



THE FUTURE

NOVEMBER 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

A TALE OF TWO WORLDS: THE UNTOLD ‘PLIGHTS’ OF MUSLIM WOMEN.....3

ONE YEAR OF THE GAZA GENOCIDE - ACCELERATION OF ETHNIC CLEANSING IN NORTHERN GAZA4

ISRAELI ATTACKS ON LEBANON INCLUDE WANTON DESTRUCTION OF HISTORIC CITIES OF TYRE AND BAALBECK.....5

ISRAEL BANS PALESTINIAN REFUGEE AGENCY UNWRA.....7

SEVERE FLOODING IN SPAIN CONNECTED WITH CLIMATE CHANGE.....8

GAZA ISSUE EMERGES AS KEY VOTE-DECIDING FACTOR AHEAD OF US ELECTIONS.....9

JAPANESE ATOM BOMB SURVIVORS GROUP NIHON HIDANKYO WINS NOBEL PRIZE FOR PEACE 10

CHHATRA LEAGUE BANNED IN BANGLADESH..... 11

AMIDST GENOCIDE, CULTURAL, MILITARY AND ECONOMIC BOYCOTT OF ISRAEL CONTINUES WORLDWIDE..... 12

PKK ATTACK IN TURKIYE – IMPLICATIONS FOR PEACE IN THE REGION..... 14

ELECTIONS IN KASHMIR SHOWCASE GENERAL DISAPPROVAL WITH MODI’S BJP..... 15

Special Article

A Tale of Two Worlds: The Untold 'Plights' of Muslim Women

- *Nousheen Sharmila Ritu**

Freedom

Where are you?

'Cause I need freedom, too

I break chains all by myself

Won't let my freedom rot in hell

Hey! I'ma keep running

'Cause a winner don't quit on themselves

During her first public appearance as a presidential candidate, Kamala Harris kicked off her presidential campaign with this acclaimed Beyonce song, 'Freedom'. To make things even more publicly spectacular, Beyonce followed by Taylor Swift publicized their presidential endorsement for Kamala Harris. The dazzle of mega feminist celebrities like Beyonce, powerful metaphors of 'breaking chains all by these women' and the 'girlboss' appeal of Harris herself make this a poster campaign for a classic feminist definition of women empowerment. Until you consider the fact that Harris as the current vice president of the Biden administration has been complicit in the ongoing genocide of the Palestinian people. Harris also refuses to budge from her unwavering fidelity and support for Israel in this act of genocide.

Even though Kamala Harris has refused to bring her 'gender' to the forefront as part of her presidential campaign, the endorsements of major female celebrities like Beyonce and Taylor Swift do send messages of 'sisterhood' in the fight for women's representation. Another central policy pledge of the Harris campaign is restoring women's reproductive freedom through the promulgation of abortion rights. For the white liberal feminists, indeed, abortion is considered a human right and thus, the inability to make decisions regarding one's own body has been a major form of human rights violation.

The point of contention in this article is not whether abortion is a human right and if women should have this right, rather, it is to question how liberal feminists frame the concepts of human rights and women's rights. While liberal feminists are aggrieved by the loss of abortion rights, they do not seem to be mildly affected by the Palestinian women's oppression and victimizations in the form of loss of babies, miscarriages, unhygienic menstrual conditions and food poverty among many others.

Interestingly, while Palestinian women are not seen worthy enough of feminist concern, however, liberal feminists have been losing their sleep over the oppression of Afghanistan women in the hands of the Taliban. Mainstream discourses are overridden with Afghan women's depiction as 'helpless, oppressed and voiceless'— a narrative that serves little to no good for the Afghan women. Once again, the argument here is not concerned with the veracity of Afghan women's plights or oppressions, but rather the framing of these narratives that have merely reinforced orientalist perceptions of Muslim women in the past given years. More importantly, the selective activism for women's rights and discriminatory treatment towards Muslim women in the Global South definitely leaves us questioning the altruism of the global feminist project.

It is important to note that ideologies are not devoid of worldviews— ideological projects like feminism, secularism, modernism, humanism or naturalism are all constituents of one ecosystem that promotes certain moral philosophies, ethical structures and concepts through which we perceive the world around us. If we take a critical look into the foundational and underlying framework of the Western feminist manifesto, we will be able to see that the feminist agenda is more than an equality project; instead, this ideological framework has shaped the conceptualizations and interpretations of what it means to be a woman, what are the plights of women and how we can resolve those concerns. And unfortunately, this global feminist standpoint has never been able to truly

understand (or tried to understand) the agency, moral principles and worldview of a Muslim woman. Muslim women have been consistently depicted as 'the oppressed subjects under the veil' and 'victims of their oppressive religions and patriarchal systems'. But Muslim women are so much more than that as the Palestinian women have shown us so distinctively. Unfortunately, stories of resistance and empowerment of these Muslim women never reach us. You may ask why? The liberal feminists are yet to answer that.

** 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*



One year of the Gaza genocide - acceleration of ethnic cleansing in Northern Gaza

Following one year of the Israel-Gaza war, the prospect of the war ending is bleak; Israel has expanded the war to include a land invasion of Lebanon, killing thousands, bombing historic cities, and murdering civilians and medical personnel at will, after it had previously attacked and destroyed parts of the occupied West Bank. In the previous month, Israel had killed the topmost leadership of Hezbollah, while this month, its forces killed the topmost leader of Hamas, Yahya al-Sinwar. However, the publishing of drone footage of his last moments played a major role in boosting his legacy in the Arab and Islamic world. Similarly, videos documenting heinous Israeli crimes, such as the burning of 19-year-old Shaban Dalou as he was strapped to an IV and lying on a hospital bed in an Israeli airstrike on Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in Deir al-Balah, and numerous atrocities documented in Northern Gaza and the Kamal al-Adwan hospital have shaken the hearts of humanity worldwide, yet seemed not to affect those of world leaders at all. Going beyond all measures of cruelty, the Israel Knesset voted to ban the UNRWA in Israeli-occupied territories, the lifeline of besieged Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank, at a time when the Zionist state has refused to let any water, food or medicine enter Northern Gaza for a month in hopes of flushing out the Palestinian population and

killing as much as possible to remove them permanently from this region. This comes as South Africa filed a detailed submission to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) outlining evidence of Israel's alleged violation of the 1948 Genocide Convention in its ongoing war on Gaza; it includes 750 pages of evidence of acts of genocide and genocidal intent, in addition to over 4,000 pages of annexes. Israeli atrocities and flouting of UN institutions, laws and directives have reached a limit where UN Special Rapporteur on the Occupied Palestinian Territories, Francesca Albanese, has called for UN member states to consider suspending Israel over the genocide of Palestinians in Gaza and its decades-long illegal occupation of Palestinian land.

The number of Palestinian casualties in Gaza as of October 29 is at least 43,061 dead, including more than 16,765 children, while the number of Palestinians wounded has reached more than 101,223. Last July, according to a study published in the Lancet, it was reported that the accumulative effects of Israel's war on Gaza could mean the true death toll could reach more than 186,000 people in Gaza alone; and current estimates are much higher with the expansion of the war into other areas of the region. The number of missing people is more than 10,000, most of whom are reported missing due to being trapped in building rubble and might have been killed as well. In the Occupied West Bank, there have been at least 763 deaths, of whom more than 166 are children, while more than 6,250 are injured. According to the latest data from the UN, WHO and the Palestinian government as of October 27, more than half of Gaza homes have been destroyed or damaged, 80% of commercial facilities, 87% of school buildings, 17 out of 36 hospitals are partially functioning, 68% of road networks and 68 per cent of cropland 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 July 31, more than 125 journalists, predominantly Palestinians, had been killed since October 7. According to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) and the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), 120 Palestinian, three Lebanese, and four Israeli journalists were killed.

References:

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-ghaza-war-in-maps-and-charts-live-tracker>

South Africa files 750-page evidence against Israel at ICJ. (2024, October 28). Middle East Eye. <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/icj-genocide-case-south-africa-files-750-page-evidence-against-israel>

Staff, A. J. (2024, October 17). 'Spirit of resistance': Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar. Al Jazeera. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/10/17/yahya-sinwar-obituary>

Staff, A. J. (2024, October 15). Shaban al-dalou: The Palestinian teen burned to death in Israeli bombing. Al Jazeera. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/10/15/shaban-al-dalou-the-palestinian-teen-burned-to-death-in-israeli-bombing>

UN should consider suspending Israel over genocide, says special rapporteur. (n.d.). Al Jazeera. <https://www.aljazeera.com/program/newsfeed/2024/11/1/un-should-consider-suspending-israel-over-genocide-says-special-rapporteur>

Image attribute: @ hosnysalah from Pixabay under Pixabay Content License.

Israeli attacks on Lebanon include wanton destruction of historic cities of Tyre and Baalbeck

Recent Israeli airstrikes on Lebanon have drawn international attention and significant outrage, especially due to strikes on the historic cities of Tyre and Baalbek. These cities hold deep cultural and historical importance, with Tyre being a UNESCO World Heritage Site known for its ancient Phoenician history and Baalbek home to iconic Roman ruins. The attacks have led to widespread displacement, with thousands of residents fleeing following Israel's evacuation orders for the area. In Baalbek, airstrikes targeted multiple locations, reportedly causing substantial damage. Meanwhile, Tyre and its surrounding areas also faced repeated and heavy bombardment, resulting in the deaths of many civilians, including members of local emergency services. At least 41 people were killed in Israeli strikes on the Baalbek region in eastern Lebanon on Friday 1 November, the regional governor said. Since October last year, at least 2,897 people have been killed and 13,150 wounded in Lebanon by Israeli attacks. Hezbollah, on its part, has furiously battled the Israeli offensive, choreographing regular rocket and deadly drone attacks deep inside Israel – two well-known cases being a drone attack that attacked and hit Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin

Netanyahu's private residence Caesarea, and another attacking a training camp of the IDF Golani Brigade adjacent to Binyamina in northern Israel, killing 4 soldiers and injuring 58 others.

These strikes have escalated tensions in the region, with Lebanese officials condemning the attacks as a blatant disregard for the preservation of historical sites and civilian safety. The outrage over these attacks is intensifying, with criticism from various international bodies and local Lebanese groups who view the strikes as violations of both humanitarian principles and cultural preservation laws. Additionally, the attacks have compounded Lebanon's existing crises, adding pressure to an already strained humanitarian situation in the region. Israel has selectively targeted emergency responders and civil defence crew apart from the population. At least six medics were killed in multiple Israeli attacks taking place within three hours on Thursday 31 October, bringing the total number of paramedics killed since the beginning of the aggression to 178, with 279 wounded and 246 vehicles hit. This week, the Israeli army issued forced evacuation orders – which amount to effective kill zones – for dozens of villages and towns in southern Lebanon, along with the major ancient cities of Baalbek and Tyre. In the meantime, even as US and Lebanese officials initially expressed hope this week that a Lebanon ceasefire could be reached, there was no sign of a breakthrough after Washington's envoys returned home following talks in Israel, a situation complicated by the upcoming US elections on November 5.

References:

Israel confirms that Hezbollah drone struck Netanyahu residence. (2024, October 22). Middle East Eye.

<https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/israel-confirms-hezbollah-drone-struck-netanyahu-residence>

Israel: Four soldiers killed and over 60 injured in Hezbollah drone attack. (2024, October 13). BBC Breaking News, World News, US News, Sports, Business, Innovation, Climate, Culture, Travel, Video & Audio. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c9dy294gweyo>

Fernández, B. (2024, October 29). It's raining bombs in a city by the sea. Al Jazeera. <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2024/10/29/its-raining-bombs-in-a-city-by-the-sea>

Israeli attacks kill dozens in Gaza, Lebanon as ceasefire remains elusive. (2024, November 1). Al Jazeera.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/11/1/israeli-attacks-kill-dozens-in-gaza-lebanon-as-ceasefire-remains-elusive>

Staff, A. J. (2024, November 1). What is Lebanon's ancient city of Baalbek and why is Israel targeting it? Al Jazeera.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2024/11/1/what-is-lebanons-ancient-city-of-baalbek-and-why-is-israel-targeting-it>

Image attribute: @ Kaufdex from Pixabay under Pixabay Content License.





Israel bans Palestinian refugee agency UNWRA

The Israeli Knesset overwhelmingly passed two laws banning the UN Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA) from operating inside Israel and occupied Palestine, despite a torrent of international pressure urging Israel not to pass the ban. The move has sparked international debate over the future of Palestinian aid and services in the West Bank and Gaza. The first law says that UNRWA is not allowed to "operate any institution, provide any service, or conduct any activity, whether directly or indirectly", in Israel, as reported by The Jerusalem Post. The second law states that no Israeli government official or agency may contact UNWRA, effectively prohibiting Israeli officials from providing services or dealing with UNWRA employees. The decision, which will go into effect within 90 days, will significantly impact the operations of the UN agency, which was formed to address the issue of displacement of hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees by Israel in 1949, currently serves over 5 million registered Palestinian refugees across the West Bank, Gaza, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria, offering critical resources in education, healthcare, and social services. Israel's ban halts UNRWA's activities within Israeli-controlled areas, raising questions about who will step in to support these vulnerable communities.

Although Israeli officials claim the decision is motivated by security concerns, such that aid goes to Hamas or that Hamas operatives work undercover in the UN organisation, UNRWA has repeatedly denied such allegations, and Israel has not cooperated with investigations into the claims. Philippe Lazzarini, UNRWA's Commissioner-General, expressed "deep disappointment" at the ban, describing the organisation's role as "purely humanitarian." He emphasised that UNRWA's education and health programs are "lifelines for Palestinian refugees," warning that the ban could lead to "severe consequences for the health and well-being of countless families." He called the Israeli vote a "dangerous precedent" that opposes the U.N. charter and violates Israel's obligation under international law. "This is the latest in the ongoing campaign to discredit UNRWA and delegitimise its role towards providing human-development assistance and services to #Palestine Refugees," he wrote on social media platform X.

The decision has garnered international concern and condemnation, with several governments and humanitarian organizations urging Israel to reconsider. "UNRWA plays a crucial role in maintaining stability in a highly fragile region," stated a spokesperson from the European Union, one of the agency's largest donors. "Any disruption to these services could have far-reaching humanitarian and security implications." Critics say that the ban will further endanger the lives of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, since without a replacement for UNRWA's services, Palestinian communities will be cut off from essential healthcare, education, and housing assistance, especially in

Gaza, where more than 70 per cent of the infrastructure has been destroyed by the Israeli offensive since October last year. Moreover, the decision to ban UNWRA is also a direct violation of the legally binding order of the ICJ for Israel to ensure the unhindered provision of humanitarian aid in cooperation with the UN, sparking questions as to whether Israel could lose its status as a member of the UN.

References:

Could Israel's Unrwa ban lead to its suspension from the UN? (2024, October 29). Middle East Eye. <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/israel-unrwa-ban-suspension-un-could>

How Israel's Unrwa ban could collapse Palestine's health, education and food services. (2024, October 30). Middle East Eye. <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/israel-unrwa-ban-collapse-palestine-health-education-food>

Israel's Parliament passes laws banning Unrwa from operating inside Israel, occupied Palestine. (2024, October 28). Middle East Eye. <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/israels-parliament-passes-laws-banning-unrwa-operating-inside-israel-occupied-palestine>

Image attribute: @ Kai Hendry from Flickr under Creative Commons License.



Severe flooding in Spain connected with climate change

Heavy rainfall has triggered severe flooding across Spain, especially affecting the Valencia and Murcia regions. Over 200 people have tragically lost their lives, with the majority of deaths reported in Valencia. The disaster, caused by a "gota fría" phenomenon where cold air meets warmer Mediterranean waters, unleashed torrential rains that washed through towns, swept away bridges, and left many areas covered in mud and debris. This rare storm brought as much as a year's worth of rainfall within hours, creating an unprecedented emergency situation. Local authorities have warned that the death toll may rise as searches continue for missing persons. The disaster is one of the most catastrophic in Spain's recent history and has disrupted travel and left hundreds of people stranded, with Valencia's main airport closed due to flooding. Experts attribute the severity of the recent flash floods to climate change, which is also contributing to Spain's record-high temperatures, persistent droughts, and warming Mediterranean waters.

A preliminary analysis by World Weather Attribution, a research group of international climate scientists, found that human-driven climate change has doubled the likelihood of such extreme rainfall events in the Valencia region. This assessment highlights the influence of global warming on Spain's increasingly volatile weather. Spain's prolonged drought—spanning nearly two years—worsened the impact of the storm. Dry, compacted soil was unable to absorb the sudden influx of water, causing flash floods to rapidly overwhelm the area. The intensity of the storm was unprecedented: in the Valencian town of Chiva, more rain fell within eight hours than had accumulated over the past 20 months, according to Spain's national weather service. This extreme weather event caught regional authorities off guard, underscoring the challenges of adapting to a changing climate.

References:

Spain searches for bodies after unprecedented flooding claims at least 158 lives. (2024, November 1). AP News. <https://apnews.com/article/flash-floods-spain-valencia-climate-change-30c6ef59ddf27598c691c89d0ba41442>

Image attribute: @ jorono from Pixabay under Pixabay Content License.



Gaza issue emerges as key vote-deciding factor ahead of US elections

President Joe Biden's unconditional support for Israel amid the horrific atrocities in Gaza and Lebanon has left many Muslim community advocates highly distraught. In fact, the Arab and Muslim vote in Michigan is immensely disenchanted with the stance of the Democratic ticket on issues like the war in Gaza. The lukewarm lip service to the Palestinian cause versus the unconditional declaration of support and arms supply to Israel has severely antagonised the Arab-Muslim bloc. Some are so distraught that they are forging an alliance with Trump in the hope of change – any change. Others are looking towards supporting a third candidate in the elections, perhaps Jill Stein, Cornell West or Oliver Chase. Democrats have time and again opined that any vote given to a third party, on account of protest against their staunch pro-Israel position on Israel-Gaza, is a vote for Trump, who they argue will be worse for Palestine. In this, they have at times insinuated that it is Muslim Americans who are a fifth column and that they will not lose because of their Gaza policies, but because of some sort of 'betrayal' by the Muslim voters, a demographic which Democrats have generally taken for granted during elections.

Contrary to the assertions of the Democrats, those voting for a third-party candidate such as Dr. Jill Stein say that they do not consider it a wasted vote. The aggrieved bloc does not see much daylight between Trump and Harris when it comes to Palestine-Israel—and now Lebanon, Iran, Syria, and Yemen, with more (perhaps) to come—crisis. Similarly, for those few Muslims who have publicly endorsed Trump, supporting Trump is not entirely about the former president, but about holding the current vice president accountable for the Biden-Harris administration's unprecedented military support for Israel. Harris, on her part, has little to distance herself from Biden's pro-Israel policies and has promised to keep the flow of American weapons to Israel uninterrupted. Moreover, she hesitated in several instances when the opportunity presented to say something in support of Palestine and against genocide, by repeating her previous rhetoric of bringing the Israeli hostages back home and expressing her sadness at Israeli deaths on October 7 while completely ignoring Palestinian victims and their suffering.

References:

Harb, A. (2024, November 2). Why many Arab voters in Michigan are flocking to Trump ahead of US election. Al Jazeera. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/11/2/why-many-arab-voters-in-michigan-are-flocking-to-trump-ahead-of-us-election>

Kamala Harris' can still get it right on Gaza | Opinion. (2024, October 30). Newsweek. <https://www.newsweek.com/kamala-harris-can-still-get-it-right-gaza-opinion-1976784>

Mitrovica, A. (2024, October 29). No, US voters, you don't need to choose between Harris and Trump. Al Jazeera. <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2024/10/29/america-is-a-decomposing-myth>

Image attribute: @ RoadTripGuys from Pixabay under Pixabay Content License.



Japanese atom bomb survivors group Nihon Hidankyo wins Nobel prize for peace

The 2024 Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to Nihon Hidankyo, Japan's leading organisation of atomic bomb survivors, known as Hibakusha, from Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Established in 1956, Nihon Hidankyo has long advocated for nuclear disarmament, using first-hand survivor testimonies to highlight the devastating impact of nuclear weapons and to promote a nuclear-free world. Their work has been instrumental in reinforcing the "nuclear

taboo," a strong international stance against nuclear weapon use. According to observers, the Nobel Prize sought to recognise their relentless advocacy amid growing nuclear threats globally.

Following Nihon Hidankyo's receipt of the 2024 Nobel Peace Prize, the organisation and its co-chair Toshiyuki Mimaki addressed the worsening humanitarian situation in Gaza. Mimaki compared the suffering of Palestinian civilians to the devastation experienced by Japanese civilians after the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Mimaki said that those working for peace in Gaza might also be deserving of Nobel recognition, given the human tragedy unfolding there. He described scenes in Gaza, particularly the suffering of children, as reminiscent of post-war Japan. While his comparison was consistent with statements by UN ambassadors and humanitarian organisations, it drew criticism from Israeli Ambassador to Japan Gilad Cohen, who responded by calling the comments "outrageous and baseless."

References:

Analysis: Why Nihon Hidankyo was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. (2024, October 28). NHK WORLD. <https://www3.nhk.or.jp/nhkworld/en/news/backstories/3628/>

Japanese atomic bomb survivors' group Nihon Hidankyo wins Nobel Peace Prize. (2024, October 11). Al Jazeera. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/10/11/japanese-organisation-nihon-hidankyo-wins-2024-nobel-peace-prize>

Nobel Peace Prize winner: Gaza like Japan after U.S. atomic bombs. (2024, October 15). MR Online. <https://mronline.org/2024/10/15/nobel-peace-prize-winner/>

Image attribute: @ purrlicious from Pixabay under Pixabay Content License.



Chhatra League banned in Bangladesh

The interim government in Bangladesh recently banned the Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), the student wing of the Awami League (AL), under the Anti-Terrorism Act. This decision follows widespread allegations that BCL members were involved in criminal and terrorist activities, including violence against protesters, killings and murder, gunrunning, extortion, torture, harassment, and campus dominance politics. The Home Ministry's gazette highlighted that BCL's actions posed a threat to public security, with accusations of murder, torture, and other violent acts,

especially during the AL's previous decade and a half in power. The ban came after sustained pressure from the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement, a group that had been pushing for the organisation's dissolution due to its actions against protesting students. Demonstrators celebrated the decision on Dhaka University's campus, marking it as a victory for a student-people uprising, where more than a thousand had died as a result of joint police and Chhatra League violent crackdown.

There have also been intense protests and pressure from various quarters of the July uprising for President Mohammed Shahabuddin, known as Chuppu, to resign due to his perceived loyalty to the Awami League and the old regime. These calls have been going hand-in-hand with national discussions on whether the Awami League should be allowed to participate in upcoming elections due to their undemocratic and fascist actions over the past three elections. National figures such as Mahmudur Rahman have been calling for a change in the governance model in post-July uprising Bangladesh, whereby he has demanded the Yunus administration re-constitute itself as a revolutionary government, with Yunus as President of the government, alongside taking steps to write a new constitution and formulate a new constituent assembly to achieve the aims of the student-people uprising of 2024. In this regard, Rahman has stressed the importance of retributive justice and rooting out of pockets and groups that have helped maintain Indian interests and hegemony in Bangladesh, especially in the media, judiciary and bureaucracy.

References:

Bangladesh bans student wing of ousted Sheikh Hasina's party. (2024, October 24). reuters . <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/bangladesh-bans-student-wing-ousted-sheikh-hasinas-party-2024-10-24/>

Bangladesh's new outcasts: Students from ex-PM Hasina's party now in hiding. (2024, October 27). Al Jazeera. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/10/27/once-powerful-student-members-of-hasinas-party-bangladeshs-new-outcastes>

Bangladesh Awami league: A study of its politics and crimes against humanity – South Asian policy initiatives. (2023, July 25). South Asian Policy Initiatives – SAPI. <https://southasianpolicyinitiative.org/2023/07/25/r-4/>

Image attribute: @ Tanjim_A_Rakib from Pixabay under Pixabay Content License.

Amidst genocide, cultural, military and economic boycott of Israel continues worldwide

Recent boycott efforts in solidarity with Palestine have had noticeable impacts, particularly on high-profile brands like McDonald's and Starbucks. These companies have faced sales declines across the Middle East, where calls for consumer boycotts have gained significant traction due to their perceived support for Israel. Additionally, the Starbucks Workers United union expressed solidarity with Palestine, which further fuelled calls for boycotts in various regions. Both companies have since reported notable decreases in revenue from these markets as consumer preferences shifted away from their products amid the ongoing conflict. Starbucks has reported a decline in sales for the third consecutive quarter, following two-quarters of consecutive declines in sales and a stock price that dropped nearly 30 per cent in six months. In the latest financial reports, the company noted that while North American store sales declined 6%, China store sales dove 14% and international store sales fell 9%. In this regard, Starbucks has been under pressure for a while, mainly after the beginning of the war in Gaza, where many consumers have been boycotting it for its association with the Israeli occupation.

Elbit Systems, Israel's largest private arms manufacturer, has also become a significant target of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement in recent months, with a series of successful divestment campaigns aimed at the company. For instance, Scotiabank, through its asset manager 1832 Asset Management, has substantially reduced its holdings in Elbit Systems, cutting its shares by over 40%, while British banking giant Barclays has sold all of its investment shareholdings in Israel's largest weapons company Elbit Systems Ltd, amid public protests and pressure from activists. In addition, Elbit's subsidiary, KMC Systems, has recently vacated its offices in Cambridge, Massachusetts, following sustained protests, while French multinational insurer AXA divested its shares in Elbit Systems and several Israeli banks associated with settlement activities in Palestinian territories,

reflecting a broader trend among international firms distancing themselves from investments in companies seen as complicit in human rights abuses.

On the other hand, over 1,000 authors, publishers, and literary professionals have recently signed an open letter organised by the Palestine Festival of Literature (PalFest) has called on the publishing industry this week to boycott Israeli institutions that "have remained silent observers" to the ongoing crisis in Gaza. Prominent authors like Arundhati Roy, Sally Rooney, and Ocean Vuong joined in this declaration, marking it as one of the largest collective protests against Israeli cultural institutions to date. Signatories emphasise their concerns over what they describe as "apartheid" and "genocide" in Gaza, comparing their stance to historic boycotts against apartheid South Africa. Alongside this, recently Radiohead and the Smile singer Thom Yorke stormed off the stage during a solo concert in Melbourne, Australia, after a member of the audience shouted "the Israeli genocide of Gaza" and then said "half of them were children" about the death toll. Yorke and other members of Radiohead, including guitarist and keyboardist Jonny Greenwood, have received criticism over the past seven years for performing in Israel and resisting calls to condemn Israeli brutality in Gaza.

References:

Arria, M. (2024, August 21). BDS win: AXA divests from Israeli banks and Elbit systems. Mondoweiss. <https://mondoweiss.net/2024/08/bds-win-axa-divests-from-israeli-banks-and-elbit-systems/>

Authors Call for a Boycott of Israeli Cultural Institutions. (2024, October 31). The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/10/31/books/authors-letters-middle-east-war.html>

Authors unite for Palestine. (2024, November 1). The Express Tribune. <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2506799/authors-unite-for-palestine>

Barclays sells all shares in Israeli weapons firm Elbit amid pro-Palestinian pressure. (2024, October 31). Middle East Eye. <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/barclays-israel-elbit-systems-sells-shares-weapons>

Paul, L. (2024, October 31). Thom Yorke pauses concert after dispute with a Palestine supporter. Rolling Stone. <https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-news/thom-yorke-pauses-concert-gaza-protestor-1235148473/>

Starbucks' sales decline for 3rd consecutive quarter. (2024, October 31). Anadolu Ajansı. <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/economy/starbucks-sales-decline-for-3rd-consecutive-quarter/3379986>

Image attribute: @ Alisdare Hickson from Flickr under Creative Commons License.





PKK attack in Turkiye – implications for peace in the region

On October 23, 2024, an attack took place at the headquarters of state-run Turkish Aerospace Industries (TUSAS) in Ankara, which killed at least five and injured 22. The attack was carried out by the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and came a day after an unprecedented statement from a Turkish nationalist leader about the possibility of a renewed peace process with the PKK. The incident involved two assailants, a man and a woman, who reportedly detonated explosives and opened fire, killing and injuring employees at the site. Following an operation by Turkish special forces, both attackers were killed in the assault. Following the incident, Turkiye launched a series of retaliatory airstrikes targeting PKK positions in Iraq and Syria. The Turkish Defense Ministry claimed that more than 30 PKK sites were destroyed in these operations, part of Turkiye's continued campaign against the terrorist organisation PKK.

Previously, a peace process between Turkiye and the PKK broke down in 2015, and the group and its affiliates carried out a number of attacks in the years that followed, as the Turkish military and security forces conducted operations against the PKK in southeast Turkiye, as well as in Iraq and Syria. The number of attacks in major Turkish cities has dropped sharply since 2017. The attack came a day after an unprecedented statement by Nationalist Movement Party leader and ally of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Devlet Bahçeli, who suggested that jailed PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan – imprisoned since 1999 – could be allowed to speak at the parliament if he calls off the rebellion and disbands his organisation – a sign of a possible resurrection of the peace process. But Wednesday's assault may be a message that the PKK is reluctant to put down arms and normalise ties with the government, according to experts.

References:

Staff, A. J. (2024, October 24). Attack on aerospace company near Turkiye's Ankara: What we know. Al Jazeera. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/10/24/attack-on-aerospace-company-near-turkeys-ankara-what-we-know>

Turkey's government is pretending Bahçeli's Ocalan outreach is being done alone. (2024, October 24). Middle East Eye. <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/turkey-government-pretending-bahceli-ocalan-outreach-being-done-alone>

Image attribute: @ UK Government from Flickr under Creative Commons License.



Elections in Kashmir showcase general disapproval with Modi's BJP

In the recent elections in Jammu and Kashmir, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) faced a significant setback, particularly in the Kashmir Valley. The elections were held in three phases—September 18 and 25 and October 1—spanning more than 90 constituencies amid heavy security. The two regional parties—Jammu and Kashmir National Conference (NC) and People's Democratic Party (PDP)—ran vehemently against BJP rule. Despite the Modi administration's claim that it has brought stability and "Naya Kashmir" (New Kashmir) through tightened security and economic reforms, the election results reflected widespread disapproval of BJP policies in the region, especially regarding the 2019 abrogation of Article 370. This decision, which removed the region's special status, remains controversial among Kashmiris, many of whom feel it has led to further disenfranchisement.

Voter turnout in these elections exceeded 60%, with many Kashmiris expressing their frustration with the BJP's policies by supporting the NC. The NC's campaign centred around reversing the BJP's policies, advocating for the restoration of Kashmir's special status, and addressing socio-economic issues, such as reduced food rations and high unemployment, which have impacted Kashmiris significantly. By contrast, the BJP was unable to secure any seats in the Kashmir Valley and struggled to gain traction, even in Jammu, a region with a larger Hindu population where it typically performs better. The election results showed that the NC, led by Farooq Abdullah, won 42 seats in a house of 90; and its ally, the Indian National Congress (INC), secured six seats, thus enabling NC and INC to combine to form a government. Already, Farooq Abdullah has announced that his son, Umar Farooq, will be the chief minister. The BJP secured 29 seats from the Hindu majority region of Jammu but failed to secure a single seat in the Muslim majority Kashmir valley despite putting up candidates in 19 constituencies, underscoring complete rejection of the BJP.

References:

Durrani, A. (2024, October 22). Modi's defeat in Kashmir. The Express Tribune. <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2504617/modis-defeat-in-kashmir>

The party promising Kashmiri statehood wins an election. (2024, October 23). The Nation. <https://www.thenation.com/article/world/jammu-kashmir-national-conference-election-autonomy/>

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

Contributing Editors

Mohammad Hossain

Dr Nazmus Sakib

Dr Faroque Amin



THE FUTURE INSTITUTE

www.tfiuk.org