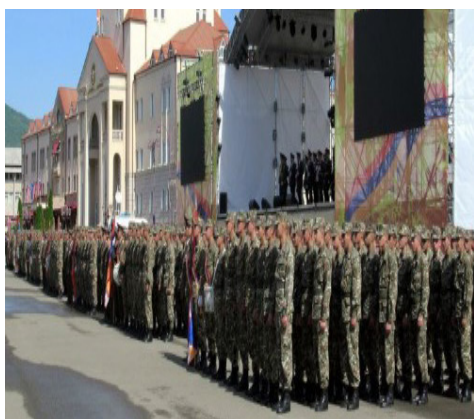
The Nagorno-Karabakh region is not the only historically volatile region in the Caucasus. The stability of Russian-controlled northern Caucasus is debatable, given ongoing conflicts in the predominantly Muslim regions of Chechnya and Dagestan. In addition, ongoing frozen wars between the South Ossetia and Abkhazia regions of Georgia culminated in Russian intervention in the 2008 Russo-Georgian War.

For civilians, the souring turn in diplomatic relations may be disappointing, but it is not surprising. Since hostilities

began in 1988, more than 3,000 Armenians and Azerbaijanis have died and at least 1.2 million people were displaced and took refuge in Azerbaijan. Violence has become so normal that civilians report that they “get used to being shot at.” An anonymous citizen told interviewers, “I haven't even thought about what my life would be like without the conflict.”

However, there might still be hope for the people of Nagorno-Karabakh. One Azerbaijani interviewee suggested to Emerging Europe that because people on both sides of the conflict once coexisted peacefully, there is still the potential for change. “We used to live with Armenians very well. So why not live together again?”

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Nagorno-Karabakh Army Showcase. Courtesy of Flickr.

FURTHER COMPLICATION IN XINJIANG PROVINCE

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The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) continues to exert its influence on the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) and ethnic minorities within its borders, particularly Kazakhs and other Turkic Muslims. The Washington Post reports that this crack-down saw to the construction of facilities dubbed “re-education camps” where the CPP forces members of ethnic minorities to learn about the CCP and Chinese nationalist ideas against their will. These camps are part

of the “Strike Hard Against Violent Terrorism” campaign, included in President Xi Jinping’s “China Dream” Initiative. Testimony from ethnic Kazakhs who left China following their stay in reeducation camps, along with a letter written by a prison guard translated into English by Freedom’s Herald, paints a grim picture of these camps. Former prisoners report large-scale sexual violence, involuntary sterilization, the punitive use of IUD birth control, and forced abortions. Many also mentioned the detention and abuse of minors. The Jamestown Foun-

dation states that “China’s pacification drive in Xinjiang is, more than likely, the country’s most intense campaign of coercive social reengineering since the end of the Cultural Revolution.” Human Rights Watch reports that the CPP makes individuals outside of the camps report on their family members or denounce loved ones who have been detained. Relatives of ethnic Kazakhs often receive calls from detained family members asking them to end advocacy efforts. Since the launch of “Strike Hard Campaign against Violent Terrorism” in May 2014, the number of people formally arrested within Turkic Muslim regions leaped three-fold compared to the previous five years. A core part of this policy is the large-scale surveillance employed throughout Xinjiang, including the collection of biometric data. Human Rights Watch

reports that this data collection identifies individuals who supposedly pose a threat to the CCP. The CPP frames the Sinicization of greater China as beneficial to the greater good. Socially reengineering China is one of Xi Jinping’s most ambitious objectives. His “China Dream” initiative aims to elevate the values of the Han ethnic majority and restore the country’s historic prosperity and national pride. As perceived outsiders, Turkic Muslims represent a threat to the consolidation of Chinese nationalist power. Since 2016, ethnic Kazakh Muslims residing in northern Xinjiang face increased targeting by the Strike Hard Campaign. On top of restricted movement policies that bar Turkic Muslims from leaving the country or even certain areas of their own neighborhoods, those spared from detention might be required to attend Chinese flag-raising ceremonies, political indoctrination meetings, and Mandarin classes.

NPR reports that the government charges many Muslims with spreading “superstition,” leaving little room for religious tolerance for Islam in China. In Kazakhstan, there is a public outcry against the Xinjiang camps and human rights violations perpetrated against ethnic Kazakhs. However, many in the country believe that their government prioritizes its economic relationship with China over the rights and interests of its people. Kazakhstan remains relatively quiet in order to preserve its relationship with China, being especially hesitant to recognize people fleeing discrimination as refugees. Foreign Policy quoted International Legal Initiative president Aina Shormanbaeva as saying, “Recognizing someone from Xinjiang as a refugee would mean acknowledging that the camps and the abuses in them are real, which would contradict Beijing.” As outlined by the U.N. Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Geno-

cide, China’s intentional suppression of the Uighur and Turkic Muslim culture within Xinjiang and other Muslim populations in China via their network of reeducation camps amounts to cultural genocide. However, because China is not a party to the International Criminal Court, acknowledging the reality of this situation poses enormous political and economic implications for any country that does. Many Muslim-majority countries even stand by China due to economic pressures. In the future, social re-engineering might be one of Xi’s greatest legacies. The Washington Post quoted Vanessa Frangville, a professor of Chinese Studies, who stated that curbing religion removes any of the CCP’s opponents to power: “To control the whole population through technology and ideology -- it’s what leaders dream about.”

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Questionable activities of the CCP in the Xinjiang region. Courtesy of Wikipedia.

PROTESTORS FIGHT CORRUPTION IN HAITI

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In Haiti’s capital city of Port-au-Prince, protests and outcry over hard living conditions and corruption persist in the streets among both the rich and the poor. Since chaos first erupted in February, angry citizens have looted stores, homes, ATMs, and police stations, according to BBC News. Because of these protests, children are unable to attend school while their parents cannot commute to work without the risk of being assaulted with stones or bullets. To combat revolt in the streets, police have retaliated with live ammunition and tear gas. The death toll has reached seven people. While many citizens have burned vehicles and buildings, others have abstained from the violence. Choosing to wave flags instead of resorting to violence, these protesters have chosen an alternative, more peaceful route to denouncing corruption and promot-

ing a more stable society. Protesters have attributed their increased frustrations to inflation and federal corruption, following a detrimental government shutdown that lasted for several weeks, as reported by U.S. News & World Report. Over the course of the last 25 years, Venezuela provided oil to the Haiti to support its struggling economy. Despite lenient guidelines and low-interest payments provided by this PeroCaribe Plan, Haiti’s problems persisted. Haitian President Jovanel Moise has been the main target of backlash throughout these protests. Citizens of both Haiti and Venezuela believe that Moise and other government officials were implicated

in a conspiracy to steal government-subsidized funds from Venezuela. Because of this, Haiti has not been able to sustain its prosperity and its people. Allegedly, a total of \$4 billion which should have been allocated to rehabilitation projects has gone missing. Citizens demand to know where these funds were placed. By looking at the state of the capital, protesters believe that it has certainly not been invested into

infrastructure as promised. Auditors have also noted this corruption, as they have produced a 600-page report and submitted it the country’s Senate on September 27. Rather than agreeing to resign, the President instead canceled his appearance at an upcoming United Nations conference in order to quell the angry crowds, reports NPR. However, his speech on September 25 was unsuccessful,

as protests continue to persist in the capital. Despite uproar throughout the nation, Moise has refused to leave office, citing his reluctance to “leave the country in the hands of armed gangs and drug traffickers.” While the people of Port-au-Prince and the nation refuse to cease the riots until funds are properly allocated, citizens also insist there is hope for a peaceful, more prosperous life in

the Caribbean state. Haiti is one of the poorest countries in the Western Hemisphere. However, given the current stalemate, work by the country’s Senate may be able to resolve the ongoing conflict and allow the nation to work productively towards a sounder future.

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The disruptive scene of protest in Haiti.

Courtesy of Wikipedia.

Low Voter Turnout Stains Afghanistan Election

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The recent elections in Afghanistan had the lowest voter turnout rates the country has seen since 2001, around 20 percent of registered voters, according to The Guardian. This low number can be attributed to many factors including security threats, voter disillusion, and technical and logistical issues.

This turnout is extremely low in comparison to previous elections. In 2004, 60 percent of eligible voters in Afghanistan participated in the election. "Turnout appears to have been

dampened not just by Taliban threats, but also voter disinterest," wrote Thomas Ruttig and Jelena Bjelica of the Afghanistan Analysts Network.

The low voter turnout in 2001 was caused by the United States' invasion of the country. The Taliban now holds the largest amount of territory it has held since the United States' invasion. Following the breakdown of peace talks between the United States and the Taliban, this seems unlikely to change any time soon.

The Washington Post reports that while there was less violence from the Taliban than had been

expected, the turnout for the elections was still very low. The Afghan government was expecting large scale violence and attacks at the polls, but none came. Despite this, some polling stations did have to close because of reported gunshots and violence. Fear stemming from this expected violence is be-

"As a result of the low voter turnout, Afghanistan's next president will have a weak mandate from his people."

lieved to be one cause for the low voter turnout.

Another cause is thought to be genuine anger and apathy about the state of democracy in

Afghanistan. The Taliban has made a concerted effort to delegitimize this election and has frequently referred to the western-backed government as a "puppet regime." Beyond these threats, there was a general sense of apathy surrounding these elections in Afghanistan and for those who live

in territories controlled by the Taliban, the outcome will likely have little impact on their lives.

Turnout is also believed to have been dampened by the fact that voters were required to be photographed. It appears that many female voters were either prevented from participating or refused to do so because they had religious objections to being photographed. Many religiously conservative women had no intention of voting at all. Many voters found the

new biometrics technology at polling stations to be confusing and frustrating.

The Transparent Election Foundation of Afghanistan also reported a number of technical difficulties experienced at polling stations with everything from biometrics and electricity to the ballots' ink. The elections were fraught with minor difficulties that frustrated many voters. The Guardian says that "Many Afghans also found fault with the voting process, claiming they found incomplete voters' lists, unworkable biometric identification systems aimed at curbing fraud, and, in some cases, hostile election workers."

To make problems worse, it now appears that ballot boxes may have been stuffed at some locations. The New York Times reports that many locations which saw sparse voter turnout reported turnout close to 90 percent and had boxes brimming with ballots.

The country's Independent Election Commission has promised to discard false ballots and feels confident that their new biometric data system will help them detect voter fraud, but this system experienced many problems during the election.

As a result of the low voter turnout, Afghanistan's next president will have a weak mandate from his people. This is a major issue for a country such as Afghanistan where the Taliban poses a major threat to regime security and stability. The winner of the election is not expected to be announced for at least another week as the Independent Election Commission sorts through ballots and biometric data.

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Constituents at a voting area.

Courtesy of Wikipedia.

EUROPEAN ECONOMY ON THE BRINK OF RECESSION

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Senior Correspondent

Europe's manufacturing Purchasing Manager Index (PMI) was placed at 45.7 in September, the lowest level since October 2012, reports Business Insider. This data suggests that Europe is approaching a recession. PMI is an economic indicator of the health of the economy based on a survey of managers and their expectations for each sector. Numbers below 50 imply economic contraction.

HIS Markit, a global information provider, explained that the German economy, Brexit, and the impact of US-China trade tensions decreased industrial confidence in Europe. It is likely that Europe would suffer even more if the United States imposes limits on American investments in China, reports CNBC.

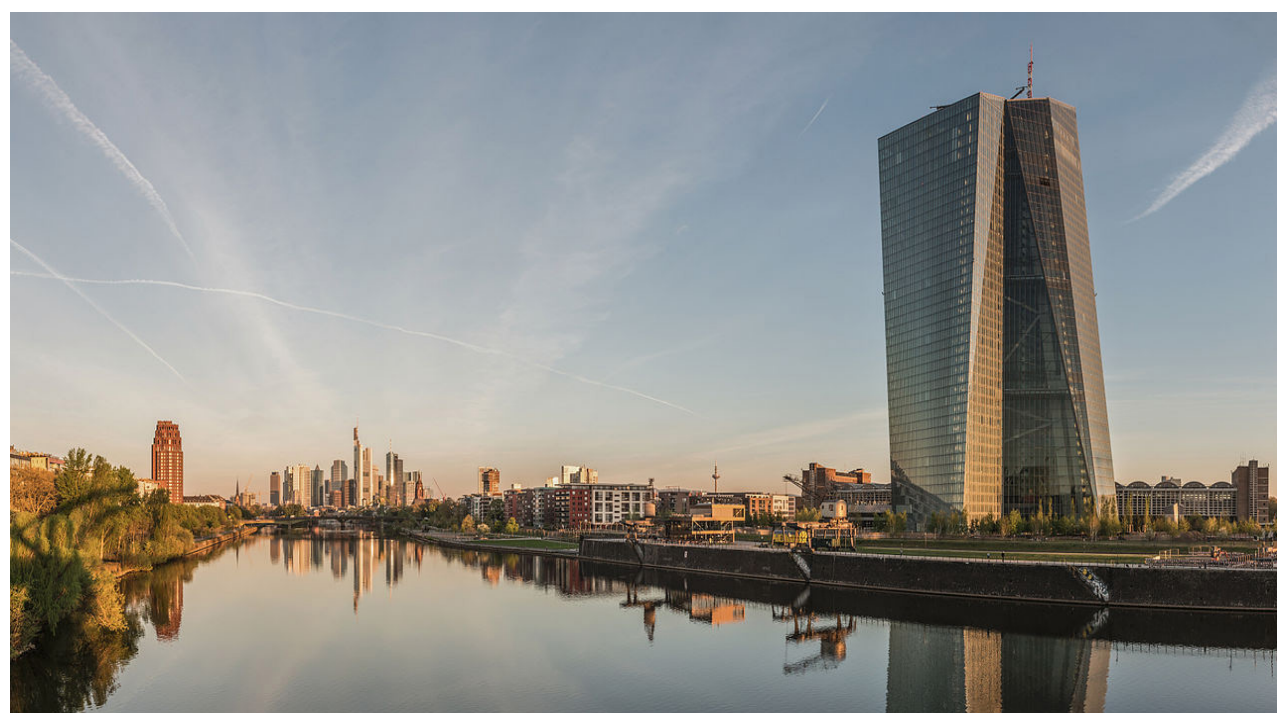
Constantine Fraser, European political analyst, stated that investment limits could decrease the value of the Chinese Yuan even more, meaning that there will be a lower demand from

China and other countries for European products. This lower demand would hurt Europe, as the continent's economy relies heavily on exports.

Moreover, the German economy is another concerning factor for Europe. According to Reuters, the country's manufacturing recession worsened in September. Some factories recorded the lowest production levels since the last global financial crisis. As such, German economic institutes decreased their economic growth forecasts for 2019 and 2020.

Manufacturing is deeply connected across the globe, so it is influenced by trade tensions and weaker economies, says The Wall Street Journal. Jason Thomas, head of global research and managing director at the Carlyle Group, highlighted that the production of most products no longer take place in just one country. Consequently, every major economy is hurt when manufacturing activities contract in one country.

The possibility of a no-deal Brexit could



The European Central Bank and Frankfurt Skyline.

Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

deepen concern for the European economy, reports Bloomberg. The UK is scheduled to leave the European Union at the end of October, and it is likely that in the worst-case scenario, the United Kingdom and the rest of Europe would enter into a recession. The Bank of England estimated that without a deal, Brexit could cost the UK 5.5% of its gross domestic product, enough to push Europe into a recession.

Additionally, the value of the euro continues to

fall, says The Wall Street Journal. With trade tensions, many investors look for safe assets, such as the U.S. dollar. Salman Ahmed, chief investment strategist at Lombard Odier IM, states that it is even possible for the euro to reach the same value of the U.S. dollar. He also stressed the need to change fiscal policy in order to avoid the use of aggressive monetary policy in the future due to a recession.

Nonetheless, some parts of Europe still have

a bright outlook. The French National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies left unchanged its growth forecast of 1.3 percent, reports Euronews. The French economy added 166,000 jobs in the first half of 2019 and the low inflation rate, combined with tax cuts, gave consumers a higher disposable income.

Given these conditions, the new president of the European Central Bank, Christine Lagarde, is pushing governments to embrace pro-growth

policies, according to The Guardian. In the past, Europe lowered interest rates to counter economic concerns. Although this restrained the debt crisis, it did not promote economic growth. Due to the vast number of factors in this issue, there is no telling what a clear solution would be.

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IRAQ

Gabrielle Goldworm
Staff Writer

While the protests in Hong Kong dominated the global social media cycle for the past several months, another mass-scale protest is occurring further west, in Iran. Demonstrations erupted in the Iraqi capital of Baghdad and in several provinces across Iraq. According to Reuters, the protests quickly turned violent, as Iraqi's who felt disenfranchised by their corrupt and ineffectual government took to the streets to display their frustration with the current state of the nation. The anti-government protests began as a response to the long power outages, lack of basic municipal services like electricity and water, and the rampant government corruption, which the protestors believe is to blame. CNN reports that these poor condi-

tions, coupled with Iraq's high unemployment level of around 10 percent, prompted hundreds of Iraqi people to protest. The response to the protest and rioting that followed is violent, with demonstrators claiming they have come under attack from security forces using live ammunition. This assertion is supported by Reuters journalists, who claimed they witnessed demonstrators who were killed and wounded by snipers from surrounding rooftops. In the first eight days of the protests, there were 110 reported deaths and over 6000 people reported injured as a direct result of the demonstration. Heavy security restrictions were imposed quickly to quell the protests. City-wide curfews were imposed, and a nation-wide internet blackout was enacted, shutting down about 75 percent of the nation's internet

access. While CNN reports that access has since been mostly restored, according to reports by Aljazeera, Iraqi social networks remain offline. The protestors began by marching on the capital and storming governors' offices in Najaf and Nasiriyah. Parts of the latter location's buildings were set on fire during the protests, prompting Prime Minister Adel Abdul-Mahdi to hold an emergency meeting with members of his security council to find a way to combat the chaos. The government response to the protests has been varied throughout the demonstration's progression. According to the New York Times, protests are not new to the country, though they usually occur during summer, when power outages cause the most suffering for citizens trying to combat Iraq's extreme heat conditions. This is

also the largest and most volatile display of public anger towards Prime Minister Abdul-Mahdi's government since it took office a little over a year ago. According to the New York Times, the Prime Minister blamed "aggressive attackers" for turning the protests into a violent standoff with security forces, but after the building burnings at Najaf and Nasiriyah, he quickly responded with attempts to call a secu-

rity council meeting to contain the protestors and attempt to meet their demands. On October 8, he introduced a "13 Point" reform plan that, according to Aljazeera, is centered on providing subsidies and housing for the poor, as well as vocational training and education initiatives for unemployed youth. Prior to this, the Iraqi military admitted to using "excessive force" against protestors, and calls for investiga-

tion into acts committed during the demonstrations are still ongoing. Only time will tell if said investigations will occur, and if they, along with the Prime Minister's proposed reforms, will quiet the discontent felt by so many Iraqi's.

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Iraqis on the street in Baghdad.

Courtesy of the Conversation.

ECUADOR

Collin Duran
Staff Writer

Ecuadorian President Lenin Moreno can currently be found stuck between a rock and a hard place. The rock is a \$4.2 billion loan from the Inter Monetary Fund (IMF) to help relieve Ecuador's foreign debt, while the hard place is a mass of Ecuador's youth, indigenous people, and transportation union. In the middle of it all a new policy has been implemented ending the state's over forty-year-old fuel subsidy and launching Ecuador into the worst protests the country has seen in decades, forcing an official "state of emergency." The Ecuadorian President has been lambasted by his people following his announcement to cut fuel subsidies, which according to NPR, have already driven gas prices up \$.54 and diesel prices up \$1.27. There are expectations that prices for both gas and diesel will double, BBC reports. Since the policy announcement, the country has been immersed in protests,

according to the Washington Post. There have been over 500 arrests, the destruction of numerous shops and buildings in the city's capital, the death of one protester, and a net loss of a whopping 12 percent of the nation's oil production. Tensions have only risen since President Moreno announced Monday that he will not reverse his decision to eliminate the subsidies, further digging himself into a hole of unpopularity within his own country. Protestors have been nothing if not effective in making their opposition to the President's policy more than clear. Comprised of CONAIE, an organized group of indigenous peoples across the country, including students and union workers, joined forces with an organized strike by the country's transportation union to make their sentiments heard. Government buildings were looted and vandalized, emergency response vehicles were destroyed, oil fields were captured by indigenous protest groups, radio and television ser-

vices were suspended, and road ways throughout the Andes were occupied to the point where there was no transportation in or out of the area, Bloomberg reports. Protestors are hoping that these actions, even if extreme and destabilizing, will create enough pressure for Moreno to reverse his policy decision. Those fighting against the President's subsidy cuts make up the most economically challenged demographics in Ecuador and are hoping for a reversal to avoid future financial stress. But a change in the policy now is unlikely. Despite the rampant civil unrest and a current approval rating of an abysmal 30 percent, and according to The Guardian, the Ecuadorian president is making the financially responsible decision by following through with the so-called "austerity program." The Washington Post reports that Moreno defended the policy, arguing, "It's necessary to correct grave economic errors... In the region, the only country with this fuel subsidy is Venezuela. And you'll



Ecuadorians protest President's economic measure.

Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

agree with me, it's not a good example to follow." According to the BBC, the numbers back up the President's claim; fuel subsidies cost the government \$1.3 billion annually and had been in place since the late 70s, costing the government billions for the last forty years. Additionally, in cutting the fuel program, along with other public spending projects, the Ecuadorian government was able to secure a \$4.2 billion loan from the IMF in the hopes of addressing both the country's foreign debt problem and fiscal deficit, according to The Guardian. But in 'stick-ing-to-his guns' and up-

holding the subsidy cut, Moreno is pitting himself against his own people. Protestors have been skeptical of the IMF loan and as a possible egg on by Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro and Ecuadorian opposition leader Rafael Correa, Reuters has cited the aforementioned loan as the root cause of the subsidy cuts. Political scientist Javier Corrales of Amherst College however suggests that civilly unpopular yet financially responsible economic plans are not only becoming a commonality in Latin America but could in fact be an eventuality for all states in the region. In

a conversation with the Washington Post, Corrales argues "States pursue expansionary policies that are unsustainable, but which consumers like... And eventually they're followed by restrictive policies that are inevitable but which consumers dislike."

With no end to the protests in sight and Moreno holding steady to his subsidy cut, he will likely find himself in between that rock and a hard place for a while.

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PROTEST TO VIOLENT REBELLION

Hong Kong

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On October 5, the Hong Kong government issued an anti-mask law, targeting protestors in the ongoing anti-government movement. Despite the government's best attempts at quelling the movement, the ban has sparked more defiant and violent protests, threatening the livelihood of Hong Kong's citizens. Carrie Lam, the chief executive of Hong Kong, created the anti-mask law under the Emergency

Regulations Ordinance (ERO), a mechanism that allows laws to be passed without the jurisdiction of the legislative branch. On the surface, the law simply bans the use of masks in both authorized and unauthorized public assemblies. It also stipulates, however, that authorities are permitted to remove masks to verify and record people's identities, arresting those who resist. As Inkstone News notes, protestors could be imprisoned for a year sentence and fined HK \$25,000 or \$3,500 USD.

The ban, however, carries a dangerous precedent for Hong Kongers and the government alike. The masks carry a dual purpose: firstly, they protect against irritants such as pepper spray or tear gas; secondly, they conceal the identity of protestors, whose professional careers and personal lives are at stake. Without these masks, protestors are vulnerable to police attacks and facial recognition. Protestors could also be targets of counterattacks by pro-government assailants. Never-

theless, protestors have not complied and are now brazenly wearing the masks as a statement against the establishment. Authorities have responded brutally in response to the mask movement. With the anti-mask law having only been released last week, police and other security officials were not given any formal training, according to South China Morning Post. Instead, authorities have followed a loose interpretation of the law, taking extreme and often violent measures against protestors. Additionally, SCMP reports that 77 protestors have been arrested under the anti-mask law. Alex Lam, a reporter for Hong Kong's Apple Daily News, tweeted about his own experience with the brutality in Hong Kong: "1st day of #AntiMaskLaw, cue the abuse of power. Riot police came looking for ppl with masks in Central like a pack of wolves. They found two and rushed to push them to the ground."

With the new law, #HK-Police thinks the(y) can use force simply bc ppl cover their face. #Free-HongKong."(Twitter) Violent means have even been taken against civilians and reporters who, by the anti-mask law, are permitted to wear them for religious, professional, or journalistic reasons. The lack of communication among security officials and police forces is mainly responsible for the unscrupulous attacks against innocent bystanders. While the government's aims were to quietly end the protests with a "deterrent effect," the ERO backfired with the law being regarded as "draconian" at best, The Economist reports. Although Lam states she will not incite the ERO again, The New York Times predicts she may be tempted to establish curfews and other strict limits to civil liberties. Now, Hong Kong officials and protestors are at an impasse. Carrie Lam

and her cabinet hope to quell the ongoing protests while simultaneously proving their worth and independence to China. Nevertheless, the government's efforts have only been met with fierce defiance by increasingly adamant protestors. Will the Lam administration infringe on human rights and crackdown on the Mask Movement? Will the Chinese Communist Party get involved to get Hong Kong under control? Or will the protestors prevail in the end? The movement has been sustained for months and while the future looks grim, hope burns bright in the hearts of the people.

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Ongoing protests in Hong Kong show no sign of stopping.

Courtesy of WikimediaCommons.



The Extinction Rebellion right outside of UK Parliament.

Courtesy of WikimediaCommons.

Alyssa Veltre
Staff Writer

The Extinction Rebellion, an UK climate activism group, took to the streets and the airwaves early in October to protest a period of environmental breakdown. Hundreds of protestors partaking in peaceful civil disobedience quickly turned into an organized rebellion blockading London. According to The Guardian, the protest even spread to other cities around the world. Activists hope to force political leaders to expe-

dite legislative decision to address the climate emergency by carrying out various unusual activities; from gluing themselves to government buildings to locking themselves in funeral hearses at Trafalgar Square, The Guardian reports. There were more than 300 arrests as of October 8, and campaigners hope there will be more. This is in addition to the 1,000 who were arrested during the April protests. Other protest sites include Germany, Australia, the Netherlands, and New York City. While most of the

disobedience is loud, it remains civil. The group has recently called for members to get arrested so they can "use the judicial system as a platform to force change," according to the New York Times. The group also demands a focus on capital cities to "maximize disruption." This is in contrast to previous climate protests by different groups at traditional sites, like power stations. Roger Hallam, a co-founder of the Extinction Rebellion, encourages campaigners to take inspiration from the

Civil Rights Movement and the Gilet Jaunes. "We need only a few hundred thousand people to actively break the law and support such activities to put us in the ball park of structural change," Hallam wrote in his research as a doctoral student. Hallam recommends hunger strikes as well. Organizers plan to maintain protests for at least a fortnight, or until their demands are met. "While we squabble over Brexit, the planet is burning," said Zuhura Plummer, one protestor from Oxford. "The moment to act is now, not 2050." The Extinction Rebellion has three core demands: the government must "tell the truth" by declaring a climate emergency, commit to net zero emissions by 2025, and create a citizens' assembly to create policies on the ecological emergency, according to the official Extinction Rebellion website. While the protests have been tolerated by Londoners, UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson remained unimpressed, referring to protestors as

London

"uncooperative crusties," reports BBC. He said at a book launch, "I am afraid that the security people didn't want me to come along tonight because they said the road was full of uncooperative crusties and protestors of all kinds littering the road." He went on to mock them as "nose-ringed" and "annoying." Despite Boris Johnson, the Extinction Rebellion continues to garner support from high-profile figures and groups. Rowan Williams, the former archbishop of Canterbury, expressed his support and the band Radiohead donated proceeds from a set of tracks to the group, according to the New York Times. Greta Thunberg also attended the group's first major event declaring rebellion outside Parliament just weeks after the UN reported a climate crisis would arrive by 2040. The UN report predicted food shortages, wildfires and mass die-off of coral reefs. The Arctic sea ice is 10 times more likely to disappear over the summer, heat

waves will increase, 411 million will be subject to severe urban drought, and 80 million could be left homeless from flooding from rising sea levels if the temperature rises by so much as one more degree. These statistics are drastically reduced if temperatures even rise only half a degree more, but nations are not even on track for the one degree mark, according to the New York Times. James Hansen, the scientist who warned of climate change in congressional testimony 30 years ago, said, "I find the people who think we are doomed to be very tiring and unhelpful." He added, "I think we are capable of being smart."

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EXTINCTION REBELLION PROTESTS RAGE ON IN EUROPE AND AUSTRALIA

Julia Nicolls
Staff Writer

Since the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) October 2018 report, the international community responded with outrage as government officials and corporations failed to acknowledge the need for extreme environmental action. According to the IPCC report, society has 12, now 11, years before climate change and the actions towards the Earth become irreversible. Therefore, the world will experience food shortages, dying of coral reefs, increased extinction of species by the hour, economic decline, and a multitude of other horrific effects.

Groups like the United Kingdom's "Extinction Rebellion" have been protesting across Europe and Australia by stopping traffic and protesting at government and corporate conventions. Initially taking off this past spring, the group aims to create a social disruption that forces policymakers and corporations to make sustainable change, as stated by group leaders to ABC. Ultimately, the group's goal is to achieve zero net carbon emissions by 2025. To do this, they blockaded bridges across London and Melbourne, as well as pressured GreenPeace to take a harder stance against these officials. Additionally, this group takes inspiration from the Freedom Ri-

ots and the Montgomery Bus Boycotts, believing that civil disobedience is the best way to create change. This strategy held throughout the



Protest in the United Kingdom.

Courtesy of Image.

past several days as busy streets throughout Europe and Australia have been blocked. According to TIME, over 450 people have been arrested during this two day period for their acts of protest.

Boris Johnson, the UK's Prime Minister, responding to these events by calling the protesters "uncooperative crusties," a slang term for eco-pro-

testers. This does little to violate their cause and will likely invigorate the group. Nevertheless, these actions do not stop in Europe. In Brisbane, protesters chained themselves to intersections and

others locked themselves in barrels of concrete for demonstration. Another individual hung from a harness on the Brisbane Story Bridge branding the "Climate Emergency" flag. The majority of these individuals were taken into police custody by the end of the protest as reported by Newsday. Through these actions, it is clear the climate emergency is more than a social or environmental issue, but rather an international security crisis as it threatens global well-being. Additionally, these protests prove that environmentalism is not just for "treehuggers," but those fighting for animals, society, and the environment alike. Sustainability and en-

vironmentalism are extremely intersectional, as it extends across business, agricultural, social, and production lines. This is a movement for everyone regardless of age or profession. Participation in this movement does not require a mass demonstration, but your voice. The most powerful thing we as individuals have. As headlines read, "hottest summer on record," use your voice to say, "this will be the coolest summer for decades to come, if we do not stop it." Prove your voice to be powerful and take action.

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OUR HYPOCRISY CAUSES CLIMATE CHANGE

Anthony Chen
Staff Writer

On September 20, the Global Climate Strike organized a massive protest to promote climate change awareness in the streets of New York City. After the rally, youth protesters will most likely return home to Amazon Prime packages on their doorsteps, commute long distances to work or school the following week, and consume products that are the major causes to the dilemma we are trying to resolve. But looking around, there were no protests outside the storefronts of fast fashion companies such as H&M, Forever 21, and Zara. Neither were there any protests against Amazon, Exxon Mobil, or Chevron. Thus, we still direct the blame on our government and Don-

ald Trump for protecting our own habits, because it is easier that way. Let us take some time to reflect on ourselves together. As the younger generation in America, we are bound to put limitations on the number of decisions we make on consumption. We have debts, loans, dues, and payments that significantly reduce our personal budgets. At the same time, we are constantly reminded of new trends, the latest iPhone model, or a new style of clothing posted on Pinterest. What used to be simply "wants" eventually turned into "needs" in order to be accepted into today's society for survival. Fast fashion companies sell not only large amounts of trendy clothes at extremely affordable prices, they also sell us a dream. We may not be

able to afford Kanye's outfits; however, we sure can afford alternatives that mirror the glamorous look, because it is a "sin" to be caught wearing the same clothes twice in Instagram photos. These companies no longer produce clothing based on demand, rather on the current fashion trends, to which it aims for Hail Marys' to make profits. When there are low seasons or months when clothes of these ridiculous designs are not being sold, it is usually dumped at landfills or burned in incinerators. The sad truth is that recycling and donating excess products cost money. These companies do not conduct business to save the world, they do business because we the consumers allow for this fast, throw-away culture. Large companies thrive

on low-cost production and high retail values for maximum profits. If everything we owned was not made in China, it will most likely be made in other developing countries; such as Vietnam, Bangladesh, India, and Mexico to name a few. These factories, again for the sake of profit and to meet our demands, push for non-stop production of goods, all while disregarding the waste it leaves, pollution it releases, and the overall livelihood of its workers. When we see pictures of mass deforestation projects on social media, know that is because we feel we "need" these things to survive in our upscale society. Not only do we just need these things; we need them now. Less than a decade ago, Amazon sold books that arrived two weeks after it was ordered online. Today, it sells just about anything made in those same developing countries, but now with guaranteed delivery in two days or less. Meaning that the ugly Christmas sweater worn once and immediately throw away, will arrive before the holiday, or that the textbooks we last minute order, will be on time for the new semester. A decade ago, delivery trucks left those warehouses with a full load. Now it leaves

the warehouse every hour with just a few packages to fulfill our Prime membership guarantee. Imagine the number of delivery trucks on the road at one time, to deliver the necessities of one person. Add on the number of other transportation trucks, daily commuters driving to work and to school, and regular people trying to get to places; we have congested traffic. This makes it much more dangerous on major highways, not to mention that slowing down or remaining idle consumes more fuel, only further increasing emission rates. Imagine the 1,800 gallons of water it takes to produce one pair of jeans in our closet. Imagine roughly 11 million paper plastic cups thrown away daily after we consume our Starbucks coffee. Almost every aspect of our lives in a developed nation contributes to climate change, and we should not blame only others without first looking at our own waste. President Barack Obama, the leader of the fight on climate change, even discussed the difficulties of changing American norms. We live in a time where our own citizens have many problems at hand. Whether it is commuting far distances to save on living expenses

or purchasing affordable necessities, the distant problem of climate change does not matter if people cannot survive in our changing society right now. Fighting climate change requires us to make personal sacrifices in our lives and allow time to help us gradually accept new and healthy habits. If we cannot make these changes voluntarily, then why are we asking our government to? We must set aside our emotions, political biases, and motives, and focus that effort on self-reflection. Instead of protesting against our government, we need to protest our own habits, which can be considered as much more dangerous than President Trump. While he may have made the decision to withdraw from the agreement to save our planet, we are the ones that continue to contribute to climate change through our own actions. Let us not practice hypocrisy. If there is no Planet B, then it is up to us, each individual person, to take the first step. If we want to solve the problem, we can no longer be a part of the problem.

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Controversies on the rhetoric of climate change.

Courtesy of Leo M. Sabangan.

BREXIT FURTHER COMPLICATED FOLLOWING LEAKED PLANS

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If someone told me last fall that I would still be writing about Brexit negotiations a year later, I might not have believed them.

To my surprise, Brexit has become a joke to which there is no punchline. Negotiating Britain's exit and a subsequent trade deal with the European Union (EU), which The Guardian reports one conservative Member of Parliament claimed would be "one of the easiest in human history," has become years-long struggle.

The latest episode in the great British breakoff prominently focuses on the EU's "hard-hitting rebuff" of Boris Johnson's latest Brexit deal, and the leaked report which exposes the de-

tails of the rejection, according to The Guardian.

The Independent reports that in a phone call between Mr. Johnson and German Chancellor Angela Merkel last week, Ms. Merkel personally rejected the Prime Minister's most recent proposal. Several other European leaders have also told Mr. Johnson to go back to the drawing board lately. French Prime Minister, Emmanuel Macron, according to The Independent, told his British counterpart he needs to redraw his plans "by the end of the week," a few weeks earlier. On the other hand, The Guardian reports that Dutch foreign minister, Stef Blok, calls for more "realism and clarity" in the proposals to come from Britain.

Mr. Johnson denies the credibility of the leaked

Brexit plans, details Forbes. He claims that the leaked plans, which were rejected, are not his actual proposal but affirmed how the "reality" of Brexit includes custom checks at the Irish border, much to the chagrin of the EU, Republic of Ireland, and some in Northern Ireland. Businesses will also be greatly impacted by a no-deal Brexit.

The reestablishment of customs checks between the Republic of Ireland and British Northern Ireland remains a key source of contention in proposed Brexit plans, particularly the latest one from Mr. Johnson, reports The Independent. In the plans introduced under former-Prime Minister Theresa May, there would have been a backstop between the two, keeping Northern Ireland



Prime Minister Boris Johnson speaking at an event.

Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

in the European single market and preventing a hard border, The Irish Times reports. However, The Independent also report that both the EU and the Republic of Ireland have been solid on their stance that there will be no Brexit agreement without a backstop.

Currently, Britain is set to leave the EU on October 31, deal or no deal. There have been efforts in Parliament to extend Article 50, and Mr. Johnson has recently pledged to write to the EU to ask

for an extension if a deal is not reached by earlier this month, according to The Guardian, though he has previously publicly expressed his refusal to extend Article 50. The latest repudiation from the EU makes an extension look more and more likely by the day.

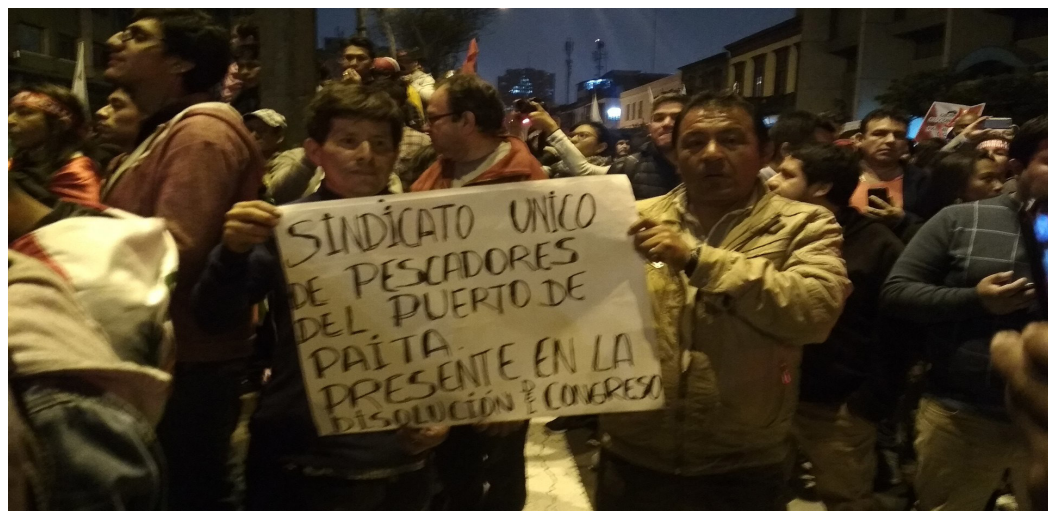
Despite the rejection dogpiled upon Mr. Johnson and his proposal, talks have continued between the UK and the EU, according to The Independent. They report that "technical talks" were

continuing between the parties, despite "little signs of progress being made."

The BBC reports that the EU and UK have agreed to "intensify" Brexit talks, but Donald Tusk worries that the positive signs leading toward an agreement may be "political tricks" according to The Irish Times.

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ANTI-CORRUPTION CRUSADE MAKES PERU'S CRISIS WORTHWHILE



Peru's constitutional crisis with some positives.

Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

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According to Reuters, on September 30, the Congress of Peru was dissolved. This decision comes after a long-standing year of Peruvian President Martin Vizcarra laying out proposals to clean up political and judicial institutions against rampant corruption among the country's elites. Early legislative elections have been rescheduled for January 26.

Peru has a history of four previous presidents involved in serious scandals. Two have been convicted, one faces extradition from the United States, and another shot himself rather than submitting to arrest. Peru

proved that the rule of law can extend all the way to the top. Continuing this pursuit, President Vizcarra engaged in an anti-corruption crusade which soon became futile as his efforts were resisted by an opposition-controlled Congress.

During the week when Odebrecht, Brazilian construction giant, planned to reveal the identities of more than 70 Peruvian "code names," mainly Congress members who received bribes or illegal campaign funding from them, shameless legislators were privately planning their getaway: the election of a new constitutional court who will rule in their favor. The drafted list by Congress members of judicial candidates in-

cluded the names of ten judges who are allegedly linked to corruption or face unresolved criminal accusations themselves, according to The New York Times.

Among the items on the court's agenda was a habeas corpus petition seeking the release of jailed opposition leader Keiko Fujimori, the daughter of imprisoned former president Alberto Fujimori, as well as the release of Mr. Fujimori himself. Such a calculated cover-up scandal proves that the fundamental issue beneath the Peruvian legal, constitutional, and political tangle is assured political corruption within Congress.

In response, Vizcarra attempted to head the

plan off by calling for a vote of confidence. According to the country's constitution, if two of the president's cabinet chiefs lose votes of confidence, he/she is allowed to dissolve the unicameral parliament. Washington's Post states that previously in 2017, the government had lost one of those votes. On September 30, cabinet chief Salvador del Solar addressed lawmakers and asked them to hold a confidence vote on the government proposal to make the selection of Constitutional Court justices more transparent.

Ignoring the proposal, Congress, instead proceeded with the election of the first two judicial candidates. Treated as a rejection of the vote of confidence, Vizcarra sent the candidates packing in order to expedite legislative elections to January 26. Per Aljazeera, this was regarded as a constructive step "towards overcoming the crisis" according to the Organization of American States.

Some lawmakers refused to leave their seats and instead engaged in a "temper tantrum," as the former head of the Peruvian chapter of the anti-corruption group Transparency International, Walter Alban, states. With a lacking majority to vote for impeachment, Congress persisted in its intent to suspend Mr. Vizcarra and installed his vice president Mercedes Aráoz. She, however, resigned one day later as the police and military reclaimed Vizcarra as their "supreme commander," according to Washington's Post. Despite no longer being legislators, former members of Congress claimed they will ask the country's top court, the Constitutional Tribunal, to intervene in what they call a coup.

Peruvians, however, appear overwhelmingly in favor of Vizcarra's decision, according to The New York Times. Weary of endless scandals and partisan bickering, recent polls have found that more than 70 percent of Peruvians favored the congressional shutdown. The OAS affirms "it is appropriate for the political polarization the country is suffering from being resolved by the people at the polls," says Time.

It is then not Vizcarra who has won here, but the people. With his new cabinet, Vizcarra must prove his commitment to the Peruvian people and enact the anti-corrupt initiatives he promised. The opportunity is opened for a new political reform; for justice to be executed. The people have demanded justice and now the corrupt system that uses democratic institutions to shield their members and allies from criminal investigations must be reformed and corrected.

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CHINA CONTINUES TO GAIN INTERNATIONAL INFLUENCE THROUGH BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE

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Staff Writer

The One Belt One Road Initiative, supposedly “the project of the century,” is President Xi Jinping’s ambitious project that would increase Chinese influence over global economics. Though roughly 152 countries accepted investments to infrastructure developments, per Sky News, many countries have been cautious to proceed in recent days. In Zambia, Vietnam, and most recently Kazakhstan, the OBOR has been the subject of much public disapproval. Despite Kazakhstan’s president Kassym-Jomart Tokayev stating that Kazakhstan would, “show greater tolerance of dissent,” protests that erupted in defiance of the Chinese-led OBOR projects were subsequently silenced by the local government, according to The Economist. Many countries are worried about “debt-trap diplomacy,” and rightfully so. Sri Lanka’s Hambantota Port, which was

built entirely on OBOR allocated funds, is now on a 99-year lease to China, per The New York Times. This is because Sri Lanka failed to pay back its debts. Many fear that multiple African countries are on the path to being ensnared into the same circumstances as Sri Lanka. Some see China’s expansion into Africa as neo-colonialism - a tell-tale sign of China’s dreams of regional hegemony. Although it is each country’s prerogative to decide whether or not to take part in the Belt and Road, potential partners should ensure that China is not simply preying on financial instability. But is China at fault for expanding its economic and political sphere of influence? Due to the decisions of the Trump administration, the United States has seen a severe decline of influence in international politics. This renewed isolationist policy in the U.S. is naturally opening the door for another country to take up the helm as an international moderator. According to the Brookings Insti-

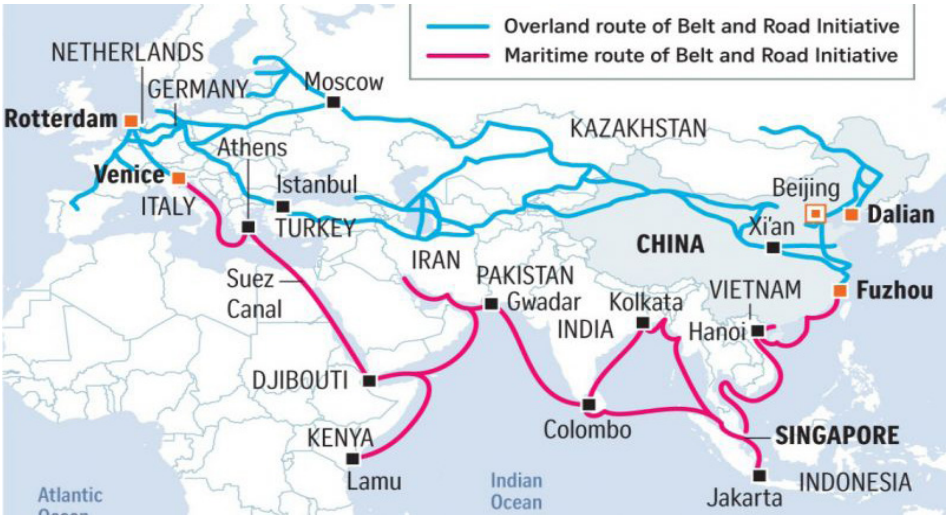
tute, China makes up 20 percent of global manufacturing, and exports \$539.5 billion worth of goods to the U.S. China is already an economic behemoth, and America has allowed China to expand its political interests with little to no threat of international backlash. Even with official statements from the Chinese government that the OBOR is strictly infrastructure projects, there have been findings that show the joint construction of military facilities in Pakistan, states Foreign Policy. Under the guise of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, it is a very poorly kept secret that China intends to expand its military influence. Many western powers have publicly questioned China’s objectives; however, Beijing has consistently announced that the OBOR was strictly related to constructing infrastructure and improving relations with involved countries. Keeping in mind that China is set to nearly doubling its nuclear arsenal, according to a U.S. military intelligence

assessment referenced in Time, the Mediterranean must be cautious and vigilant of what President Xi’s real intentions are for the OBOR Initiative. The United States should seek to further improve relations with foreign countries. In 2013, President Barack Obama began the Power Africa project, which sought to bring renewable energy to African countries, especially in areas with barely any access to electricity. These kinds of projects bolstered relations between the U.S. and African countries involved in the project, and not only helped modernize Africa but created an international framework

for countries and organizations alike to participate in the development of third-world countries. It is imperative that the U.S. reopens dialogue with the outside world and reclaim its international standing. If the U.S. does not provide incentives to foreign countries to make deals with the U.S., China will slowly gain dominance over international markets, and can quite possibly take America’s spot as the world’s strongest economy in the near future. In addition, Chinese corporations are much more indifferent to corruption, environment, and labor laws; and quite frankly, the developing African countries are not

so inclined to international standards when they are being presented with such large investments. The west should attempt to take part in Africa’s infrastructure development, which has been rapidly growing and improving, not only because of the immediate and future economic gains for all parties involved, but to ensure that African countries are not being abused in the process by Chinese firms that may be taking advantage of poorer states.

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The Diplomatic Envoy



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DIPLOMACY PROFESSOR INVOLVED IN NEW UN BIODIVERSITY TREATY

Luisa Chainferber
Senior Correspondent

On September 30, I had the opportunity to sit with Dr. Catherine Tinker, the brain behind part a new international treaty on Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ), at the United Nations.

Dr. Tinker explained that the purpose of this new treaty is to fill the gaps present in the 1980 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, which established rules concerning the use of the ocean and their resources. While this convention was an important step, Dr. Tinker emphasized that rules concerning biodiversity and property rights from research remained unclear. The BBNJ treaty aims to determine that all humankind shares the right to the sea's biodiversity, that is, as it represents a universal good owned by all humans.

In order to reach negotiations, Dr. Tinker notes that many nongovernmental organizations and other parties engaged in dialogue with member

states over the past several years. These organizations have facilitated the negotiations and are now observers at the Intergovernmental Conference sessions at the UN.

Concerning these negotiations, Dr. Tinker explained that the most important step for the potential BBNJ treaty is the completion of a text that could be sent to the UN General Assembly if member states manage to reach an agreement.

This treaty would be legally

binding and would require more than one negotiating section in 2020. Dr. Tinker believes that the treaty would create "a new system of global governance for all aspects of life in the marine environment and human ac-

tivities on the high seas," and as such, the treaty will have a vast scope.

As an example of chal-

Tinker asserted that any new treaty must consider the impact that climate change already imposes

cludes access to marine genetic resources and benefit-sharing (monetary and nonmonetary). She noted that these factors are one of the four parts of the metaphorical "package" countries currently negotiate. In fact, the intellectual property rights regime was a discussion topic at the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, meaning this convention could serve as a guideline for a new treaty concerning the marine environment.

Nonetheless, Dr. Tinker highlighted that it is too early to predict what will be the outcome of discussions because many are still in the early stages of negotiations.

Even with negotiations, Dr. Tinker still expects that member states will need to accept certain compromises. For example, she mentioned the need to balance the freedom of navigation and access to natural and mineral resources for economic development. Most importantly, she stated that it is important to ensure conversation. Countries

must also decide who will be the decision-making authority, who will take on the possible role of a scientific body, who will initiate the transfer of marine technology, and who will back the financing.

To conclude our discussion, Dr. Tinker affirmed that the BBNJ treaty could open the door for future environmental discussions or treaties. Because the BBNJ treaty covers the sea surface to the deep seabed, Dr. Tinker emphasized that much of the territory covered by the treaty is yet to be explored and therefore only in the future it will become clear if the treaty is effective or not. Ultimately, she believes that the biggest challenge will be in making the BBNJ treaty strong enough to apply principles of international environmental law but also provide flexibility for scientific knowledge and new legal principles.

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Dr. Catherine Tinker at the United Nations. Courtesy of Seton Hall University Website.

enges ahead, Dr. Tinker stated that it is necessary to provide flexibility for scientific knowledge but also ensure that states meet the treaty objectives of conservation and sustainable use of the marine environment. Dr.

for marine biodiversity, in addition to promoting a solution to human activities that are harmful to marine biodiversity.

Dr. Tinker explained that a possible solution could include a public-private partnership that in-

INTERVIEW WITH A UNICEF-USA INTERN

Saveria Antonacci
Opinion Editor

Seva Tsivgas, a Diplomacy and International Relations major, minoring in Cyber Security, Spanish, and Economics hit off her senior year by starting out an internship at UNICEF-USA (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund). There, she serves as a Global Cause Partnerships (GCP) Intern, where she helps oversee the transfer of funds from donors to their intended programming at UNICEF. Tsivgas also researches new organizations to build partnerships and assist in fundraising. Most of these organizations can be grouped in as corporate, faith-based, club-based, or foundational partnerships.

Tsivgas believes the most rewarding aspect of her internship is to "be part of something greater," where she can see the direct results of her contributions. Recently, she saw how the cause

transcends a New York City Office after tasked with writing an article to announce the eradication of maternal and neonatal tetanus (MNT) in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Tsivgas believes it is one thing to learn about UNICEF USA's efforts towards eradicating polio, but another to create content to help promote them. As a result of UNICEF's efforts, only 12 countries remain with a high risk of MNT, which is down from 59 countries in 2000. Tsivgas was also given the opportunity to write a toolkit for volunteers to review at World Polio Day on October 24.

After speaking with the Chief Financial Officer of UNICEF USA, Tsivgas concluded: "every single person who works at UNICEF USA has a direct impact on what we do abroad." If a team member struggles in doing a tedious task, they can go to a meeting and understand the effects of the tasks towards children abroad.

When asked about pri-

or leadership roles she believed helped prepare her for this experience, Tsivgas cited her time spent as an At-Large Senator and Parliamentarian at Seton Hall University's Student Government Association and a Women's Empowerment Intern at International Rescue Committee (IRC). At these organizations, she was "able to make a lot of professional relationships with other student leaders and organizations. I was also able to expand the portfolio of IRC's employer network. We would work with employers to help refugees find jobs through building healthy relationships."

Tsivgas also serves as the President of SHU's Women of Diplomacy Leadership Program, where she continues to draw encouragement from in her responsibilities to create more partnerships with women's empowerment organizations.

Additionally, Tsivgas drew inspiration from her grandmother who immigrated to the United

States from Greece. "I heard all these stories about my grandmother's experience living in poverty, working as a housekeeper in a hotel or working in a luggage factory." Tsivgas' inspiration turned into motivation, as these stories inspire her to continue being a force of

change. "I've always been passionate about helping displaced people... especially when they are forced to navigate all the saddening experiences people have after leaving a home country." She added, "It took her decades to see the benefit of moving to the United

States and I want to be able to help people in new situations so that others won't have it as rough as my grandmother did."

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Seva Tsivgas speaks on her experience interning with UNICEF-USA.

Courtesy of Saveria Antonacci,

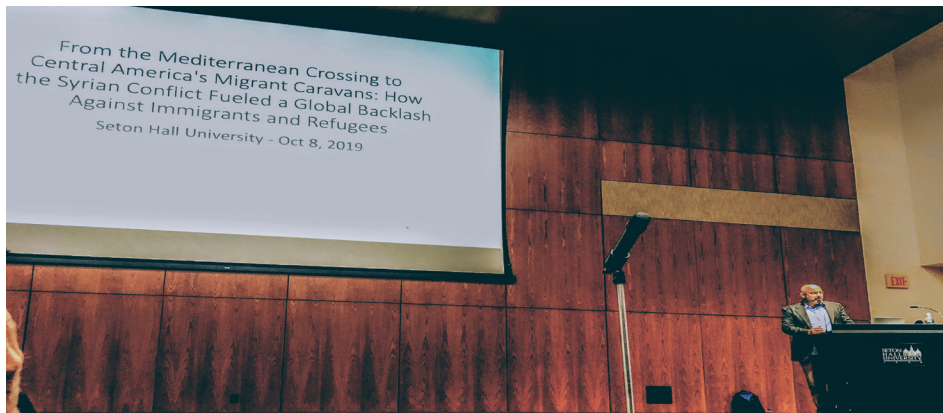
SAM DAGHER DELIVERS LECTURE ON THE SYRIAN CONFLICT AND REFUGEE MIGRATION

Harshana Ghoorhoo
Staff Writer

Sam Dagher, journalist and author of *Assad or We Burn the Country* delivered a lecture at Seton Hall University on Tuesday October 8, 2019. His talk, “How the Syrian Conflict Fueled a Global Backlash Against Immigrants and Refugees,” was focused on the Syrian crisis and how the conflict placed a global stigma on refugees fleeing Syria.

Mr. Dagher has worked in the Middle East for over 12 years and has been reporting on the Syrian conflict since its onset in spring 2012. For more than two years, he was the only Western correspondent living in the Syrian capital Damascus and reported on all the happenings from within the country.

In his address to the audience, Dagher spent a considerable portion of the lecture breaking down how the conflict began, elaborating on the different stages of the conflict, and explaining how it ultimately led to mass emigration from Syria. “When



Sam Dagher speaks on his findings at Seton Hall.

Courtesy of Tien Phan.

Russia intervened directly in September 2015 on the side of the Syrian regime and started killing civilians,” Dagher explained, “the Syrian population became hopeless and joined an exodus of migrants crossing the Mediterranean to Europe.”

The Syrian people saw no hope for the war coming to an end and risked perilous journeys to find better and safer futures. Dagher pointed out that above 13,000 Syrians had perished at sea while trying to flee between 2014 and 2018.

He also talked about the importance of addressing the issue of immigration. “We must have a real debate in 2020 about immigration, why people are fleeing their countries and what

the U.S. could do to help them stay home.” With respect to the negative perception that we have acquired globally on refugees, Dagher asserted that we need to tell the stories of the refugees creating better lives for themselves and assisting in their new communities. “We need to highlight their success stories and show what these people are achieving despite all the odds being stacked against them.”

During an interview, Dagher spoke of his inspiration behind writing the book, “At the time, there were attempts to rewrite history, to pretend that it started as an armed insurgency and there were no peaceful protests from the perspective of the regime and its supporters.” Therefore, Dagher felt

the need to set the records straight and to have an accurate elaboration of the history of the war.

Speaking on the conflict, Dagher made important remarks about how countries in the Middle East had always been caught up in these power plays that were bigger than them. “During the cold war, the U.S. wanted the middle eastern countries to be on its side and oppose the Soviet Union while the rival country wanted these countries on its side to oppose the U.S. Unfortunately, all that these powerful countries wanted were leaders who almost answered to them and whom they could control.”

According to Dagher, the fundamental problem has always been that

the parties involved never considered what the population wanted. “We always had this relationship with these horrible regimes that always served the West’s interests but,” Dagher remarked, we “never took into account the people, and I think we are still stuck with that narrative to this day.”

As Dagher revealed, statistics show that above seven million Syrians are displaced worldwide across Europe and in refugee camps. Dagher believed that “if there is to be a viable solution, then we need to include the Syrian people in the dialogue.” In order to have any possible hope for an end to this conflict, it is vital to listen to the demands of the population. “Unfortunately, right now all the solutions involve players like Russia, Iran, and Turkey as well as some elements of the opposition which don’t necessarily represent all the Syrians.”

Extending the argument to the role of the international community, Dagher talked about the inefficiency of the UN and how it has not been able to act as a strong de-

terrent. “The way the UN acts is that it based itself in Damascus and it would get permission from the regime to go to the areas that were being constantly bombed. Most often, the UN was not allowed into areas to which the regime prevented the access of food and medical assistance.” Because of how its bureaucracy functions, the UN operated in Syria according to the extent that the regime allowed it.

Speaking of potential solutions, Dagher said, “the first step is for the UN to review all of its policies and try to learn lessons from all these experiments.”

He also maintained that the voice of the people needs to be heard and acknowledged. “It is vital to look at what’s happening on the ground and how to help the people have their freedom and basic rights restored. Only then will there be hope for reconstructing society.”

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WOMEN OF DIPLOMACY LEADERSHIP PROGRAM: WOMEN RUNNING

Alyssa Futa
Communications Liason

On Wednesday, October 16, the Women in Diplomacy Leadership Program organized a panel of women in local government. The panel included four women: Rielly Karsh, a Councilwoman for the town of Clinton, New Jersey; Janice Kovach, the Mayor of Clinton, New Jersey; Sheena Collum, a Seton Hall University alumnus and President of the village of South Orange, New Jersey; Mila Jasey, an Assemblywoman for the state of New Jersey.

The conversation began with introductions by each woman and led to a discussion about specific areas of focus, such as each woman’s experience, women empowering each other to run for office, the importance, or lack thereof, of age in office, and women’s voice in government. Their unique positions allowed for discussion on a local, state,

and even federal level.

Karsh, the founder of Moms Running, an organization that is “dedicated to increasing the political engagement of moms at every level of the political landscape” according to the Moms Running website, emphasized how the landscape of politics is changing, with technology and social media acting as an increasing part of campaigns. The four panelists had a lively discussion on the topic of women empowering one another, including the importance of encouraging women to run for public office. Kovach left the audience with the saying, “If you don’t have a seat at the table, you’re on the menu,” and partook in discussion regarding the importance of listening, particularly amongst different age groups in government. The panelists admitted to the difficulties that surround a political career but also shared the experiences and events that made the hardship worth it.

Frank Mabalatan, an attendee, said regarding the panel, “It was a wonderful and insightful event, but I think there should have been more men there in the audience. Feminism and women empowerment is a social process that is gender inclusive. I just feel like men have an obligation to be a part of that and empower women.” The panelists’ conversation also included how men can be allies in government by recognizing women for their work and seeking to understand the intricacies of gender equality issues.

The event was organized by Alyssa Futa and the Women in Diplomacy Leadership Program, an organization that seeks to empower women in the field of Diplomacy and International Relations. The organization has put on events such as Dress for Success, which elaborated on what proper business attire looks like for women and is organizing trips to New York City and Washington D.C.



Women Running Panel leadership in governmental career.

Courtesy of Alyssa Futa.

with speakers including the UNICEF Chief Executive Officer. The Women in Diplomacy Leadership Program also hosts a mentor/mentee program and encourages all students, not just women, to join the organization.

The panel ended with audience questions, including an international perspective on how gender equality in government varies throughout different regions. Audi-

ence members also asked about the sacrifices that are necessary when in office, to which the panelists admitted to there being numerous sacrifices they had to make but emphasized that there are ways to serve your community while maintaining a balance in other aspects of life.

The panelists effectively illustrated the different walks of life that politicians can come from and

celebrated the diversity between elected officials, citing the necessity of having a wide variety of experiences and perspectives in order to do right by the communities and constituencies they represent.

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