

D+C

DIGITAL MONTHLY

DEVELOPMENT AND
COOPERATION

D+C

ENTWICKLUNG UND
ZUSAMMENARBEIT

E+Z

International
Journal

ISSN
2366-7257

2021 12

COVID-19

How the pandemic
is affecting garment
workers

VACCINATIONS

At WTO summit, EU
leaders must support
waiver of IP rights

CLIMATE

UN summit leaves
behind the most
vulnerable communities



Forced migration

Editorial

- 3 **SABINE BALK**
In search of humane migration policies

Magazine

- 4 **ANUP DUTTA**
Global Hunger Index shows worsening need
- 5 **AENNE FRANKENBERGER**
How Covid-19 is affecting garment workers
- 6 **BIMBOLA OYESOLA**
Nigerian women's double burden
- 8 **HANS DEMBOWSKI**
Social justice, social inclusion and social awareness in sub-Saharan schools
- 9 **IMPRINT / DASMANI LAARY**
Nowadays column: Deaf children in Ghana

Debate

- 11 **MIRZA ALAS**
EU should support vaccine patent waiver at WTO summit
- 12 **RONALD SSEGUJJA SSEKANDI**
How the coronavirus crisis is exacerbating inequality in Uganda
- 13 **MIRA MANDAL**
Why Indian democracy has become a flawed democracy

- 14 **HANS DEMBOWSKI**
COP26 in Glasgow left behind the most vulnerable people

Focus: Forced migration

- 16 **HAMED SARFARAZI**
How I fled from Herat to Cologne
- 18 **DAGMAR WOLF**
In Syria, there is no safe place for returning refugees
- 19 **INTERVIEW WITH GERALD KNAUS**
How the EU could implement a more humane policy
- 22 **MARKUS RUDOLF**
Ethiopia's strife puts at risk Eritrean refugees in particular
- 24 **ISAAC SAGALA**
Kenya's government wants to close large refugee camps
- 25 **BEN EZEAMALU**
Internally displaced persons in Nigeria
- 27 **IRIT EGUAVOEN**
Millions of slum-dwellers live in permanent fear of eviction
- 29 **VIRGINIA MERCADO**
The dangerous journey north to the USA
- 30 **RUKAMANEE MAHARJAN**
Nepali women are trafficked into sex-slavery
- 32 **MAREN SUCHTA-PLATZMANN AND AMÉDÉ SCHMITZ**
When it comes to mitigating and cushioning refugee crises, social-protection systems can make a significant difference

FOCUS


Forced migration

Displacement is a global challenge which the international community must rise to. Wars, crises, natural disasters and economic desperation make an increasing number of people leave their homes. Poor regions are affected in particular. Some flee across borders, others stay in their home country. Only few make it to prosperous world regions, such as the EU. Irregular migration is far too common even though it is dangerous and may end in death.

Title: Dadaab refugee camp in Kenya.
Photo: picture alliance / dpa / Anna Kerber





 **Our focus section on Forced migration starts on page 15. It pertains to the UN's 16th Sustainable Development Goal (SDG): Peace, justice and strong institutions. It also has a bearing on other SDGs.**

kind of policy that would be appropriate. Things are similarly awful in other Western countries, such as the USA or Australia for example. The full truth is that matters also tend to be quite bad in many poorer countries where the majority of international refugees live.

It is a huge challenge to draft better policies regarding migration and flight. Prosperous nations must stop shying away from it. It is not a sustainable solution to seal themselves off with the use of force. The big irony, moreover, is that labour-market experts agree that the same nations urgently need immigrants because their populations are ageing and, in some cases, even shrinking. The demand for skilled labour increasingly exceeds supply – and that has harmful impacts on the care sector as well as small-scale industries.

Germany, for example, needs thousands of additional workers in hospitals and old-age care. The new Federal Government seems to want to tackle the challenge. It announces that it will also promote migration from non-EU countries.

In search of humane solutions

As has been obvious in media reporting for many years, wars, crises and natural disasters force people to leave their homes in many parts of the world. Whether migration is forced or voluntary, can be very hard to tell. People's decisions are normally driven by more than one cause.

When a country is strife-torn like Syria or governed with brutal force as is the case in Eritrea or Myanmar today, it is absurd to assume that people leave voluntarily. Where livelihoods are destroyed by the climate crisis, young people do not see a future for themselves or entire societies depend on migrants' remittances, the choices are not entirely voluntary either. Most people concerned would probably prefer to stay where they grew up – but they do not think that would be wise.

For these reasons, many experts doubt it makes much sense to distinguish forced migration from the voluntary kind. Nonetheless, the difference is legally relevant. Parties to the 1951 Refugee Convention have an obligation to accept refugees, but remain free to take in migrants as they please. Whether borders are crossed, matters very

much. Internally displaced persons typically enjoy less support and protection than international refugees.

Western governments, however, have been shirking their duty to protect refugees, thus undermining international law. The currently most obvious case concerns the Polish-Belarusian border, which is the EU's external frontier. The Belarusian regime has brought Middle Eastern refugees there, but the Polish government refuses to allow them into its country and will not check whether they are legally entitled to get asylum. Security forces are preventing the refugees from crossing the border, and humanitarian agencies do not have access to the area.

The Mediterranean scenario has been similarly disturbing for quite some time, with border agencies using force to push back boats full of migrants from Africa. The situation in refugee camps on Greek and Italian islands, moreover, is often desperate, with people faring far worse than European ideas of human dignity allow.

It is a scandal that the EU is breaching human rights and asylum laws. For many years, the EU has failed to draft that humane



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are fighting for the rights of the persons concerned. We are happy that Rukamane has promised to write more essays for us in the future. **PAGE 30**

▶ You'll find all contributions of our focus section plus related ones on our website – they'll be compiled in next month's briefing section.

FOOD INSECURITY

Alarming trend

This year's Global Hunger Index (GHI) shows that things are getting worse. Food security is under attack on several fronts.

By Anup Dutta

To judge by the current GHI projections, the world as a whole — and 47 countries in particular — will fail to achieve “zero hunger” by 2030. Achieving that is the second Sustainable Development Goal (SDG). For obvious reason, the GHI does not yet take account of the worrisome recent surge of food prices around the world.

The GHI authors emphasise that “three Cs” are driving hunger: conflict, climate change and Covid-19. The new report thus confirms alarming trends policymakers have been aware of for some time (see Gerd Müller in Debate section of D+C/E+Z e-Paper 2021/01).

The annual hunger and malnutrition report is prepared jointly by two international non-governmental organisations: Ireland-based Concern Worldwide and Germany-based Welthungerhilfe. Colleen Kelly of Concern's US branch calls for “urgent action” to ensure the zero-hunger agenda is not derailed.

The primary driver of hunger is violent conflict. The GHI report states: “Conflict devastates food systems, drives up undernourishment and child mortality rates, destabilises agricultural production, prevents economic investment, and forcibly displaces entire communities.”

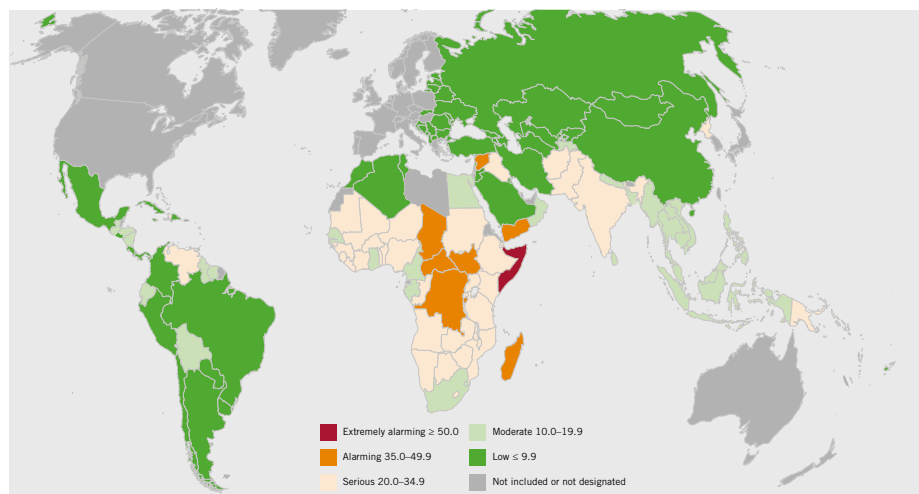
Changing patterns of rainfall, extreme weather events and water scarcity are exacerbating people's competition for resources, however. They thus intensify tensions that may erupt in violence or exacerbate strife. The novel coronavirus, moreover, has worsened poverty by triggering recessions and overburdening already weak health-care systems.

COVID-19 IMPACTS NOT FULLY EVIDENT YET

GHI data show, however, that food insecurity was getting worse even before the ad-

vent of Covid-19 two years ago. The report acknowledges that “the full effects of the Covid-19 pandemic” are not evident yet and are likely to show up in GHI data in coming years.

The current GHI was calculated with data for the years 2016 to 2020. The researchers used statistics from multilateral institutions (UN agencies and the World Bank) as well as various demographic and health surveys. For some countries, data are insufficient, so some rankings had to be estimated. They include South Sudan, Burundi and Zimbabwe, for example.



2021 Global Hunger Index by severity.

The GHI is a multidimensional index that shows the state of matters at the global, world-region and national levels. Four indicators serve to calculate the rankings:

- undernourishment,
- child wasting (the share of children under the age of five who have low weight for their height, reflecting acute undernutrition),
- child stunting (the share of children under the age of five who have low height for their age, reflecting chronic undernutrition) and
- child mortality (the mortality rate of children under the age of five).

Among the countries that could be assessed precisely, the GHI shows that the situation is worst in Somalia, where the authors see an “extremely alarming” level of hunger. Seven countries are in the “alarming” category: Syria, Yemen, Chad, Central African Republic, South Sudan, Democratic Republic of the Congo and Madagascar.

The report points out that hunger levels have worsened in ten countries that are in the categories “moderate”, “serious” and “alarming”: Central African Republic (alarming), Ecuador (moderate), Lesotho (serious), Madagascar (alarming), Malaysia (moderate), Oman (moderate), Republic of Congo (alarming), South Africa (moderate), Venezuela (serious) and Yemen (alarming).

Nonetheless, there is some good news too. Several countries have kept improving their GHI scores in recent years. Bangladesh, Gambia and Guatemala are among

those that have dropped from the “serious” to the “moderate” category since 2012. The GHI 2021 is the 16th of the annual series.

LINK

Global Hunger Index 2021: Hunger and food systems in conflict settings.

<https://www.globalhungerindex.org/pdf/en/2021.pdf>



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Sewing workers in a garment factory in Bangladesh.

PANDEMIC IMPACTS

Debt and forced labour

The coronavirus crisis has had a devastating impact on the working and living conditions of garment workers in developing countries. They have been largely abandoned by major fashion corporations and governments.

By Aenne Frankenberger

Many economic sectors have suffered during the Covid-19 pandemic, and the garment industry is no exception. A recent report shows the impacts the pandemic has had on the working and living conditions of garment workers in four case-study countries – Ethiopia, Honduras, India and Myanmar. The findings were published by

the University of Sheffield in cooperation with the University of British Columbia, the Modern Slavery and Human Rights Policy and Evidence Centre of British scholars and the independent Washington-based Worker Rights Consortium.

According to the authors, multinational fashion corporations faced the prospect of severe losses during the pandemic. Their response early on was to cancel orders at textile factories with no regard for their social commitments. They also held up payments to suppliers for garments already made. The report states that this profit-prioritising strategy triggered a domino effect along the supply chain, forcing companies

at the bottom to shut down production. Workers were thus condemned to one of two fates:

- either suspension and termination of employment or
- lower pay and worse working conditions.

Asked about job security, 72% of the surveyed workers said they were still employed at the same factory during the pandemic, while 17% had found another job, and 11% were currently unemployed. Of the 13% whose employment contracts were terminated, more than two-thirds did not get any severance pay. Those most likely to be laid off were members of ethnic minorities or lower castes.

Compared with pre-pandemic levels, wages in the garment industry were found to have fallen by an average of 11%. According to the report, the most important reason was that those who kept their jobs worked less hours. Opportunities to earn money

with overtime work were reduced, moreover.

Unsurprisingly, the level of debt among workers has increased by an average of 16% in the four case-study countries. In Ethiopia, it almost doubled. The researchers state that the number of people without any savings rose by 25%. Their conclusion is that people were forced to increase their debt to meet basic needs.

At the same time, indebted people reported difficulties servicing loans. Most said they tried to work more hours to reduce their debt burden, while others went without meals. In Ethiopia in particular, indebted workers took on new loans to pay off old ones, getting caught in a vicious circle. The researchers heard reports of violence and threats from lenders. They saw evidence of growing debt heightening vulnerability to forced labour.

One sign of such vulnerability is that 35% of respondents reported experiencing verbal abuse at work. While 24% received threats, 22% had to accept unfair deductions from their wages. Some workers in the

sample said this was the first time they were treated in this way, others claimed it had happened before but became worse during the pandemic. The researchers found out that indicators of forced labour were most prevalent in Ethiopia. More than a third of respondents, moreover, reported working in poor hygiene conditions. Given the lack of alternative employment opportunities, garment workers had virtually no way to escape this precarious situation.

During the pandemic, some fashion-brand companies tried to repair some of the social damage, but the study argues that doing so is not easy. The authors point out nonetheless, that for several reasons, big corporations are interested in living up to social commitments. Managers' personal conscience matters, but there is also corporate self-interest in reliable supply chains and compliance with regulations. Managers find long-term relationships with suppliers helpful, the report adds.

Government action has had a significant impact on pay during lockdowns. In

some countries, garment companies received coronavirus grant money and continued to pay workers the normal wages. Unfortunately, this was not the case everywhere. In the meantime, government funding is at low ebb. Support programmes have been time-limited and often difficult to access (see my article in the Magazine section of D+C/E+Z's digital monthly 2021/10).

LINK

The unequal impacts of Covid-19 on global garment supply chains:

<http://speri.dept.shef.ac.uk/2021/06/21/new-report-risk-of-forced-labour-in-clothing-industry-rises-due-to-pandemic-and-industry-response/>



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WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

Double Burden

Because they have to fulfil their traditional role within the family, women are severely disadvantaged in Nigeria's labour force. The road to full empowerment is still long.

By Bimbola Oyesola

In Nigeria, most women who have dependent children must work to boost their families' income. But this does not relieve them from the burdens of domestic duties. These women struggle to juggle household chores and paid work, especially when husbands are not supportive.

Adesola Olaniyi is an example. She is a mother of three and works at a bank on Lagos Island. She has to get up very early to make it to work by 7:30 am, as she lives downtown, Lagos. As a manager, she cannot afford to be late. Each morning at 4 am, she prepares both breakfast and lunch for

her family and gets the children ready for school. In order to beat Lagos' traffic, she leaves home by 5:30 am. Her husband, who works closer to their home, is still asleep.

The bank closes to customers at 4 pm, but Adesola usually works until 6 pm. Due to rush hour, she sometimes does not get home until after 8 pm. However, her day is not over when she arrives. Her duties include monitoring what the children are doing in school – and whether they have done their homework properly. At times, she brings some of her work home and stays up late. Her life is a rat race, but she has no choice. Her job is essential as her husband's income cannot sustain the family.

Catherine Nwachukwu lives a similarly stressful life. She is a mother of five and works as a caterer in the informal sector. She never had an employment opportunity in the formal sector, where jobs are safer and

the pay is better. Her husband is an unemployed artisan who had to shut down his workshop because of poor electric-power supply.

Catherine keeps the family afloat while also caring for the children and doing household chores. Her job usually takes her out of the house for two days. If she does not earn money, her children will not have anything to eat. Sometimes, she even has to leave Lagos state. Her husband stays with the children on such occasions, but when she returns, she still has to cook for the family and clean the house.



Many women work two or three jobs to provide for their families. Ayinke, for instance, is a primary school teacher and has four children. She also runs a local shop where she sells various consumer items after school and on the weekends. Her husband abandoned the family, and teacher's salary does not cover all expenses. Inflation is eroding purchasing power in a country that has suffered two recessions in the past five years.

As in many other African countries, women in Nigeria have a subordinate role to their male counterparts. Twice as many women as men live below the poverty line, according to official statistics. Moreover, men occupy 19 times more executive positions than women. It matters very much that women have a host of family duties so they cannot conform to enterprise cultures that require "anytime, anywhere" availability.

Many workers in Nigeria's informal economy are women. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), that is typical of emerging markets and developing countries. These lack social safety nets, labour laws and decent working conditions. Things are particularly bad for the owners of small businesses.

The Covid-19 pandemic has hit the informal sector particularly hard and exacerbated pre-existing problems. According to the ILO, 83% of workers in this sector were significantly affected by lockdown measures. The situation is especially dire in the informal hospitality industry, in which women vastly outnumber men.

But no matter which sector they are employed in, coronavirus has rendered many Nigerian women vulnerable. Many jobs were lost when formal-sector companies went bankrupt. A large number of surviving businesses are still operating below capacity, so most workers are yet to be recalled.

CHANGING THE NARRATIVE

Some argue that women must change the public's perception of themselves. Adenike Ogunlesi is one of them. She founded the Network of Entrepreneurial Women (NNEW), which is part of Nigeria Employer's Consultative Association (NECA). "We will get what we want," she argues, by speaking up with determination and clarity.

Oyinkansola Olasanoye agrees. She is immediate past chair for the Women's Commission of the Trade Union Congress of Nigeria. She emphasises that the public is wrong to believe that women are incapable of reasonable action. In her eyes, issues such as female unemployment, vio-

heeding international advice on women's financial empowerment (see interview with Jen Braswell in Magazine section of D+C/E+Z e-Paper 2021/10).

Nonetheless, many women entrepreneurs still have ample reason to feel marginalised and excluded. Blessing Irabor, who



Informal businesses typically do not have access to capital: market vendor in Lagos.

lence against women, sexualised violence against girls and maternal mortality require urgent attention. Men, she says, must support women in financial and political terms.

There is some progress, however. For example, financial-sector institutions have begun to improve their outreach to women. The Central Bank of Nigeria is leading the field. It has committed 220 billion naira (the equivalent of €0,46 billion) to its Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development Fund, reserving 60% of this sum for women. Commercial banks like Fidelity Bank and Sterling Bank are following this example. Important institutions are thus

heads the Nigerian chapter of the Organization of Women in International Trade, points out that financial literacy tends to be low among women, while banks apply stringent eligibility criteria for lending purposes. The full truth is that informal businesses in particular lack access to the capital that would help them become more productive. In many cases, women suffer the consequences.



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SCHOOLS

What kind of teachers Africa needs

A new book casts light on social inclusion and societal awareness in education – and on how to bring both about in sub-Saharan countries.

By Hans Dembowski

Getting social justice right in schools has two dimensions. The first is social inclusion in the sense of all children getting quality education, including those from disadvantaged communities. The second is societal awareness, in the sense of young people gaining an understanding of what causes poverty, what the impacts are, and what kind of policy interventions can make a difference.

Both social inclusion and societal awareness are important if all members of a country's young generation are to become fully empowered citizens of a democratic nation. Though primary-school enrolment has increased dramatically in many low- and middle-income countries in recent decades, the quality of teaching all too often remains poor.

Teaching young children is harder than many believe, particularly in multi-lingual and multi-cultural societies. It is still all too common for young pupils to be yelled at in a language they do not understand and perhaps even get beaten because they do not respond in the way an educator expects (see Laura Hinze in Focus section of D+C/E+Z Digital Monthly 2021/04).

Young children should be taught in their mother tongue, and subjects should relate to the environment they know. Acknowledgement of their communities' traditions is useful too (see Boro Baski in D+C/E+Z print magazine 2009, p. 280). Unfortunately, many formally educated teachers look down on what they consider to be backward village attitudes, for example.

Early on, children should be made aware of deprivation and its impacts. As they grow older, they deserve to learn about legal, historical, political and cultural dimensions of inequality. Unless they understand what kind of social-protection system

exists in their country, they will neither be able to claim their rights nor to support others in a sense of solidarity. In our era of globalisation, international affairs matter too.

Where disparities within a nation are great, both social inclusion and societal awareness are particularly important – and particularly challenging. The implication is that teachers' professional competence needs to be particularly strong. A recent Routledge book assesses the implications for teacher education in Africa, though it does not use the terms social inclusion and societal awareness systematically the way I do here. The target group is academic experts, so many primary-school teachers may find it difficult reading.

The book was edited by Carmel McNaught and Sarah Gravett, who both teach at the University of Johannesburg (full disclosure: I have written a chapter on social-protection policies to the book and Carmel McNaught recently contributed a short essay on scientific literacy to the Focus section of our D+C/E+Z Digital Monthly 2021/04)

It is striking that several chapters of the book delve deeply into why social inclusion and societal awareness are so important. This is clearly less self-evident in Africa than in Germany. Several chapters focus on South Africa, so the book is, to some extent, an expression of South Africa's intel-

lectual struggle to define a sense of multiracial nationhood and build a shared welfare state after overcoming apartheid.

It is no big surprise, of course, that some things that work well in school education also make sense in teacher training. Service learning is an example. This term stands for students providing useful services to a local community. The advantages of this approach include:

- personal experience rather than abstract reasoning,
- expansion of personal networks beyond one's own community and
- greater motivation due to tangible impacts.

Students who want to become teachers should also have the opportunity of classes being held in their mother tongue. However, I do not think the entire curriculum should be offered in Zulu, Xhosa or any other regional language. It empowers citizens of a multi-lingual nation to speak more than their own language, and soon-to-be educators who do not read in a world language cannot make use of books like the one discussed here.

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McNaught, C., and Gravett, S., 2021: *Embedding social justice in teacher education and development in Africa*. London and New York, Routledge.



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A young woman in teacher training at Stellenbosch University, South Africa, in 2015.

Vulnerable and voiceless

In Ghana, most people with disabilities are stigmatised, marginalised and denied access to basic public services. Among the most strongly affected are deaf people.

Deaf children have limited access to education, which in turn impedes their later opportunities for jobs. Deaf people also have reduced access to health care, including mental health services. Their inability to communicate in the same way as others is a daily hindrance.

The difficulties for deaf people in Ghana begin at an early age. Only 16 public schools serve the approximately 110,000 deaf children in Ghana. The Ghana National Association of the Deaf (GNAD) estimates that this shortage leaves 80% of deaf children without access to education.

The association has tried to remedy the situation by advocating for interpreter services to translate spoken words into sign language in schools. But it has made few inroads, with the result that many deaf children do not attend school.

Mabel Agyei Adowa, a teacher, expressed concern about the many deaf children in Ghana who stay at home for lack of sign language interpreter

services in schools. “Many parents of deaf children have become hopeless due to lack of interpretation services,” she says. “They do not know how to educate their children.”

Only about 20% of deaf people who complete their primary school education continue to secondary school, says Daniel Fobi, a lecturer in special education at the University of Education, Winneba, a university in the central region of Ghana. Even that select group faces restrictions. “Those who can attend secondary schools are not allowed to study science or business,” Fobi says. “They are only allowed to study arts or technical subjects.”

In addition, some deaf secondary school students must pay for their own sign language interpreters, he says. Because of the barriers facing deaf children in Ghana, many perform below the level of their hearing colleagues.

Health-care delivery to deaf people is a further area of concern. The inability of doctors and nurses to understand deaf patients can cause misdiagnoses and wrong prescriptions. This has particularly affected pregnant deaf women receiving prenatal care. Lack of access to sign-language interpretation is compounded by negative social attitudes toward deaf people. Stigma and discrimination play a major role in marginalising the deaf.

GNAD is calling on the government to require all state institutions to employ sign language interpreters. “We call on the state to review the disability law with a view toward recognising Ghanaian sign language,” says Juventus Duorinaah, Executive Director of GNAD.

Ghana ratified the UN convention on the rights of persons with disabilities in 2012 and adopted a policy of inclusive education in 2015. But sign language interpretation is still widely perceived as an oddity that has no place in an educational setting. Nor does sign language have legal recognition as a necessary part of public service delivery. So the isolation of Ghana’s deaf people continues and deepens as the years go by.



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MASTHEAD / IMPRINT

D+C DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION

Sustainable development requires global awareness and local action.

Vol. 48, 2021

D+C is the identical twin of the German edition E+Z

Internet: www.DandC.eu

ISSN 2366-7257

The production of this Digital Monthly was completed on 30.11.2021.

D+C Development and Cooperation is funded by Germany’s Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and commissioned by ENGAGEMENT GLOBAL. D+C does not serve as a governmental mouthpiece. Our mission is to provide a credible forum of debate, involving governments, civil society, the private sector and academia at an international level. D+C is the identical twin of E+Z Entwicklung und Zusammenarbeit, the German edition.

ENGAGEMENT GLOBAL gGmbH

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FAZIT Communication GmbH

Executive directors: Jonas Grashey, Hannes Ludwig

ADDRESS OF THE PUBLISHER AND EDITORIAL OFFICE:

Frankenallee 71–81, D-60327 Frankfurt am Main, Germany

This is also the legally relevant address of all indicated as responsible or entitled to represent them in this imprint.

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Disclaimer according to § 5,2 Hessian Law on the Freedom and Rights of the Press: The shareholder of the company is FAZ Fazit Stiftung.

ADVERTISING AND SUBSCRIPTION SERVICE:

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c/o Cover Service GmbH & Co. KG

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D-82034 Deisenhofen, Germany

Phone: +49 (0) 89 8 58 53-8 32

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PRINTING:

Westdeutsche Verlags- und Druckerei GmbH

Kurhessenstraße 46

D-64546 Mörfelden-Walldorf, Germany

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PRINT SUBSCRIPTION PRICES (INCL. MAILING CHARGES):

single issue: € 2.20

annual subscription, Germany: € 14.00

annual subscription, world: € 18.00



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COVID-19

Brutal inequality

In view of the raging pandemic, vaccines must not be a luxury. Everyone deserves access. If EU leaders want to live up to their words, they must agree to waiving intellectual property rights.

By Mirza Alas

Vaccination rates show how brutally unequal the international community is. By mid-November, some 52% of the world population had received at least one dose of a Covid-19 vaccine according to the statistics compiled by ourworldindata.org. The share for low-income countries was a mere 4.6%.

As the World Health Organization (WHO) has reported, over 5 million people around the world have died because of Covid-19. The death count keeps increasing, and experts point out that authorities of some countries are probably underreporting coronavirus harm. The pandemic is still raging, and we will not know the total impact on mortality for quite some time.

Let's not forget that the death toll does not provide a full picture of the disaster. It does not reflect the strains that health services are under. Intensive-care units are overcrowded in many places, so people in need do not get the treatment they need. Routine services have been disrupted, including programmes to fight HIV/AIDS, TB and malaria (see Aenne Frankenberger in Magazine section of D+C/E+Z Digital Monthly 2021/11). European leaders reassured partners from Africa, Asia and Latin America during the World Health Assembly in May 2020 that vaccines would be treated as public goods once they became available. They also stated that immunisation must not be a luxury, but available to everyone.

That is not what happened. Instead, Britain, the USA, Canada and the EU rolled out vaccination programmes for their entire populations as fast as they could. Spending heavily, they ensured they had enough doses, in effect monopolising access to the innovative pharmaceuticals. The rich nations did not pay any attention to the WHO's global allocation framework. Because of

their hoarding, COVAX, the global initiative designed to ensure vaccine availability in poorer countries, was unable to provide the promised 2 billion doses by mid-2021.

By now, the prosperous countries have begun to roll out booster programmes and immunise children, who rarely suffer severe Covid-19 cases. In less fortunate world regions – Africa in particular – high-risk people, including indispensable front-line health workers, are still awaiting their first doses. The WHO has repeated its call for more support, and many civil-society organisations, many of which belong to the coalition called The People's Vaccine, have endorsed it. It is high time to increase vaccine manufacturing capacity in developing countries. This can actually be done fast. To make it happen, intellectual property (IP) rights must be waived and know-how shared.

The US and Europe have made commitments to increase donations. However, their related efforts have only delivered too little too late so far. The plain truth is that vaccine demand is now stronger than expected in high-income countries, while supply remains limited. Production capacities

must be scaled up fast in many more countries. Nations with high-tech pharma sectors must support those that lack the needed capacities.

The first step is to waive IP rights that are enshrined in the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS Agreement) of the World Trade Organization (WTO). The WTO can and must do so. Though its summit in Geneva in early December has been postponed because of coronavirus, TRIPS negotiations are taking place. US President Joe Biden has said he is in favour of waiving patents. If the EU agrees, it can make it happen.

Policymakers must not put private-sector profits over people's lives. As governments have funded much of the research that resulted in the Covid-19 vaccines, they are in a legitimate position to press manufacturers to share their know-how with partners in developing countries.



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Far too few Africans have had their first shot: vaccination in Dakar in the summer of 2021.



Ugandan teenagers taking part in radio schooling in the summer of 2021.

CORONAVIRUS

Growing disparities

Even before the pandemic, many low-income countries were marked by great inequality. Covid-19 has exacerbated matters – for example in Uganda.

By Ronald Ssegujja Ssekandi

In the first half of 2021, Uganda's Finance Ministry reported that 28% of Ugandans were poor. That rate had increased from 18% before the pandemic. In line with World Bank practice, the official poverty line is the equivalent of \$1.90 purchasing power per day and head. The Finance Ministry also noted that two thirds of Ugandans had lost at least some income due to the Covid-19 crisis.

It was obvious that things would be challenging. In June 2020, the Uganda office of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) prepared a report on what impacts the novel virus was likely to have. It expected some 4.4 million workers in Uganda's informal sector to fall into extreme poverty. Women, people with disabilities and chronic conditions, youth and the elderly were said to be most at risk. The UNDP report also predicted that tourism, manufacturing and services sectors would be disproportionately affected.

Statistics are not totally reliable anywhere, but they tend to be especially poor in least-developed countries with weak capacities. It is hard to tell to what extent the UNDP predictions have come true. What the mass media report, however, suggests that things are playing out as foretold.

From the turn of the millennium to the onset of Covid-19, economic growth was generally strong in sub-Saharan countries. Uganda's gross domestic product increased from \$6 billion in 2000 to \$36 billion in 2019 according to the World Bank. However, the population grew from 23 million to 44 million in the same time span, and not everyone benefited equally from growth. As in many countries, a small elite has prospered in particular, and many people say that a small set of government officials has benefited from corruption.

Even before the pandemic, Oxfam, the international charity, had warned that inequality was worsening in Uganda. A key problem was – and is – the unfair distribution of land. While women constitute 73% of Uganda's agricultural workforce, for example, they own only seven percent of the land. There are regional disparities too. Oxfam reckoned, for example, that 80% of rural households were

vulnerable to poverty even before Covid-19, compared to less than 30% in urban areas. It is generally acknowledged that Uganda's north is much poorer than the south.

The pandemic has affected access to education. Learners were sent home. Only those with access to digital technology could attend online classes. Regional and gender disparities, of course, play a role in who can and who cannot make use of the internet (see Ipsita Sapra in the Magazine section of D+C/E+Z Digital Monthly 2021/10). Radio lessons, however, are less effective.

The government offered cash transfers and food parcels to the urban poor, but these short-term efforts did not help people in rural areas. To afford the efforts, the government had to incur more debt.

The government has promised to change its spending patterns and channel more funds to village committees. Results are yet to be seen. On the other hand, it has announced measures to boost government revenues, and a large share of taxation is levied on consumer spending, which hurts poor consumers in particular.

What is happening in Uganda reflects global trends. The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted global inequality with data showing a widening gap between the rich and poor. While the world's richest people amassed more wealth, many have fallen into extreme poverty. The worst impacts are felt by people in low-income countries who cannot rely on strong social-protection systems – and where vaccination campaigns have not made much progress accordingly.

LINK

UNDP, 2020: Leaving no one behind: From the Covid-19 response to recovery and resilience building. Analysis of the socioeconomic impact of Covid-19 in Uganda.

<https://www.ug.undp.org/content/uganda/en/home/library/un-socioeconomic-impact-report-of-covid-19-in-uganda.html>



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HUMAN RIGHTS

“Flawed democracy”

India is generally considered to be the world's largest democracy. As civic freedoms are being eroded, international experts now consider it to be damaged.

By Mira Mandal

The Economist Intelligence Unit calls India a “flawed democracy”. In the same vein, the annual Freedom House report, which assesses the state of democracy around the world, only lists India in the category “partly free”. Things have been deteriorating since Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu-supremacist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) came to power in 2014. With not even 40% of the nation's vote, it won a thumping majority in the parliament. That happened again in the election of 2019.

There is a troublesome pattern of people being silenced after daring to criticise the government and its supporters. Consider recent faith-based violence in the small eastern state of Tripura. Extremist mobs hounded Muslims in pogrom-like scenarios, claiming to take revenge for similar anti-Hindu action in neighbouring Bangladesh. The police are now investigating some 100 people who spoke out against Indian mobs

in Tripura on social media. The charge is that they breached the draconian Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA).

In spite of India's secular constitution, Hindu-supremacists pretend that only people of their faith are real Indians. Two years ago, there was a broad-based social movement against the introduction of a citizenship law that discriminated against Muslims. The movement's epicentre was in Shaheen Bagh, a Delhi neighbourhood (see Arfa Khanum Sherwani in Tribune section of D+C/E+Z's Digital Monthly 2020/02). It also opposed police violence, demanded jobs and called for better protection of women. Government propaganda discredited this overwhelmingly non-violent campaign as a dangerous insurgency. In truth, it was defending the constitution.

The movement ended in February 2020 with the Covid-19 lockdown, after parts of Delhi were rocked by communal violence. Mosques were burnt down and twice more Muslims than Hindus died. As is happening now in Tripura, the perpetrators of anti-Muslim violence largely enjoyed impunity, while many of those who supported the pro-secularism protests were accused of UAPA breaches.

Early this year, another protest movement erupted. Farmers vehemently opposed government plans to let agriculture be guided by market forces. The plans were withdrawn in November, but when protests were gaining momentum, the government resorted to repression and provoked violent clashes. Many protestors belong to the Sikh community, and they were targeted in particular. They are not Hindus.

This year, Twitter was ordered to block accounts that favoured the farmers' protests. The government claimed they were inciting public disorder. Facebook and Twitter were persuaded to shut down millions of accounts for perceived offenses of this kind. Anti-minority hatred, however, keeps spreading on social media without BJP-run authorities intervening.

The shutting down of internet services during protests has now become a norm. Indeed, internet access in Kashmir is permanently limited to certain websites the government approves of. In 2019, it dissolved what up to then had been the country's only Muslim-majority state and afterwards shut down the internet completely there for months (see Arfa Khanum Sherwani in Debate section of D+C/E+Z Digital Monthly 2020/11).

According to official data, more than 8,300 people – among them priests, professors, poets, students, lawyers, journalists and stand-up comedians – were arrested and jailed in the last five years. Even law courts have qualified this as abuse of power. The most prominent victim was perhaps Stan Swamy, a Catholic priest, tribal rights activist and Parkinson's disease patient. Accused of terrorism, he died in detention in July 2021.

Various laws are used to act against government critics. Even long established media brands such as Dainik Bhaskar, a daily newspaper with a circulation of more than 4.5 million, is not safe. After it exposed government efforts to hide the true number of Covid deaths, it is now being hounded with tax raids. It is telling, moreover, that Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch no longer have offices in India.

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Commemorating Stan Swamy in Kolkata in July 2021.



Cyclone damage on Ibo, a Mozambican island, in 2019.

GLASGOW CLIMATE SUMMIT

1.5°C goal is alive, but comatose

Though the motto of the Sustainable Development Goals is to leave no one behind, the UN climate summit in Glasgow basically decided to leave the world's most vulnerable communities behind. Months ahead of COP26, Saleemul Huq, the Bangladeshi scholar, told D+C/E+Z what the demands of climate vulnerable countries would be (see Focus section of our Digital Monthly pdf 2021/05). He emphasised three things: ambitious emission reductions, the fulfilment of long-standing climate finance pledges and a mechanism for dealing with the loss and damage global heating is causing already. COP26 did not deliver.

By Hans Dembowski

There was no serious progress concerning the third point at all. A new “dialogue” will discuss things. For the time being, the international community is leaving to themselves those who are affected worst in disadvantaged world regions, even though they have not contributed to bringing about the climate crisis.

In regard to climate finance, there was only marginal movement. Governments of prosperous nations admitted that they

failed to provide the annual \$100 billion by 2020 as they had been promising for over a decade. The new pledge is to meet that target – and most likely exceed it – within a few years and channel a larger share to adaptation. The shortfall for 2020 and 2021 alone amounts to about \$40 billion, a huge sum for least developed countries.

As for emission reductions, official national plans have only been scaled up moderately. The figures show that the 1.5° goal of the Paris Agreement is not dead, but comatose. According to the Climate Action Tracker, an initiative of scientists, humankind is on track post-Glasgow to increase average global temperatures by 2.1° over pre-industrial levels if all national targets and pledges for 2030 and beyond are met. That is a very big if, given that most targets are not binding and so many promises were broken in the past.

Before the summit, temperatures were set to rise by 2.7°. According to the Tracker's “optimistic scenario”, global warming might yet be limited to 1.8° if all announced targets and net-zero pledges come true. That is a still bigger if – and even 1.8° would mean dramatic harm. Temperatures are now up by 1.1° – and the impact includes devastat-

ing storms, floods and droughts. Prosperous nations' refusal to design a meaningful mechanism to deal with loss and damages shows that their rhetoric of global solidarity is largely lip-service. According to the Global Carbon Project, another scientists' initiative, 23 developed nations have caused 50% of all historical carbon emissions. These nations, with 12% of the world population, are thus responsible for half of the harm caused by global warming. Those who suffer most of that harm live in much poorer countries. The issue is urgent, but nothing is being done. Talk does not help people whose livelihoods were destroyed by climate impacts.

It is noteworthy, moreover, that a rift is opening up between major emerging markets, and least-developed countries. While the most vulnerable countries need fossil fuels to be phased out fast, China and India in particular want to keep using those resources. At the very last minute, India even insisted on rephrasing the COP outcome document, which now states that coal needs to be “phased down” over the years rather than “phased out”. Ironically, smog was so bad in Delhi that a lockdown of schools was announced almost exactly when India's delegation upheld the right to keep burning coal indefinitely.

There is still a chance of more mitigation dynamism in coming years. The reasons are:

- Climate damages are increasing and becoming increasingly hard to deny.
- Major private-sector industries are now taking the related risks very seriously.
- Political movements are becoming more assertive.

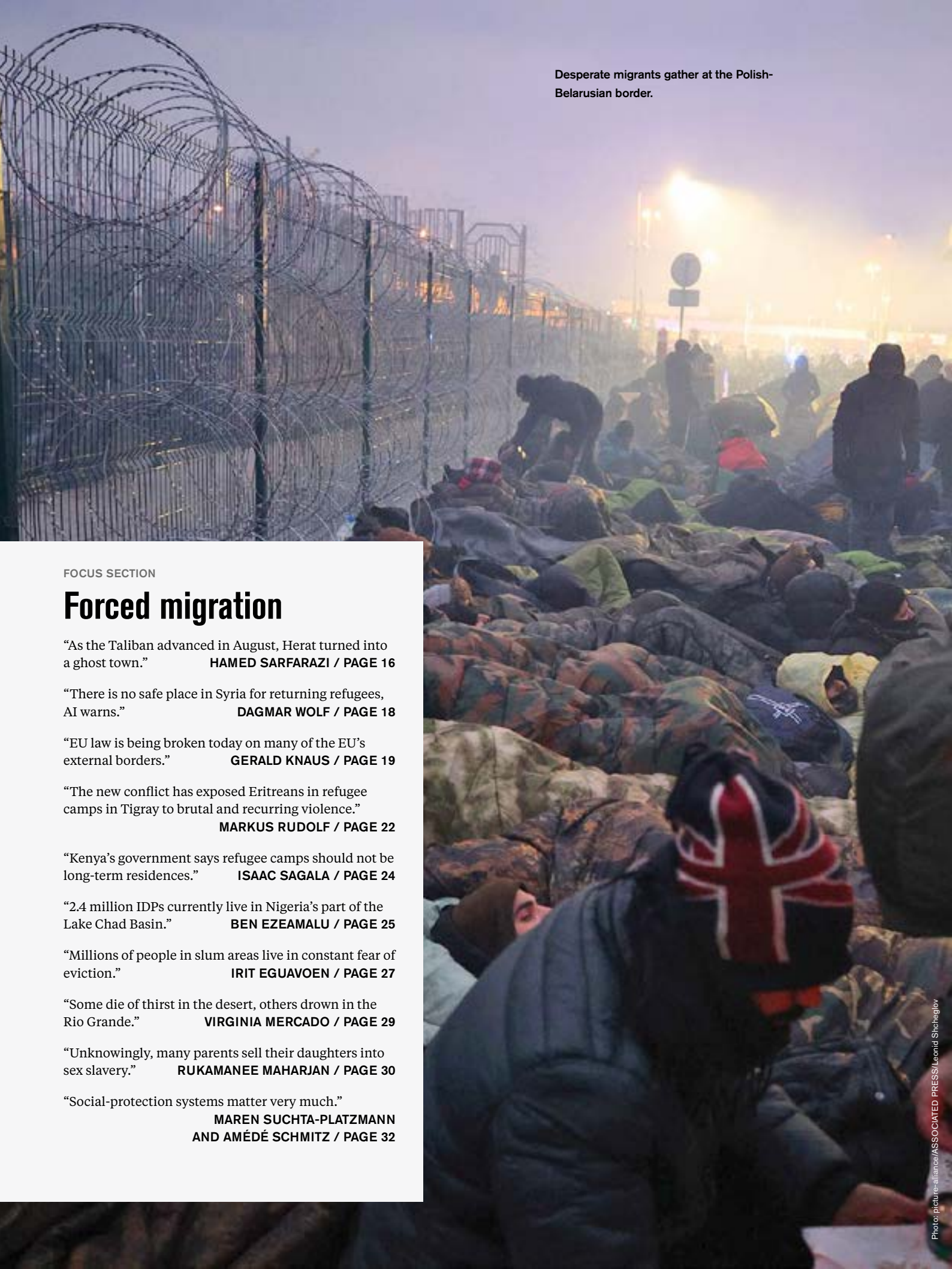
Coalitions of the willing are emerging, involving state as well as non-state actors. Major announcements in Glasgow dealt with reducing methane emissions, protecting forests and eliminating car emissions for example. Such coalitions may yet prove very influential. Unfortunately, we have no guarantees. What is certain, however, is that vulnerable communities who are already feeling the pain will not benefit much from more and better efforts to mitigate global heating.



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Desperate migrants gather at the Polish-Belarusian border.



FOCUS SECTION

Forced migration

“As the Taliban advanced in August, Herat turned into a ghost town.”
HAMED SARFARAZI / PAGE 16

“There is no safe place in Syria for returning refugees, AI warns.”
DAGMAR WOLF / PAGE 18

“EU law is being broken today on many of the EU’s external borders.”
GERALD KNAUS / PAGE 19

“The new conflict has exposed Eritreans in refugee camps in Tigray to brutal and recurring violence.”
MARKUS RUDOLF / PAGE 22

“Kenya’s government says refugee camps should not be long-term residences.”
ISAAC SAGALA / PAGE 24

“2.4 million IDPs currently live in Nigeria’s part of the Lake Chad Basin.”
BEN EZEAMALU / PAGE 25

“Millions of people in slum areas live in constant fear of eviction.”
IRIT EGUAVOEN / PAGE 27

“Some die of thirst in the desert, others drown in the Rio Grande.”
VIRGINIA MERCADO / PAGE 29

“Unknowingly, many parents sell their daughters into sex slavery.”
RUKAMANEE MAHARJAN / PAGE 30

“Social-protection systems matter very much.”
**MAREN SUCHTA-PLATZMANN
AND AMÉDÉ SCHMITZ / PAGE 32**



Taliban patrolling the streets of Herat in August 2021.

AFGHANISTAN

From Herat to Cologne

Hamed Sarfarazi is a journalist who fled from Taliban-controlled Afghanistan. In this essay, he reports how he experienced Herat, his home town, before leaving, what impression he had of the jihadist militants and how he coped with the toughest time of his life.

By Hamed Sarfarazi

Herat is my hometown and used to be known for its spectacular culture and modern lifestyle. As the Taliban advanced in August 2021, however, it turned into a ghost town.

Herat is located in western Afghanistan and the capital of the province that bears its name. With 600,000 people, it is Afghanistan's second largest city.

In an alliance with the formal military, Amir Ismail Khan, a former mujahedin leader, wanted to fight the Taliban which were already in control of large parts of the country. A devastating battle was looming. Many

of those who feared the Islamists tried to flee and make it to a foreign country. Among those who did so were business people, civil-society activists, journalists, government officials and plain citizens. Even the security forces withdrew, taking along family members.

This summer, everything that had flourished and brought me joy in Herat withered away. Being a journalist, I obviously had reason to worry about my future as well as that of my family, friends and acquaintances. In view of the Taliban's anti-women's rights ideology, I felt most concerned about the safety of a friend of mine who is a female journalist.

Nonetheless, I wanted to withstand the fears and not abandon Herat at this historical moment. I also felt responsible for a foreign journalist whom I was helping to work in my hometown. Relatives and friends insisted I should leave, but I was determined to stay.

Those were the toughest days I've ever experienced. As a reporter, I witnessed Taliban attacks on the frontline. On 12 August, the Islamist forces took the town. All high-ranking officials surrendered. So did Amir Ismail Khan. The troops handed over their arms, including heavy weapons, to long-haired, sandaled rebels on motorbikes. The hopes and wishes of Herat's people simply evaporated.

I grew up there. Sweet memories are linked to this place, and so are bitter ones.

TALIBAN-CONTROLLED KABUL

The time had come to say farewell forever. After two more days, I decided to leave with my wife and children. We wanted to escape the country from Kabul. We left behind our home and way of life. We gave up good jobs and took our children out of school, neither knowing where we would get to nor how long we would be staying there. This decision was not selfish, it also served to protect friends and relatives.

We spent more than 24 hours on the road. We saw the signs of war: bomb craters, burned vehicles and the like. By the time we arrived in Kabul, the Afghan Republic no

longer existed and the Taliban were establishing their emirate.

It had been foreseeable for some time that the Republic would fail. It was mired in corruption, and part of the government had authoritarian attitudes (see interview with Paul D. Miller in the Magazine section of our D+C/E+Z Digital Monthly 2021/10). It was outrageous that President Ashraf Ghani fled the country. The Taliban took the capital city without fighting.

By that time, most men had grown beards and were wearing traditional clothing. They were afraid of hard-line Taliban. With the exception of a few courageous civil-society activists, women and children were dressed in traditional garb too. Some were protesting and demanding rights for girls and women, such as going to work or school. The attitude of the Taliban at this point was still rather restrained. They did not want to risk international disapproval and wanted their regime to be formally acknowledged by foreign governments.

Nonetheless, armed jihadists seemed to be everywhere – in market squares, along the street, at checkpoints. They looked terrifying with unusually long hair and beards. Some wore uniforms, but many were clad informally. They controlled the cars of Kabul's frightened inhabitants. They seemed

to be looking out for enemies everywhere. They observed fashionably coifed young men in jeans with suspicion – and that was also their attitude towards women and girls in tightly fitting dresses or who dared to show a strain of hair.

The 30 days I lived under Taliban felt like 30 years. For my family and myself, the only hope was to escape. Journalist friends called from abroad by phone and offered support. Particularly encouraging were the wonderful people from Deutsche Welle Academy. Friends in Kabul were also helpful, but I did feel despair in view of the terrible scenario.

DEPARTING TO ISLAMABAD

Finally the day arrived for our family to board a plane to Islamabad, the capital of Pakistan. An aid agency paid for the tickets. Other people were hit much harder than we were. The one-way trip to Islamabad cost persons who had to leave for health reasons or because of an emergency more than \$1200. Tickets were only available on the black market as all airlines were booked for many months ahead. Those who wanted to get to Pakistan by land needed newly introduced passports which cost anywhere between \$400 and \$1000 per person. Visas

were also required and sold on the black market too.

Colleagues from Deutsche Welle welcomed us at Islamabad airport. We could finally relax, feeling safe in the accommodation they had booked for us. Friendly staff from the German embassy provided us with visa, so we could soon fly on to Leipzig, from where we travelled on to Cologne. I will never forget how happy our children were on this flight, nor how enthusiastically my colleagues from DW Academy welcomed us in Cologne. These moments are now among the most cherished of my life.

The decision to leave our home was anything but easy. What brought me to Germany was the dream of a better life for my children, one without violence or extremism. We have only been here for a few weeks, and our new lives have just begun. I am sure, however, that my children will have a good future here. We have experienced a lot of empathy and generosity, and we feel grateful. We are fully aware of others being less fortunate and still stuck in Afghanistan.



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Looming disaster

Afghanistan is on the brink of the world's worst humanitarian catastrophe, the UN's World Food Programme (WFP) warns. According to the WFP, the country's food crisis currently looks worse than what is happening in Ethiopia, South Sudan, Syria and Yemen. This alarming assessment is based on the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) report. It was issued in October in a joint effort of the WFP and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

The authors state that in September and October 2021,

nearly 19 million people in Afghanistan experienced high levels of acute food insecurity. They expect this number to rise to 22.8 million in the months November 2021 to March 2022. More than half of the country's people thus face hunger – including 3.2 million children under five, many of whom will suffer acute malnutrition by the end of this year. People all over the country are affected, including in urban areas.

Afghanistan has experienced two severe droughts in four years. The current impact on crops and livestock is sig-

nificant. Food prices are rising fast. The country's economy depended heavily on foreign aid before the Taliban seized power in Summer 2021, and things have been deteriorating since. Public services have collapsed, and so has the financial system. Unemployment is getting worse, and Covid-19 has exacerbated all other problems.

One year ago, Afghanistan already had 3.5 million internally displaced persons (IDP). They are a particularly vulnerable group. The UN reckons that at least 660,000 more people were displaced in the months January to September this year.

The WFP has so far provided emergency aid to around four million Afghans in Sep-

tember and plans to feed nine million in December. It needs more funding, however, and is thus calling on the international community to scale up humanitarian assistance and to resume food trade with Afghanistan. WFP's Executive Director David Beasley: "This winter, millions of Afghans will be forced to choose between migration and starvation unless we can step up our life-saving assistance, and unless the economy can be resuscitated." JD

LINK

UN's World Food Programme
<https://www.wfp.org/news/half-afghanistans-population-face-acute-hunger-humanitarian-needs-grow-record-levels>

SYRIA

Returnees risk prison and torture

Millions of Syrian refugees are under pressure from host countries to return to war-torn Syria. An Amnesty International report shows that those who do are at risk of serious human-rights violations.

By Dagmar Wolf

Since the beginning of the war in Syria in 2011, over 13.3 million people have fled terror and violence. Around half of them left the country. Most sought refuge in the neighbouring countries of Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt. Over a million people fled to Europe.

It is difficult to say how many refugees have returned to Syria, in part because many of them take informal routes into the country. According to the United Nations, about 280,000 people have returned since 2016. The actual number is probably much higher.

The human-rights organisation Amnesty International (AI) has recently assessed the plight of returnees in a report entitled “You are going to your death”. It states that one reason for returning is that the situation in Syria is supposedly peaceful now. It

is true that military operations have largely ceased. With help from his allies, President Bashar al-Assad has managed to regain the majority of the territory. Against this backdrop, the government itself has publicly called for refugees to return to Syria.

Another reason for returning, according to the report, is that the tense economic situation in neighbouring countries is making it hard for Syrian refugees to stay there. Conditions have worsened dramatically in Lebanon in particular due to the economic crisis of 2019, the spread of Covid-19 and the catastrophic explosion in the capital city of Beirut in 2020. As a result, the approximately 1.5 million Syrians there are increasingly subjected to hostility from the authorities and the people, who hold them responsible for the country’s problems. (Regarding the situation of Syrian refugees in Lebanon, see Mona Naggar in the Tribune section of D+C/E+Z Digital Monthly 2020/03.)

AI states that the situation is escalating in Turkey too, which is now home to about 3.6 million Syrian refugees. According to the report, the people’s resentment of refugees led to a change in policy in 2019.

Syrian refugees were encouraged to return to their home country, and criminals were immediately deported.

AI also claims that due to increasingly populist tendencies within their populations, some countries in Europe – Denmark and Sweden, for example, – have changed their policies too. Therefore, people from Damascus and the surrounding area, a supposedly peaceful region under Assad’s control, are at heightened risk of being deported to Syria.

There actually is no safe place in Syria for returning refugees, AI warns. The report documents serious human-rights violations inflicted on 66 people, including 13 children. They returned to their home country between mid-2017 and the spring of 2021.

Based on statements of affected people, their relatives and attorneys as well as aid agency staff, AI accuses the Syrian secret police of arbitrary detention, sexualised violence, systematic torture, enforced disappearances and extra-judicial executions. According to the recent publication, violence was committed at border crossings as well as at detention centres and torture facilities. Five returnees died in custody and the whereabouts of 17 others remain unknown. The report claims that the secret police targeted returning refugees and considered them to be supporters of the opposition, traitors, terrorists or spies for foreign countries.

For these reasons, AI is calling on the international community to grant Syrian refugees international protection. According to the organisation, sending people back to a country where they are at risk of imprisonment, torture or abduction is a violation of international law. AI argues that an action that directly or indirectly presses refugees to return to Syria must stop immediately.

LINK

Amnesty International, 2021: You are going to your death. Violations against Syrian refugees returning to Syria.

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde24/4583/2021/en/>



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Syrian soldiers checking papers of returnees from Lebanon at the border crossing in Zamrani.



Desperate asylum seekers stranded on the Polish border in Belarus.

POLISH BORDER CRISIS

“There are viable and humane solutions”

Immigration has been a controversial topic in Europe for years. Right-wing populists successfully stir up emotions, demanding policies against migrants and asylum seekers. Refugees have long been forcibly prevented from entering the EU via the Mediterranean. Now, a new humanitarian drama is unfolding on the Belarusian-Polish border. Belarusian autocrat Alexander Lukashenko is deliberately luring migrants from the Middle East and steering them towards the Polish border. He is putting pressure on the EU this way. Poland is sealing its borders and using force to drive back asylum seekers. Migration researcher and policy consultant Gerald Knaus assesses the situation.

Gerald Knaus interviewed by Sabine Balk

Is Belarusian strongman Lukashenko's strategy working?

Yes, look at what he achieved already, since he announced this summer that he would

no longer stop people who want to get to the EU. His state is now smuggling people. With a few thousand people on the border – and at the cost of an unknown number of lives – he has forced the EU to negotiate with him again as the effective ruler in Minsk. At the same time, he is repressing his own people increasingly hard. The EU is building a fence, even preventing Belarusian dissidents from reaching safety. The images of a few thousand irregular migrants have generated fear and provoked the Polish government to respond harshly. That in turn allowed Belarusian TV to show EU hypocrisy and brutality. By making use of a few thousand people – and even taking money from them – he caused the EU to breach its own principles.

So Poland is responding as he expected?

Well, also other countries have used force in violation of EU law on the EU's external borders in recent years. That happened on

the Greek-Turkish border in February 2020, when the EU-Turkey cooperation collapsed. It had happened before on Croatia's border with Bosnia, where violence has been used for years in attempts to block irregular migration. Hungary has even legalised border pushbacks – forced returns of migrants entering a country – in 2016 and continues this practice even though the European Court of Justice declared it to be illegal in December 2020. The disturbing reality is that EU law is being broken today on many of its external borders. In Poland, the situation is compounded by the fact that the government is under pressure anyway. It only wants one thing from the EU – political support for its harsh policy. That is what it received, while even rejecting support from Frontex, the EU agency which has its headquarters in Warsaw. Poland denied aid agencies and the media access to the border area, while accusing the Polish opposition of being weak and compounding the problems. This crisis served as a perfect distraction from other issues. After all, the EU is accusing Poland's government of undermining the independence of its judiciary and breaking EU law. On the border, however, other member states now support illegal action, considering it to be necessary. It is not hard to see how this scenario is useful for the Polish government. Respect of EU law now appears to be a matter of mere political convenience. That is what this government believes it should be anyway.

How can the EU escape this predicament?

The EU urgently needs an alternative and humane policy for controlling irregular migration, which does not break legal principles by resorting to force. In recent years, however, democratic governments have repeatedly felt that they had to choose between losing control of borders and regaining control by pushing back irregular migrants. Government after government has sacrificed the non-refoulement (no push-back) principle. That happened in Australia, the USA, Greece, Croatia and Poland. During the election campaign, US President Joe Biden has criticised the approach taken by his predecessor Donald Trump, but in office, he continued the policy of deporting irregular migrants without any asylum procedure. Most were sent to Mexico, some directly to Haiti. In fact, no US administration has ever sent more people back across the border without granting them any access to

asylum procedures than the current one. In September 2021 alone, 100,000 people were affected. So many democracies are embracing such policies, that the principle of non-refoulement is being violated around the world. This principle is, however, at the core of the 1951 Refugee Convention. This trend is dramatic.

Please elaborate...

Governments are entitled to control their borders. They are also entitled to deport people who have no right to stay. However, democracies decided decades ago that they would only do so by following legal procedures. They adopted conventions: on refugees, on anti-torture, on the rights of children. Europe also has the European Convention on Human Rights and a Charter of Fundamental Rights. Now we see those fundamental rights being sacrificed. Under public pressure, governments feel that they need to choose between losing control or ignoring these rights. This is a trap. Democracies need humane ways of controlling borders without breaching fundamental rights. To make that happen, it does not suffice that media and non-governmental organisations describe shortcomings and suffering at borders. They have been doing that for years in regard to the terrible conditions of irregular migration from Libya for years. What is needed are tangible proposals for reducing irregular migration without pushbacks and human-rights breaches as well as convincing majorities that achieving that is worthwhile.

How can that be done?

There is a need for clear thinking. Regarding irregular migration on the border, governments have three options:

- They can keep borders open without trying to reduce irregular migration, as happened in some months of 2015.
- They can rely on border pushbacks, violence or bad treatment as a deterrent, as is happening in Poland now.
- Or they can conclude agreements with third countries to where migrants can be transferred after a pre-defined date and where they will be treated in a humane way and have the opportunity to apply for asylum. That was what the EU-Turkey deal was about.

The goal of such agreements is to reduce deadly irregular migration without

violating human dignity or suspending the non-refoulement principle. There is no human right to migration, but there is a human right for people in need of protection not to be sent back into settings where they are potentially in danger. However, there is no right to choose the country which offers protection. Lukashenko's strategy would have failed immediately, had the EU reached an agreement with a country outside the EU which would have allowed it to bring even a small number of refugees there. It would have become impossible to lure refugees to Belarus. However, why would any third country want to help the EU? Consider Ukraine, a country with ample problems of its own. When German politicians started taking about it as a potential partner, obvious questions arose immediately: Why us? What is our interest? The starting point for serious negotiations would be to consider what the EU can offer a country like Ukraine as an incentive to help.

That is how the EU-Turkey deal came about.

Yes, indeed. Turkey's government made a proposal to the EU in March 2016. That was not blackmail, as is the case of Belarus today. Turkey was in a position similar to France today in regard to irregular migration to the UK. Turkey never invited Syrian refugees to come only to send them on to the EU. Most Syrian refugees have since remained in Tur-

key, which has become the country hosting the most refugees in the world. Smart diplomacy and cooperation improved the situation for millions of Syrians in Turkey, with €6 billion being mobilised in their support. The death toll in the Aegean Sea fell by an annual 1,000. When this cooperation collapsed in 2020, we witnessed what some in the EU had considered to be the better alternative even in 2016: pushbacks at land and sea. The EU-Turkey statement had ruled them out. Now, some in the EU believe that the fate of millions of Syrians in Turkey need no longer concern them. The humane alternative to breaching fundamental rights is agreements with third countries.

It does not look as though the EU were working on such agreements. Are there tangible plans for cooperating with Ukraine?

Well, it takes a partner government that wants cooperation. The Turkish government proposed cooperation because it served its interests. Turkey did not need to do much to help the EU. The EU, including Germany, accepted the plan. Let's assume the EU would offer Ukraine a special fund worth €5 billion for upgrading its energy system and expanding the use of renewables. That would make the country less vulnerable to Russian pressure. Brussels and Kiev could talk about even closer integration into the EU's single market. Member states could offer more tan-



Irregular migrants returned to Libya after being intercepted in the Mediterranean Sea by the Libyan coast guard.

gible support in the case of a potential Russian aggression. In return, Ukraine would, from a certain date on, take in a small number of refugees who want to get from Belarus to Poland and Lithuania, whereas the EU would accept all those who currently are in Belarus. The humanitarian crisis would be over. There would be no need to negotiate with Lukashenko. Ukraine would be appreciated as a strategic partner of the EU. Cooperation would help both sides to counter blackmail attempts by Minsk and Moscow. However, such discussions have not taken place. Many in the EU found it easier to sacrifice the refugee convention than to make a serious and attractive proposal to another democracy.

In Germany, that would be the job of the newly formed government.

The new coalition treaty of the three parties that want to form the new Federal Government is very clear on what it wants to end: pushbacks, deaths at sea, suffering at borders. It states that the incoming government wants to protect the refugee convention and reduce irregular migration. But here is the crux: these things cannot be achieved without partners in the EU and beyond it. The crisis in Belarus shows that it is important to have more than lofty goals. There is a need for realistic and implementable plans. Good intentions must lead to serious diplomacy. Otherwise, even the best ideas and most noble ambitions will remain mere rhetoric.

Why is it not possible to distribute refugees among the EU states that are willing to accept them?

That would be a part of the plan, but no country – and that includes Germany – is currently prepared to take in an unlimited number of irregular migrants. Don't forget how difficult it was to distribute families with children after last year's devastating fire in the Moria refugee camp. Back then, the number of people in desperate need was actually quite small.

Labour-market experts say that Germany and other member nations of the EU urgently need immigration to sustain social-protection systems, including health care and nursing care. Isn't it ironic that the EU is so vehemently rejecting people who want to come here?

Yes, indeed. Our societies need immigration, but that does not mean that they should arrive via deadly and irregular routes across the sea or through Belarusian forests. And when people sense of a loss of control, that has a political impact beyond specific numbers. A humane approach would be to combine two things:

- reducing irregular migration without pushbacks, through cooperation with partners and legal repatriations and
- increasing regular migration and resettlements, legal ways to help people in need of protection.

The key is to open up safe routes to increase resettlement programmes. That is being discussed, including in Germany. The outgoing Federal Government set up a commission to assess causes of displacement (see box on page 33 of this issue). It recommended that Germany should take in and resettle at least as many people per capita as Sweden. That would mean 40,000 in Germany annually. These people would be spared dangerous journeys at the hands of people smugglers. Instead, they would have the prospect of a regular status as residents. If France and others would join Germany in such an effort there would be 100,000 legal routes for refugees per year. If Canada and the US cooperate, the resettlement of 250,000 refugees a year would be perfectly feasible – and that would be a big step towards a humane refugee regime.

Do you expect the new Federal Government to take that approach?

Alas, the coalition agreement does not spell out any concrete number in regard to resettlements and legal routes for refugees. However, it does include the principle of replacing irregular with regular migration and expanding protection through legal ways. It now remains to be seen what these statements will mean in practice.

How will migration from Africa develop in the coming years? You have frequently cast doubt on the popular narrative of “mass invasion” or “floods of refugees”.

Yes, reckless politicians and writers keep propagating the myth of mass immigration from Africa and growing “migration pressure”. In truth, regular and irregular immigration figures have barely increased at all in recent years – despite Africa's population growth. It is increasingly difficult for



young Africans to get a visa or work permit. In fact, this trend should be reversed: Europe ought to increase regular migration, including for exchanges of students and scholars. At the same time, limited but deadly irregular migration to the EU should be further reduced through human-rights compatible agreements. Obstructing rescues at sea, as is happening in the Central Mediterranean, is not acceptable. 2021 has been a horrible year in this regard. A huge number of people have drowned and horrific human-rights violations occur in camps in Libya. The number of refugees from Africa who reach the EU is very small.

Do you see mass immigration from Africa to Europe as a possibility at some point?

No, I do not. What this narrative misses is a plain truth. The decisive factor that determines how many people manage to cross borders are governments' border policies. When states abandon human rights and use force – as is happening around the world – refugees are shut out and irregular migration drops. In the past four years, the number of refugees who managed to cross borders around the globe was very small. This trend must be reversed, and the Mediterranean must not remain the world's deadliest border. Germany's incoming coalition government has spelled out this goal. It is feasible if real efforts are made. Reversing the current trends would be a historic achievement. With partners and determination, policymakers can make it happen.



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Protesters in London are rallying against the Tigray conflict.

TIGRAY CONFLICT

Eritrean refugees are at risk in Ethiopia

In Ethiopia's north, violent conflict is escalating. Refugees from neighbouring Eritrea are among the victims. They need protection, but the camps they live in are exposed to violence from different parties.

By Markus Rudolf

Serious civil strife erupted in Ethiopia in November 2020, pitting the central government in Addis Ababa against the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF). The TPLF is the regional party that was running the state government of Tigray and had, until a few years ago, dominated the central government. The international public does not get much detailed information on the military operations, but some impacts are only too evident. They include human-rights abuses, hunger and flight (see my comment in Debate section of D+C/E+Z Digital Monthly 2021/09).

The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) counted more than 2 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Tigray this summer. However, violence has spread to neighbouring regions too. Relying on Ethiopian sources, for example, the UN speaks of more than 700,000 IDPs in Amhara state, where more than 1 million people depend on food aid. Moreover, several ten thousands have fled west to Sudan.

One group in Tigray's worst conflict zones is getting very little attention: the refugees from Ethiopia's northern neighbour Eritrea. Before the current crisis, there were 96,000 of them according to the UNHCR. Many of them had fled governmental oppression in their home country. Eritrea's despotic regime has been increasingly militarising society since the Ethiopian-Eritrean war of 1998 to 2000, arguing the country is under Ethiopian threat. It recruits people into the military by force, and they must

serve indefinitely for very little pay. Others are forced to provide other kinds of services. There are no free elections in Eritrea and fundamental rights such as the freedom of expression or faith are violated systematically.

Eritreans have not only fled to Ethiopia because the country is near. There are also linguistic and cultural affinities as well as family ties. The ethnic group of Tigrinians, who are at the centre of the current conflict, actually control power both in Tigray and Eritrea, but the two governments hate one another bitterly (see my comment in Debate section of D+C/E+Z Digital Monthly 2021/01).

THE CAMPS ARE NOT SAFE

The new conflict has exposed Eritreans who live in refugee camps in Tigray to brutal and recurring violence. In late 2020, the Ethiopian army relied on Eritrean support to occupy large parts of Tigray. The refugees saw themselves confronted by the very Eritrean troops they had managed not to join by fleeing across the border.

A report published by Human Rights Watch shows how different armed units repeatedly made people in the camps suffer in the months November 2020 to January 2021. Eritrean soldiers executed people they

found on lists of wanted people. Moreover, they forced many others to return to Eritrea against their will. On the other hand, militia units from Tigray attacked refugees in cooperation with opposition fighters from Eritrea, claiming to take revenge for alleged plundering.

Hitsats und Shimelba, the two camps closest to Eritrea, have been destroyed completely. Surviving residents had to flee once more – to two camps farther south. These camps have also been hit by armed groups perpetrating violence such as kidnappings and plundering. A new refugee camp, Alemwach, was set up in Amhara in June, but front-line fighting has come threateningly close by now.

DEMANDS FOR MORE SAFETY

Even in Addis Ababa, the capital city, refugees do not find peace. Some have staged protests, demanding more safety for themselves as well as their relatives in the conflict region. They say they experience discrimination and attacks. On the one hand, the central government accuses them of



backing the TPLF. On the other hand, TPLF supporters resent them because they are Eritreans. The refugees also report that their relatives in the camps have been cut off entirely from aid and communication in the past three months.

Food security has deteriorated dramatically, with hundreds of thousands of people facing famine. As the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported in November, 870,000 people needed food aid in northern Ethio-

pia. The Eritrean refugees are obviously affected.

An end to the conflict is not in sight. Leaders on both sides have stated they want a military solution. The TPLF troops are controlling increasingly more parts of Ethiopia, and the TPLF leaders have launched a new coalition of opposition factions against Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, who has stated that the TPLF must be destroyed entirely and has begun to mobilise even non-military people for this purpose. Civilian people caught between the fronts will pay a very high price – and one group concerned is refugees from Eritrea.

LINK

Human Rights Watch: Ethiopia: Eritrean refugees targeted in Tigray.

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/09/16/ethiopia-eritrean-refugees-targeted-tigray#>



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REFUGEES

Eviction notice

More than 400,000 refugees live in Kenya's sprawling Kakuma and Dadaab camps. In March, they were told they would face eviction within a year. Kenya's government, saying the camps are recruitment grounds for terrorists, plans to close both camps by June 2022. Most likely, however that deadline will be missed.

By Isaac Sagala

Refugees living in the two camps reacted with alarm nonetheless. Some fear returning to their countries of origin, as the problems that caused them to flee still exist. Others say their camp is their only home; indeed, the camps house generations of refugees.

Backed by human-rights groups, these refugees are asking the government to reconsider. "I was born here; I know no other home," said Hassan Mohamed, a Somali refugee living in Dadaab. "I have never been to Somalia; I don't even know what the country looks like. Telling me to go there is like a punishment."

"If you send me back to South Sudan, what am I going to do there?", asked a Kakuma Camp resident who wished to be identified as Deng Bol Deng. "I do not know anyone there. I came to Kakuma in 1996 when I was two years old. This camp has raised me. I got an education here that I would not have gotten in my home country. It gave me a chance in life."

He added, "maybe the government and the UN should consider taking us to a third country, as our home country still faces a threat of war. If I got a work permit in Kenya it might not be useful, as even people in the host community of Kakuma struggle to get jobs."

Camp residents are scared. Announcements of this kind had occurred previously, and it is obvious that camp closure is a popular topic that resonates with many Kenyans. Aside from expressing security concerns, the government says refugee camps should not be long-term residences in the first place. "A camp is not a permanent thing," Raychelle Omamo, the cabinet secretary for foreign af-

fairs said in April. "It is a place of limbo. No one should live in a place of uncertainty or indignity generation after generation."

At the time, she said the government was working on ways to close the camps cooperatively and in compliance with the Global Compact on Refugees. Some refugees would return to their countries of origin, while others would be sent to third countries. Citizens of East African Community (EAC) countries would get work permits and be offered the option to stay in Kenya and integrate into Kenyan society.

The Kakuma camp, located in North West Kenya, was established in 1992 and is home to over 200,000 refugees, mostly from South Sudan. Other countries of origin include Sudan, Eritrea, Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda. The Dadaab camp was established in 1991 near Kenya's border with Somalia. It houses over 200,000 refugees, most of them Somalis.

An earlier attempt to close the Dadaab camp was made in 2013, when Kenya's parliament called the camp a training ground for suspected Al-Shabaab militants. This group – a terrorist, jihadist fundamentalist group based in East Africa – carried out the 2013 Westgate Mall terrorist attack in Nairobi. Other terror attacks in Kenya, including the 2015 Garissa University and the 2019 DusitD2 Hotel attacks, were also linked to Al-Shabaab. Kenya tried again in 2016 to close the camps and repatriate refugees.

The initiative in spring was different in an important respect, as a commentator has argued on the website theelephant.org: "Unlike previous calls, the latest call to close Dadaab that came in March 2021 was not triggered by any major security lapse but, rather, was politically motivated," wrote Abdullahi Abdille Shahow. "It came at a time of strained relations between Kenya and Somalia."

It matters that there is a strong anti-Somali sentiment in Kenya. The online comment made an interesting point: The scheme proposed by the government would have meant that Somali refugees would have had to move to their country of origin, whereas South Sudanese refugees would have been permitted to stay in Kenya. South Sudan, after all, belongs to the East African Community. Somalis living in the camps might be a soft target. On the other hand, Kenya has a large Somali community, and there are more Somalis in Nairobi than in the camps.

Other observers believe that the government is trying to put pressure on international donor agencies. Steps towards closing the camps might twist their arms and result in more generous funding, after all.

LINK

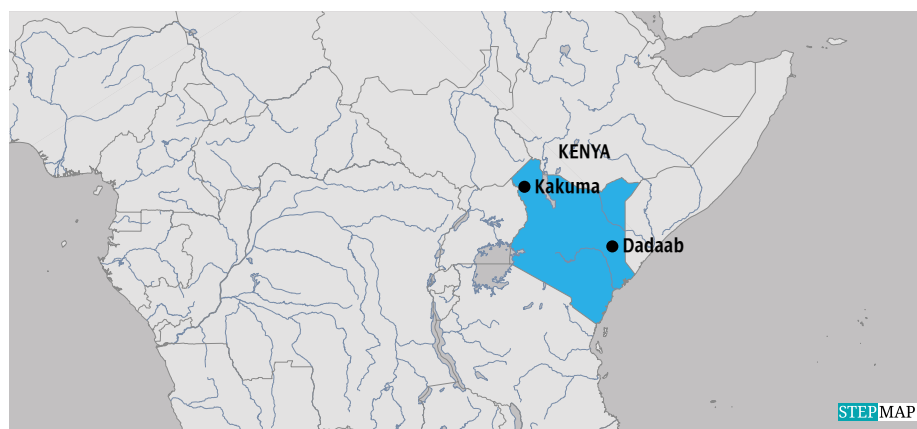
Abdullahi Abdille Shahow's comment:

<https://www.theelephant.info/features/2021/10/16/dadaab-playing-politics-with-the-lives-of-somali-refugees-in-kenya/>



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STEP MAP

INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT

Expelled from home with no border crossed

More than 10 million Nigerians are internally displaced persons (IDPs) according to the National Commission for Refugees, Migrants and IDPs. That number exceeds the population of Sweden and it has been increasing fast.

By Ben Ezeamalu

When President Buhari took office in 2015, there were only 1.5 million IDPs in Nigeria. The main reason the number has grown is violent strife, but natural disasters such as flooding matter too. The National Commission reckons that 300,000 people were internally displaced in 2020 alone.

According to the International Committee of the Red Cross, refugees are people who have crossed an international frontier and are at risk or have been victims of persecution in their country of origin. IDPs, on the other hand, have fled their homes for similar reasons, but did not cross an international frontier.

IDP numbers are not totally reliable. Statistics never are of course, but they are particularly hard to compile precisely:

- when disasters strike and
- when people live in places with weak infrastructure.

Moreover, not everyone who flees their home in despair counts as an IDP. After all, many rural people move to urban areas in the hope of finding better livelihoods, so the distinction between internal migration and internal displacement can be very blurry. Domestic debate in Nigeria focuses primarily on people living in IDP camps. Government plans to dismantle the camps are currently a hot topic (see box next page).

Several things are quite clear nonetheless:

- The Boko Haram insurgency, which peaked in 2014 and mostly affects Nigeria's north-eastern states, is the most important cause of internal displacement, and peace has not been restored to the region affected.

- Food security is deteriorating in all of Nigeria, and the economic downturn caused by Covid-19 has been compounding problems. Things are worst in the north-eastern crisis region.

- Life in IDP camps is full of suffering.

VIOLENCE-TORN REGION

The UN Refugee Agency reckons that 2.4 million IDPs currently live in Nigeria's part of the Lake Chad Basin. It comprises of

neighbouring Cameroon, Chad and Niger are affected too. Some people have fled across borders, so they are officially refugees now. All countries concerned also have IDPs. Telling refugees from IDPs can be quite difficult since local languages tend to be spoken on either side of a national border and many people do not have official documents.

The regional crisis has several dimensions. The population is growing fast while water scarcity is worsening, particularly because of the global climate crisis. Many young people are desperate and angry, which makes it easier for militants to find recruits. To some extent, moreover, gangs offer perspectives.

Violence keeps haunting Nigeria's northeast, though the jihadists have indeed lost some ground. However, the words "bandits" and "herdsmen attacks" have been added to the nation's conflict lexicon. Buhari won the election in 2015 on the back of prom-



President Buhari visiting an IDP camp in Katsina in 2019.

the six Nigerian states of Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe. Borno is where the Boko Haram uprising began, and the jihadi extremists actually controlled some of its territory in 2014. That year alone, they killed an estimated 11,000 people.

There have been attacks outside Borno, of course. Moreover, Nigeria's neigh-

bourhood is tense. "We shall spare no effort until we defeat terrorism," Buhari promised soon after winning the election. He spoke of a "tough and urgent job".

Not quite seven years later, the situation remains tense. Various armed groups are active. Officialdom likes to suggest that what is happening now is a plain law-



and-order problem and that the insurgency is over. To the people at risk at the grassroots, however, that distinction does not matter.

International observers are sounding the alarm. “Conflict is likely to rise further in Borno state, as well as violence in the northwest, in the coming months, driving further displacement and constricting already extremely challenging humanitarian access,” was a prediction in a report published this summer by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Food Programme (WFP). It also stated: “Nationwide inflation and high food prices, meanwhile, are projected to increase further, affecting access to food.”

International non-governmental organisations are expressing related worries. In summer, Save the Children estimated that 700,000 children under the age of five were

among 2.3 million children and youths going hungry in Nigeria’s northeast. Shannon Ward, who leads the agency’s Nigeria office, said: “Millions of children have already been through a decade of suffering, violence and humanitarian crisis.”

SUFFERING IN IDP CAMPS

In particular, people living in IDP and refugee camps are exposed to risks of malnutrition, hunger and even starvation. Supplies of clothing and medicine tend to be irregular too. Sanitation problems exacerbate issues of inadequate health care. Though a great number of children and teenagers live in the camps, education facilities tend to be poor or simply do not exist at all (see Qaabata Boru in Focus section of our D+C/E+Z Digital Monthly pdf 2021/04).

It is well understood, moreover, that IDPs typically struggle more with mental-health issues than people who were not forced to leave their homes. According to the Geneva-based Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder are widespread. Professional support can help, but camps mostly lack trained staff who could offer support.

Women are the majority of Nigeria’s adult IDP camp population. Sadly, sexual harassment and gender-based violence are common. Movement is restricted, and IDPs are at the mercy of security forces. According to the Legal Defence and Assis-

tance Project (LEDAP), a Nigerian advocacy group, women and girls in the northeast’s IDP camps have been sexually abused in exchange for food and water in a systematic way. There are even reports of pregnant women being raped. Women have also been forced into marriages or sold into slavery.

Similar reports were published in the past. In 2016, for example, Human Rights Watch (HRW) documented the sexual abuse of 43 women and girls living in IDP camps in Maiduguri, the capital of Borno state. “It is bad enough that these women and girls are not getting much-needed support for the horrific trauma they suffered at the hands of Boko Haram,” stated Mausi Segun, an HRW researcher. “It is disgraceful and outrageous that people who should protect these women and girls are attacking and abusing them.”

While life in the IDP camps is full of suffering, many Nigerians struggle with hardship. As stated above, food insecurity is worsening. The full truth is that even well-to-do people only see very limited prospects for themselves in Nigeria – and many are eager to migrate to more prosperous countries (see my comment in the Focus section of the D+C/E+Z Digital Monthly 2021/09).



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Safety matters

In October, Nigeria’s government announced plans to close camps in which internally placed persons (IDPs) live. The state government of Borno had previously expressed the same intention. The big problem is that it is not safe for the IDPs to return home.

Imaan Sulaiman-Ibrahim heads Nigeria’s National Commission for Refugees, Migrants and Internally Displaced Per-

sons. According to her, IDPs have been staying in camps too long. “We can’t continue looking after people that are able to contribute to nation-building.” She spoke of creating an enabling environment to allow them to contribute to nation-building instead. Her statement makes sense, but it does not address the main challenge. The enabling environment does not exist, which is

why masses of Nigerians struggle to find a livelihood at all.

In May, Babagana Zulum, the governor of the northeastern state of Borno, announced the closure of one of 27 IDP camps in his state. People were sent back to their villages. The governor has also promised to close all camps by the end of 2021. However, the security situation in Borno, where the jihadist militia Boko Haram caused trouble first, is still tense (see main story). According to analysts, 74 civilians and 70 security officials were

killed in Borno in the past five months. There has even been an attack on a convoy Zulum was travelling with.

IDPs say they worry about their safety, so they do not want to return home. They doubt, moreover, that they will really get the promised support for farming, such as seed, pesticides and fertiliser. Roland Schönbauer, a spokesperson of the UN Refugee Agency, sees things in a similar light. What really matters in regard to IDP resettlement, he says, is safety, not time. BE

HOMES

Informal rental business

Millions of people in low-income countries' slum areas live in constant fear of eviction. Informal settlements, however, provide indispensable housing and are growing fast in many urban agglomerations. A new study focusing on the development of an unplanned community in the West African city of Abidjan sheds light on how complex social relations are in the informal real-estate market.

By Irit Eguavoen

In many big cities across the global south, legal housing is unaffordable for poor urban dwellers. In desperation, they build own homes for themselves on public land. The result is unplanned settlements, mostly on the urban periphery. As time goes by, residents create networks and invest in upgrading their homes. Their community gradually evolves into a neighbourhood, which is often tolerated by municipal authorities for decades. Nonetheless, the conditions remain precarious because residents have no secure land rights and live in fear of eviction by the authorities (see Diana Mitlin and David Satterthwaite in the Focus section of D+C/E+Z Digital Monthly 2021/01).

Urban development programmes in Africa and elsewhere often start by legalising and physically upgrading informal settlements. A new ethnographic study focuses on important but often overlooked actors in illegal housing development. It also casts light on some of the economic dynamics that play a role in the creation of affordable housing.

The study looks at the fast-growing spontaneous settlement of Adjahui in the coastal metropolis of Abidjan, the commercial capital of Côte d'Ivoire. This settlement has been growing unplanned in the municipal district of Port-Bouët since 2011. It is located on a peninsula in the lagoon that cuts through the city. By mid-2018, Adjahui had 60,000 residents.

INVESTORS FROM OUTSIDE

Adjahui came into being when people who had been evicted from a neighbouring area

occupied public land. They created an urban infrastructure, with a market, schools, ferry port, mosques and churches. At first, they allowed other homeless people to join. As the influx continued, the first "cours communes" – small rooms which are rented out separately but share a courtyard – appeared (see box next page). More evictions in the vicinity followed, while urban renewal and gentrification made rents increase in the metropolis. Accordingly, demand for cheap rooms in Adjahui stayed strong.

Now, only a few years later, other actors dominate the scene. They are local real-estate agents and non-local small-scale private investors such as market women,

fully recouped within a few years if demand for cheap housing stays strong and the informal settlement is tolerated for a longer period. After that point, rentals prove very profitable.

The units are constructed on land where customary land rights, though not formal land rights, have been acquired. Investors are thus able to use the plots concerned for an unspecified period of time. The costs of building single-storey cours communes are manageable. No site development expenses accrue. Neither permits nor building regulations must be considered. Moreover, there is no competition by housing associations or accredited construction companies which might drive up land prices.

Typically, investors replace wooden buildings with stone structures after a few years to make higher profits. In many cases, they hope that a "proper settlement" will have a better chance of being legalised. In



The informal real-estate market is booming: courtyard accommodation and advertising for rental properties in Abidjan.

pensioners or international traders. They invest in rental cours communes. Local construction firms assemble the housing units using prefabricated modules. This kind of investment is risky because the district government might evict Adjahui at any time. On the other hand, the investment will be

that case, they could become land owners with full legal entitlement.

AGENTS MATTER VERY MUCH

Unaccredited estate agents who live in the settlement themselves facilitate the illegal

construction of rental property in Adjahui. Many started out as contractors or suppliers of building materials to the small investors. Gradually, they rendered more and more property-management services, such as selecting tenants, drafting contracts or personally collecting the monthly rent. The agents know their neighbourhood well and are part of local networks. They can offer non-resident investors a package of services, limiting investor involvement to the financial transactions.

Agents generally display a sense of social responsibility towards tenants. Rents have remained low over the years and are in line with local incomes. If potential tenants cannot afford them or if tenants fall into arrears, the agents will put in a good word for them with the landlord. In emergencies, some have even helped out with their own money.

For many, a room in Adjahui or another informal settlement is the only chance of accommodation in the metropo-

lis. Accordingly, most of some 300 households interviewed for the study were happy to have found a place to live in Adjahui. Despite challenges such as limited public transport or the lack of electric power, people rarely complain about the quality of life in Adjahui. Many residents are convinced that living conditions, infrastructure and services will improve over time. They hope the district government will eventually legalise their neighbourhood.

The new study confirms what international urban research has shown since the mid-1990s: investment in slums certainly makes business sense. Informal real-estate markets in spontaneous settlements merit more attention, both from scholars and from urban planners, including those from international development agencies. Patterns of speculation and the interests of actors involved matter a lot. The crucial point is not that investors show compassion for poor urban people, but that a large quantity

of urgently needed low-cost housing is built fast by private investors. Unless the needs of tenants, local property owners and external small-scale investors are understood, it is impossible to fully assess what legal recognition really means to the people concerned.

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Abidjan's housing shortage

Two thirds of Abidjan's approximately 5 million people live in rented accommodation. More than a third of them have to manage on an income that is below the national poverty line. For most of them, eviction is a constant threat.

The cheapest accommodation option is a simple 9 m² unit in a courtyard, where yard and sanitary facilities are shared with neighbours. They are called "cours communes". Rental prices start at the equivalent of ten to 15 euros a month for a one-room timber room with no windows.

There is an acute shortage of housing in Abidjan. Only the state can launch formal house-building projects on public land. The Ivorian government's current social-housing programme promotes the construction and funding of middle-class hous-

ing, for which demand is also very strong. Welfare organisations involved in building

homes for poorer groups have withdrawn from Abidjan. The main reason is that unclear issues of land ownership give rise to conflicts. Welfare agencies could operate in partnership with the government on

public land, but the desired co-operation fails to materialise. Accordingly, there are two distinct rental markets in Abidjan – a regular one for middle- and higher-income people and an informal one with no legal certainty for low-income people.

The eviction policy of the district government, the city's highest administrative authority, has aggravated the situation. Since 2011, it has bulldozed dozens of informal settlements, stating that they were at risk of flooding or landslides or that they were built on public land. As a result, many of the city's cheapest rental accommodations disappeared. The government did not replace them. Tenants evicted from demolished low-income neighbourhoods therefore sought shelter in other informal settlements. One consequence was the rapid rise in the population and density of those settlements. Adjahui is an example (see main story). IE



The design of the simple timber units is based on a modular system.

LATIN AMERICA

Dangerous journeys

Migrants fleeing violence and poverty in their home countries face many barriers in their quest to reach the United States. Many of those barriers appear when they enter Mexico. Both the US and Mexico should do more to ensure migrants' safety and protect their rights.

By Virginia Mercado

A year and a half of mobility restrictions due to the Coronavirus pandemic have not stopped migration in the Americas. In spite of contagion risks and many difficulties on the journey, people keep leaving their homes. Indeed, the economic fallout of the pandemic has worsened conditions in many Latin American and Caribbean countries, forcing more families than ever to seek a better life in the north.

The migrants' journey is among the most difficult ventures imaginable. To many people, however, staying at home looks worse. Migrants describe terrifying scenarios in their native countries. Components include political crisis, organised crime, violent gangs, extreme poverty, climate change and natural disasters.

Some undertake the journey full of hope, without realising they are running the

risk of human trafficking, smuggling, disappearances, murders. Some die of thirst in the desert, others drown in the Rio Grande, the border river. The problems are nothing new (see my essay in the Focus section of D+C/E+Z Digital Monthly 2016/02), but they are getting worse. Despite a brief lull at the height of the pandemic, the numbers are now higher than in 2019. Mexico has seen record numbers of refugees every month since the beginning of 2021.

Mexican government figures show a significant increase in undocumented people. In 2020, 82,379 people were brought before the immigration authorities, three quarters of whom were returned to their countries of origin. In 2021, from January to August alone, the number of undocumented people jumped to 148,903. Of these, 59,080 adults and 5,511 minors were returned home. The official term is "assisted repatriation".

A significant number of migrants try to legalise their stay in Mexico, waiting for long periods outside of immigration offices for their applications to be processed. But their numbers have overwhelmed the processing capacities of Mexican authorities. Andrés Ramírez, head of COMAR (National Commission for Refugee Aid), tweeted that "by the end of August, 77,559 applications have been

registered – 10% more than in the whole of 2019, when a record 70,423 were received".

The national origins of all northbound migrants is not known precisely, but some groups stand out. The number of Haitians swelled in 2021 due to political crisis and natural disasters there. Other large groups include Hondurans, Guatemalans, El Salvadorians, Cubans and Venezuelans.

There is also a large number of Mexican migrants. In fact, Mexicans lead the numbers of asylum applications in the United States. Many want to escape organised crime and gang violence. It has simply become impossible to live in some Mexican towns.

Meanwhile, complaints about temporary shelters for migrants abound. They lack supplies, food and medicines, have poor sanitary conditions, and process applications too slowly. And after enduring these conditions, migrants have no guarantee of a positive outcome.

The outlook is no better for those who make it to the US-Mexican border. Migrants can be stranded before closed borders for weeks or months, in conditions that some describe as violating human rights. In the end, most of them are deported.

Moreover, there is evidence of unnecessary violence against migrants perpetrated by both Mexican and US authorities. This includes border police chasing Haitians on horseback as they crossed the river for food and National Migration Agency officials beating migrants in a caravan. These acts raise serious ethical questions. So does the increased presence of unaccompanied refugee minors, who are exposed to countless risks.

The bigger picture is that migration is a growing phenomenon in the southern hemisphere and is probably here to stay. The countless thousands fleeing untenable conditions are faced with discrimination and acts of xenophobia along their long and dangerous journeys. Nations must find a more humane way to enable people to make their way towards a better life.



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Migrant woman in a crowded shelter in Ciudad Juarez near the US border.



Only few are free to go home: women in Kolkata's red-light district in December 2020.

SEXUAL ABUSE

Trafficked into slavery

Many women who end up as sex workers in a foreign country have actually left their homes voluntarily, without knowing what would expect them. Shame, stigma, the lack of documents, violence and a shattered self-confidence often keep them trapped in slavery-like conditions. This is the depressing fate of many Nepali women and girls. Civil-society organisations have begun to fight back.

By Rukamane Maharjan

Nepal is a patriarchal society. Women and girls are considered to be less valuable than men and boys. Many families see daughters as a burden and want to marry them off young. Families who live below the poverty line struggle to make ends meet. Especially in poor rural communities, many people go to bed hungry, at least occasionally. They normally do not hesitate to send their young boys and girls away to work in cities and sometimes even abroad.

Nepal has a history of the Kamalari system. It means that girls from disadvantaged communities are sent to work as domestic servants in more prosperous households of high-caste landowners, business people or civil servants. The Kamalari system has been abolished by law, but it is still in practice to some extent. Traditions are difficult to uproot in low-income countries. The girls are usually aged around eight, but maybe as young as five when they leave their homes.

Obviously, job offers for teenage girls look lucrative to many families, and so do some marriage proposals. Criminal networks exploit vulnerable families. The promise of regular meals, good clothes and a tin roof over the head makes parents send their child away with a complete stranger.

Unknowingly, many parents sell their daughters into sex slavery. Indeed, thousands of women and girls have become prostitutes this way. Very many are being exploited in brothels or private households in India, the Middle East, Southeast Asia and even Africa. Recent reports show that China

too seems to be becoming a routine destination for human trafficking from Nepal.

Nepal's giant neighbouring country, of course, is where women and girls from Nepal are traditionally sent to. Their light skin colour is considered to be very attractive in India. Moreover, there is an irrational belief of sex with Nepali virgins curing various diseases, including HIV/AIDS. As crossing the open border is easy, India has also become a transit country.

A 2018 study conducted by the Indian border guard Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) stated that 108 girls and children were rescued at the Indo-Nepal border in 2013. By 2017, the number had increased almost six times to 607.

Nepal's National Human Rights Commission reported in 2019 that "around 35,000 persons in Nepal have been trafficked, whereas around 1.5 million are at risk". The Commission clarified that both internal and cross-border trafficking were prevalent and that about 15,000 women and 5,000 children had become victims. The true numbers are probably higher as official statistics cannot keep track of undocumented cases.

The background of this terrible trend is extreme poverty, unemployment and poor implementation of Nepal's anti-trafficking laws. The government of Nepal has indeed

imposed restrictions for traveling abroad, given that emigration has become quite common (see box below). It has limited the scope for leaving with the intention to become a household helper. The idea is to protect people from possible exploitation.

One consequence, however, is that more women and girls are now leaving the country without proper documents, which makes them even more vulnerable. After all, illegal aliens know they cannot turn to state agencies for help. It is easy to manipulate and control them, so traffickers tend to take passports and other ID documents away if one of their victims happens to possess one.

Once sold to a brothel, victims are trapped. It is very hard for them to move out – and even harder to return home. Shame and stigma matter very much. Moreover, sexual abuse and other forms of physical violence amount to deeply traumatising torture. Victims' self-confidence tends to be shattered. Many neither believe they can

live a normal life anymore – nor that they are entitled to one.

INTERNATIONAL PATTERN

There is an international pattern of women from poorer countries being brutally exploited as sex workers in prosperous nations. In the EU, for example, many women workers from the former Soviet Union or Africa are trapped in red-light areas. In the USA, many Latin American women are abused this way.

Things are not entirely hopeless however. Some victims have begun to fight back. Chari Maya Tamang is an example. At the age of 16, she was trafficked from Nepal to an Indian brothel where she was taken advantage of for almost two years. After being freed in a government raid, she returned to Nepal – only to find that her community no longer accepted her. However, she was the first who went to the police and named the

people who had trafficked her. In 1997, a law court found eight men guilty.

In cooperation with other trafficking victims, Tamang started a civil-society organisation in 2000. It is called Shakti Sharmuna and fights for the rights of trafficked persons. In 2013, it won the prestigious Ramon Magsaysay Award. Another important organisation is Maiti Nepal.

In Nepal it has become common for rescued trafficking victims to file cases against the persons who caused their suffering. The example set by Tamang not only inspires people in Nepal. Activists in many countries around the world are aware of what she suffered and what she has achieved nonetheless.



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Not entirely voluntary

Labour migration is normally considered to be voluntary, though it can be driven by issues like debt bondage. Moreover, a nation may actually need large-scale what looks optional to an individual. Nepal's economy, for example, depends on Nepalis working abroad.

Nepal's average per-capita income is not even \$900. Several things have made the alleviation of poverty very challenging. They include a decade of armed conflict until 2006 (see my essay in the Focus section of D+C/E+Z Digital Monthly 2020/08), the devastating earthquake of April 2015 and most recently the Covid-19 pandemic (see Jonathan Menge in the Covid-19 diary of D+C/E+Z Digital Monthly 2020/06). Climate related disasters like floods or landslides compound the problems.

The lack of opportunities makes people desperate to leave the country. Millions of Nepalis have done so, and others keep following them. According to Nepal's official Labour Migration Report 2020, almost 600,000 officially registered persons left the country in 2017/18 and 2018/19 combined. This figure does not include those who tried their luck as undocumented migrants.

Nepal's government acknowledges that foreign labour migration is a salient aspect of the nation's economy. The financial remittances are important. The World Bank reckons they currently account for almost one quarter of GDP. The government also appreciates that many workers return home with increased skills. What is not said as often is that competition for livelihoods in Nepal

would be tougher without migration and have destabilising impacts.

Some migrants pay a very high price however. The plight of foreign workers on Qatar's construction site for the football world cup has made headlines around the world. Nepali newspapers are full of stories about migrant suffering. Problems typically include the withholding of wages, excessive overtime work, retention of identity documents, the threat of denunciation to the authorities, physical and sexual abuse and forced labour. Human trafficking into prostitution is a huge problem too (see main story).

Verité, the US-based civil-society organisation, has argued that Nepal's history of human trafficking inside the country along with the prevalence of bonded labour and child labour in various sectors make Nepali workers accept harsh and even illegal work-

ing conditions abroad. In early 2018, Felipe González Morales, the UN's Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants came to similar conclusions. In his view, the situation of many Nepali migrants amounted to debt bondage, forced labour or human trafficking. He also noted that the government had not effectively implemented its reforms to improve matters.

Things are not entirely bleak, however. In June 2021, the US State Department published a report entitled "Trafficking in persons". It puts Nepal in tier 2. That means that a country does not fully meet the minimum standards for eliminating trafficking, but is making significant efforts to get there. As part of its commitment to end trafficking, for example, Nepal has recently acceded to Palermo Protocol (Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children). RM

SOCIAL POLICY

Social protection for refugees

When it comes to mitigating causes of displacement and addressing displacement situations, social-protection systems can make a significant difference. Better coordination is needed at the interfaces of humanitarian assistance, development cooperation and peacebuilding.

By Maren Suchta-Platzmann and Amédé Schmitz

At the end of 2020, the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) reported that the number of forcibly displaced people in the world was once again higher than at any previous time in the agency's history. Displacement poses challenges, and to permit an appropriate response, the international community has agreed on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus (HDP Nexus). The guiding idea is to interlink humanitarian assistance, development cooperation and peacebuilding more closely.

The UN Global Compact on Refugees, which was adopted in 2018, supports this approach. It distributes responsibilities more equitably within the international community. A core aspect is to create longer-term prospects for both the local population and refugees in the often very poor host regions,

rather than addressing their needs through parallel systems.

It is necessary to scale up efforts through better social-protection systems. For different states to cope with poverty, conflict and crises government departments must work better together on designing and implementing sustainable responses. Adaptive social protection is a promising approach, which is attracting growing attention. One reason is that, in the Covid-19 crisis, pre-established social-protection systems have proven crucial for supporting a large variety of population groups.

PROTECTING PEOPLE FROM POVERTY AND HUMANITARIAN CRISES

“Social protection” consists of policies and programmes designed to ensure that people suffer neither poverty nor social exclusion. The focus is on vulnerable groups. Social-protection systems offer support to individuals, for example in the case of illness or unemployment. However, they can also be helpful in collective crises. In the event of a disaster, for example, a government can relax eligibility rules of an existing social benefits scheme. Another option is to increase the level of support in times of crises.

If systems are able to adjust to a changing environment, we speak of adaptive social protection.

Adaptive social protection systems can reduce poverty, decrease inequalities and protect people from the consequences of crises. In countries of origin, fully functional social-protection systems thus contribute to reducing root causes of displacement. In host countries, however, the big challenge is to expand social-protection systems in ways that allow them to serve newly-arrived displaced persons. Especially in host countries with low and medium incomes, resources tend to be tight. They often do not even suffice for local people in need.

On the other hand, statehood tends to be stronger where people enjoy the support of social-protection systems (see Henning Melber in Debate section of D+C/E+Z Digital Monthly 2021/11).

Adding to the problems is the unequal international distribution of refugees. Rich donor countries tend to take in a significantly smaller share than developing countries do. Moreover, they do not always comply with the 1951 Refugee Convention – just consider the debate on the pushbacks of asylum seekers at the EU's external borders (see interview with Gerald Knaus on page 19 of this issue).

Accordingly, rich industrialised countries find themselves accused of double standards. At the same time, governments of developing countries run considerable political and economic risks when they accept refugees.

International actors, including the World Bank and UNHCR as well as several donor countries, are focusing increasingly on adaptive social-protection systems. The preconditions are that the state concerned is not party to the conflict and grants access to social protection services without discrimination. Scarce resources will generally be distributed more cost-effectively if existing national systems are used for displaced persons. Creating parallel systems is normally more expensive. Moreover, using a single system facilitates new-comers' long-term integration.

LINKING SOCIAL PROTECTION TO HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

Where host countries are overburdened, stronger social-protection systems are



Refugees from Africa in Izmir, Turkey.

a prime requirement and deserve international support. To provide needs-based assistance to more people, the system's base must be robust. In turn, an effective system can contribute to mitigating causes of displacement. It will also facilitate cooperation of many different parties involved in providing support. Donors can provide funding, for example, while national agencies take charge of registration and data management. An EU-funded programme operating along such lines in Turkey is currently providing support to more than 1.5 million refugees per month.

If a social-protection system is to work well for forcibly displaced persons, it must be geared to different target groups with diverging needs. Contracts with financial-service providers, for example, need to be designed in ways that allow disbursements to be increased and decreased flexibly. Programmes must also spell out clearly what proof of identity is required for receiving benefits and what alternatives are

acceptable when persons have lost those documents. Reachability matters too. More than half of all refugees are accommodated in urban areas, often in informal settlements. Local authorities and international agencies often struggle to get in touch with them.

Social, political and economic conditions vary considerably from one country to another. The devil is thus in the details. However, if the actors keep the political-economic circumstances in mind and succeed in building bridges between different resorts, sectors and systems, adaptive social-protection systems can help to reduce the causes and consequences of displacement in the long term.

LITERATURE

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https://www.fachkommission-fluchtursachen.de/fileadmin/user_upload/pdfs/Root_Causes_Displacement_Report-Summary.pdf



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Expert commission reports

In Germany, an independent commission has studied the issues of displacement and irregular migration. Appointed by the Federal Government 24 scholars and practitioners were asked to make recommendations on how to mitigate root causes of forced displacement and irregular migration as well as to support countries that host displaced people.

The commission presented its report in May 2021. Among the key findings is that the main drivers of displacement are failing states and government institutions, the lack of economic and social prospects as well as conflict and persecution. The commission also pointed out indirect triggers, such as environmental degradation, climate change and population growth.

One recommendation is that Germany's Federal Government should develop an inter-ministerial strategy to mitigate root causes of displacement more systematically and to support effective nation-

al systems in partner countries. These recommendations are in line with the international trend to take an increasingly integrated, inter-sectorial approach to crisis management (see main story).

The commission has strongly emphasised the relevance of adaptive social protection. It suggests promoting the

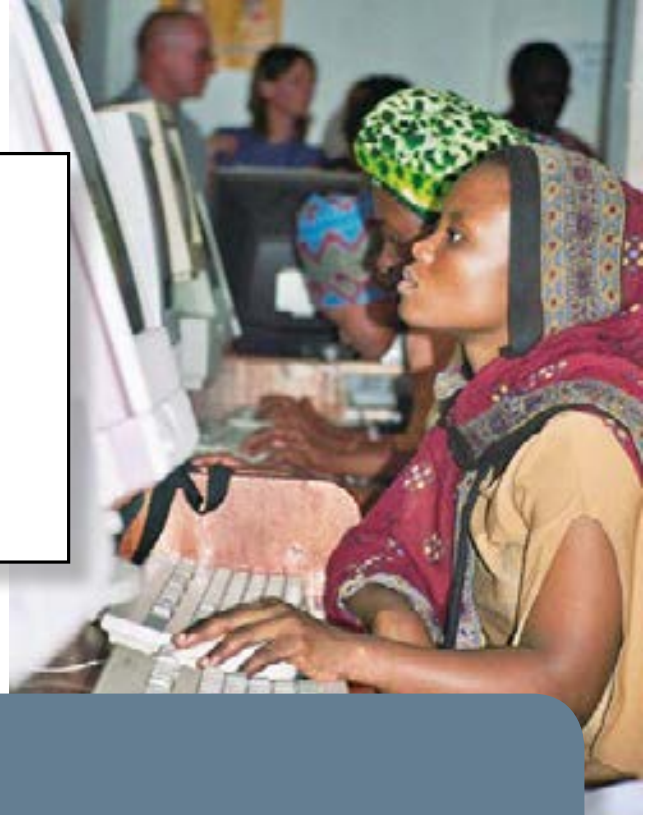
development and significant expansion of adaptive social protection in countries of origin and host countries. Options for doing so include funding and targeted technical assistance.

Complex challenges with mutually reinforcing components require long-term efforts. To mitigate causes of displacement, German development agencies will require patience, perseverance and strategic capability. As the "mother country" of social-protection systems (see Markus Loewe in the Focus section of D+C/E+Z Digital Monthly 2018/11), and as an established international partner for social protection systems' building, Germany has a strong potential to increase its engagement in the sector. The incoming Federal Government shares this view. Its recently published coalition agreement makes a commitment to the cause. AS, MSP



Presentation of the report of the Commission on the Root Causes of Displacement in May 2021 with chairwomen Bärbel Dieckmann (l.) and Gerda Hasselfeldt as well as the Minister for Development Gerd Müller.

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