

The World Bulletin

Bringing the World to the Island

Women Watch Soccer in Iran
Restoration of Notre Dame
Alvord Center/YMGE Trip to Portugal
African Migrants Journey to Europe
Fires Destroy Amazon Indigenous
Japan Has a New Emperor



“Two thousand years ago, the proudest boast was ‘*civis Rōmānus sum*’” said President John F. Kennedy in 1963. “Today, in the world of freedom, the proudest boast is ‘*Ich bin ein Berliner*.’” Minor translation gaffe aside — he did not, of course, mean to say that he was a German pastry, a *Berliner Pfannkuchen* — President Kennedy, the gifted orator, followed in the tradition of mobilizing the “I am/We are” construction to rally a populace around common ideals, to express solidarity, and to encapsulate a set of core values in a simple byword or mantra. “All free men, wherever they may live, are citizens of Berlin, and therefore, as a free man, I take pride in the words *Ich bin ein Berliner*,” he said; in so doing, he made the demonym *Berliner* synonymous with the free and Berlin a metonym for liberty.

Declarations of solidarity by identity have various analogs throughout time; these statements, politically and emotionally charged, have served as vehicles for belonging and inclusion — or exclusion — throughout time. In Ancient Rome, the declaration *civis Rōmānus sum* guaranteed travelers safety; in the New Testament, it was Saint Paul’s demand to be tried as a Roman citizen before Caesar, and in Marcus Tullius Cicero’s *In Verrem*, it served as a plea for the legal rights of citizenship. In France, the “I am/We Are” construction has become a political reflex — one of inclusion and solidarity — after times of great tragedy, after tests of national identity. The origin of its modern usage can be traced to protests in May 1968 following attacks on the German-Jewish activist Daniel Cohn-Bandit, when *nous sommes tous des juifs allemands* — we are all German-Jews — echoed through Parisian streets. On September 13, 2011, following the 9/11 attacks two days earlier, *nous sommes tous Américains* — we are all Americans — was emblazoned on the front page of the French newspaper *Le Monde*. In 2015, the rallying cry *Je Suis Charlie* memorialized the deaths of those killed at the offices of the satirical French magazine *Charlie Hebdo* and, by extension, celebrated and supported the freedom of speech in France. Recently, in solidarity with undocumented immigrants, French individuals have taken up and mobilized the expression *nous sommes tous des sans papiers*: we are all undocumented immigrants. In the United States, after officer George Zimmerman shot Trayvon Martin, an unarmed African-American man, in 2012, “I am Trayvon” became a popular rallying cry at Black Lives Matter demonstrations. Identifying with the disenfranchised, the oppressed, is a means of celebrating them as valued members of society, including them in the political process, and extending, metaphorically, a hand as a source of succor. In so doing, these demonyms, these expressions of belonging, these declarations of collective identity, become bywords for inclusion, diversity, and belonging.

While the “I am/We Are” construction and the use of demonyms can promote inclusion, they can also serve as agents of exclusion. The pendulum swings toward exclusivity and insularity when sociological, cultural, or demographic factors challenge societal norms and traditional modes of identification thus become less effective. Today’s globalization and rising multiculturalism, the ensuing questions of cultural integration and assimilation among migrants, and the rising numbers of refugees fleeing conflicts across the globe have provided the conditions that challenge traditional identifiers. As countries’ roles on the world stage become less certain, as national self-confidence wanes, as nations look inward, and as the perennial debate about the definition of citizenship, or what it means to be a citizen, flares up again, demonymic and national identifiers serve a critical role in parsing and defining a people’s identity. With individuals fearing that “otherness” threatens the integrity of traditional national identity and thus unwilling to allow demonymic identifiers to transform and adapt to changing demographics, statements that once expressed solidarity now serve as agents of xenophobia and promote exclusion. Like in Hungary: common at

rallies for the right-wing Movement for a Better Hungary (JMM) are signs that proclaim “*Nem Turista! Magyar Vagyok!*” or “I am not a tourist; I am a Hungarian!” And the right-wing Polish newspaper *Jestem Polakiem* proclaims boldly “I am a Pole!” The designations *Magyar* — “Hungarian” — and *Polakiem* — “Pole” — suddenly take on entirely new meanings in these professions of identity; demonyms and other identifiers become bywords for exclusion, purity, homogeneity, and insularity.

Its role on the world stage uncertain, its workforce ostensibly threatened by rising numbers of Eastern European migrants from the European Union (EU), the UK is now grappling with what it means to be British. Their ever-controversial answer, decided by referendum in 2016, is one that embraces inward-looking, insular politics antithetical to the spirit of globalization: Brexit.

The whole of the EU faces a similar, perhaps imagined, specter: the gradual replacement of its constituent national identities and its racial homogeneity with a precarious plurality of cultures, beliefs, normative codes, and ethnicities. As the EU, for example, admits more refugees fleeing conflict in the Middle East, what it means to be French, German, Italian, British, becomes more unclear. In these times of perceived cultural and demographic duress, there have arisen campaigns to redefine, constrict, and streamline demonymic and national identities by looking inward and reclaiming traditional means of identification: that is, focusing on ethnic purity, superiority, and embracing xenophobia (all the while using demonymic identifiers as rallying cries to these ends). The United States of America, too, ignoring its origins as a haven for refugees and rejecting Emma Lazarus’ charge in her *New Colossus*, inscribed on the Statue of Liberty — “Give me your tired, your poor, / Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free / The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.” — has looked inward and away from globalization in order to patch up its damaged sense of national identity and the waning clarity and coherence of “Americanness.” At a crossroads, we must define what it means to be American. When someone holds up a sign proclaiming “I am an American” or “We are Americans,” what does it mean? That, as Americans, we must uphold values of multiculturalism and belonging, or that we must protect the original American, Anglo-Saxon identity?

Expressions of “I am/We Are” identity may serve as statements of both belonging and exclusion, and they ultimately beg us to dig deeper. What informs the emotional charge and character that define demonymic identifiers like “Hungarian,” “Pole,” or “American”? Beyond demonymic identity, what are the qualities of citizenship we’d like to see perpetuated? What defines our people and our role in our increasingly interconnected world? We must question: How can we ensure that our demonyms, our collective identities, become bywords for inclusion, diversity, and belonging? As Loomis students’ political views take shape, as they parse global politics, develop their stances, and evolve into conscious global citizens, they must consider their “I am/We are” identities: What are the limits and scopes of these pronouns? Who is permitted to say “I am [insert ethnicity here]?” How can we promote belonging? LC students must consider the meaning with which these identifiers are imbued, the ways they define themselves and their associations. What values are associated with “Loomis Chaffee student?” and with “Senior,” “Junior,” “Sophomore,” and “Freshman”? What does it mean to be a member of the Loomis community?

As students, faculty, alumni, and alumnae, it is our job to serve as custodians of the community, to make “Loomis Chaffee” a byword for the values of inclusivity and diversity, to embrace the patchwork of national identities, political persuasions, and cultural values that comprise the community we know and love, so that when we proclaim à la JFK “I am a Loomis Chaffee [graduate, teacher, or student],” our values, though implicit, are self-evident.



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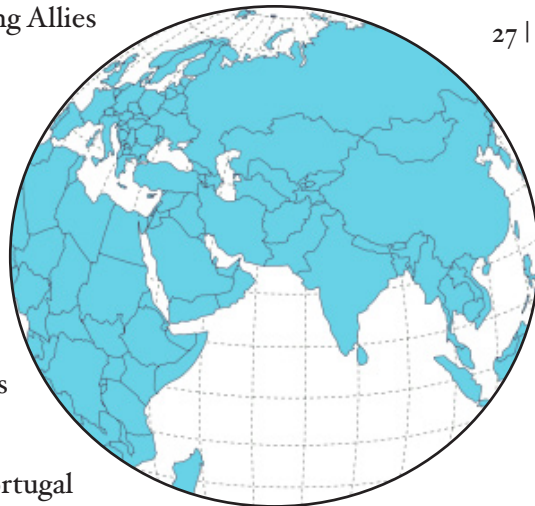


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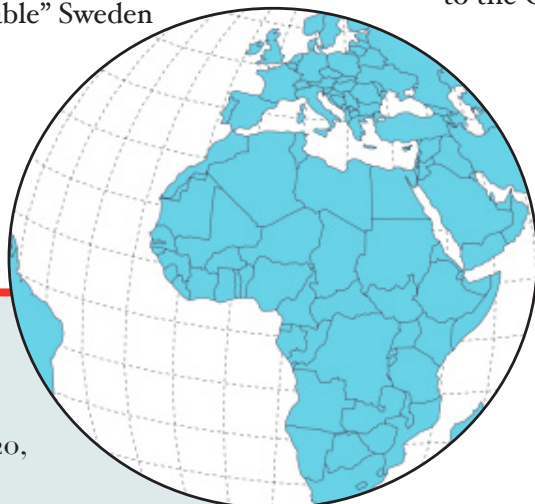


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About the Writers

The Log. Principal cellist of the Connecticut Youth Symphony Orchestra, in 2017, Ethan founded the Loomis Chaffee Music Mentors program. Previous articles in the *Bulletin* include “Remembering Anti-Apartheid Leader Ahmed Kathrada” (Spring 2017) and “Archaeology Digs the Spotlight” (Spring 2019).

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COOPER RAPOSO '21 (“Meghan Markle, the Royal Family, and Freedom of the Press”) is from Chatham, New York, and makes his home on the Island in Taylor Hall. Cooper writes for *The Log*, is a member of the ski team, and he enjoys painting.

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SOPHIE ZHUANG '21 (“Abiy Ahmed Wins Nobel Peace Prize”) is a prefect in Cutler Hall from Shanghai, China. A member of the varsity swimming and JV lacrosse teams, Sophie wrote “Protests in Sudan” for the Spring 2019 issue of the *World Bulletin*.

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MIDDLE EAST

Gender Equality Through Soccer? Women in Iran Permitted to Attend Men's Games by Arjun Grover '20

On October 10, 2019, the Iranian soccer team faced off at Tehran's Azadi Stadium against Cambodia in a World Cup qualifying match that saw the home team win comfortably by a score of 14-0. Yet this match will not be remembered for the score, but rather for the unprecedented scene in the stands. For the first time since 1981, women were allowed to buy tickets to and attend a live soccer match in Iran.

Blowing vuvuzelas, waving flags, and displaying the country colors of red, green, and white, 3,000 women packed a special women-only section in the stadium.



Women cheer on the Iranian national team against Cambodia on October 10, 2019.

Adding to the strange atmosphere, this section at the top corner of the stadium was packed to capacity while the rest of the 78,000-seats remained largely empty (Tariq Panja, "Iranian Women Allowed to Attend Soccer Game for First Time Since 1981," *New York Times*, 10 October, 2019). This experience was so new to the women attendees that a small group of women had to teach the rest of the section how to chant and cheer for their team. Many fans also paid tribute to Sahar Khodayari, dubbed the 'Blue Girl,' who set fire to herself after being charged with "openly committing a sinful act" when she attempted to attend a soccer match one month prior without a hijab and dressed as a man (Christiana Macfarlane, Sean Coppack, and James Masters, "FIFA Must Act After Death of Iran's Blue Girl," *CNN*, 12 September 2019).

On match day, FIFA sent a delegation to the stadium to ensure the safety of the women who were brave enough to attend. According to FIFA President Gianni Infantino, "There can be no stopping or turning back now. The passion, joy, and enthusiasm showed today is remarkable to see and encourages us even more to continue the path we have started.

History teaches us that progress comes in stages and this is just the beginning of a journey" (Simon Evans, "Iranian Women Attend First Soccer Match in 40 Years," *Reuters*, 10 October 2019). However, there is still much more progress needed. "Part of me is happy, but they have basically created a wall, it's not what we've been asking for," said Maryam Shojaei, sister of the Iranian national team's captain, Masoud Soleimani Shojaei, and one of the leaders in the campaign to allow women to attend soccer games. "It's not like everybody can go and sit freely with their brothers, fathers or husbands" (Panja).

The rule that banned women from attending public sporting events was implemented in 1979 after the Iranian Revolution, an uprising that led to the toppling of the monarchy, the establishment of Islamic Law, and the enforcement of extremely conservative values (Rebecca Tan, "For the First Time Since 1980, Iranian Women Allowed to Watch the World Cup in the Same Stadium as Men," *Washington Post*, 20 June 2018). As a result of the Revolution, women were required to cover themselves in public, were not allowed to pursue higher education, and were forced out of the labor force. In June 2019, women were allowed to enter the stadium in Tehran for the first



Maryam Shojaei, center, wore sunglasses and a hat while demonstrating in June 2018 at a World Cup game in Russia, where women and men could watch together.

time since 1981, not to watch a live game, but to watch a live broadcast of a game between Iran and Spain. However, only hours before the event was set to start, authorities canceled the event due to infrastructure difficulties. This only added to the disdain among female soccer fans and the international community.

Moving forward, the future looks positive as the



Male and female Iranian fans in the stands at the men's World Cup in Russia in June 2018. Activists have campaigned for FIFA to suspend Iran, one of the top teams in Asia and a 5-time World Cup qualifier, from world football over its prohibition of women attending men's matches, as well as repeated instances of government interference in the national team's affairs, which FIFA says violates its own rules.

women-only sections at Tehran's Azadi Stadium seem permanent. "If we can do it once...we can keep pushing for more. I really, really hope it happens," said Ms. Yeganeh Rezaian, an Iranian journalist who attended the event (Tan). FIFA President Infantino released a statement after the event where he hailed the day as a positive step forward, but said that he still "looks more than ever towards a future when ALL girls and women wishing to attend football matches in Iran will be free to do so, and in a safe environment" (Panja).

Kafala in Qatar: World Cup Construction Faces Criticism

by Ting-Yo Tan '22

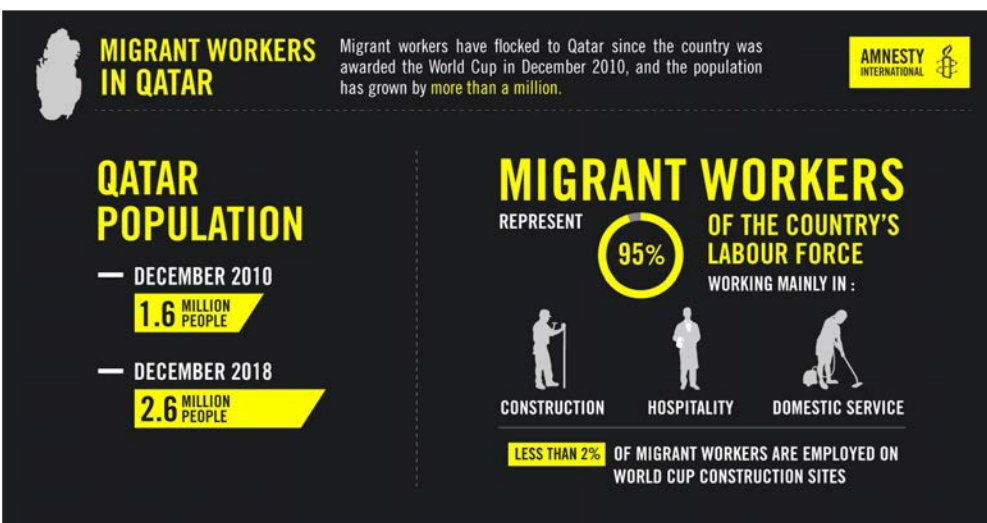
When Qatar was granted the rights to host the 2022 World Cup, the country's population suddenly surged by almost two million (Samuel Lovett, "Qatar 2022: Migrant Workers Still Being Exploited Despite Promises of Reform, Says Amnesty International," *Independent*, 5 February 2019). Due to the need for construction workers for new stadia and other infrastructure, thousands of impoverished workers left their home countries and immigrated to this small Arab state, seeking a better income to help their families back home. However, as soon as they arrived, all of their travel documents were confiscated, and they were grounded in Qatar while living in terrible conditions. They could neither quit their jobs nor leave the country. They were essentially stuck.

With Qatar's labor laws failing to act against this abuse, migrant workers were still vulnerable to harsh exploitation every day. The culprit of these exploitations is the notorious "kafala" migrant sponsorship system. The practice, widely used in construction and domestic sectors in Persian Gulf countries such as Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates, legally binds domestic

and immigrant workers to their employers, limiting their movement, and violating the basic human right to freedom. For workers helping prepare the country



A group of workers takes a break in the day. Migrant workers are forced to stay in the country by their kafeel, who impound their visas and forbid them return back to their home country.



for the 2022 World Cup, the slave-like system forces them to toil in extreme heat non-stop and with few breaks in a day. From 2010 to 2013, approximately 1,200 Indian and Nepalese workers died in Qatar, from causes related to work accidents, heart attacks, and illness connected to unsanitary living conditions (Mark Byrnes, "How Qatar's World Cup Could End Up Killing 4,000 Migrant

Workers,” *CityLab*, 25 March 2014). Under the kafala system, these workers would remain in Qatar for years, unpaid and vulnerable to detention and arrests if they were caught by their kafeel (employer) trying to desert the job.

In November 2017, Qatar finally signed an agreement with the International Labor Organization (ILO). Filled with promises, the Qatari government passed several laws and legislation to benefit migrant workers, including setting a temporary minimum wage, ending the exit permit requirement for most, and establishing a workers’ insurance fund. (“Reality Check: Migrant Workers Rights with Four Years to the Qatar 2022 World Cup,” *Amnesty International*, February 2019). Since then, those workers became more hopeful that the kafala system would be banned soon, and that they would receive proper wages from then on. “This agreement is a welcome step that offers a prospect of hope for migrant workers in Qatar,” claimed James Lynch, deputy director of the Global Issues Program of Amnesty International. “There are some positive commitments—in particular relating to unpaid

THE KAFALA SYSTEM

Despite the reforms underway, employers still have powers over migrant workers to:



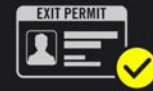
1 SPONSOR THEIR VISA AND ISSUE THEIR RESIDENCE PERMIT



2 STOP A WORKER CHANGING JOBS WHILE IN CONTRACT, OFTEN FOR UP TO 5 YEARS



3 REPORT WORKERS AS HAVING “ABSCONDED”, LEADING TO ARREST OR DEPORTATION



4 CONTROL WHETHER DOMESTIC WORKERS AND OTHERS CAN LEAVE THE COUNTRY BY ISSUING EXIT PERMITS

Until now. In October, the International Labor Organization announced that the kafala system in Qatar would finally be banned in January 2020. The ILO claimed that the Qatari government and their ministers have acceded to end kafala, as well as to introduce a “non-discriminatory minimum wage” (David Conn, “Qatar to Abolish ‘Kafala’ Labor Next January Before 2022 World Cup,” *Guardian*, 16 October 2019). Marking “the end of kafala,” the ILO said in a statement, “These steps will greatly support the rights of migrant workers, while contributing to a more efficient and productive economy” (Conn), with a tweet adding that “Kafala would only be truly abolished when workers have agency to renew their own residence visa, without being dependent on the sponsor to do so” (Faras Ghani, “Qatar Moves to Announce the Abolishment of Kafala System,” *Al Jazeera*, 17 October 2019). If they don’t issue workers their residential visas by January, as promised, people may lose faith in the government, and with less than 3 years remaining until the opening match of the World Cup (scheduled for November 21 to December 18, 2022), any human rights setback could be detrimental.

WHAT QATAR HAS DONE SO FAR

Since 2017, Qatar had passed new laws and reforms aimed at benefiting migrant workers, including:



A TEMPORARY MINIMUM WAGE OF \$200 PER MONTH
but it remains below the rate required by ‘home’ countries like Nepal



A WORKERS’ SUPPORT AND INSURANCE FUND
but it is not yet in operation



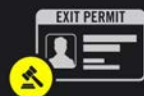
A LAW FOR DOMESTIC WORKERS
but it remains weakly enforced and below international standards



RATIFICATION OF TWO INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS TREATIES
but with ‘reservations’ blocking trade unions



DISPUTE RESOLUTION COMMITTEES
a faster complaints process, but it can still take months and many workers fail to get their dues



PARTIAL ABOLITION OF THE EXIT PERMIT
but domestic workers and others are excluded

wages. However, the question of whether this is a true game changer will be answered by the actions of the government in the coming period” (“Qatar/UN: Agreement to Tackle Migrant Labour Abuse Offers Path to Reform,” *Amnesty International*, 26 October 2017). Although the Qatari government signed the agreement in 2017 and set rules benefiting those migrant workers, the cruelty of kafala still did not cease.

Though one may think that the future is looking better for migrant workers, there are still many questions that are left unanswered. Will the Qatari government take action immediately? What are the consequences if they don’t? Nicholas McGeehan, an advocate for improved human rights in the Arab Peninsula, asserted that the reforms should be addressed with “very cautious optimism,” and added that “urgent action is needed on heat stress in Qatar” (Conn).

Following drone attacks on Aramco, Saudi Arabia's national oil company, on September 14, 2019, the United States announced it would bolster Saudi



A still image from a video obtained from social media showing smoke billowing at an Aramco facility in Abqaiq, one of two oil processing centers struck by drones on September 14, 2019.

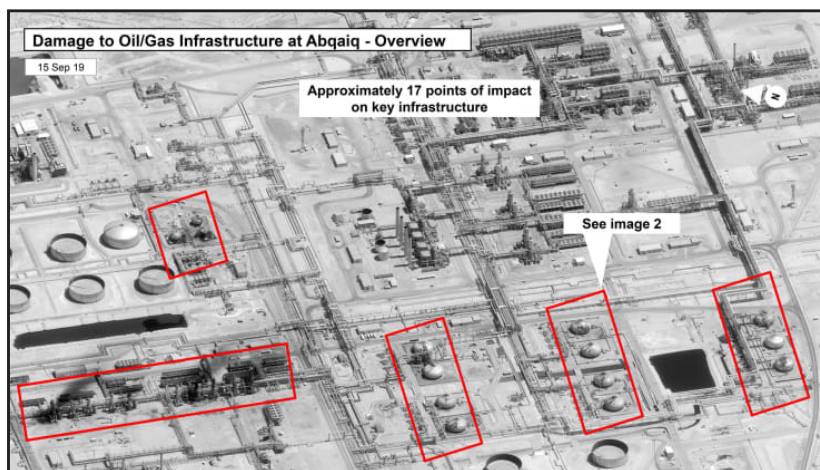
defenses, and deter further attacks by Iran, by deploying 3,000 additional U.S. troops to Saudi Arabia. The attacks on Aramco were claimed by the Iranian-backed Houthi rebels, but U.S. intelligence indicated they were launched by either Iraq or Iran, while the Saudi government indicated that solely Iran was responsible.

By providing additional aid to Saudi Arabia, the U.S. government added to a continued pattern of providing the country with aid despite congressional disapproval of Saudi officials' treatment of Yemen and widespread condemnation of journalist Jamal Khashoggi's 2018 murder. Saudi Arabia has been a primary buyer of American weapons, accounting for 18 percent of U.S. arm sales from 2013-17 (Patricia Zengerle, "Defying Congress, Trump Sets \$8 billion-plus in Weapons Sales to Saudi Arabia, UAE," *Reuters*, 24 May 2019). Frustrated by bipartisan opposition to the continuation of sales to Saudi Arabia, in May 2019, President Trump declared an emergency to bypass congressional approval and sell \$8 billion of arms to the United Arab Emirates, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia with the justification that the emergency was necessary to deter Iran. President Trump has long stood by the Saudi government and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman; he took his first trip overseas as president to Riyadh and even affirmed Salman's claim that he was not involved in the killing of Khashoggi, even though CIA intelligence has indicated that the Crown Prince was behind the order, with Congress passing a bipartisan resolution condemning the Saudi leader.

By selling arms to Saudi Arabia and other Middle

Eastern countries in May of 2019, President Trump even bypassed the usual congressional approval process for all arms sales to foreign countries. Congress had been blocking such sales to Saudi Arabia, as well as to the UAE, for months due to concerns about human rights violations: namely, the humanitarian crisis perpetrated by Saudi activity in Yemen, which the United Nations now claims is the world's largest man-made disaster ("Humanitarian Crisis in Yemen Remains the Worst in the World, Warns UN," *UN News*, 14 February 2019). In April 2019, Trump vetoed a congressional resolution to end U.S. involvement in Yemen altogether.

Since 2015, when Saudi Arabia intervened in the war in Yemen, U.S.-made weapons have been used by Saudi forces to commit war crimes and human rights abuses. A report by the United Nations linked thousands of civilian deaths in Yemen to Saudi forces, who have directed airstrikes at civilians and used



This image provided by the U.S. government and DigitalGlobe, and annotated by the source, shows damage to the infrastructure at the Abaqaiq oil processing facility in Buqyaq, Saudi Arabia.

forced starvation as a means of gaining leverage. The UN report also cited western allies of the Saudi-led coalition as complicit for supplying weapons and providing intelligence, causing U.S. lawmakers to oppose funding the war in Yemen by stopping the supply of weapons to Saudi Arabia.

In addition to the direct implications of U.S. weapons being used by the Saudi-led coalition, these arms have also been found in possession of al Qaeda fighters, Salafi militias, and other Houthi-backed rebels, who were sold such weapons in violation of Saudi Arabia's agreement with the United States (Nima Elbagir, "Sold to an Ally, Lost to an Enemy," *CNN*, 15 February 2019). American weapons are highly valued and have been used as a form of currency for Saudi Arabia to form alliances with local tribes.

Although arms markets are illegal in Yemen, they are often operational and contain U.S.-made weapons, which have even ended up in the possession of the Iranian-backed Houthis, allowing Iranian intelligence to assess U.S. military technology. Saudi Arabia's sale of U.S. weapons is a severe violation of its agreements with the United States, which has yet to hold Saudi Arabia accountable for its breach of the agreement, stating that increased Iranian control is too large a risk.

In addition to their strong military ties, the United States and Saudi Arabia have a fairly robust trade relationship. In 2018, trade between the nations totaled \$48.1 billion; U.S. exports were \$25.7 billion and imports were \$25.7 billion. Saudi Arabia was the United States' 20th largest supplier of goods, according to the Office of the United States Trade Representative. While Saudi Arabia has been a trade partner of decreasing importance for the United States, the latter is still the fifth largest consumer of Saudi goods, representing 8.3 percent of exports. Further, American imports are crucially important to Saudi Arabia, accounting for 13.6 percent of total imports to the Middle Eastern nation (*CIA World Factbook*). However, the United States has become



Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and President Trump in the Oval Office of the White House in March 2018.

increasingly less dependent on Saudi exports of crude oil and petroleum products, once hot commodities in the American market. The number of barrels of crude oil and petroleum imported has steadily decreased since 2003, when the United States received 2.3 million barrels per day, to only 461,000 barrels per day in August 2019 (U.S. Energy

Information Administration).

Although Saudi Arabia still supplies the United States with oil, only 11 percent of the U.S. oil supply is imported, and, of the imported fraction, Saudi Arabia accounts for only 9 percent. In short, the United States is not nearly as dependent on Saudi Arabia as it used to be, but Saudi Arabia still relies heavily on the United States as a trading partner.

Despite Saudi-perpetrated war crimes in Yemen, violations of human rights, a breach of the arms agreement, and little economic incentive for U.S. involvement, the United States continues to unequivocally support Saudi Arabia militarily and financially, continuously blaming Iran as the perpetrator of evil in the Middle East.

Trump's Middle East: Ceding Power and Abandoning Allies

by Anya Sastry '20

During Donald Trump's presidency, U.S. policy toward the Middle East has been largely unpredictable and divisive. In particular, his decisions regarding U.S. troops in Syria have rattled the nation and have escalated to the point of being downright damaging.

For the past five years, American policy in the Middle East has centered around the goal of not only weakening Bashar al Assad's government and the Islamic State, but also countering the growing power of Iran and Russia. Within northern Syria, there are three major powers: established U.S. bases and troops, the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), and the Turkish troops. A large sector of the SDF are Kurdish troops that Turkey views as terrorists. Due to this animosity, the United States and the Kurds struck a deal: if Kurdish forces provided U.S. troops with the necessary logistical and military support needed to defeat ISIS and its leader, Abu Bakr al Baghdadi, U.S. troops would protect the Kurds from Turkey. As of October 2019, around 1,000 American troops were stationed in northern Syria, relying upon, and fighting alongside Kurdish forces (Jane Arraf, "In

Syria, U.S. Military Says Fight Will Continue Against ISIS," *NPR*, 13 November 2019). On October 6, this all changed.

On that first Sunday of October, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey phoned Trump and related to him that Turkish forces would be advancing through northwest Syria. Trump, despite warnings from his cabinet and advisors, immediately announced the withdrawal of troops from the two American bases near the Turkish border. Within hours, Turkey invaded, killing hundreds of civilians, and destroying multiple towns. Put simply, Trump's withdrawal of troops has single-handedly transformed the power dynamic within Syria and has potentially reshaped the trajectory of U.S. policy in the region for years to come.

Abandoned by its American ally, and faced with the imminent invasion of Turkish forces, the Kurdish administration has brokered a deal with the American enemy, the Syrian al Assad regime, through Russia. Without the protection of American troops, the Kurds have received permission from Damascus to deploy



Syrian troops along the border to fight off Turkey's invasion. In return, they are handing over to the Syrian government towns that they have controlled for years. Mazloum Abdi, commander-in-chief of the Kurdish-led SDF, has a rather straightforward explanation for quickly shifting sides and partnering with a long-standing opponent of America. In an October 13 op-ed for *Foreign Policy*, he writes, "If we have to choose between compromise and genocide, we will choose our people." He refers to the agreements with al Assad and Russia as "painful compromises"; however, he continues on to say that "the Russian and Syrian regimes have made proposals that could save the lives of millions of people who live under our protection."

Back in the United States, many have questioned the White House's decision to withdraw troops. While the president is off justifying the withdrawal of troops with the notion that ISIS has been defeated, members of his cabinet and his top advisors are sending conflicting messages, many denying abandonment of the Kurds. Congress is not pleased with Trump's decision, either. Senator Jack Reed (D-RI), a senior member of the Armed Services Committee, said in a statement on his website, "This is another example of Donald Trump creating chaos, undermining U.S. interests, and benefitting Russia and the Assad regime....His reckless abandonment of U.S. partners is a disaster that will reverberate far beyond Syria."

Senator Reed is correct, at least with regards to his comment on U.S. interests and benefitting the enemy. This pact has essentially cost the United States its influence and power in the region. The absence of American troops has allowed Russia to enter critical areas of Syria that it could not previously access, Assad to gain more power and control over Syria, and

Turkey to move its destructive forces further into Syria. Furthermore, Trump is wrong to believe that ISIS has been defeated. If anything, withdrawal of U.S. troops is an opportunity for ISIS to regroup and resurge, counteracting all of the sacrifices made by the American and Kurdish forces over the past five years. Even if one momentarily forgets the ways in which Trump's decision undermines American power, there is still the betrayal of the Kurds, an ally whose soldiers have died alongside those of the American troops, fighting for the same cause. It all comes down to the fact that the United States had made a deal. The Kurds upheld their end of that agreement, working to impede the growth of ISIS and providing U.S. troops with vital intel that ultimately lead to the death of al-Baghdadi. In response, the United States essentially cleared the way for Turkey to invade and kill the Kurds.

With one fell swoop, Trump has risked smearing America's reputation as a reliable and steadfast ally. His foreign policy decisions and deference to Erdogan have put the lives of many innocent people in danger and have perhaps perpetuated the mass destruction of Syria. As Syria enters its ninth year of civil war,



Tweets from President Trump in October questioning the role of U.S. troops in the region.

the United States no longer has boots on the ground, the power dynamics are shifting in favor of American enemies, and the humanitarian crisis is ongoing. Mustafa Bali, a spokesperson for SDF, remarked that as U.S. soldiers go home to be with their families during the December holidays, Syrian Kurdish soldiers are going home in coffins. His final statement truly sums up the impact of Trump's decision: "The thing which makes me sad is, in five years working with the U.S. military, we became real friends fighting ISIS. But they are sad too, because they wanted to stay. Politicians gave them orders to leave. Politics made us victims" (Arraf).

EUROPE

Progress in Paris: Notre Dame Cathedral Restoration

by Ethan Levinbook '20

On April 15, 2019, after fourteen months of labor, the \$7-million restoration of the 19th-century spire of the Notre Dame de Paris was nearly complete. Just before the renovation was finished, however, a blaze ravaged the medieval cathedral. The fire, abetted by the cathedral's attic "forest" of over 5,000 wooden



With the Eiffel Tower standing tall in the background, flames and smoke rise from the blaze at Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris during the April 15, 2019 fire that destroyed its spire and roof but spared the two medieval bell towers.

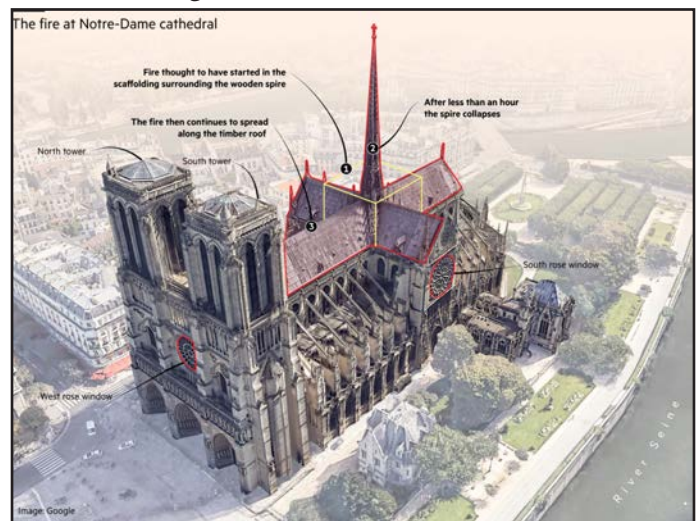
beams (most of which had supported the structure since the 12th century), destroyed the spire, ruined two-thirds of the roof, and fused together most of the scaffolding, which had been erected for the ongoing restoration (Matt Stieb and Adam K. Raymond, "What Was Lost and Saved in the Notre-Dame Fire," *New York*, 16 April 2019).

It is nothing short of a miracle that the building was not wholly ruined. Its iconic bell towers, erected between 1220 and 1250, still stand tall; its rose windows, constructed between 1225 and 1260, withstood the incredible heat; relics like the 13th-century French King St. Louis' tunic were saved; its 8,000-pipe organ, which dates to the 1730s, survived unburnt (Stieb and Raymond). In a fortunate twist of fate — or perhaps divine intervention — copper statues of the Twelve Apostles and four New Testament evangelists were removed from the cathedral's spire mere days before the blaze. In a state of disrepair, they were taken to southwestern France to be restored and cleaned.

Miracles notwithstanding, an incredible amount of work remains until the beloved site may return to its former glory. French President Emmanuel Macron promised that the much beloved cathedral would be

completely restored within just five years, though critics are skeptical. Serious concerns persist not only about Macron's overly-optimistic restoration plan, but also about the current condition of the cathedral and whether it can, without immediate action, be truly saved.

Optimism and idealism today are tempered by architects' fears that there persists the potential for further damage to the cathedral. Melted in the fire



and fused together, the scaffolding that encaged and supported the building during its 2018-2019 renovation could seriously threaten the architectural and structural integrity of the historic, religious, and cultural landmark. For if any portion of it were to collapse, or if pieces of the metal latticework were to fall onto the charred structure, it would surely spell the ruin of other surviving parts of the cathedral.

This additional complication means that workers must carefully remove the metal scaffolding from Notre Dame before the president's ambitious five-year plan can even commence (Aria Bendix, "Notre-Dame's Melted Scaffolding Is Putting the Structure at Risk of Collapse," *Business Insider*, 17 October 2019). Accordingly, French Cultural Minister Franck Riester said in October that the scaffolding would be taken down in the coming weeks so that renovations could begin. Another unforeseen consequence of the blaze at Notre Dame is that it continues to pose grave health concerns for those living and working in its proximity. The cathedral's leaden spire and roof contained approximately 460 tons of lead; during the fire, dangerous fumes and particles were released into the surrounding area (Bendix).

Since the fire, Parisians have pressed for greater governmental transparency. They have called on French officials to take measures to mitigate the harmful effects of the melted lead from the cathedral's roof. The public's fears of bureaucratic apathy and deception seem to have been well founded; the *New York Times* reported "significant lapses by the French authorities in alerting the public to health risks," revealing that restoration workers at Notre Dame were exposed to lead levels between 955 and 1300 times higher than the recommended threshold (Elian Peltier, James Glanz, Weiyi Cai, and Jeremy White, "Notre-Dame's Toxic Fallout," 14 September 2019). Moreover, labor inspectors observed that many workers did not use proper safety gear and may not have been alerted to the dangers of lead poisoning. The long-term consequences of this exposure are unknown.

In addition, it took over a month before Paris officials conducted the first lead tests at schools near the cathedral. Even today, French officials have not conducted tests on every school in the danger zone around Notre Dame. It took four months for city and regional health officials to fully decontaminate the areas most impacted. During the intervening time between the blaze and the officials' decontamination of the cathedral's proximity, a great number of children were put at risk; over 6,000 children under the age of six live within a half mile of areas with dangerous lead levels. Anne Souyris, Paris' deputy mayor in charge of health, admitted that the city might have left important health concerns concealed from the public out of fear of inciting paranoia. "The state was afraid to make people afraid," she said (Peltier, Glanz, Cai, and White).

For restaurateurs, business owners, and retailers operating near Notre Dame, the devastating economic consequences of the April 2019 fire still persist. Revenues have plummeted for these businesses. Once among the most-visited areas in the world, the plaza, cathedral, and various surrounding streets and arteries have been closed off to tourists keen to spend. Yet there is a bright side. The world has banded together to support the reconstruction of the cathedral. The budget for the restoration remains undecided, but approximately 350,000 donors have, so far, pledged the equivalent of \$1.02 billion to the renovation effort, according to Riester. In addition, the Notre Dame Foundation received \$114 million in a matter of months ("Notre-Dame Cathedral 'Not Yet Totally Saved' Six Months After Devastating Fire," *France 24*, 15 October 2019).

Concerns over the sourcing of materials for the reconstruction of the cathedral have troubled some architects and leaders. In short, 1,300 oak trees were felled in the 12th century to build Notre Dame's frame; the deforested area would have spanned approximately 52 acres. While France no longer has the requisite



Debris fills the interior of the cathedral after the 12-hour fire.

number of mature oak trees to repopulate the attic's "forest" of wooden latticework, a company in Ghana has stepped in to help. Kete Krachi Timber Recovery announced that wood sourced from a vast underwater forest in Lake Volta, Ghana, could be used to rebuild the frame of Notre Dame Cathedral. This solution would be far more environmentally-friendly than felling new trees, and it would simultaneously support Ghana's developing economy. Dr. Cathy Oakes, a preminent expert in French and English medieval architecture and iconography at the University of Oxford, said the wood taken from Lake Volta would be of similar durability and strength as "bog oak," which was widely used in medieval construction. The acidity of peat bogs and the lack of oxygen served to fossilize the submerged wood, and it thus became sturdier and better-suited for carpentry. France has not yet accepted Kete Krachi's offer, but it remains a viable, sustainable solution (Aaron Akinyemi, "Notre-Dame: How an Underwater Forest in Ghana Could Help Rebuild a Paris Icon," *BBC*, 6 October 2019).

The world watched with a heavy heart as Notre Dame was engulfed in flames last spring, and it is still left to consider serious questions. Of particular importance to the people of Paris: Is the lead contamination under control, or is the French government still misleading the public to cover its own lapses in judgment and action? A fierce debate, ignited in April, still rages on; had there been adequate safeguards in order to protect the cathedral, visited by over 13 million people annually, from fire? "These cathedrals and houses of worship are built to burn," said Vincent Dunn, a former New York City fire chief (Brigit Katz, "What Happened to Notre-Dame's Precious Art and Artifacts?" *Smithsonian*, 16 April 2019). And how will the attic of Notre Dame be reconstructed so as not to be as great of a fire hazard? Whence will the timber be sourced, and what solution will prove the least detrimental to the environment? Though the (leaden) dust has settled somewhat, questions and concerns are still unresolved.

Meghan Markle, the Royal Family, and Freedom of the Press

by Cooper Raposo '21

Meghan Markle, Duchess of Sussex, and wife of Great Britain's Prince Harry, has been a frequent figure in the British tabloids since they started dating in 2016. Since rumors of the relationship began, there has been an almost constant struggle between Meghan and Britain's most vicious tabloids over their portrayal of her, their prying into her personal life, their slandering and defaming her; this has come to a head in the past few months and has brought up old wounds for the royal family, along with a revived scrutiny of the British media.

A major part of the criticism of the British press is based on the racially charged coverage of Meghan since the couple became official in late 2016. Tabloids like the *Daily Mail* used crude and racist remarks in their reporting; one article boasts the headline "Harry's Girl Is (Almost) Straight Outta Compton" (Ruth Styles and Shekhar Bhatia, 2 November 2016), an apparent reference to the fact that Meghan is from Los Angeles, but also to the fact that she is biracial (her mother is black). The *Daily Mail* also insinuated that "Meghan's appearances seem more flashy than other members of the royal family," a disapproval that has been compared to similar criticisms of Beyoncé after her pregnancy announcement in 2017; this may represent a double standard for the public appearance of women of color, notes Michelle Ruiz ("The Meghan Markle Tabloid 'Pile-On'—And How to Fix It," *Vanity Fair*, 5 April 2019).

The tabloid's at times unflattering, even hypocritical, coverage of Meghan and Harry has been condemned by the British government and the royal



The couple announced their engagement at Kensington Palace on November 27, 2017.

couple since they started dating; the first official acknowledgement of their relationship was in a statement by Harry himself on November 8, 2016, deploring the "wave of abuse and harassment" in which Meghan had been embroiled (Morgan Evans and Eileen Reslen, "A Definitive History of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle's Royal Relationship," *Town & Country*, 8 May 2019). Three years later – long after their wedding and the birth of their first child – Prince Harry released another statement that again aired the couple's grievances with the British media and addressed their pursuit of litigation against several publications. The couple are suing the *Daily Mirror* and the *Sun* for different breaches of privacy, one concerning a phone hack and another a private letter (Ruiz).

Seventy-two female British MPs from across the political spectrum have also come out in support of Meghan, and they signed a letter in solidarity with her plight (Rory Sullivan, "British Female MPs Sign Open Letter to Meghan Condemning 'Outdated, Colonial Undertones' of Press Coverage," *CNN*, 30 October 2019). Many journalists and media outlets argue that their examination of the royal family is just; they argue that breaches of privacy, continuous portrayals in tabloids, and a fair share of criticism is a price they have to pay for celebrity — a celebrity that is funded in part by taxpayer dollars.

The similarities between Meghan and her husband's late mother, Princess Diana, are glaring; both face constant media scrutiny and attention from paparazzi. Princess Diana died in 1997 in a fatal car crash in Paris while being swarmed by paparazzi on motorcycles, prompting a massive international mourning. No physical harm has been inflicted on Meghan, although there have been attempts to break into her home, according to Kensington Palace). Prince Harry himself has acknowledged the connection between the two royals, saying "I lost my mother and now I watch my wife falling victim to the same powerful forces" (Megan Lawton, "Why Prince Harry Is Comparing Meghan to Princess Diana," *BBC*, 2 October 2019).

After Diana's death, there was a crackdown on the publication of paparazzi pictures and a new emphasis on personal privacy, especially that of celebrities like the royals. This offensive gave Britain very harsh privacy restrictions when it came to photography, especially of children, helping keep Diana's two sons,

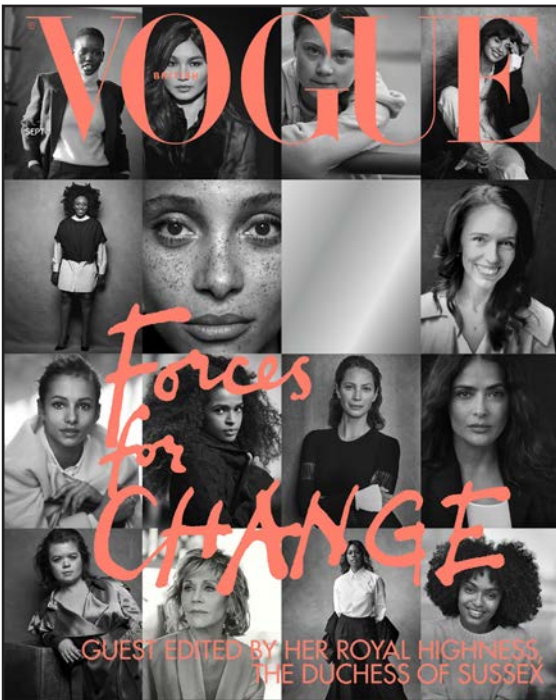




Prince Harry and Prince William, somewhat out of the public eye. These privacy protections have largely remained to this day, but the royal family has still had to fight photographers and publishers in court (Kate Samuelson, "The Princess and the Paparazzi: How Diana's Death Changed the British Media," *Time*, 27 August 2017).

Even in the new age of celebrities being able to control and shape their public persona through social media, the Royal Family cannot escape or outrun the constant barrage of press coverage on them. Meghan Markle, like Princess Diana, has fallen victim to the tabloid system, and even with a massive amount of popular support, the tabloids refuse to rise above their racist and sexist rhetoric, coupled with their incessant scrutiny of her.

Note: On January 8, 2020 Prince Harry and Meghan Markle, the Duke and Duchess of Sussex, announced on their Instagram account, @sussexroyal, that they "intend to step back as 'senior' members of the Royal Family and work to become financially independent, while continuing to fully support Her Majesty The Queen," adding that they planned to split their time between the United Kingdom and North America.



on magazine covers to promote various causes. With the exception of Queen Elizabeth herself, nearly every member of the family has recently engaged to some degree with the media—indeed, it can be argued, it is a mutually beneficial relationship. The queen's daughter (Harry's aunt), Princess Anne, Meghan's late mother-in-law Princess Diana, and her sister-in-law Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge (aka Kate Middleton) have all appeared on the cover of British *Vogue*. For the September 2019 issue of the magazine, Meghan chose not to grace the cover, feeling it would appear too "boastful"; instead, she selected 15 women as "Forces for Change" (leaving one space as a reflective mirror, for the reader's face), including advocates for the environment, inspirational female political leaders, and those calling for more diverse voices in the fashion and entertainment industries. Despite this, Meghan's involvement sparked criticism from some in the British press, with cries that it was behavior unbecoming of a member of the royal family.



Avocado-gate: The *Express* praises Kate's pregnancy cure ("Prince William was given one of the green fruit - wrapped up in a bow - by a little boy whose mother is suffering during her pregnancy, too... 'He said he'd take it to [Kate] and see what happens - and said good luck for [the boy's] mummy.'" -September 14, 2017) while chastising Meghan for the same thing ("The pregnant Duchess of Sussex and so-called 'avocado on toast whisperer' is wolfing down a fruit linked to water shortages, illegal deforestation, and all round general environmental devastation." -January 23, 2019)



The Daily Mail's coverage of pregnant Kate Middleton ("Bumping along nicely! The Duchess was seen placing a protective hand on her tummy as she exited the event." -March 22, 2018) and Meghan Markle ("Personally, I find the cradling a bit like those signs in the back of cars: Baby on Board. Virtue signaling, as though the rest of us barren haridans deserve to burn alive in our cars." -January 26, 2019)

Reflections on a Visit to Portugal

by Stephanie Zhang '21

The pleasant Portuguese weather welcomed us with open arms upon our arrival in Lisbon. The sunny sky and gentle breezes were a stark, but delightful, contrast to Connecticut's gray skies and arid cold.

Over Thanksgiving break, I, along with eleven of my peers, and faculty advisors Ms. Rachel Engelke and Mrs. Marley Matlack, traveled to Lisbon, Portugal to participate in the Yale Model Government Europe (YMGE) conference. From Saudi Arabia to Switzerland, Luxembourg to the United States, schools from all over the world attended this annual conference organized by Yale University that simulates solving global issues as the European Union, a twist on the typical conference that is modeled on the larger United Nations. Of course, we couldn't just travel to Lisbon and not explore and experience the amazing city, so we spent the first four days before the conference taking in the beauty of Lisbon and Portugal, eating scrumptious Portuguese dishes, learning about the culture as well as the modern impact of tourism on Portugal, and so much more.

While waiting outside the airport for our bus to take us to our Airbnb called The House, we met Gonzi, our local tour guide, who reflected the cheery Portuguese weather with his easygoing friendliness. Gonzi gave us a brief overview of the interesting history of Portugal and introduced us to some basic cultural points of the country; he jokingly blamed the carefree and leisurely lifestyle of the Portuguese and some other parts of Europe on the substantial amount of sunshine they get, which he said makes them want to go to the beach all the time. Gonzi also asked us what we hoped to get out of the trip, to which I immediately exclaimed, "Good food and fun!"

By the end of my first day in Lisbon, my expectations of good food and fun had already been exceeded. For dinner, we went to El Mercado de Campo Ourique, an old fish market that had been remodeled and repurposed to now be a gourmet food court with food stalls ranging from Italian cuisine to traditional

Portuguese dishes and even Poke bowls. While I sat eating my Portuguese squid stew, I turned to Gonzi and expressed my satisfaction at the fulfillment of my expectations and contemplated everything we had done since we first set foot in Lisbon that morning. In less than 12 hours, we had gone on a walking tour, more than six miles through hilly cobblestoned roads from our Airbnb to more or less the other side of Lisbon, climbed around five to six stories worth of



With our guide Gonzi at Miradouro da Graça, a popular scenic overlook offering panoramic views of Lisbon



pastéis de nata, a Portuguese egg and custard tart dusted with cinnamon

stairs to see the best bird's-eye view of the city, and eaten the most delicious and famous dessert of Lisbon, the pastel de nata or egg custard tart. Additionally, Gonzi also taught me a lot about Portugal's important founding figures and more of its history. He explained that due to a 8.5-9.0 magnitude earthquake that had occurred the morning after All Saint's Day, or Halloween, in the year 1755, much of Portugal had been destroyed as a result of the earthquake, the following tsunami, and fires that had been caused

by the candles set out by people who were honoring their deceased loved ones during the holiday the night before. Because of the fire damage, the beautiful tiled houses that we kept seeing while we walked through Lisbon was a result of people fireproofing their houses in case another one happened again.

The following day, Monday, the good food and fun continued! We started off the morning by participating in a cooking class, where we, with the help of our teachers, Chef Ana and Chef Brenda, concocted a starter, a tomato and onion stew with a poached egg on top, the main courses, seafood with rice and mushroom with rice, and dessert, papo de anjo, or angel's double chin. All of us had a

ton of fun learning how to cook common Portuguese dishes, and we all pushed our limits in the kitchen, whether it was trying not to cry while cutting onions or having the courage to peel and clean the raw shrimp. I learned that the key to Portuguese cooking was in using a lot of good quality olive oil and spices to enhance the flavors in the dishes. Chef Ana also explained that the Portuguese use an all-natural salt

when cooking, unlike American salt which is heavily processed and very unhealthy. Gonzi added that food plays a very important role in Portuguese culture and everyday life; the Portuguese make it an absolute priority that their guests have plenty to eat when hosting them and to accommodate every person's dietary needs.

After a hearty home-cooked meal, we ventured to one of the campuses of the University of Lisbon, where we performed a case study about the impacts of tourism. Ironically, we, as tourists, interviewed the university students about their opinions and thoughts on the effects of increased tourism on Lisbon. While I was initially scared to approach the older students, it was a really good exercise, and I ended up obtaining some very valuable local insight and thorough responses surrounding the topic. They were super friendly and responded passionately to the questions we asked them. Many students agreed that they had seen tourism affect all aspects of Lisbon, whether that be housing, prices, transportation, or the general population of people living in certain neighborhoods. Many said that not a lot of locals live in Lisbon anymore; they are instead driven to the suburbs farther away from the center of the city due to high housing prices. One person even mentioned that some people hang ads up from stores on their laundry lines just to make enough money to pay rent. As a tourist, this made me more cognizant of the impact that I have when I visit other countries and to be more aware of how I, a foreigner, am affecting the culture and economy.

In the evening, after returning to The House, Mrs. Matlack and Gonzi surprised us with an in-house *Fado* concert. I was very grateful to experience such a powerful form of music special to the Portuguese. The band, made up of the lead female singer, a guitarist, and a guitarist playing the Portuguese guitar, explained that there are different types of *Fado*, traditional and musical. *Fado*, meaning "fate," is characterized by mournful tunes and lyrics and often tells a story about longing for love or can also be a more upbeat march detailing a war victory or used for a parade.

Our third day in Lisbon, we woke up bright and early to test our navigational skills and memory from the walking tour on the first day. Mrs. Matlack split the twelve of us into three groups of four and gave us a long list of tasks we had to complete for a scavenger hunt. Unfortunately for us, this was the one day that Portugal decided to start pouring down rain, but



Stephanie and her soaked scavenger hunt teammates, Azaan, Aidan, and Victoria

this failed to stop us and we carried on. By the end of the more than two-hour adventure, we were all soaked from head to toe but had learned that the best way of getting around was asking locals for help and that there are public orange trees that you can pick oranges from. Additionally, my group had the chance to examine closely a variety of graffiti around the city; Gonzi explained that graffiti was actually encouraged among youth during political elections as another means of voicing their political views.

After drying off and relaxing with a pizza lunch back at The House, we had the pleasure of embarking on a private boat cruise in the afternoon, where we had up-close views to many of the city's most famous riverside monuments. We saw the Cristo Rei statue, very similar to Christ the Redeemer in Brazil, the Ponte 25 de Abril, essentially a replica of the Golden Gate bridge, and Padrão dos Descobrimentos, a

monument that romanticizes and idealizes the Age of Portuguese Discovery by displaying notable figures responsible for the era of exploration. We also saw the world map detailing the routes of exploration and Portuguese occupations in their colonies in front of the monument.



Padrão dos Descobrimentos (Monument to the Discoveries), on the northern bank of the Tagus River, in Belem, was built in 1960 to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the death of Henry the Navigator. Designed in the shape of a prow of a caravel, this 170-foot high statue commemorates the mariners, monarchs, artists, scientists, missionaries, and all those who took part in the development of the Portuguese Age of Discovery. On either side of the ramps of the monument are 33 figures from the era, including Afonso V, Vasco da Gama, Ferdinand Magellan, and Bartolomeu Dias.



The full group proudly displays our LC banner at Cabo da Roca (Cape Roca), the westernmost point of mainland Europe, during a day in picturesque Sintra.

Finally, our last day before the conference, we took a day trip to Sintra, a 45-minute drive through rolling countryside. In Sintra, we went to an old castle where the history of Portuguese royals was shown and we even found the influence of the Illuminati in the architecture. We also ventured to the westernmost point of mainland Europe. Gonzi explained that Europeans used to think that it was the end of the world because, before the discovery of the Americas, they thought nothing existed west of Europe.

Since Thursday was Thanksgiving, we had a hearty Thanksgiving feast with a giant turkey weighing around 60 pounds. It was my first Thanksgiving in more than a couple of years, and I could not have asked for a better place or a better group of people

to spend it with. The food was absolutely amazing, but because I was so nervous for my first committee session that would begin right after dinner, I could not even find the space in my stomach for a delicious slice of apple pie for dessert!

Overall, the YMGE conference itself was a fantastic experience. My committee talked about building an ethical framework for Artificial Intelligence, as this technology is relatively new and constantly changing. Over the course of three days, I not only retained a better understanding of my topic and shared those ideas with others to cooperate and create a resolution to the issue, but my peers also taught me how to succeed in the political world, as I saw social moves play out. I definitely gained a lot from this experience and would certainly do it again.

Portugal is truly a hidden gem and I completely understand why tourism is currently booming in the area. Every day was packed with meaningful activities that never failed to teach me something new. After every day, I was sure that I had seen and experienced everything that Portugal had to offer, but the next day would come and the country would surprise me again with its beauty and personality. As the plane lifted off from Portuguese soil to return home, I ended the trip not feeling like a tourist who had come here for vacation, but truly, like Gonzi had mentioned before, like one of his friends who had come to visit him and learn about his amazing home country. It was an absolutely incredible and unforgettable experience, and I have definitely added Portugal to my list of places to go back to, and maybe even live, someday.

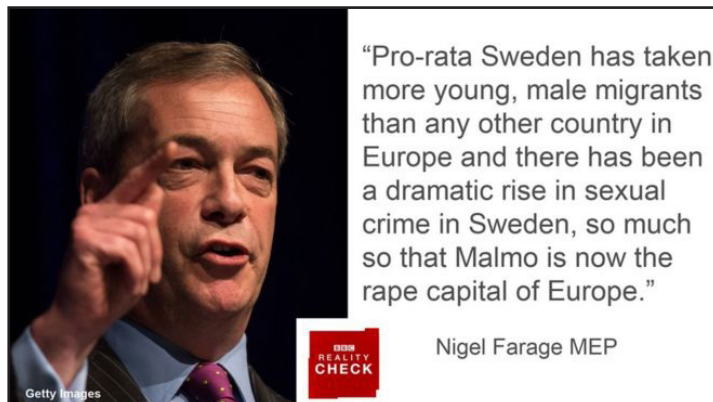
Xenophobia in “Most Reputable” Sweden by Kavya Kolli '20

Sweden is well-known for the majestic Aurora Borealis, or Northern Lights, its clean cities, happy citizens, and generally all-around high quality of life. It has repeatedly been ranked #1 by the Reputation Institute, which rates the environment, government, and economy of each country—others in the top 10 include Scandinavian neighbors Norway, Finland, and Denmark, along with Switzerland, Netherlands, Ireland, New Zealand, Australia, and Canada. However, the northern European nation has recently been in the spotlight for a more problematic reason: it has one of the highest percentages of reported rapes in the European

Union. In February 2017, former UK Independence Party (UKIP) leader Nigel Farage, an avid Brexiteer, Eurosceptic, and opponent of immigration (particularly from the Middle East and northern Africa), even went so far as to call the southern Swedish

port city of Malmo the “rape capital of Europe,” suggesting that there is a connection between the increase in “young, male migrants” – more in Sweden than in any other country, he said – and a “dramatic rise in sexual crime” (“Reality Check: Is Malmo the ‘Rape Capital’ of Europe?” *BBC*, 24 February 2017).

It is true that, beginning in 2015, Sweden experienced a



“Pro-rata Sweden has taken more young, male migrants than any other country in Europe and there has been a dramatic rise in sexual crime in Sweden, so much so that Malmo is now the rape capital of Europe.”

Nigel Farage MEP

Former UKIP leader Nigel Farage in February 2017, connecting a rise in refugees as reason for increased rape cases in Sweden.

surge in the number of refugees, and in recent years it has continued to be home to one of the largest such populations in the EU. Further, a majority of the 2015 asylum seekers were male (114,470 out of 162,000 applications), and 40 percent of those men (45,790) were between 18 and 34 years of age (BBC). Those numbers, combined with the fact that the growing refugee population was predominantly Muslim in an overwhelmingly Christian nation, led many, including populists like Britain's Farage, to blame refugees for the sudden increase in reported rape, with the national media and the anti-immigration Sweden Democratic Party even citing the supposed correlation as fact. But, in reality, did the increase in immigration cause the increase in sexual crime?

Statistically, the data says no. According to an analysis conducted by BBC News, citing the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention, "sexual offenses" in Sweden as a whole rose steadily from 2008 to 2010, before tapering off slightly then reaching a peak in 2014, the year before the influx of refugees. Furthermore, according to the study, the number of reported rape cases in Malmo has not seen a sharp increase since the biggest group of refugees arrived. "Reported rapes per 100,000 inhabitants peaked in 2008, 2010 and 2011, and the figures were higher for those pre-refugee influx years than in 2015 and 2016. In addition, the reported rape figures were not higher in the Malmo municipality, compared with two other major urban municipalities in Sweden: the capital Stockholm and Gothenburg in the west" (BBC).

Due to the perception that foreigners are responsible for increased rape rates, many people believed these crimes occurred through attacks on the streets. The reports, however, show that many of the crimes did not involve any other form of violence, leading investigators to conclude that many of the crimes were committed by perpetrators the victim knew ("New Crime Study: Rise in Sweden's Rape Stats Can't Be Tied to Refugee Influx," *Local Sweden*, 29 May 2019). If the victims reporting such crimes were mostly Swedish citizens, and they apparently knew their assailants, the offenders are thus less likely to be a foreigner, or refugee. However, with all the media coverage and political turmoil surrounding these accusations, especially in the heightened Brexit era that has seen increasing support for far-right parties that are critical of immigration and globalization, refugees have found it harder to integrate into society, even in a country that was initially among the most welcoming in all of Europe.

Though the rise in immigrants may not be the answer to the drastic changes in sexual crime rates, many other factors have played a role. With international advocacy campaigns such as the U.S.-born #MeToo movement encouraging women to speak up for themselves, more cases have simply been reported. In this era of increasing awareness about

human rights and gender equality, women have grown less tolerant of non-consensual sexual acts, even in domestic situations, where little to no violence occurs. In Sweden, a "sexual offense" is a broad term that includes a range of sex-related crimes in addition to rape, such as prostitution, sexual harassment, indecent exposure, molestation, and trafficking. So, while Swedes in particular are doing a good job of reporting sexual crimes, it is dangerous to generalize too much beyond that, as the standards of reporting and the definition of what even constitutes a sexual offense differs widely from country to country. A 2012 United Nations study revealing Sweden to have the highest rate of rape in Europe and the second highest



Protesters carrying banners and placards take part in a branch of the Worldwide Women's March, in Stockholm on January 21, 2017. Nearly 500,000 people marched in Washington D.C. the day after President Donald Trump's inauguration, with estimates of 3-5 million people marching in cities across the United States and seven million throughout the world. On July 1, 2018 Sweden became the 10th country in Western Europe to recognize nonconsensual sex as rape.

in the world also noted that 63 countries did not submit any statistics, including South Africa, which had indicated high numbers on earlier surveys.

An August 2018 television program called "The Mission Investigation," on Swedish public broadcaster SVT, said that between 2013 and 2018, the number of those convicted for rape in Sweden was 843, with 197 (23 percent) originally from the Middle East and North Africa, 134 from Southern Africa, 96 from another country outside of Europe, and 416—nearly half—from Sweden and other European countries. Furthermore, data on ethnicity is only available on convictions, not all reported rape cases. In 2017, for example, there were 7,369 reports, but only 190 convictions ("Sweden Rape: Most Convicted Attackers Foreign-born, Says TV," BBC, 22 August 2018). It is irresponsible to draw conclusions about the role of ethnicity and the rate of rape cases in Sweden, as there is no convincing evidence to support a connection between the rise in refugees after 2015 and the increase in sexual offenses. But, of course, that won't stop politics from continuing to make these assumptions for us.

Boris and Brexit

by Ryan Fortani '22 and Harry Knight '21

Brexit, the British exit from the European Union, has been a highly controversial and serious dilemma that has plagued British politics since the Leave campaign's success in the June 2016 referendum. Following then-Prime Minister Theresa May's three major legislative defeats in attempting to pass her EU Brexit agreement through Parliament and her survival of a no-confidence vote, May announced her

voted to Leave. Most notably, he scrapped the highly controversial backstop which was loathed by Conservative Members of Parliament (MPs) and the May government's parliamentary ally, the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP).

The so-called Irish "backstop" was a plan within May's attempted Brexit deal that was created to prevent customs or border controls at the boundary between Northern Ireland, a nation within the United Kingdom, and the Republic of Ireland, an independent country. The border between the Republic of Ireland and the UK is the only true land border the UK would have with the EU in a post-Brexit world. Therefore, the methods of trade through the border are of utmost concern to British leaders as it will directly define the trade relationship the UK maintains with the European economy.

Several British politicians, even within May's and Johnson's own Tory party, argued that the backstop would leave Britain with trade relations that are too intimately tied to the European trading bloc and ultimately make it harder for the UK to maintain its economic independence. This would harm Britain's ability to form trade deals with

non-European nations as it will be stuck within the EU's customs regulations (Sam Meredith, "What Is the Irish Backstop? All You Need to Know About the Border Dispute Blocking an Orderly Brexit," *CNBC*, 11 September 2019).

At the same time, the removal of the backstop would open the UK to a border crisis where exports headed outside Great Britain would have to meet European standards and must pass through a string of new barriers to entry that would create extensive difficulties for transnational businesses within the UK. Therefore, many public figures in the UK called for a clause within the Brexit deal that would set a time limit on the backstop or give Britain the right to end it if, or when, it sees fit.

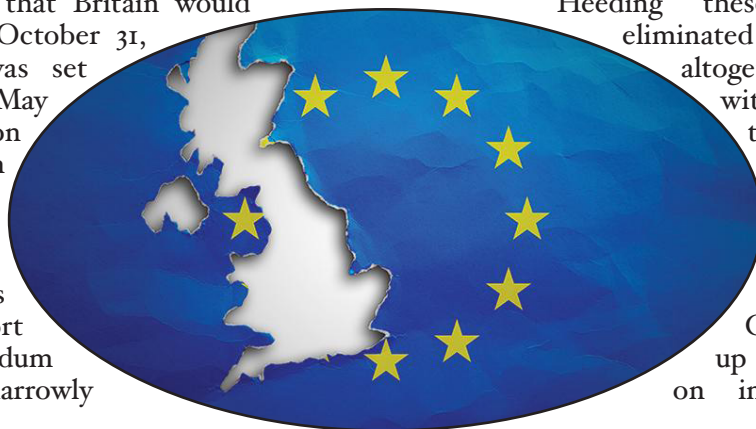
Heeding these concerns, Johnson eliminated the backstop proposal altogether and replaced it with a customs border that regulates trade between Great Britain and Northern Ireland. This means some types of goods entering Northern Ireland from Great Britain would end up paying a European tariff on imports. However, the



Under the promise to "get Brexit done," Prime Minister Boris Johnson speaks during the general election campaign in Uttoxeter, England, on December 10, 2019.

resignation as PM and leader of the Tory party on May 24, 2019, officially vacating 10 Downing Street two weeks later. This necessity for new national leadership led to the election of Boris Johnson as leader of the Conservative (Tory) Party, and to Prime Minister. Johnson's election threw Britain into even more political turmoil, as the former London mayor is both a colorful and divisive figure (Holly Ellyatt, "Here's What We Know About New UK PM Boris Johnson and What He Means for Brexit," *CNBC*, 23 July 2019).

Since his ascension to Prime Minister, Johnson has worked to ensure that Britain would leave the EU by the October 31, 2019 deadline that was set under the second May ministry. When Johnson assumed leadership in July, he worked hard to make changes to May's previous Brexit deal, maintaining his commitment to support the national referendum three years earlier that narrowly



tariff would be refunded should the goods remain in Northern Ireland, thus in the UK, rather than entering the Republic of Ireland. The rest of the terms of the legislation remain relatively similar to the previously negotiated deal of the May Ministry; the

now to a final date of January 31, 2020, Johnson has begun preparations to call for a general election on December 12, 2019 in order to increase the number of seats held by Conservatives in Parliament and diminish resistance to Brexit's passage (Jill Lawless and Samuel Petrequin, "EU Grants Brexit Delay to Jan. 31; UK Ponders New Election," *NBC Montana*, 28 October 2019).

However, should he face the same fate as his predecessor, Johnson could end up losing his tenuous majority in December and, in so doing, face even greater obstacles to his goal of passing Brexit. As of recent polling, however, Johnson has continued to increase his lead against the head of the opposition, Labor Party leader Jeremy Corbyn; an increased majority for the Tories, and thus for a final Brexit deal, may not be far off (Benjamin Kentish, "General Election: Labour Cuts Conservatives' Poll Lead to Eight Points," *Independent*, 16 November 2019).



Front page of *The Daily Express* on December 13, 2019 celebrating Boris Johnson and the Conservative Party's convincing victory

rights of EU citizens in the UK and British citizens in the EU are maintained and the estimated £39 billion Britain would pay Europe for its exit is assumed to remain the same. The other major change to the Brexit deal under Johnson allows for the long-term agreement with Europe to be based on free trade and alleviates European bloc pressures on the UK, allowing it to form its own individual trade deals with other nations ("Brexit: All You Need to Know About the UK Leaving the EU," *BBC*, 29 October 2019).

With a new deal in hand, Johnson set out to push his new, backstop-free deal through Parliament. However, MPs decided to table the bill until the withdrawal agreement was properly incorporated into British laws. While Johnson originally claimed that he "would rather be dead in a ditch" than ask for an extension past the October 31 deadline, he had no choice but to request a Brexit delay from Brussels, the headquarters of the European Commission ("Top UK Minister Rudd Quits in New Brexit Blow to PM Johnson," *France 24*, 9 August 2019).

As the Brexit deadline receives another delay,



During the wildly successful London Olympics in the Summer of 2012, Boris Johnson agreed to ride down a 1,000-foot zip line at East London's Victoria Park. Donning a hard hat and proudly carrying two Union Jack flags, the popular mayor suddenly got stuck, hanging 20 feet in the air for over five minutes. He laughed it off in good humor and it only helped his spirited and playful image.

Note: In the December 12 election, Boris Johnson and his Conservative Party won a convincing majority in the British Parliament, 365 seats to 203 for Labour – 82 seats went to 7 other parties – giving the Tories its largest victory since Margaret Thatcher's third election in 1987. As expected, one week later Parliament voted 358 to 234 in favor of Johnson's EU Withdrawal Agreement Bill, and on January 31, 2020 Brexit became official.

AFRICA

African Migrants and the Difficult Journey to Europe

by Emma Devlin '21

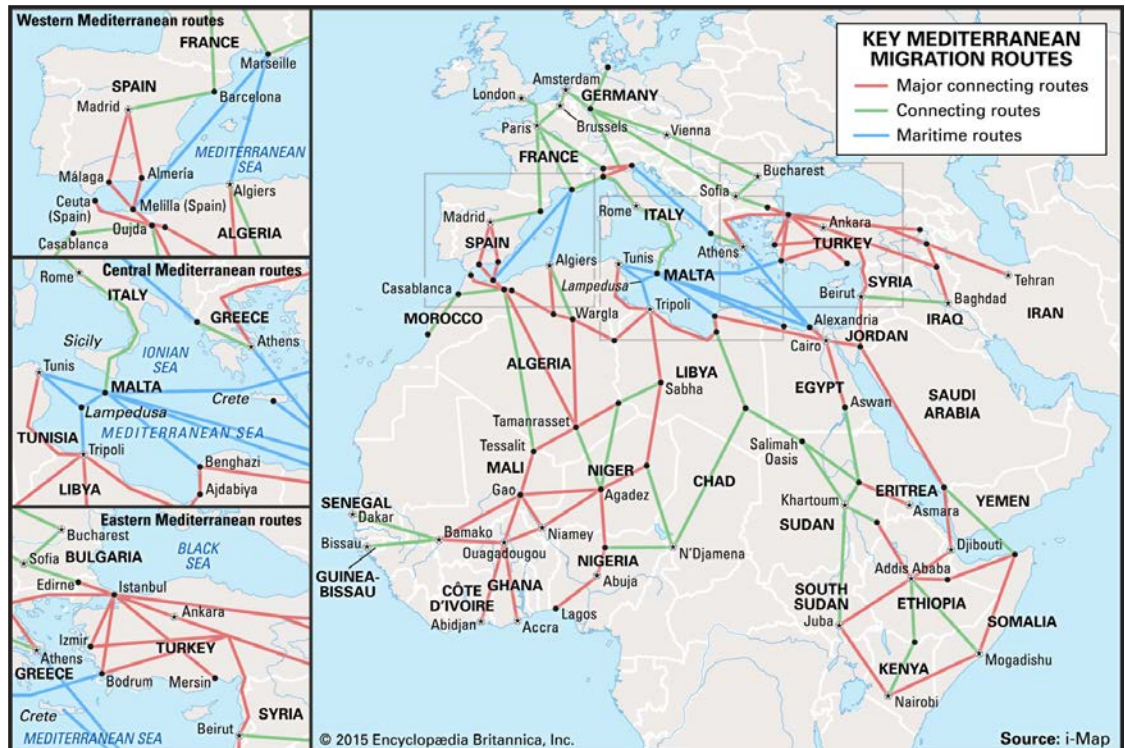
In the past decade, more than a million African immigrants have fled to Europe to seek refuge from escalating crises in every region of their continent (Pew Research Center, “At Least a Million Sub-Saharan Africans Moved to Europe Since 2010,” 22 March 2018). In southern Africa, destructive wars leave communities in decay; towards the east, mandatory military service and strife leave people with few options, and in the west, extreme poverty and random incarceration blanket the population in fear.

The majority of migrants travel through the Sahara Desert and into Libya, the so-called “backdoor” to Europe. Here, they get ready for the second, and most deadly, part of their journey: traversing the Mediterranean Sea—that is, if they’re lucky. Most are too sick or too broke to land a spot in a sailing vessel. In hopes of settling in Spain or Italy, many migrants are instead trapped in Libya where they work for their ticket to freedom, with many women ending up as sex workers to earn money. In such a circumstance, the journey for these asylum seekers becomes far longer and more precarious, sometimes adding several years to the process.

According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), nearly 30,000 migrants have gone missing in the Sahara Desert since 2014; either killed by dehydration or heat, some of these bodies are never recovered, probably buried by sandstorms (Franck Kuwonu and Louise Donovan, “Risky Journey to Europe,” *Africa Renewal*, December 2018-March 2019, on UN.org). However, while scarring events occur throughout this turbulent migration to the Mediterranean, further trouble awaits those who actually make it to Europe.

National Geographic’s Cynthia Gorney describes

her encounter with Youssouf, a migrant from Mali in western Africa now living in Lepe, Spain. His home is an abandoned slaughterhouse close to where he works on a fruit farm. After 14 years of living in Spain, Youssouf has learned Spanish and is also fluent in French and his native Malian language, Bambara. With new friends from other African regions, he has created a large extended family. He has water in his home, clean clothes to wear, and company to talk to in the nearby migrant shelter. These luxuries are new to Youssouf, whose life before the journey to Europe was far from comfortable, and who was tempted to flee by promises of a better life. The difficulties he



encountered, however, were tremendous. Youssouf said that “nobody talks about what [our journey was] really like.” In fact, left behind are his teenage daughter, his wife, and his son whom he has never met. They are unaware of his lifestyle and the area he lives in, where the neighboring cemetery, known as the “migrants’ slum,” expands each month. While Youssouf wishes to live in France, he lacks a working permit and Spanish residency document. Nonetheless, despite his family is doing relatively well back in Mali, and despite having enough money to leave Spain, Youssouf believes “It’s still better that [he’s] here”



According to the UNHCR, in 2015, there was one death for every 269 refugees who reached European shores. In 2016, this number climbed to one death in 72 arrivals, in 2017 to one in 57, and by mid-2018 to one death for every 49 arrivals. The reason for the stark increase can be attributed to the fact that in 2014 and 2015 the majority of refugees and migrants arriving in the EU entered Greece from Turkey, using a much shorter sea route; from 2016, that was replaced by a much longer and more dangerous route – across the Mediterranean to Italy from Libya.

“African Migrants in Europe Trade One Hardship for Another,” August 2019).

Franck Kuwonu and Louise Donovan tell the tale of Tekle, a 36-year-old man who fled Eritrea, on the Red Sea coast between Ethiopia and Sudan, with his brother. He now lives in Niger, a country marked by instability and police brutality, where he has few liberties and is treated poorly by authorities. He willingly began the trip to “the land of opportunity—Europe.” However, Tekle made it only as far as Libya, where, according to IOM, 1 million African refugees are marooned, a section of which is held back for military purposes. Unfortunately, Tekle was one of those captured. On his way to Libya, he was kept in a warehouse with thousands of others, where he was beaten for challenging the smugglers’ maltreatment of women, admitting, “Even now [that he] can’t talk [about it]... It is very painful.” During the journey, Tekle even lost his brother. Abruptly placed among strangers, Tekle had to push forward and cross the lethal desert alone. To cope, he says of his fellow migrants, “The people you meet on the way become your family.” Tekle now lives in Niger, southwest of Libya. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) finally saved Tekle from a cycle of unofficial detention centers. After receiving legal, financial, and living support, as well as psychotherapy, Tekle says, “[He] can’t go through that again... [he] doesn’t have the stamina.”

While every refugee encounters difficulty in their journey to Europe, women face bigger challenges than most. “There are more opportunities for men within the underground economy,” says Lola López, Immigration Commissioner at Barcelona’s city hall. “Women are much more alone. Their communities

are smaller” (Lucia Benavides, “For Women Seeking Refuge in Spain, a Trail of Peril Awaits,” *New Internationalist*, 11 April 2019).

Nigerian refugee Joy Good talks about her journey to Spain. Good left her home in Nigeria, the place where she was raped and impregnated at 15, because she “[didn’t] have help [nor] anyone.” Her parents died during her childhood, and, once she gave birth to a baby girl, she left her child with another family and sought refuge in Europe. She wasn’t prepared for the unexpected. While at the Morocco-Algeria border, Good explains how the guards “wanted to make love to [her],” and how they would “always... beat [her].” Around 10 percent of refugees in Spain are women, and they often experience sexual abuse and ill treatment while travelling, according to immigration lawyers. To earn money for passage through the Mediterranean Sea, many women work in the sex practice “en route”



A Spanish government relief worker with a young migrant child at a sports center in San Roque, southern Spain, after the child was rescued by Spain’s Maritime Rescue Service in the Strait of Gibraltar on August 1, 2018.

or find a “journey boyfriend,” who protects a woman in exchange for sex. Good, who was eight months pregnant when she arrived in Spain, likely had one of these; she says her son’s father was left behind in Morocco. Good, who now lives in southern coastal Málaga, is still waiting for the Spanish government to grant her asylum. In the meantime, she’s learning how to speak Spanish and earn a living. Unlike many other migrants, Good wants to stay in Spain, rather than travel north to France or Germany.

Good, like Tekle and Youssouf, endured a strenuous journey to find liberty in Europe. They each left the violence, conflict, and corruption of their home countries. While their new lives aren’t as joyous as they expected, it’s something more hopeful and bearable than what they had before.

“I feel good,” claimed Good, “It was not easy. But... God made everything possible. So, everything was successful” (Benavides).

A formerly little-known 61-year-old law professor named Kais Saied is the new president of the fledgling 8-year-old North African democracy of Tunisia, securing victory with nearly three-quarters of the vote against his chief opponent, Nabil Karoui, a formerly imprisoned media mogul.

Tunisia was a dictatorship led by Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali until the movement known as Arab Spring in 2011, when his government was overthrown after mass demonstrations. The 2019 elections were the second in the nation's short history as a democracy



New Tunisian president Kais Saied waves to supporters as he leaves a polling station in capital Tunis in October.

and marked several key milestones. More specifically, the nation held its first televised presidential debates, in which 26 candidates participated.

The election ultimately came down to a two-way fight between Saied and Karoui, the two candidates who had gained the most votes in the hotly-contested primary stage of the election, with Saied receiving 18.4 percent of all votes cast and Karoui securing a smaller, but relatively close 15.6 percent (Independent High Authority for Elections, ISIE, 14 October 2019). Both candidates, by virtue of receiving the most votes in the primary, advanced to the run-off stage of the election, as no candidate had received the majority of the vote needed in the first round to declare victory.

Saied, a fiscally and socially conservative independent candidate running with the endorsement of the nation's largest party, the Islamist Ennahda, appealed to the nation's angry populace with his anti-establishment stances and his vows to provide adequate healthcare and education to the beleaguered electorate. The modest nature of Saied's campaign, which centered around canvassing and connecting directly with voters, stood in stark contrast to Karoui, who spent millions of *dinars* to promote his business-oriented campaign through the media.

Those factors propelled Saied to a resounding

victory over Karoui in the runoff elections on October 13. Saied, according to the Tunisian government's official ballot counts, secured an overwhelming 72.7 percent, or almost 3 million of the nearly 4 million votes cast (ISIE).

Many Tunisians celebrated Saied's victory on the streets of capital Tunis, seeing him as a nontraditional political figure ready to usher in sweeping changes to address the nation's high unemployment rate, rising prices, and lack of opportunities, all of which sparked the revolution eight years ago. Thousands of his supporters "thronged the grand boulevards of central Tunis in celebration" the night of the election after two exit polls showed him winning by overwhelming margins, demonstrating the high levels of enthusiasm among the Tunisian people for his presidency (Tarek Amara and Angus McDowall, "Supporters of Saied Celebrate His Projected Presidential Win," *Al Jazeera*, 13 October 2019).

However, Saied will face an uphill battle in his fight to deliver on campaign promises, due to the divided nature of the nation's parliament, which had its own elections the week before his, on October 6. Twenty parties and twelve independents divide the 217 seats in the nation's legislative body, the Assembly of the Representatives of the People; with 52 seats, the Ennahda Party maintains a plurality of seats, yet far fewer than the majority—109 seats—needed to form a government ("Tunisia Election: Preliminary



Tunisia was the spark for the Arab Spring revolts that toppled a number of authoritarian governments around North Africa and the Middle East.

Results Show Ennahda in the Lead," *Al Jazeera*, 10 October 2019). Without compromise across partisan lines in the newly elected body, no government can be formed, and none of the components of Saied's ambitious legislative agenda can begin to take shape.

Saied's election reflects a recent, disconcerting trend in global politics: the (re)surfacing of populism and anti-establishment forces. The popularity of his candidacy is in large part due to his ability to channel

the anger of the Tunisian people toward their nation's political establishment. This anger in Tunisia developed as a result of the perception that the nation's establishment is not acting in accordance with the people's best interests. This mirrors similar phenomena across the Mediterranean and the Atlantic: the rise of figures like Marine Le Pen, leader of France's far-right National Rally political party, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, and U.S. President Donald Trump, all of whom have relied on similar populist sentiments during their respective bids for their nation's top leadership posts.

The results of Tunisia's recent elections reflect a political dynamic that may be closer to the Western democracies a sea away than the North African nations directly around it. Moreover, they mark a transformative milestone in the nation's metamorphosis from dictatorship to democracy following the 2011 Arab Spring protests.

TUNISIA PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION 2019
Frontrunners

Youssef Chahed TAHYA TOUNES	Nabil Karoui QALB TOUNES	Abir Moussi FREE DESTOURIAN PARTY
Abdelkarim Zbidi INDEPENDENT endorsed by NIDAA TOUNES	Abdelfattah Mourou ENNAHDHA	Moncef Marzouki AL-IRADA

Source: Al Jazeera | September 10, 2019
@AJLabs ALJAZEERA

Kais Saied was not even listed among the frontrunners on this chart one month before the election. With 26 candidates in a crowded primary, the Tunisian election had all of the hallmarks characteristic of a nascent democracy recently shedding its authoritarian past.

Abiy Ahmed Wins Nobel Peace Prize by Sophie Zhuang '21

Ethiopia's Prime Minister, Abiy Ahmed, was awarded the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize "for his efforts to achieve peace and international cooperation, and in particular for his decisive initiative to resolve the border conflict with neighboring Eritrea," according to the official announcement from the Norwegian Nobel Committee in October.

The two countries share a border, as well as "deep ethnic and cultural ties, but until July 2018 they had been locked into a state of neither peace nor war, a conflict that had separated families, complicated geopolitics, and cost the lives of more than 80,000 people during two years of border violence" (Matina Stevis-Gridneff, "Nobel Peace Prize Awarded to Abiy Ahmed, Ethiopian Prime Minister," *New York Times*, 11 October 2019).

In the 1920s, during the imperial

"Scramble of Africa," Eritrea was an Italian colony. In order to start trading with and gain support from Italy, Ethiopia granted parts of its territory to Italy, earlier known as the Italian Eritrea. Under Italian rule, Eritrea's economy flourished, and the country became culturally distinct from Ethiopia because of its European influence. In 1930, Italy began to expand its power in Africa. Under the leadership of Benito Mussolini, it invaded Ethiopia and seized control easily. However, during World War II, Italy suffered a great loss. Ethiopia supported the Allies, and Great Britain granted its independence after the war, with Eritrea operating under the Ethiopian federal authority. After continuous attempts to remove the government power of Eritrea,



Ethiopia's Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, winner of the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize

Ethiopia dissolved the Eritrean parliament in 1962. With Eritrea's parliament dissolved, Ethiopia invaded Eritrea, sparking the Eritrean War of Independence that lasted for 30 years. During the war, Ethiopia's government was replaced by a military junta, which had authorized massacres of many Eritrean towns. When the war ended, the Ethiopian government was overthrown by internal forces, and Eritrea successfully voted for its independence. Seven years after the end of the war, Eritrea annexed an Ethiopian border village, calling for the reestablishment of official borders. This started the border war that lasted until 2018.

Abiy Ahmed became prime minister only in April 2018, following the resignation of Hailemariam Desalegn. But in that short time, Abiy has broken “through two decades of frozen conflict...He threw himself at a breakneck pace into reforms at home, and peace negotiations with [Eritrea's] rebel-turned-dictator, President Isaias Afwerki” (Stevis-Gridneff). The Nobel Committee recognized Abiy's efforts in his first 100 days as prime minister in “lifting the country's state of emergency, granting amnesty to thousands of political prisoners, discontinuing media censorship, legalizing outlawed opposition groups,



Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, left, smiles as he hands keys to Eritrea's President Isaias Afwerki during inauguration ceremony marking the reopening of the Eritrean Embassy in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on July 16, 2018. Ahmed was awarded the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts to end decades of hostilities between Ethiopia and Eritrea.

dismissing military and civilian leaders who were suspected of corruption, and significantly increasing the influence of women in Ethiopian political and community life. He has also pledged to strengthen democracy by holding free and fair elections.”

Even with these recognitions, there has been some criticism that he won the Peace Prize after only 18 months in office; his work is still in progress, and some of his new regulations have shaken the current stability within the country. As Berit Reiss-Andersen, the chair of the committee, acknowledged, “The Norwegian Nobel Committee believes it is now that Abiy Ahmed's efforts deserve recognition and need encouragement” (Stevis-Gridneff). Though



Relatives greeting one another at the airport in Asmara, Eritrea, last year after the arrival of the first commercial Ethiopian Airlines flight to the country in 20 years.

Mr. Abiy has already received this high honor for his work, there is still much to be done to ensure that peace in the region will last beyond his time as prime minister. Furthermore, he is not the first leader who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize early in his first term; U.S. President Barack Obama received the same honor in 2009, after less than ten months in office, for his advocacy of nuclear disarmament, and “his extraordinary efforts to strengthen international diplomacy and cooperation between peoples.” With Obama in 2009 and Abiy in 2019, the Nobel committee has come under some scrutiny for awarding the prize on aspirations, not achievements. Prime Minister Abiy has made an important first step in finding peace in his region, but he must ensure that his early successes continue, and justify the recognition he has garnered as a peacemaker in East Africa.

When asked in a telephone interview by Adam Smith, Chief Scientific Officer of Nobel Media, what he thinks the award will help him achieve, Mr. Abiy stated, “peace is a very expensive commodity in my country, as well as in my region. This recognition will give me and others great energy to work towards peace,” adding that this is “great news for Africa and great news for east Africa.”



Abiy Ahmed Ali receives the Nobel Peace Prize from Berit Reiss-Andersen, chair of the Norwegian Nobel Committee during a ceremony at the city hall in Oslo on December 10, 2019.

THE AMERICAS

Impeachment of a President by Lauren Volkodav '22

In July 2019, U.S. President Donald Trump called Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky to arrange an investigation into former U.S. Vice President Joe Biden, Trump's potential opponent in the 2020 presidential election. Long before this phone call, however, Trump withheld hundreds of millions of dollars in military aid from Ukraine, something which had previously been approved by Congress so that the country could defend itself from Russia. By doing



U.S. President Donald Trump and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky during a meeting in New York on September 25, 2019, on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly

this, Trump effectively “withheld security assistance for help with a political campaign” according to a U.S. diplomat in a text message to Congress (Katherine Faulders and Conor Finnegan, “Crazy to Withhold Security Assistance’ to Ukraine for Political Campaign: Top U.S. Diplomat,” *ABC News*, 3 October 2019). “It is illegal for any person to solicit, accept, or receive anything of value from a foreign national in connection with a U.S. election” pointed out Ellen L. Weintraub, the chair of the Federal Election Commission (Tucker Higgins, “FEC Chair Tweets Reminder That Accepting Foreign Help in an Election Is Illegal,” *CNBC*, 3 October 2019). President Trump has repeatedly dismissed accusations of misconduct as merely part of a supposed “witch-hunt,” reverting

back to a familiar defense strategy. However, not only did Trump pressure a foreign nation to investigate his political rival, Trump's personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani also pressured Ukraine to blacken Biden's image.

The impeachment process formally began in September by Speaker of the House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi (D-California), when she announced the House would open an official impeachment inquiry. In the Trump inquiry, there are six committees investigating the president: the Intelligence Committee, designated as the lead; the Judiciary Committee, which will decide whether to present charges to the full House; the Ways and Means Committee, charged with uncovering the past six years of the president's tax returns; the Committee on Oversight and Reform, investigating whether Trump breached financial disclosure laws; the Committee on Foreign Affairs, whose sole focus is Trump's aforementioned interactions with Ukraine; and the Financial Services Committee, which is looking into Trump's connection with the German multinational investment bank, Deutsche Bank AG, through which the Russian government has been accused of laundering money. These committees held public hearings throughout the fall; they will then present their findings and the president and his team have the chance to present a defense. After the hearings, the Judiciary Committee will vote on whether to formally present articles of impeachment to the full House of Representatives. Finally, the House will vote whether to impeach, with at least 218 members (a majority of 435) needed in order for the next step in the process: a Senate trial on whether to convict him.

If Trump is impeached by the House, the Senate would then host a trial, with the Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts serving as the judge, House members serving as prosecutors, the president's personal lawyers providing defense, and a full 100-member Senate serving as the jury. If a Senate trial found Trump guilty, he would be removed from office and Vice President Mike Pence would become president. If the president is found not guilty, he will remain in office. If Trump were to be found guilty

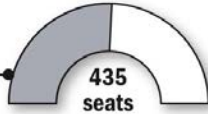


House Speaker Nancy Pelosi announced a formal inquiry into the impeachment of President Donald Trump on September 24, 2019.

THE IMPEACHMENT PROCESS

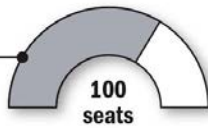
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES: THE INVESTIGATION

- 1** The House of Representatives may vote on a resolution directing a committee to begin an impeachment inquiry, though it's disputed whether the Constitution requires this step. Impeachment proceedings against Presidents Richard Nixon and Bill Clinton began with such resolutions.
- 2** A committee will likely investigate potential wrongdoing by the president and gather evidence before deciding whether to draft articles of impeachment accusing the president of "treason, bribery, or other high crimes and misdemeanors."
- 3** The full House of Representatives debates and votes on whether to impeach. A simple majority of those voting is needed.
- 4** If the House votes to impeach, the process moves to the Senate for a trial.



U.S. SENATE: THE TRIAL AND REMOVAL FROM OFFICE

- 5** The trial is held in the Senate, the only body which can remove a president from office. The chief justice of the U.S. Supreme Court oversees the trial, with a group of House members serving as prosecutors and the senators as the jury. The president can pick defense attorneys.
- 6** The Senate passes a resolution setting the rules for conducting the trial.
- 7** A conviction requires a two-thirds (67%) vote by the Senate.
- 8** If found guilty, the president is removed from office and is replaced by the vice president. There is no appeal.



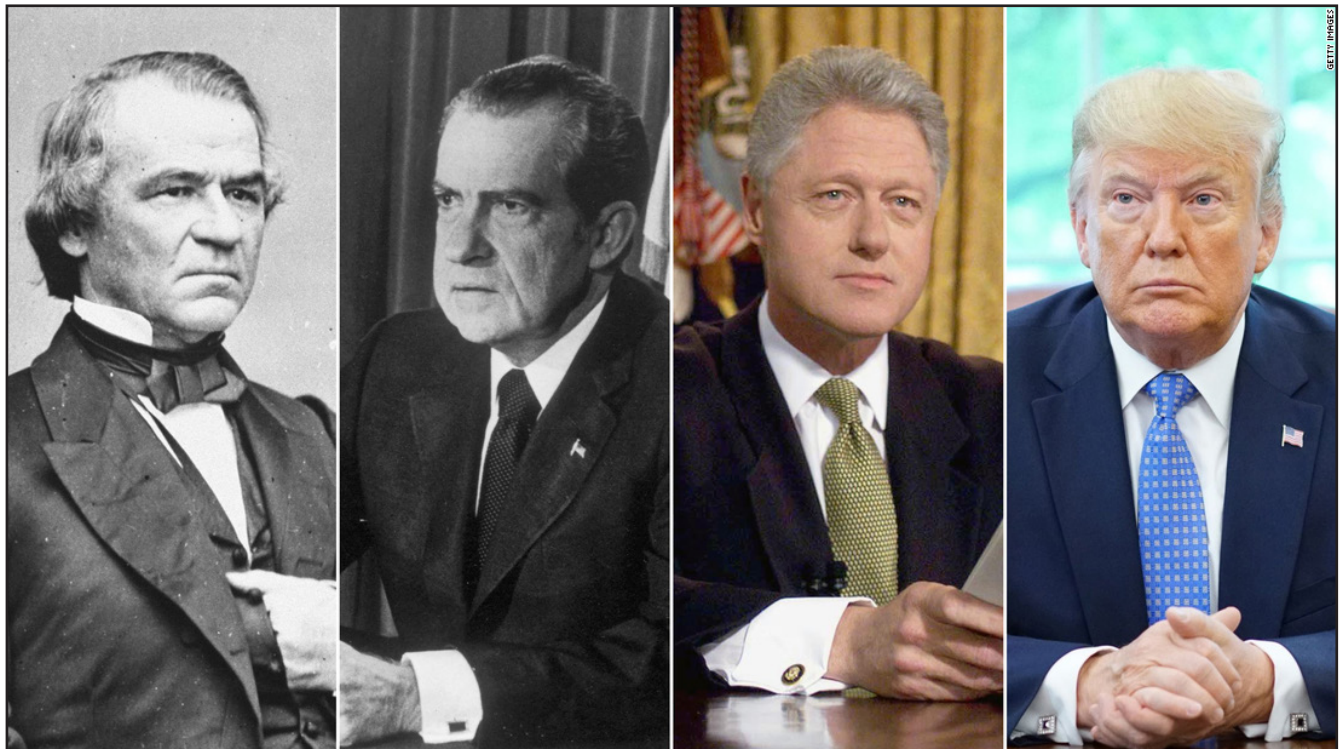
Staff graphic

by the Senate, he would be first president in American history to be removed from office after an impeachment trial; Andrew Johnson in 1868 and Bill Clinton in 1998 were both impeached by the House, but survived Senate trials and remained president.

Many have questioned whether or not the impeachment inquiry should have been launched in the first place. In the fall of 2020, the citizens of the United States will vote to reelect the president or elect a new one. One option many have posed would simply be to allow the electorate to decide if they still trust the president over the alleged illicit dealings with Ukraine. In under a year, we could have a new president, and the House and Senate could have spent their time trying to pass laws that would better the lives of American citizens.

Note: On December 18, 2019 President Donald J. Trump was impeached on two counts, Abuse of Power (230-197) and Obstruction of Congress (229-198). A Senate trial was held from January 16 to February 5, 2020. Trump was acquitted on both charges by the Senate, 48-52 and 47-53.

Below, L-R: Andrew Johnson (1868) was impeached on 11 counts in the House but was acquitted by the Senate; Richard M. Nixon (1974) was not impeached, though this is widely misunderstood. The House Judiciary Committee passed 3 articles of impeachment, and the Senate indicated a likely conviction would occur if brought to trial. Therefore, Nixon resigned from office before an impeachment vote was brought before the full House; Bill Clinton (1998) was impeached on 2 counts in the House but was acquitted by the Senate; Donald Trump (2019) was impeached on 2 counts in the House but was acquitted by the Senate.



Brazil's Bolsonaro Exploits Amazon Indigenous

by Ryan Jones '20

In August 2019, protests broke out across Brazil as the Amazon, the world's largest rainforest, was engulfed in flames. The Amazon, which comprises 98.5 percent of the land belonging to Brazil's indigenous communities ("Brazilian Indians," *Survival International*), features a plethora of endangered flora and fauna, and contains a vast amount of stored carbon which, when released, could have drastic consequences for the earth's climate, has endured a particularly rough year. In fact, in 2019, the Brazilian rainforest saw a three-fold increase in the number of fires, the region's highest frequency of forest fires in almost a decade (Lancaster University, "Amazon Deforestation and Number of Fires Show Summer of 2019 Is Not a 'Normal' Year," *Science Daily*, 15 November 2019). However, while many in the international community have blamed climate change for the forest's precipitous destruction, Brazilian protesters seemed to find a different target for their scorn; on August 25, 2019, the streets of Rio de Janeiro roared with chants of "Out with Bolsonaro" (Catherine Osborn, "SOS from Brazil's Amazon Fire Protestors: 'We Need the World's Help Right Now,'" *NPR*, 26 August 2019).

Jair Bolsonaro was elected to the Brazilian presidency on October 28, 2018 – he took office on January 1, 2019 – with over 50 percent of the popular vote. A former army officer and member of the Social Liberal Party (PSL), Bolsonaro ran on a platform of often radical far-right populism, drawing backlash for his regressive views on women's rights, same-sex marriage, and recreational drug use; in fact, just a month before the election, Bolsonaro was stabbed by a protestor, and, for fear of his safety, cast his ballot a month later in full-body armor. In the year since his election, Bolsonaro has continued to be mired in controversy, as declining popularity in his own party forced him to disown the PSL and found the new Alliance for Brazil (APB). However, while the Brazilian president seemingly self-immolates – his approval rating dropped 10 percent in merely six months, to an abysmal 29.4 percent (Eduardo Simões and Anthony Boadle, "Brazil Poll Shows Bolsonaro Government

Approval Sinks," *Reuters*, 26 August 2019) – perhaps the most consequential aspect of his agenda has gone largely unnoticed.

Though many international observers associated



In this aerial image, a section of the Amazon rain forest that has been decimated by wild fires on August 25, 2019 in the Candeias do Jamari region near Porto Velho, Brazil

the August fires with the disastrous consequences of human-induced climate change, the conflagration was actually set intentionally by local farmers, who have been emboldened by Bolsonaro's stymying of federal environmental regulations. Bolsonaro, who campaigned on a promise to make the Amazon accessible to developers, has overseen the highest rate of deforestation in over a decade (Olivia Rosane, "Bolsonaro Dismisses Amazon Deforestation as 'Cultural,'" *EcoWatch*, 22 November 2019). This phenomenon is no coincidence, however; though the Brazilian Institute of Environment and Renewable Natural Resources (IBAMA) had mostly curbed illegal development in the region, IBAMA has drastically reduced its regulatory activity in the last year. Bolsonaro, who has long chastised environmental conservation efforts' supposedly negative



Brazil's President Jair Bolsonaro, who has received criticism for his handling of the climate crisis, the destruction of the Amazon rain forest, and displacement of indigenous peoples in the region

'LUNGS OF THE EARTH' ON FIRE



Amazon: World's largest rainforest



BRAZIL

- Located in South America
- Covers **5.5 million sq. kms** of land
- Spreads across **9** nations
- **Brazil accounts for 60%** of Amazon rainforest
- Produces **20%** of the oxygen in Earth's atmosphere
- Home to **3 million** species of flora and fauna; **1 million** indigenous people



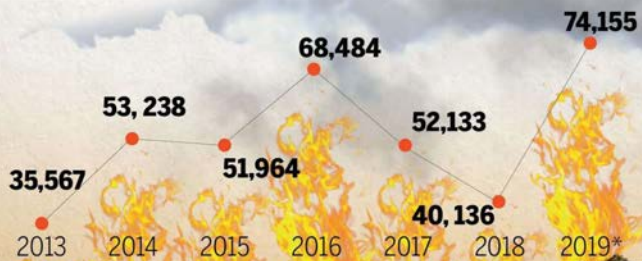
Aug 23 fire map by NASA

Area lost to deforestation (in Km²)



*From Aug 17 to July 18

No. of wildfires recorded in Brazil by year



*Between Jan & Aug 19. **Amazon accounts for half the territory where fires are burning
Source: Statista, News reports

effects on the economy, has not only increased miners' and farmers' access to the forest, but also made himself a clear opponent of environmental groups, whom he publicly accused of igniting the fires in an act of political retribution.

"There is nothing on the horizon that gives us the tiniest bit of hope something will be done to protect the environment in the next four years," said Ane Alencar, the Amazon Environmental Research Institute's Scientific Director, lamenting Bolsonaro's seemingly escalating anti-environmentalism (Manuela Andreoni and Christine Hauser, "Fires in Amazon Rain Forest Have Surged This Year," *New York Times*, 21 August 2019). In fact, Bolsonaro has largely doubled down in the wake of the wildfires, even rejecting foreign aid and brushing off criticism with claims that only "vegans, who only eat vegetables" care about reforestation (Mariana Simões, "Brazil's Bolsonaro on the Environment, in His Own Words," *New York Times*, 27 August 2019).

However, environmentalists haven't been the only

object of Bolsonaro's scorn, as Brazil's indigenous populations, many of whom have risen up in protest in recent months, have seen their livelihood threatened by his policies. Bolsonaro, who once bemoaned that "the Brazilian cavalry hasn't been as efficient as the Americans, who exterminated the Indians" ("Stop Brazil's Genocide," *Survival International*), has long sought to take away indigenous communities' autonomy for economic gain, opening up the coveted land of Brazil's 305 indigenous populations for agribusiness and mining. Bolsonaro even attempted to dismantle Brazil's National Indian Foundation (FUNAI) before the idea was rejected by Congress.

"Not since the [military] dictatorship [of 1964-85] have we lived through such a tough moment," said Jaime Siqueira, the head of the Indigenous Work Centre (CTI), a Brazilian NGO supporting indigenous communities fighting to defend their lands (Tom Phillips, "He Wants to Destroy Us': Bolsonaro Poses Gravest Threat in Decades, Amazon Tribes Say," *Guardian*, 26 July 2019). As the situation seems to grow more dire, many indigenous Brazilians have united in protest across Brazil – last April about 4,000 demonstrated for several days in Brasilia (Marina Martinez, "While the Amazon Burns, Brazil's Indigenous Peoples Rise Up," *Waging Nonviolence*, 17 September 2019).

However, as Bolsonaro's hardline economic nationalism grows ostensibly more severe – he has even described outside forces offering aid as "perverts lust[ing] for Brazil's [virginity]" (Leticia Casado and Ernesto Londoño, "Under Brazil's Far-Right Leader, Amazon Protections Slashed and Forests Fall," *New York Times*, 28 July 2019) – many are rapidly losing hope that Brazil's environment and indigenous peoples will be protected.

"He's not a president who has come to fix things. He's a president who has come to destroy," said Javari tribe leader Lucia Kanamari. "It's a tragedy" (Phillips).



This map, from August 23, 2019, shows every fire that had started burning in just a 10-day period across central South America, with estimates of 100,000 in Brazil alone.

Huawei CFO and Good Neighbor Canada Caught in U.S.-China Crosshairs

by Victoria Che '21

Huawei Technologies, a large Chinese telecommunications company, has faced criticism from American and European authorities in recent years; the White House has “claimed that China violates the rules of global trade through forced technology transfer and cyberwarfare” and “U.S. officials have long suspected that Huawei, a major smartphone maker, maintains ties to China’s communist leaders; the founder of the company is a former officer in



China’s People’s Liberation Army” (Emily Rauhala and Ellen Nakashima, “Senior Huawei Executive Faces Extradition to U.S. After Arrest in Canada,” *Washington Post*, 5 December 2018). The European Union has expressed worry about Huawei and other Chinese companies being required “to cooperate with Chinese intelligence services, such as on ‘mandatory back doors,’ to allow access to encrypted data,” allegations that Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Lu Kang strongly denied. Lu insisted that “Chinese laws and regulations never give any institution [such] mandates,” hoping “that relevant countries can provide a fair, transparent and unbiased environment for Chinese enterprises seeking investment, operation and cooperation there and refrain from setting up unnecessary obstacles for the normal operation of Chinese businesses out of other motives” (Foreign Ministry of the People’s Republic of China, Regular Press Conference, 10 December 2018).

Meng Wanzhou, daughter of Huawei’s founder, Ren Zhengfei, and the company’s chief financial officer, was arrested in Vancouver, Canada on December 1, 2018, apparently at the behest of the United States, where she faces extradition. Following Meng’s arrest, Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Geng Shuang said that China has demanded the United States and Canada “to immediately clarify the reason for the detention and release the detainee” (Foreign Ministry of the People’s Republic of China, Regular Press Conference, 7 December 2018). At a hearing in Canada six days after Meng’s arrest, it was revealed that an arrest warrant

was issued by a judge of the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of New York on August 22, 2018 (Julia Horowitz and Scott McLean, “U.S. Case Against Huawei CFO Revealed in Canadian Court,” *CNN*, 8 December 2018). In response to the judge’s decision not to rule on bail, Huawei released a statement on December 10 declaring that the company was “not aware of any wrongdoing by Ms. Meng” and that it “complies with all applicable laws and regulations where it operates” (Horowitz and McLean).

On December 8, the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs summoned the U.S. and Canadian ambassadors to China and stated that Meng’s arrest “severely violated the Chinese citizen’s legal and legitimate rights and interests” (Yong Xiong and Susannah Cullinane, “China Summons U.S., Canadian Ambassadors in ‘Strong Protest ‘Over Huawei CFO’s Arrest,’” *CNN*, 9 December 2018). China’s Vice Minister of Foreign



Huawei Chief Financial Officer, Meng Wanzhou leaves her Vancouver home to appear in British Columbia Supreme Court on September 30, 2019. The 47-year-old Huawei chief financial officer was detained during a stopover at the Vancouver airport in December 2018 on a U.S. warrant. The United States wants to put Meng on trial for fraud for allegedly violating Iran sanctions and lying about it to U.S. banks, accusations that her lawyers dispute.

Affairs, Le Yucheng, warned Canada against full responsibility to “grave consequences” if it does not release Meng. On December 11, she was released on \$10 million bail with conditions including electronic surveillance.

Charges were officially filed against Meng by the Western District of Washington State on January 16, 2019, and by the Eastern District of New York on January 24. Taken together, there were 23 indictments against the Chinese telecommunications giant and its CFO. Unnamed individuals “who have not yet

been apprehended” were also charged, according to the Justice Department’s indictment (Redacted Indictment of Huawei Technologies Co. Ltd, *U.S. District Court E.D.N.Y.*, 24 January 2019). Charges laid against Huawei and Meng included bank fraud, wire fraud, violations of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA), theft of technology, and skirting American sanctions in Iran. Both Huawei and Meng have officially rejected the claims (“Huawei Faces U.S. Charges: The Short, Medium, and Long Story,” *BBC*, 7 May 2019).

The Canadian Extradition Act states that a request for extradition must be made within 60 days of the initial arrest. On January 30, 2019, two days away from the deadline, the Canadian Department of Justice confirmed that it received an official request from the United States for Meng’s extradition. The extradition process commenced on March 1, as the Canadian Department of Justice ruled on an Authority to Proceed. Meng’s lawyers announced lawsuits filed against the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the Canadian Federal Government, and the Canada Border Services Agency in the British Columbia Supreme Court. Accompanied by her lawyers, Meng was briefly present at a hearing on March 6 while protests were taking place outside the court. She was granted permission to move to a personal property in Vancouver. In June 2019, the British Columbia Supreme Court accepted a proposal to officially begin Meng’s extradition case on January 20, 2020 (“Extradition Hearing for Meng Wanzhou Set for Early Next Year,” *CBC*, 6 June 2019).

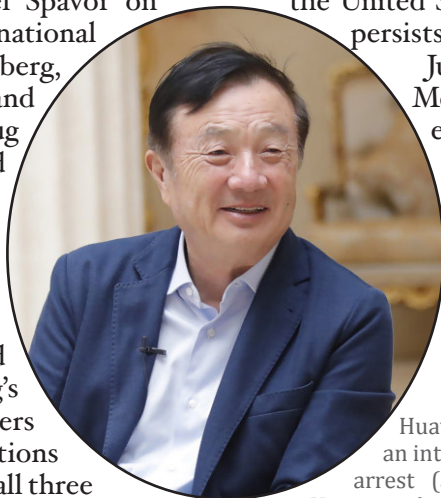
As hearings take place in Canada, China has also acted quickly and decisively in retaliation for this event. On March 4, 2019, three days after Canada announced the extradition hearing for Meng, China detained former Canadian diplomat Michael Kovrig and Canadian businessman Michael Spavor on allegations of “endangering Chinese national security.” Canadian Robert Schellenberg, who had previously been arrested and sentenced to 15 years in jail for drug smuggling in China, was retried and sentenced to death (Rauhala, “Canada Arrested Huawei’s Meng for the United States. As China Retaliates, It’s on Its Own,” *Washington Post*, 8 May 2019). While its concern for citizens detained in China continued to rise, Ottawa declared that Meng’s arrest concerned solely legal matters and that there are no political motivations behind the arrests. To the surprise of all three countries, instead of echoing its ally’s statement, President Trump tweeted that he would intervene in Meng’s case if he can gain a favorable edge on the trade deal with China. Trump’s statement gave both Beijing’s and Meng’s lawyers further reasons to suspect

the political nature of the arrest (Rauhala). China also applied economic pressure to Canada by officially halting Canadian canola imports and suspending permits of two Canadian pork producers (*BBC*).



Michael Kovrig, left, a former diplomat, and Michael Spavor, an entrepreneur with high-level contacts in North Korea, are Canadians who have been detained in China.

While China continues to pressure the Canadian government, Canada has seen little help from the United States for its assistance in arresting Meng; outside of simple gratitude, the United States has not acted on Canada’s behalf. The White House seems focused on securing a trade deal with China, and the United States, while aware of Canada’s struggles, has yet to act in support of its conflicted neighbor, a neighbor who was, arguably, simply doing a favor. Canada’s ambassador to the United States, David MacNaughton, expressed his frustration at the scarcity of attention and help that the United States has offered Canada and suggested that Canada would be “less inclined to continue” cooperating with the United States on other fronts if U.S. inaction persists (Rauhala).



Just over a year has passed since Meng’s arrest in Vancouver. While her extradition case is still pending, her detention has strained the already tense U.S.-China relationship and has sparked (arguably unnecessary and avoidable) conflicts between China and Canada.

Huawei CEO and founder Ren Zhengfei, 75, said in an interview with CNN one year after his daughter’s arrest (and a year living under house arrest in Vancouver): “As a father, of course I care about my children and I am concerned, but I believe that these hardships will toughen my daughter up and benefit her for the rest of her life. In the China-U.S. trade war, she is like an ant caught in between two titans. I think she should be proud of herself for being caught in such a situation – that she is important enough to be used as a bargaining chip when two countries fight.”

ASIA/PACIFIC

A Rising Son: Emperor Naruhito's Ascension to the Chrysanthemum Throne by Ethan Ito '20

On October 22, 2019, Japan celebrated the formal coronation of Emperor Naruhito, who had been on the throne since May 1, the day after his 85-year-old father, the former Emperor Akihito, resigned due to health concerns — this was the first time in more than two centuries that a Japanese emperor abdicated his throne. For Emperor Akihito to step down, special legislation had to be passed, as one of many Japanese royal traditions appears to have shifted to a new generation. The beginning of Naruhito's rule in Japan marks the end of the Heisei era, a period corresponding to the reign of Akihito, and ushers in the beginning of the Reiwa era (Amy Gunia, "Japan's New Emperor Is Declaring His Enthronement on Tuesday. Here's What to Know," *Time*, 22 October 2019).



Then-Emperor Akihito, with Empress Michiko by his side, waves to well-wishers on April 18, 2019, shortly before he abdicated the throne.

World leaders including Britain's Prince Charles, Philippine president Rodrigo Duterte, former French president Nicolas Sarkozy, and Brazilian president Jair Bolsonaro attended the enthronement ceremony. Though Naruhito had technically acted as emperor from the day Akihito abdicated on April 30, his ascension was not official until he completed a series of rituals, culminating in his enthronement.

"The emperor is the means by which the Japanese define the national identity, what it means to be Japanese," says Ken Ruoff, professor of history and director of the Center for Japanese Studies at Portland State University (Gunia). At the close of World War II, Japan, as part of its surrender, had to

publicly renounce the idea that the emperor is divine, effectively reducing the role of the Japanese emperor to that of a national figurehead, somewhat similar to the role Queen Elizabeth II plays as the leader of the British monarchy. The position, though once carrying with it the power to dictate national policy, is now merely symbolic, a purely nominal leadership role around which the entire country can unite.

Following many Japanese customs, the ritual itself has not fundamentally changed for centuries. "The ceremony, steeped in centuries of tradition, includes the presentation of the sacred sword and jewel that are part of the imperial regalia, which has been passed through generations of monarchs who have ascended the Chrysanthemum Throne" (Isabel Reynolds, "Naruhito Takes Throne as Japan's First New Emperor in 30 Years," *Bloomberg*, 22 October 2019). The day of the enthronement ceremony is a public holiday, and, in recognition of Naruhito's ascension, more than half a million petty criminals were pardoned as an opportunity to start anew (Gunia).

Naruhito's ascension is uncommon, not because of the ceremony or the celebrations, but because of the age-old traditions that have shifted for the modern monarchy. For example, Emperor Naruhito is the first emperor in Japanese history to have been educated in the West. In his book, *The Thames and I: A Memoir of Two Years at Oxford*, Naruhito recalls, "The two years [I] spent at Merton College researching transport on the Thames river in the 18th century were perhaps 'the happiest time of my life'" ("Japan's Emperor Is a Prisoner in His Own Palaces," *Economist*, 17 October 2019), with fond memories of "pub visits, vinegar-soaked fish and chips, and tussles



Newly enthroned Emperor Naruhito and Empress Masako



Emperor Naruhito, along with his wife, Empress Masako, and other members of the Japanese royal family, wave to crowds of well-wishers from the balcony of the Imperial Palace on May 4, 2019, following his ascension to the Chrysanthemum Throne after his father abdicated due to ill health.

with an uncooperative washing machine” (Justin McCurry, “Japan’s Anglophile New Emperor to Open Era of ‘Beautiful Harmony,’” *Guardian*, 26 April 2019). Furthermore, the nomenclature of Naruhito’s era also bends a long-standing tradition. Typically, the naming of an imperial era, or *genko*, is inspired by two characters from classical Chinese literature. The naming of Naruhito’s era, Reiwa, also consists of two Chinese characters; however, its source is a Japanese poem, not Chinese.

Japanese nationalism has steadily risen in recent years, and Naruhito’s



Emperor Naruhito is the head of the Imperial Family, Japan’s monarchy, and serves as the head of state, a largely ceremonial and symbolic role, but one filled with public duties and responsibilities. The head of government, in charge of the day-to-day operations running the country, is Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, left, who has held this position since 2012.

rise to the Chrysanthemum Throne carries with it concerns, as his early actions can have a major impact on the future. The name Reiwa also raises an eyebrow for some. Though it translates to “auspicious, or beautiful, harmony” by itself, the character “rei” also means “command” or “order,” making the meaning of the name rather subjective (Kristin Surak, “Shinzo Abe and the Rise of Japanese Nationalism,” *New Statesman America*, 15 May 2019). The former Emperor Akihito was much beloved by his country, and used his position as emperor for the good of the Japanese people. Though questions naturally exist over the new emperor’s approach, royal historian Eiichi Miyashiro believes that Naruhito’s ‘good, harmonious’ reign is unlikely to dramatically depart from Japan’s norm. “Any changes in style will be barely perceptible and introduced over time” (McCurry).

Emperor Naruhito’s enthronement is a ceremony that many people in Japan will remember as a milestone. While this ascension is doubtful to have a major political impact on a country with the oldest hereditary monarchy, but still one governed by a democratic prime minister, Shinzo Abe, the emperor will continue to serve as a symbol, and his actions in this role can influence Japanese opinion for the Reiwa era and beyond.

Conflict Over Kashmir by Grace Wolf ’20

The conflict over Kashmir, a territory of lakes and meadows located between Pakistan and India, has been in an incessant war-like state since 1947 (Erin Blakemore, “The Kashmir Conflict: How Did It Start?” *National Geographic*, 2 March 2019). Since then, the conflict has only worsened, and the area has become more and more dangerous.

In 1947, under the Indian Independence Act, Kashmir was given a choice: join India or Pakistan. Though the region’s leaders originally wanted to remain independent, because of gang and tribe invasion from Pakistan, they decided to accede to India. Directly following this decision to join India, a war broke out over Kashmir. Although the United Nations suggested that India and Pakistan hold a referendum to dissolve the territorial dispute, they could not come to a ceasefire agreement in order to do so. Finally, in July of 1949, India and Pakistan agreed on a plan that split

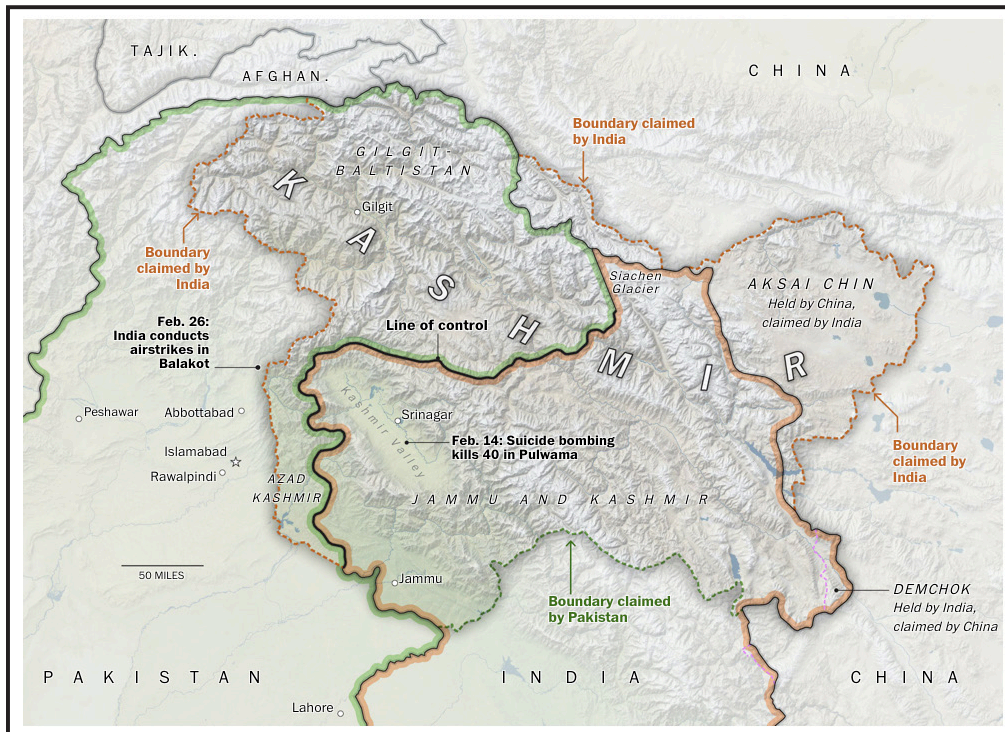
Kashmir virtually in half (David Ehl, “Kashmir: The World’s Most Dangerous Conflict,” *Deutsche Welle*, 8 July 2019). Since the ceasefire, Kashmir has constantly been the center of conflict between Pakistan and India, with wars occurring in 1965 and 1999, the latter of which ended in a ceasefire in 2003.

Though many thought that the conflict between Pakistan and Kashmir might have been coming to an end in the early 2000s, they could not have been more wrong. In 2016, summer protests erupted in Kashmir, denouncing its oppressive Indian leaders; Kashmir suffers from chronic unemployment, alleged human rights abuses by military officers, and more. Many citizens wished to join Pakistan, a Muslim country. However, their hopes were not realized. During the 2016 protests, a 22-year-old protest leader died in a conflict with military forces, sparking even more civil unrest (“Kashmir: Why India and Pakistan Fight Over

It,” *BBC*, 8 August 2019). At his funeral, there was much turmoil; 30 more citizens died. The next year, the Indian government blamed Pakistani groups for a raid of an airbase in Punjab, a northern state in India. Due to the alleged attack, Indian leadership took an even harder stance on Pakistan; it is still unclear whether the assault was really conducted by Pakistani men or used as an excuse.

military conducted airstrikes in Pakistan. This was only the beginning of the hostile exchange. The very next day, Pakistani forces shot down two Indian jets and took a fighter pilot hostage (Vindu Goel, “What Is Article 370, and Why Does It Matter in Kashmir?,” *New York Times*, 5 August 2019).

On August 5, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) revoked Article 370, which gave Kashmir its “autonomy, its own constitution, a separate flag, and independence over all matters besides foreign affairs, defence, and communications.” The Article had stood for seven decades (*BBC*). Following the declaration, the Indian Government cut off internet access and television in the territory, sent tourists home on the false pretense of a looming terrorist threat, and declared public gatherings a crime. Following this destruction of rights, the Indian government in Delhi is deciding to split the regions of Kashmir into two and govern them independently. Unsettled and unhappy about India’s assumed control of the region, Pakistani UN



Map of the region’s conflict, from February 2019

And 2019 proved a bloody year for Kashmir as well. On February 14, a Pakistani suicide bomber killed 40 Indian soldiers. India responded immediately; on February 26, the

leaders plan to bring the conflict to court.

One can only hope for the best for the people of Kashmir, who have so long endured the violence imposed by India and Pakistan.

Protests in Hong Kong by Neala Sweeney '20

For the past nine months, Hong Kong locals have been protesting. These protests began with a proposed extradition bill, which was initially supposed to include only Hong Kong and Taiwan. The bill was a reaction to a situation in which a Hong Kong man, Chan Tong-kai, murdered his girlfriend in Taiwan and then fled back to Hong Kong to avoid persecution. The bill was supposed to define the procedure by which the Hong Kong government could extradite him to Taiwan to be tried for his crimes there. However, mainland China was added to this bill, and thus began the protests.

Hong Kong was a British colony until 1997, when it was returned to China under a policy known as “one country, two systems,” which granted the territory a high degree of sovereignty, including a free press, independent courts, open internet, and other democratic features that were more in line with its



Hundreds of thousands of people in Hong Kong, a city of about seven million, protested a contentious extradition law on June 9, 2019.



Pro-democracy protesters demanding electoral freedom, particularly autonomous decision-making in the selection of their chief executive, gather outside the Hong Kong government headquarters in September 2014.

connection to Great Britain than to mainland China. The terms of that agreement were guaranteed under the Basic Law, which is set to expire after a 50-year transition period, in 2047. At that point, Hong Kong will lose its autonomous status and officially become one with China, particularly its laws and regulations (Mike Ives, “What Is Hong Kong’s Extradition Bill,” *New York Times*, 10 June 2019). However, Hong Kongers have been protesting what appears to be China’s encroachment in recent years, with many concerned that the mainland is exerting its authority much earlier than the agreed upon terms of the Basic Law, which still has more than 27 years left. During the so-called “Umbrella Revolution” of 2014 and, more recently in the summer of 2019, Hong Kong residents have taken to the streets to protest.

The proposed extradition bill would allow criminals to be extradited to mainland China and tried under Chinese law. Because of Hong Kong’s special administrative region status, Hong Kong law and Chinese law are not the same. The people of Hong Kong are worried this bill would lead to unfair trials and potential violent treatment. Many also argue that the bill would allow greater nondemocratic Chinese influence and could be used to arrest and target journalists.

The first large organized protest took place on June 9, 2019. More than one million of the city’s seven million residents showed up to the protest (Jin Wu, K.K. Rebecca Lai, and Alan Yuhas, “Six Months of Hong Kong Protests. How Did We Get Here?” *New York Times*, 18 November 2019). The main target of this unrest was Hong Kong’s Legislative Council, wherein pro-Beijing legislators held a majority. Protesters

threw bricks, bottles, and umbrellas at the police – a tactic similar to that of the Hong Kong protests of 2014 – and the police responded with pepper spray, tear gas, and batons. Many Hong Kongers thought the police response was excessive and violent. June 16, 2019, saw the largest march in Hong Kong’s history, with two million protesters marching in opposition to the government and the proposed extradition bill. In addition to withdrawal of the bill, the protesters demanded something new: an independent investigation of the Hong Kong police (Wu, Lai, and Yuhas).

After weeks of protesting, Carrie Lam, Chief Executive of Hong Kong, announced that the bill would be suspended, but gave no clear timeline, and the legal language that she used denoted that the bill was still alive, yet merely not being considered at the moment.

On July 1, the anniversary of Hong Kong’s return to Chinese sovereignty, protesters vandalized the Legislative Council, and returned with more demands of the government, including the release of arrested protesters and the retraction of the word “riot,” which was used to describe the marches on June 12. On the night of July 21, many demonstrators were using the MTR, Hong Kong’s subway, to get home. In Yuen Long, the protesters were assaulted by men wearing masks and white shirts. Many of the men were later identified as members of the Chinese Triad, a transnational system of organized crime based in China, Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan. The police for a long period of time were not responsive to the many emergency calls made. They also did not make any arrests on that night; many thus believed that they were in cahoots with the Triad members.

On August 13, the protesters shut down Hong Kong International Airport, one of the world’s busiest. The protesters also tied up and beat two mainland Chinese men, one of them believed to be

Protesters rally inside the arrivals hall of Hong Kong International Airport on August 9, 2019.



a security officer and one of them a reporter for a pro-China newspaper. The protesters later apologized for this. August 18 saw a protest of 1.7 million Hong Kongers marching peacefully in the rain (Wu, Lai, and Yuhas). However, violence again ensued on August 31, the anniversary of the 2014 proposal to constrict democracy in Hong Kong. A few days later, Lam announced officially that the government would withdraw the extradition bill. It was obvious that this would no longer satisfy Hong Kong protesters, who now held a much more ambitious agenda. October 1 marked a

very important day in the trajectory of the protests: It was the first day that a police officer shot a protester.

Hong Kong protesters have also been targeting franchises and businesses that they consider enemies of their movement, including Starbucks. Protests consider Starbucks as sympathetic to Beijing. Some companies have been trying to dodge questions, as answering in favor of either side would jeopardize their business. Hong Kong demonstrators have called for a boycott of all pro-China restaurants and franchises and have encouraged vandalism of said restaurants. Activists have also called for the boycott of Apple, as it removed an app from the App Store which allowed protesters to see where the Hong



Kong police were and when.

There was also much speculation about the potential replacement of Carrie Lam; many believed that President Xi Jinping considered Lam incapable of dealing with the protesters. Hong Kongers are worried that China will initiate a full takeover before 2047. Many are also worried about the potential for another Tiananmen Square incident. The protests continue in Hong Kong and there is no foreseeable end at this point.

Hong Kong's Chief Executive Carrie Lam, pictured addressing reporters on June 10, 2019, said that she would continue pursuing legislation that would allow extraditions to mainland China despite widespread protests opposing it. She later backed down, after the city's protests continued throughout the summer.

Asia's El Chapo by Hazel Le '22

Tse Chi Lop, a 55-year-old Canadian national born in Guangdong Province, in southern China, is suspected of running a multi-billion-dollar drug trafficking syndicate operating in Hong Kong, Thailand, Macao, and many other Southeast Asian countries.

"He is Asia's most-wanted man," writes investigative reporter Tom Allard in "The Hunt for Asia's El Chapo" (*Reuters*, 14 October 2019). "He is protected by a guard of Thai kickboxers. He flies by private jet. And, police say, he once lost \$66 million in a single night at a Macau casino." Members of Tse's syndicate refer to the organization as "The Company," while law enforcement authorities



Undated and blurry portrait of alleged drug kingpin Tse Chi Lop, also known as Sam Gor, leader of a narcotics syndicate believed to hold significant responsibility for a surge of synthetic drugs, including methamphetamine and ketamine, across the Asia-Pacific region.

call it "Sam Gor," which is Cantonese for "Brother Number Three," one of Tse's nicknames. Sam Gor's 19 top leaders consist of four Canadian citizens, and others from Hong Kong, Macau, mainland China, Taiwan, Malaysia, Myanmar, and Vietnam. The syndicate produces heroin, ketamine, and methamphetamine in Myanmar, then traffics drugs to countries ranging from Thailand and Japan to some

on the other side of the globe. In a "conservative estimate" by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the group's meth revenue in 2018 was \$8 billion a year, but says it could be as much as \$17.7 billion.

Tse was raised in China during the Cultural Revolution, during which time he joined a group of imprisoned members of Mao's Red Guard called the Big Circle Gang, eventually moving to Canada in 1988 to seek sanctuary from his group's criminal activities. In the 1990s, Tse participated in the smuggling ring in the Golden Triangle, an opium-producing region where the borders of Myanmar, Thailand, China, and Laos meet. In 1998, he faced the Eastern District Court of New York, and was found guilty of conspiring to import heroin into the United States. By claiming his family's dependence – ailing parents, a sick child, and an overwhelmed wife all relied on him – and expressing great sorrow, Tse was sentenced to only nine years in a



Bags of methamphetamine found during a raid in Australia in 2017. The Sam Gor syndicate is believed to funnel tons of meth, heroin, and ketamine to at least a dozen countries like Japan and New Zealand. The UN Office on Drugs and Crime estimated in 2018 that meth revenue alone is at least \$8 billion a year.

federal correctional institution in Elkton, Ohio. After being released in 2006, Tse and his wife registered a new business named the China Peace Investment Group Company Ltd, in Hong Kong in 2011. This is when police believed Tse Chi Lop picked up on his previous connections with the drugs syndicate, and The Company has skyrocketed since. With “center-parted hair and [the] casual fashion sense of a typical middle-aged Chinese family man,” Tse may not draw a lot of attention. He’s said to be much more discreet than Latin cartel leaders such as Mexico’s Joaquin “El Chapo” Guzman or the late Colombian drug lord Pablo Escobar (Allard).

The Australian Federal Police (AFP) took the lead of Operation Kungur, a multinational, previously unreported investigation of Tse’s organization. In 2011, AFP officers caught a group in Melbourne

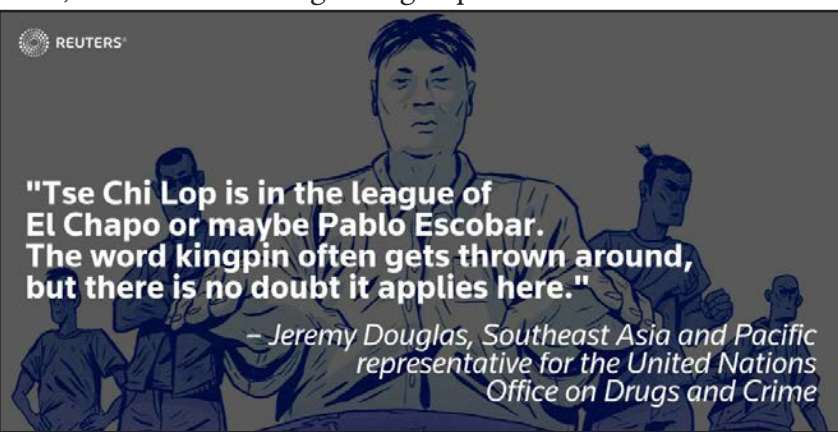


Left: Sinoaloe cartel leader Joaquin “El Chapo” Guzman of Mexico (captured and imprisoned in the United States since January 2017); Right: Medellin cartel’s Pablo Escobar of Colombia (killed on December 2, 1993)

regulations in the Shan State along with new highways and bridges, have made the importation and transportation of meth makers’ products easier. The UNODC report found that the syndicate is not only moving meth to meet demand but is also trying to increase demand by flooding the region with rock-bottom-priced products (Joshua Berlinger, “Asia’s Meth Trade Is Worth an Estimated \$61B as Region Becomes ‘Playground’ for Drug Gangs,” *CNN*, 18 July 2019).

The 2016 National Drug Strategy Household Survey revealed alarming and concerning numbers, as it found that, while the total use of meth was declining across Australia, the rate of regular and dependent users was growing. In Australia alone, 1.3 million people over the age of 14 claimed that they used the drug once, and 20 percent said that they used the drug weekly or daily. Adelaide, in South Australia, was reported on a worldwide study to have to the highest level of methamphetamine use across more than 120 cities in 30 different countries (Alle McMahon, “Australian Federal Police Helping Hunt Down ‘Asia’s El Chapo,’” *News.com.au*, 27 October 2019).

Considering the situation’s serious implications and the scope of the transnational syndicate, governments and authorities need to work together to stop it from spreading. One of the main factors leading to the growth of the syndicate is relaxed law enforcement. Asian countries need to take responsibility and address the situation practically. Questions are being raised about how such a large-scale syndicate could be working right under the government’s nose for such a long time (Berlinger, “Asia’s Meth Boom: How a War on Drugs Went Continent-Wide,” *Reuters-CNN*, 5 November 2018). Read the full investigation by Tom Allard [here](#).



"Tse Chi Lop is in the league of El Chapo or maybe Pablo Escobar. The word kingpin often gets thrown around, but there is no doubt it applies here."

– Jeremy Douglas, Southeast Asia and Pacific representative for the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

importing dozens of kilos of meth. Police attempts at tapping the suspects’ phones proved futile, however, as the illicit product kept getting intercepted. As AFP investigated deeper, they found that “the syndicate is enormously wealthy, disciplined, and sophisticated – in many ways more sophisticated than any Latin American cartel, say anti-narcotics officials. Sam Gor supplies a bigger, more dispersed drug market and collaborates with a more diverse range of local crime groups than the Latin cartels do,” writes Allard. Nevertheless, the true scale of the Sam Gor syndicate was only revealed in 2016 when a young Taiwanese man got caught in Myanmar’s Yangon Airport with a bag of white powder strapped to each of his thighs. During the past year, Reuters’ Allard and his team has been extremely active and involved in investigating the story of Tse and his Sam Gor network. Not only did they interview more than two dozen law enforcement authorities from eight countries, but reporters also spoke to leaders in Myanmar’s Shan State, the heart of Southeast Asia’s Golden Triangle.

The main factors contributing to Sam Gor’s vast success are the syndicate’s abundant wealth and the market’s constant needs. In addition, lenient

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