



THE FUTURE

JULY 2024

ISSN 2753-3670



The Future is a newsletter periodically published by The Future Institute from Marlyon Road, Ilford, United Kingdom.

This newsletter aims to chronicle the major events and developments in the societies of emerging nations with the potential to impact their future. This publication offers snippets of news analysis that might be advantageous to academics, policymakers, social and political workers, students and various organisations.

If you are interested in engaging with or participating in any TFI project or publication, please write to us at: admin@tfiuk.org



Topics in this issue

THE LABOR OF MOTHERHOOD 3

ISRAEL-GAZA WAR CONTINUES PAST NINE MONTHS OF DEATH AND DESTRUCTION 4

INDIA’S MODI BECOMES PM FOR A THIRD TIME, ALBEIT A MUCH WEAKER ONE 6

DESPITE LANDSLIDE VICTORY IN UK ELECTIONS, LABOUR’S GAZA POSITION LEADS TO LOSS OF POPULAR VOTE 7

POWER OF AIPAC ON SHOW AS US HOUSE PASSES LEGISLATIONS SANCTIONING ICC OVER GAZA, BARRING STATE DEPARTMENT FROM CITING GAZA HEALTH MINISTRY DEATH TOLL..... 8

1,301 HAJJ PILGRIMS DIE IN EXTREME HEAT IN SAUDI ARABIA; MORE THAN 500 DIE OF HEAT IN PAKISTAN 9

WIKILEAKS FOUNDER JULIAN ASSANGE FREE TO WALK AFTER STRIKING US DEAL 10

BIDEN IMPOSES SWEEPING ASYLUM BAN ON US-MEXICO BORDER..... 11

WHILE ARMENIA RECOGNISES PALESTINE, NEW GERMAN CITIZENS REQUIRED TO AFFIRM ISRAEL'S RIGHT TO EXIST 12

HISTORIC UK SUPREME COURT VERDICT RAISES QUESTIONS OF FAIRNESS IN BANGLADESH 71 WAR CRIMES TRIALS... **ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.**

Special Article

The Labor of Motherhood

- *Nousheen Sharmila Ritu**

“Has motherhood always been this difficult?”

This would be the foremost and most overwhelming thought storming my mind day and night stepping into motherhood for the first time. I would have liked my new-mom brain to believe that all new mothers grappled with this same question having embraced the tremendous pain and challenges of motherhood. As I would tread through these challenges, I would recurrently wonder, why has nobody ever told us that motherhood is this all-encompassing? Why is there so little discussion and support system for tackling the myriads of tests and tribulations experienced by a mother? More importantly, why is motherhood so underrated?

I would then resort into enumerating the multitude of skills and strengths a woman masters upon embracing motherhood. Can you imagine how much cognitive strength it takes for a mother to set aside nerve-racking emotions and physical pain, and instead focus on the minutest care of her newborn? What level of time management skills does a mother require to juggle between newborn care and the mundane chores of everyday life? Is there any better demonstration of leadership quality as a mother stands at the helm and steers her new family through thick and thin? Can we ever count the number of endless decisions that a mother has to make every day, each likely to affect the health, safety and well-being of a vulnerable little human being? Where can one learn better problem-solving skills as a mother puts her toddler at ease after the twentieth meltdown for the day?

As you start surviving and triumphing in this new role with just three to four hours of broken sleep, you may begin to realize that motherhood is not only transformative at a personal level, but it also unleashes an unseen and unimagined potential within a woman. So, I would think to myself, “Why are women not putting out motherhood as an acquired experience in their CVs?” But that question immediately redirected me into realizing something else— why do we value professional skills so much that we want to capitalize on a mother’s unconditional love and put formal tags to it? This is probably because the capital system only values those which can produce materialistic value. And hence, as painstaking, extraordinary and worthy as a mother’s labor is, it is not valued enough within the capitalist system.

This reality can be further understood through the lens of social reproduction theory which asserts that the reproduction or renewal of human life (or human labor power) is a major aspect of inequality within a capitalist social system. The key proponents of social reproduction theory, Louis Althusser and Pierre Bourdieu depict the concepts of ‘ideological state apparatus’ and ‘cultural capital’ to highlight how the institutions and social relations work in tandem to produce resources that reproduce inequality within a capitalist system. Marxist feminist, Tithi Bhattacharya puts it in simpler words— if workers produce commodities, who produces the worker? Social reproduction theory zooms in on the contradictory relationship between production and reproduction whereby capitalists need human labor power to produce value, but must control the human conditions that produce life or human labor, e.g. wages, social spending, etc. By doing so, they can keep producing cheap labor power that ultimately enables the reproduction of the same social relations and processes that perpetuate inequality.

This contradictory relationship between life-making and profit-making can somewhat help us understand why motherhood or housework is critically undervalued in our society to the extent of being non-economic oppression. This is probably one of the reasons why the labor of motherhood goes unseen and unappreciated in the context of our contemporary capitalist society; and the only way in which we can claim its value is through the translation of a mother’s labor into professional skills and experiences. It is as if we have forgotten to value labor until it produces economic value even if that might entail being ignorant to the purest and unconditional efforts in this world.

* Nousheen Sharmila Ritu is a mother and an aspiring social researcher. She has recently finished her master’s on Criminology and Criminal Justice from the University of Oxford. Her research interests include genocide, transitional justice, decolonisation, prison and punishment studies.



Israel-Gaza war continues past nine months of death and destruction

Following 260 days of war, Palestinians in the Gaza Strip continue to live amidst famine and an ongoing genocidal onslaught by the Israeli military. Since Israel began the invasion of Rafah on May 6, the cycle of destruction and genocide has continued unabated. In June, the world was treated to horrible scenes of slaughter of innocent civilians when the Israeli military carried out strikes on the Nuseirat refugee camp, first on June 6 killing 33 Palestinians, then on June 8 when Israeli forces entered the camp disguised as humanitarian aid trucks to rescue hostages, where 274 Palestinians, including 64 children and 57 women were killed and entire residential blocks were wiped out to rescue 4 Israeli hostages. The massacre showed how closely the US worked with Israel, providing all weapons and ammunitions to kill Gazans on one hand, while using the excuse of the “humanitarian” pier as a cover to aid Israel in military operations leading to the deaths of hundreds of innocent civilians. While the Israeli military spokesperson Daniel Hagari said that Israel was wrong to think it could eliminate Hamas, the IDF nonetheless has continued in its genocidal spree – on June 20, 45 Palestinians were killed in IDF designated ‘safe zones’ in Rafah and Central Gaza, from where shocking videos emerged of beheaded babies and strewn pieces of human flesh, while on the same day 22 people were killed in a shelling near the Red Cross Office; on June 22 Israeli strikes killed 42 Palestinians in Gaza City while 22 were killed in Al-Shati area.

Nevertheless, Israel has faced staunch resistance from the Palestinian resistance movement in Gaza, which has uploaded videos of devastating attacks on Israeli convoys and soldiers on an almost daily basis. Hezbollah and Houthi movements have also kept up attacks on Israel on a limited scale, the former releasing extensive reconnaissance videos of secret Israeli military sites that have confounded and shocked the Israeli administration and military. On a related note, the need for more military men in the IDF as the threat of a regional war looms has pushed the Israeli courts to rule that ultra-Orthodox men previously exempt from military services must be drafted, a move that has threatened to unravel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s ruling coalition, and led to large-scale demonstrations from ultra-Orthodox Israeli groups. Meanwhile, Israel has continued settler-colonial operations in the West Bank, as Israeli authorities approved the seizure of 12.7 square kilometres of land in the occupied West Bank. In the largest single appropriation approved since the 1993 Oslo Accords. Among other notable events in July included UN official Chris Sidoti calling “The Israeli army is one of the most criminal in the world,” and UN environmental impact report stating thirty-nine million tonnes of debris was created by the war, while water and sanitation systems in Gaza destroyed by Israeli forces, and international criticism of International Women’s Media Foundation for revoking award of Palestinian reporter Maha Hussein after pressure from a US conservative group.

Meanwhile, the material and human catastrophe of the war has been piling up, with no end in sight. The number of Palestinian casualties in Gaza as of July 3 is at least 37,953 dead, including more than 15,000 children, while the number of Palestinians wounded has reached more than 87,266. The number of missing people is more than 10,000. In the Occupied West Bank, there have been at least 561 deaths, of whom more than 138 are children, while more than 5,300 are injured. According to the latest data from the UN, WHO and the Palestinian government as of June 30, more than half of Gaza homes have been destroyed or damaged, 80% of commercial facilities, 88% of school buildings, 17 out of 35 hospitals are partially functioning, 130 ambulances have been destroyed, while 267 places of worship have been damaged. Every hour in Gaza, 15 people are killed, of whom 6 are children, while 35 people are injured and 12 buildings are destroyed. As of April 5, more than 100 journalists, predominantly Palestinians, had been killed since October 7. According to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) and the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), 96 Palestinian, three Lebanese, and four Israeli journalists were killed.

References:

2023 Israel–Hamas war. (2023, October 25). Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. Retrieved July 6, 2024, from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2023_Israel%E2%80%93Hamas_war

2024 Nuseirat rescue operation. (2024, July 4). Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. Retrieved July 6, 2024, from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2024_Nuseirat_rescue_operation

AJLabs. (2023, October 9). Israel-Gaza war in maps and charts: Live tracker. Breaking News, World News and Video from Al Jazeera. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/longform/2023/10/9/israel-hamas-war-in-maps-and-charts-live-tracker>

Israeli army spokesman: Anyone who thinks Hamas can be eliminated is wrong. (2024, June 20). Middle East Eye. <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/israeli-army-spokesperson-daniel-hagari-says-hamas-cannot-be-eliminated>

Israeli high court rules ultra-orthodox men must serve in the military. (2024, June 25). Middle East Eye. <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/israeli-high-court-rules-ultra-orthodox-men-must-serve-military>

Israel's war on Gaza caused major environmental damage, UN says. (2024, June 19). Middle East Eye. <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/israels-war-gaza-caused-major-environmental-damage-un-says>

Women's media Foundation criticised for revoking Palestinian journalist's award. (2024, June 20). Middle East Eye. <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/womens-media-foundation-condemned-rescinding-award-palestinian-journalist>

Image attribute: @ Save_Palestine and hosnysalah from Pixabay under the Pixabay Content License.





India's Modi becomes PM for a third time, albeit a much weaker one

In the 2024 Indian general elections, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) secured a third consecutive term. However, despite wild pre-election surveys by mainstream media outlets projecting a decisive victory for the BJP and its coalition of 350+ or even 400 seats, the BJP itself won just 240 seats, which is far below the 303 seats it won in 2019. However, the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), which includes the BJP and its regional coalition partners such as Telegu Desam Party (TDP) and Janata Dal (United) (JDU(U)), secured a total of 293 seats out of 543, allowing Modi to return a third time as Prime Minister. Despite extreme heat conditions that many feared would adversely affect voter turnout, this election saw an increase in voter participation, with 642 million voters, including 312 million women, casting their votes. In contrast to the BJP's efforts to leverage India's growing global status and its Hindu nationalist credentials, it was local livelihood issues and economic concerns which significantly influenced voter behaviour.

The primary opposition, the Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA), led by the Indian National Congress (INC), performed better than expected, winning 234 seats. This includes 99 seats won by the Congress, which now holds the official opposition status for the first time in a decade. The result was seen as shocking by many who had predicted 400 seats for the BJP. Instead, the INDIA opposition alliance attained upset victories in major states such as Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, and West Bengal, forcing the BJP to rely on the 28 cumulative seats won by the Andhra Pradesh-based Telugu Desam Party led by Chandrababu Naidu and the Bihar-based Janata Dal (United) led by Nitish Kumar in order for the NDA to retain its majority in the Lok Sabha. Observers say the elections have created a dent in brand Modi, bringing back an era of coalitions that will force the BJP to be more deliberative and consultative.

Despite this, however, the election saw the deliberate exclusion of Muslims both by NDA and INDIA blocs. There was not one Muslim in Modi's oversized cabinet of 71 members having Hindus, Dalits, Sikhs and even Christians, while major opposition parties fielded only 43 Muslim candidates in total for the 2024 elections, a sharp decline from 115 in 2019, reflecting increasing marginalisation of Muslims in Indian socio-political life. In contrast, in 2014, all political parties had collectively nominated 320 Muslim candidates, while this number dramatically plunged to a historic low of 94 in 2024. Despite the significant drop in the number of Muslim candidates nominated, the number of Muslim candidates elected, at 24, clearly disproves the argument of non-BJP parties that they avoid nominating Muslims

due to concerns over their “winnability,” showcasing instead the BJP’s success in not only reducing Muslim representation in Parliament and state legislatures but also in influencing opposition parties to follow suit.

References:

2024 Indian general election. (2024, July 5). Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. Retrieved July 5, 2024, from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2024_Indian_general_election

Modi set for third term as coalition backs him for PM. (n.d.). BBC News. <https://www.bbc.com/news/live/world-asia-india-69072275>

MuslimMirror. (2024, June 24). Indian Muslims: Excluded by BJP, ignored by opposition, facing a crisis of non-belonging. Muslim Mirror. <https://muslimmirror.com/eng/indian-muslims-excluded-by-bjp-ignored-by-opposition-how-the-community-is-facing-crisis-of-non-belonging/>

Image attribute: @ MEAphotogallery from Flickr under Creative Commons License.



Despite landslide victory in UK elections, Labour’s Gaza position leads to loss of popular vote

Keir Starmer’s Labour Party surged to a landslide victory in a parliamentary election on Friday, ending 14 years of often tumultuous Conservative government. Labour won a massive majority in the 650-seat parliament with Rishi Sunak’s Conservatives suffering the worst performance in the party’s long history as voters punished them for a cost-of-living crisis, failing public services, and a series of scandals. However, while Labour won a 170-seat majority, with 412 seats against 121 seats for the Conservatives, Labour’s share of the national vote was just 33.8 per cent, the party coming to power with the lowest share of the popular vote of any incoming government in British history. Moreover, voter turnout was just at 60 per cent, the second lowest since 1885. The Conservatives faced a massive backlash, recording their lowest-ever vote. The party suffered a massive 20-point decline since 2019, with 11 senior ministers losing their seats, including former prime minister Lizz Truss, Defence Secretary Grant Shapps and prominent Brexiteer Jacob Rees-Mogg. Apart from picking up several Conservative seats, Labour’s main gains came

via the collapse of the Scottish National Party (SNP), which lost almost 40 seats to Labour, including all six Glasgow seats.

On the other hand, the Labour Party suffered significant election setbacks at the expense of pro-Palestine candidates in areas with large Muslim populations amid discontent against Kier Starmer on Labour's position on the war in Gaza. Long counting on the backing of Muslim and other minority groups, the party saw its vote fall on average by 10 points in seats where more than 10% of the population identify as Muslim- Heavyweight Labour candidate Jonathan Ashworth lost his seat to independent Shockat Adam in Leicester South, Jeremy Corbyn won as an independent against Labour in Islington North, while pro-Gaza independents also won in Blackburn, and Dewsbury & Batley. Several other Labour lawmakers only just held on to their seats winning by very slim margins, such as Wes Steeting in Ilford North by 528 votes and Jess Philips in Birmingham Yardley by 693 votes, as they were challenged by pro-Gaza candidates. While Labour has said it wants the fighting in Gaza to stop, it has also backed Israel's right to defend itself, angering some among the 3.9 million Muslims who make up 6.5% of Britain's population – Starmer's comment on a radio show in October that Israel "has the right" to withhold power and water from Palestinian civilians in Gaza caused outrage among many left-wing and Muslim voters.

References:

Edwards, C. (2024, July 5). The Labour Party's position on Gaza appears to have cost it votes in the UK election. CNN. <https://edition.cnn.com/2024/07/05/uk/labour-gaza-israel-vote-uk-election-gbr-intl/index.html>

Landslide victory against Tories, but collapse in Labour's popular vote heralds UK government of crisis. (2024, July 5). World Socialist Web Site. <https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2024/07/05/ygrw-i05.html>

Pro-Gaza candidates dent Labour's UK election victory. (2024, July 5). Reuters.com. <https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/pro-gaza-candidates-dent-labours-uk-election-victory-2024-07-05/>

Pro-Gaza candidates squeeze Labour vote in some constituencies. (2024, July 5). BBC Breaking News, World News, US News, Sports, Business, Innovation, Climate, Culture, Travel, Video & Audio. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c9e9yjdj215yo>

Image attribute: @ Number 10 from Flickr under Creative Commons License.

Power of AIPAC on show as US House passes legislations sanctioning ICC over Gaza, barring State Department from citing Gaza Health Ministry Death Toll

Alongside a host of anti-Palestine measures such as cutting funding for the UNWRA, preventing refugee resettlement, and slashing funds for other Palestine-related issues such as the Gaza pier, the US House of Representatives recently voted to pass legislation this month that would sanction the International Criminal Court (ICC) after its prosecutor applied for arrest warrants against Israeli officials. The move comes after The Hague-based court's prosecutor said Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant should be arrested on charges relating to the war in Gaza. The vote passed with a majority of Republican support by a vote of 247-155. Two Republicans voted "present" and 42 pro-Israel Democrats sided with their Republican colleagues to back the legislation. Though the bill passed in the House, experts said that it is not expected to become law. President Joe Biden has also indicated that he "strongly opposes" the bill and the US administration has said it does not support the sanctions.

In an even more bizarre turn of events, the US House of Representatives later also voted to bar the State Department from using international affairs budget funds to cite figures on the number of Palestinians killed by Israel in Gaza. The 269 - 144 vote in favour of the bipartisan amendment was backed by 62 Democrats and 207 Republicans. Palestinian-American congresswoman Rashida Tlaib slammed the vote as an extreme manifestation of anti-Palestinian racism, noting that it was an attempt to hide the scale of the devastation wreaked on Gaza by Israel. This comes despite the fact that casualty figures provided by Gaza's health ministry have been shown to be accurate by UN agencies and NGOs in previous Israeli assaults on Gaza. Observers noted that these latest votes in Congress not just show how US lawmakers have been trying to protect Israel's image amidst its ongoing genocide, but also the huge power and influence of Israeli foreign lobby AIPAC, the latest indication of which was Representative Jamal Bowman's loss in his re-election bid from New York; AIPAC reportedly spent more than \$14M to unseat Bowman.

References:

House spending bill erases UNRWA, Gaza pier funding, blocks refugee resettlement. (2024, June 28). Al-Monitor: Independent, trusted coverage of the Middle East. <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2024/06/house-spending-bill-erases-unrwa-gaza-pier-funding-blocks-refugee-resettlement>

The New Arab Staff. (2024, June 28). 'Genocide denial': US house votes to bar use of Gaza death toll. The New Arab. <https://www.newarab.com/news/genocide-denial-us-house-votes-bar-use-gaza-death-toll>

US house votes to sanction ICC over Israel-Gaza arrest warrants. (2024, June 4). BBC Breaking News, World News, US News, Sports, Business, Innovation, Climate, Culture, Travel, Video & Audio. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cm551217yero>

Image attribute: @ Stephen Melkisetian from Flickr under Creative Commons License.



1,301 Hajj pilgrims die in extreme heat in Saudi Arabia; more than 500 die of heat in Pakistan

Climate change and the ill effects of extreme heat on human lives and societies took the centre stage again as the world grapples with another extremely hot summer. Authorities in Saudi Arabia have reported that more than 1,300 pilgrims had died during the Hajj pilgrimage which took place during intense heat. The authorities, however, added that most of the deceased did not have official permits. The dead came from more than 10 countries stretching from the United States to Indonesia, and some governments are continuing to update their totals. Earlier, Arab diplomats had told the AFP that Egyptian pilgrims accounted for 658 deaths - 630 of them unregistered pilgrims. According to Saudi Arabia's National Meteorological Centre, temperatures in Mecca this year climbed as high as 51.8C (125F) and was counted as a major reason behind most of the pilgrim deaths. Officials said that a high number of the deaths were of unregistered pilgrims from Egypt, who in many cases did not have access to amenities meant to make the pilgrimage more bearable, including air-conditioned tents.

On the other hand, the BBC reported that more than 500 people had died in Pakistan as temperatures in Karachi soared above 40C (104F), with the high humidity making it feel as hot as 49C, reports said. The body count was based on reports from social welfare organisations such as Edhi, whose ambulance services said that they had

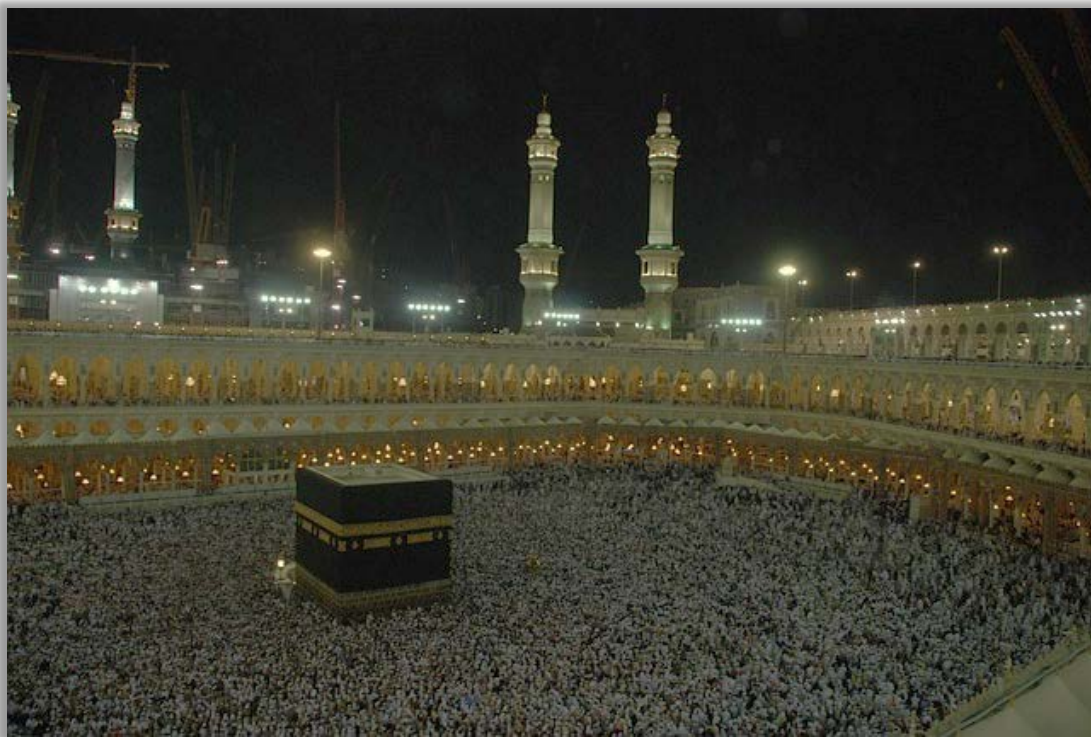
picked up 568 dead bodies from the streets over six days between June 22-28, which is higher than the usual 30-40 dead bodies sent to the Karachi city morgue on a daily basis. The temperatures have been similarly high in other parts of South Asia as well, and daily life of the general people is much more miserable due to the regular power cuts which cut off the fans and air conditioning many rely on to keep cool. It is expected that upcoming monsoon rains will bring much-needed relief to the region and its people.

References:

Pakistan: More than 500 die in six days as heatwave grips country. (2024, June 27). BBC Breaking News, World News, US News, Sports, Business, Innovation, Climate, Culture, Travel, Video & Audio. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cn05rz3w4x1o>

Saudi Arabia says 1,301 Hajj pilgrims died in extreme heat. (2024, June 23). Middle East Eye. <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/saudi-arabia-1301-deaths-hajj-mostly-unregistered-pilgrims>

Image attribute: @ GLady from Pixabay under the Pixabay Content License.



Wikileaks founder Julian Assange free to walk after striking US deal

Wikileaks founder Julian Assange has been released from prison following a plea deal with the U.S. Department of Justice, where he pleaded guilty to a single criminal count of conspiring to obtain and disclose classified U.S. national defence documents, in exchange for the U.S. dropping 17 other espionage charges against him. This agreement was made to expedite his release and allow him to return to his native country Australia. Assange's plea hearing took place in Saipan, part of the Northern Mariana Islands, where he was sentenced to 62 months of time already served in a UK prison. Following his plea, he was released from Belmarsh Prison in London, where he had been held for five years, largely in solitary confinement. His release marks the end of a prolonged legal battle that began with Assange's arrest in the UK in 2019 after he was forcibly removed from the Ecuadorian embassy in London, where he had sought asylum for seven years to avoid extradition to Sweden on sex crimes accusations (later dropped) and the US on espionage charges.

He is viewed by the US government as a reckless villain who had endangered the lives of US intelligence agents through WikiLeaks' mass release of secret U.S. documents - the largest security breaches of their kind in U.S. military history. This has made him a hero in the eyes of many, including world leaders, celebrities and prominent journalists, who have decried his trial as a witch-hunt and instance of persecution. WikiLeaks came to prominence in

2010 after it released hundreds of thousands of classified U.S. military documents on Washington's wars in Afghanistan and Iraq along with swaths of diplomatic cables. The website released more than 90,000 documents related to Afghanistan and later published more than 400,000 documents from the war in Iraq. The documents included information about civilian deaths at the hands of the US military, the hunt for al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden and Iran's backing of militants in Iraq.

References:

WikiLeaks' Assange set to be freed after US espionage charge plea deal. (2024, June 26). Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com/world/wikileaks-julian-assange-set-be-freed-after-pleading-guilty-us-espionage-charge-2024-06-25/>

WikiLeaks' Julian Assange pleads guilty to violating Espionage Act in plea deal for freedom. (2024, June 25). USA Today. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/elections/2024/06/25/julian-assange-wikileaks-guilty-espionage-act/74203330007/>

Image attribute: @ Ars Electronica from Flickr under Creative Commons License.



Biden imposes sweeping asylum ban on US-Mexico border

The issue of immigration is shaping up to be a key issue in the 2024 US presidential campaign and featured prominently in the debate between Joe Biden and Donald Trump in their presidential debate held on June 28. While Trump accused Biden of allowing millions of unauthorised migrants to enter the country, claiming that the border had been left open under the current administration, Biden attempted to explain what he would do to continue lowering the number of migrants crossing illegally, despite that number hitting an all-time high during his tenure, in effect displaying continuity of Trump policies regarding the issue of immigration, albeit in a sugarcoated fashion. On June 4, Biden instituted a broad asylum ban on migrants caught illegally crossing the U.S.-Mexico border in what many say is a bid to get on top of the immigration issue. Migrants caught crossing illegally could be quickly deported or turned back to Mexico under the measure, although there will be exceptions for unaccompanied children, people who face serious medical or safety threats and victims of trafficking, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security said.

Biden took office in 2021 vowing to reverse some of Trump's restrictive immigration policies, but has ended up in the opposite direction, due to what officials say are record levels of migrants caught crossing the US border illegally. Even as Biden rolled out the new measures, he criticised Trump's most controversial policies, including separating migrant families at the border and comments denigrating illegal immigrants in the U.S. Critics have pointed out that the new restrictions resemble similar policies implemented by Trump and use a legal statute known as 212(f) that served as the underpinning for Trump's travel bans blocking people from several majority-Muslim nations and other countries. The measures have been criticised as illegal by rights organisations such as ACLU and Amnesty International, which right-wing voices have dubbed it as too little, too late. The new anti-immigrant measures come after Biden pushed unsuccessfully for months to pass a Senate bill crafted by a bipartisan group that would toughen border security but Republicans rejected it after Trump's opposition.

References:

Biden imposes sweeping asylum ban at US-Mexico border. (2024, June 5). Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/biden-expected-block-migrants-asylum-us-mexico-border-sources-say-2024-06-04/>

Biden's new executive order denies asylum claims to most migrants crossing the border unlawfully. (2024, June 4). NPR. <https://www.npr.org/2024/06/04/nx-s1-4991917/biden-executive-order-asylum-migration-border>

Image attribute: @ Paul (unless labeled Cathy!) from Flickr under Creative Commons License.



While Armenia recognises Palestine, new German citizens required to affirm Israel's right to exist

Armenia has officially recognised the State of Palestine, as announced by the Armenian Foreign Ministry on June 21, 2024. The ministry cited the "catastrophic humanitarian situation in Gaza" among the reasons behind its decision, which was welcomed by the Palestinian Authority (PA) and Hamas, and prompted a rebuke from Israel. Reaffirming its commitment to the two-state solution, the Armenian government expressed concerns over the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, condemning violence against civilians and infrastructure, as well as called for the release of Israeli hostages. In response to this recognition, Israel summoned the Armenian ambassador for a formal reprimand, indicating a potential strain in Israeli-Armenian relations. The announcement follows a similar move from various

European states such as Spain, Ireland and Norway last month, joining over 140 UN member states that have recognised Palestine over the past 4 decades.



In contrast, Germany, one of Israel's biggest weapons suppliers, has continued enacting repressive measures against acts of solidarity with Palestine, the latest being that applicants for German citizenship will be required to explicitly affirm Israel's right to exist. The changes come as part of a new citizenship law which shortens the number of years that a person must have lived in Germany in order to obtain a passport from eight to five years, and allows first-generation migrants to be dual citizens. Parts of the test include questions on Judaism, Germany's historic responsibility towards Jewish people as a result of the crimes of Nazi Germany, and when the state of Israel was founded. The above measure comes in light of repressive measures against Palestine such as banning protests for Palestine, cancelling activists and scholars speaking up for Palestine, and even preventing their travel, as in the case of refusing entry to British-Palestinian surgeon Ghassan Abu Sittah into Germany to take part in a pro-Palestine conference.

References:

Armenia recognises State of Palestine. (2024, June 21). Middle East Eye. <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/armenia-recognises-palestine-state>

New German citizens required to affirm Israel's right to exist. (2024, June 26). Middle East Eye. <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/new-germany-citizens-required-affirm-israel-right-exist>

Image attribute: @ ErWin from Flickr under Creative Commons License.

UK Supreme Court rules unanimously against Home Secretary in landmark libel claim brought by prominent Muslim leader; raises questions of fairness in Bangladesh 71 war crimes trials

A UK Supreme Court judgement to allow British citizen Chowdhury Mueen-Uddin to pursue libel action against the UK Home Office for its 2019 publication of allegations of the said citizen's complicity in crimes against humanity during the 1971 Bangladesh War of Independence is being deemed as a historic one. Mueen-Uddin, a prominent Muslim community leader who served as Secretary-General of the General Council of Mosques, Director of Muslim Spiritual Care Provision in the NHS, as well as a founder member and chair of Muslim Aid, had always denied the Bangladeshi authorities' allegations as being entirely false and politically-motivated. He had sued the UK Home Office for libel after it refused to apologize or meet demands for redress in relation to its 2019 publication. On 20 June, the Supreme Court reversed the decision of the lower Courts to strike out the claim as an abuse of process, confirming that Mueen-Uddin should be permitted to pursue his claim at trial. Apart from the obvious, what this judgement has also done is raise serious questions about the fairness of the war crimes tribunal in Bangladesh.

The International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) was a domestic war crimes tribunal in Bangladesh set up in 2009 to investigate and prosecute suspected collaborators of the Pakistan army who had allegedly conducted war crimes and crimes against humanity in the 1971 war. However, it had been convened by special legislation which necessitated the amendment of the Bangladeshi constitution, so as to remove fundamental procedural protections from the individuals accused. Moreover, the tribunal was not constrained by the ordinary rules of evidence and procedure and was allowed to rely on newspaper reports from the time, and later even hearsay accounts, as admissible evidence of "guilt," which formed the basis of multiple death sentences handed out to defendants by the court, leading many to decry the trials as politically motivated and judicial murders. Most or all of the defendants at the ICT hailed from the Jamaat-e-Islami and Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), which form the core of the political opposition to Sheikh Hasina and the Awami League in Bangladesh.

Since its constitution in 2009, the ICT helped the Bangladeshi government to enact the death sentences of opposition Jamaat-e-Islami leaders Abdul Quader Mollah, Kamaruzzaman, Ali Ahsan Mojahid, Motiur Rahman Nizami, Mir Quasem Ali, and opposition BNP leader Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury. It also sentenced to life veteran Jamaat leader Gholam Azam and popular scholar Delwar Hossain Sayeedi to life sentences, both of whom have died in harsh living conditions in prison. Among others, Chowdhury Mueen-Uddin was also called in to face trial for allegations of war crimes in 1971, but chose not to attend due to grave concerns surrounding the conduct of due process; his fears proved right when the ICT sentenced him to death in absentia based on 1971 opinion news reports in a hastily conducted trial. The political nature of the ICT, its collusion with the Bangladeshi government, and its lack of any judicial independence were exposed in the 2012 Skype controversy published by the Economist and Amar Desh; since then, the ICT has been universally condemned by human rights organisations, the United Nations, EU and UK Parliaments.

References:

Bokhari, D. H. (2024, July 4). Kangaroo courts of Bangladesh: The unfair trial of Mueen-Uddin. Paradigm Shift. <https://www.paradigmshift.com.pk/kangaroo-courts-bangladesh-mueen-uddin/>

International crimes tribunal (Bangladesh). (2024, February 27). Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. Retrieved July 6, 2024, from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Crimes_Tribunal_\(Bangladesh\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Crimes_Tribunal_(Bangladesh))

Supreme Court rules unanimously against home Secretary in landmark libel claim. (2024, June 20). Chambers and Partners. <https://chambers.com/articles/supreme-court-rules-unanimously-against-home-secretary-in-landmark-libel-claim>

Contributing Editors

Mohammad Hossain

Dr Nazmus Sakib

Dr Faroque Amin



THE FUTURE INSTITUTE

www.tfiuk.org