



The Diplomatic Envoy

CORONAVIRUS SPREADS WORLD-WIDE PANIC

Morgan Huber
Staff Writer

The deadly coronavirus continues to spread, brewing concern and fear among the global populace. Concentrated primarily in the city of Wuhan, China, this disease has caught the attention of people and organizations around the world. There have been roughly 600 confirmed cases and 17 confirmed deaths since the first report on New Year's Eve 2019, according to the World Health Organization. However, reports from the MRC Center for Global Infectious Disease Analysis at Imperial College London suggest that as many as 4,000 people may have contracted the coronavirus as of yet. The virus reportedly originated in one of

Wuhan's seafood markets, which have been under investigation and shut down due to violating food safety regulations, according to BBC. So far, all fatal cases have been located in the Chinese Province of Hubei, although outbreaks have been reported in other countries, including Thailand, Korea, Japan, Taiwan, Singapore, Vietnam, France, and the United States. This potentially global outbreak has triggered widespread panic, with people taking serious precautions to protect themselves from the virus. However, it has not prevented the WHO from stopping short of declaring a global emergency on the matter until January 30, 2020. To prevent the coronavirus from claiming

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INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE ORDERS MYANMAR TO PROTECT ROHINGYA MUSLIMS

Megan Gawron
Staff Writer

On January 23, 2020, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) released orders for Myanmar to protect its minority population of Rohingya Muslims currently subject to genocidal acts, UN News reported. For years, Myanmar has refused to recognize the validity of the Rohingya people living within their borders. A predominantly Buddhist country, Myanmar views the Rohingya, a Muslim ethnic group living primarily in the Rakhine State, as interlopers from Bangladesh. Unfortunately, Myanmar's disdain toward the Rohingya does not stop at denying them citizenship. In August 2017, groups made up of Burmese military and civilians responded to an attack by Rohingya militants by

gathering to burn Rohingya villages and attacking anyone in their way. BBC News reports that within the first month of the violence more than 6,700 Rohingya, some younger than five years old, were murdered. Now, a little over two years later, the Rohingya remain in Bangladesh as refugees fearing for their lives. Atrocities committed by Myanmar have driven over 740,000 Rohingya to Bangladesh, unsure of when they will be able to return home, according to Amnesty International. Approximately 600,000 Rohingya remain in Myanmar. The UN-appointed investigative panel reported to the Human Rights Council that Myanmar's government continues to pose a risk to them. UN News quotes Ms. Yanghee Lee, explaining "Myanmar continues

to be a State that commits ongoing gross violations of international law." As a late response to the atrocities committed against the Rohingya, in November 2019 The Gambia brought a case against Myanmar in front

of the International Court of Justice (ICJ), accusing the State of committing genocide against the Rohingya. After hearing the case, the ICJ unanimously voted that Myanmar must prevent genocide, Al Jazeera reported. Human Rights Watch quotes Param-Preet Singh, saying "the ICJ order to Myanmar to take concrete steps to prevent the genocide of the Ro-

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The Gambia brought Myanmar's action to the ICJ. Courtesy of UN Photo.

THE BEGINNING OF THE END TO THE HEGEMONIC DISPUTE BETWEEN CHINA AND THE U.S.

Julia Clapis
Staff Writer

Since July 2018, there had been threats back and forth between the U.S. and the Chinese governments. However, on January 22, 2020, in Washington D.C., President Trump and China's Vice Premier Liu He took the first step towards a more definite, binding, and peaceful agreement. As stated by Bloomberg, "Phase one" of the trade deal has been completed. In order to understand the essence of this conflict of interest, one must reason with the eventful past of the trade relationship between the two countries. The formidable trade war began due to uneven trade balance,

which is directly related to a country's trade deficit, as well as spending more money abroad than revenue brought in. In this case, it means that the U.S. imports more goods and services than it exports to China. The U.S.'s negative trade balance has been startlingly worsening

since 1985. The deficit has increased from \$100 billion in the early 2000s to that of \$419 billion in 2018, according to the Office of the United States Trade Representative. One of the President's electoral promises was to increase domestic consumption and stimulate

the American industry. Essentially, the ultimate goal is to make Chinese products less compelling to American consumers. This can be achieved by increasing tariffs on Chinese goods and services, in turn making the products more expensive, and ultimately persuading

Americans to buy more national products, making the demand for those imported products in the U.S. market decrease. Due to China's historical record of not complying with its trade deals, Americans worried whether Mr. Trump could carry this deal out. The

goal was to bind China to respect the deal and make them abide by their obligations. To make sure both parties understand their commitment and responsibility to each other, the Bilateral Evaluation and Dispute Resolution was created, with the purpose, "to resolve issues in the economic and trade relationship of the Parties in a fair, expeditious, and respectful manner, and to avoid the escalation of economic and trade disputes and their impact on other areas of the Parties' relationship" (Article 7.1 of the trade deal). Even so, Liu He has claimed that the imports in China will depend on its market demand. To some, this

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China Vice Premier Liu He and President Trump signed first phase of their trade deal. Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

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INDIAN SUPREME COURT REFUSES TO HOLD BACK CITIZENSHIP AMENDMENT BILL

Maheen Khan
Staff Writer

On December 11, 2019, the Parliament of India reviewed and passed the Citizenship Amendment Bill (CAB), which is also known as the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA). The Indian Supreme court has since rejected an appeal to hold back the Citizenship Amendment Bill.

CAB was first introduced to the Indian parliament in July 2016. According to BBC News, the parliament's lower house (Lok Sabha) is composed primarily of India's governing party Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and had cleared the bill. The Parliament's upper house (Rajya Sabha) failed to pass the bill due to ongoing protests in north-eastern India which became violent.

According to The Economic Times (India), the intended purpose of the bill is to protect six minorities from religious persecution and offer them fast-track citizenship. The six minorities include Hindus, Sikhs, Jains, Parsis, Buddhists, and Christians who are protected against persecution in Muslim-majority countries like Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan. The bill not only grants citizenship to these minorities with no requirement for valid paperwork, but it also reduces the mandatory stay requirement from the existing 12 years down to seven years.

The Indian Constitution says, "No religious discrimination will be shown by the state against any person on account of his religion or faith." Yet, opponents of the bill state that the bill blatantly

violates constitutional rights by making the means of obtaining citizenship based on religion, excluding Muslims from those protected. This leaves numerous residents in India, like the Rohingya Muslims fleeing from persecution in Myanmar, at a loss. This turmoil continues because India's Supreme Court refuses to stay the law.

The Indian government's logic behind this refusal to keep CAB is based on the fact that due to Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan's specified state religion, the six minorities mentioned previously face dangers of persecution in their daily lives. According to the Economic Times, the bill states that these minorities have fled to India

to seek asylum and shelter despite having invalid documents. However, this logic is inconsistent due to the CAB not protecting all religious minorities such as Rohingya Muslims, the Ahmedia sect, Shias who face discrimination in Pakistan.

While a prominent factor in the uproar amongst those residing in India is due to the Citizenship Amendment bill excluding Muslims from the list of asylum seekers,

the possibility of nationwide implementation of National Register of Citizens (NRC) is deeply concerning to many.

The first state to experience NRC was Assam in northeastern India. Residents of Assam were required to provide proof of their own or their ancestors' residence in Assam on or before March 14, 1971. The aim of NRC is to detect illegal immigrants and deport them. Approximately 1.9

million people have already been affected by NRC and become stateless. The Washington Post states many fear that Assamese Muslims, who are unable to provide proof of their residence due to displacement during the 1947 India-Pakistan partition, will risk facing deportation or detention.

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People took to the streets as Indian Supreme Court announces the decision.

Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE COURT ORDERS MYANMAR TO PROTECT ROHINGYA MUSLIMS

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hingya is a landmark step to stop further atrocities against one of the world's most persecuted people." The ICJ ordering Myanmar to prevent genocide comes with a critical, underlying implication: that genocide is not currently happening.

Even Amnesty International is slow to identify the massacre of the Rohingya as genocide, instead explaining that Myanmar has committed "likely genocide." While the word 'likely' does not seem like much, this qualifier can change the future narrative. Without explicitly considering this abuse of the Rohingya as a genocide, the responsibility to take care of the issue lies completely with Myanmar. However, Myanmar's way of taking care of the issue is to continue to persecute the Rohingya.

It cannot be expected that such action will be taken by Myanmar fol-

lowing the ICJ decision. Al Jazeera reports that while defending Myanmar, former Nobel Peace Prize laureate Aung San Suu Kyi not only vehemently denied accusations of genocide, but she also failed to use the term 'Rohingya'. Instead, she would refer only to Rakhine and whether these atrocities were actually occurring there. Despite the intervention of the international community in the mistreatment of the minority group, Myanmar refused to acknowledge the Rohingya as a valid group.

Ultimately, even after the ICJ decision, there is much to be done before the Rohingya will be secure. While Myanmar continues to deny their rights, they remain stateless people.

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FRANCE PLEDGES MORE SUPPORT FOR FLEDGLING WEST AFRICAN COUNTER-TERRORISM FORCE

Jarrett Dang
Managing Editor

At a summit on January 13 with leaders of the G5 Sahel, French President Emmanuel Macron doubled down on France's support of five French-speaking African nations experiencing a surge in Islamic terrorism. Euronews reports that the summit, which took place in the city of Pau, resulted in Macron promising 220 additional French troops to an existing contingent of 4,500 stationed in West Africa. In attendance were UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, European Council President Charles Michel, and African Union Commission President Moussa Faki. The African leaders, which included heads of state from Niger, Burkina Faso, and Mali, released a statement praising the ongoing American and French military efforts to combat terrorism in the region, saying that they wished for continued engagement and cooperation.

Since the re-emergence of instability in West Africa, beginning in the early

2010s in Mali, the United Nations formed the Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) in 2013, which brought UN Peacekeepers to the country to try re-imposing stability. This mission has had only limited success in combatting terrorists who were able to operate with impunity in the deserts, which are largely unpopulated and ungoverned, making them perfect to base attacks out of. Islamic militant groups affiliated with Al-Qaeda and ISIS began to spread from Mali into other impoverished nations like Niger and Burkina Faso, leaving behind thousands of military and civilian casualties and nearly one million civilians internally displaced.

Regional and international efforts like the G5 Sahel aim to curb the spread of violence in the Sahel region to mixed results. The G5 Sahel, which is made up of Mali, Burkina Faso, Chad, Mauritania, and Niger, is an African Union-sponsored partnership meant to create a joint force to combat rising terrorism

in the Sahel region. According to the French Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs, the project draws support from France, Germany, other European countries, and international organizations like the UN and the World Bank.

However, nearly six years from its start in February 2014, the initiative has made little progress on reigning in Islamic militant groups that plague the region. In fact, the number of terrorism-related deaths has risen sharply since the inception of the group, especially in Niger and Burkina Faso. BBC News says that the number of internally displaced people rose from 40,000 to more than 500,000 within the past year in Burkina Faso alone. Meanwhile, armed groups are finding success in fending off security forces – 89 Nigerien soldiers were killed in a single attack earlier this year.

Increased militant activity in the Sahel comes at a particularly bad time as the U.S. prepares to scale back its involvement in Africa. Foreign Policy says that U.S. Secretary

of Defense Mark Esper is considering a drawdown of U.S. troops in Africa and South America to address larger perceived threats like China. Secretary Esper said that European nations could step in should the U.S. withdraw, but France urges America to stay. In a joint press conference, French Defense Minister Florence Parly said, "I will mention again that U.S. support is critical to our operations, and its reduction would severely limit our effectiveness in our operations against terrorists."

The U.S. has an estimated 6,000 troops and a newly constructed drone base in Niger, and numerous Pentagon officials and Republican lawmakers are questioning the wisdom of any troop drawdown in an area where China's influence is surging, reports Military.com. Still, while America considers its options in Africa, France will continue its support of its former colonies in their fight against Islamic terrorism.

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PUERTO RICO HIT BY EARTHQUAKES: GOVERNMENT HOLDS BACK AID, PROMPTING PROTESTS

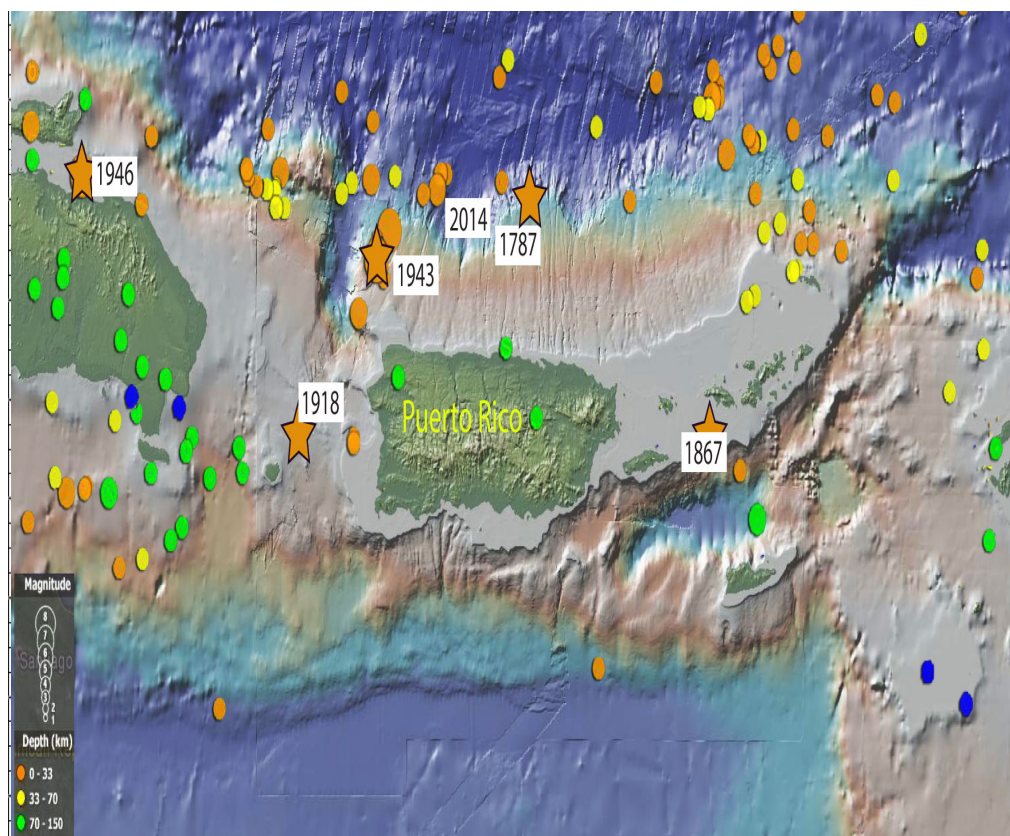
Matheus Bueno
Staff Writer

It has not been a good start of the decade for the Caribbean island of Puerto Rico. In January, the U.S. territory fell

victim to multiple devastating 5.0 magnitude earthquakes. While most southern regions have been affected, the earthquakes have been felt throughout the island, which ended up

with no power for almost a week at the beginning of the month. According to NBC News, there has been an average of 1,000 tremors only in the first two weeks of this year.

Thousands of people have been displaced due to severe damage caused by the natural disaster. In the coastal city of Ponce, more than 350 people were moved back into a school that



Destruction carries little weight in prompting government response.

Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

has been serving as a shelter for those who lost their homes due to the tremors. Puerto Rico's Office of Energy Management estimates that over 8,000 people have sought refuge, mostly in shelters that are not administered by the government. The lack of response by the island's government has sparked a series of protests in the country. People criticize the way the administration

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more victims, the city of Wuhan has taken precautions as well, essentially quarantining the city by temporarily banning all incoming and outgoing public transportation.

This initiative coincides with the Lunar New Year, a major Chinese holiday where people anticipated to travel and visit their families. Public events and exhibitions in the city have also been limited and canceled to prevent the disease from spreading. Some schools have also been shut down indefinitely. Reportedly, this travel ban and the quarantine overall is expected to affect 50 million in the metropolitan area.

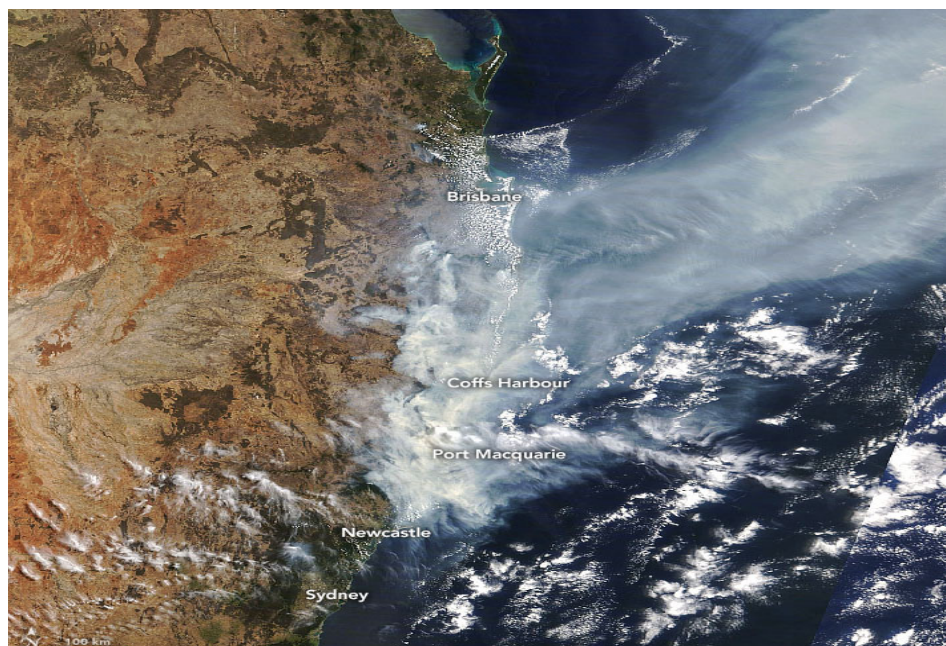
While the coronavirus's impact has been primarily social and cultural, it also has taken a toll on

the international economy. Since the quarantine, China's Dow Jones industrial average fell nearly 200 points, as production decreased due to these measures. Oil prices in surrounding countries have also decreased in anticipation of a potential outbreak. Looking at these consequences, the economy may continue to slow down as China awaits a vaccine.

The virus infects the lungs and symptoms start with a fever and cough. It can progress to shortness of breath and breathing difficulties. To prevent contraction of the virus, WHO recommends that people frequently wash their hands and avoid consumption of or contact with raw and undercooked meat.

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AUSTRALIAN BUSH FIRES: INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE AND GOVERNMENT LACK OF ACCOUNTABILITY



The situation in Australia through NASA's view.

Courtesy of NASA.

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Staff Writer

For the past few months, the Australian Rural Fire Service (RFS) has been battling powerful wildfires in the New South Wales region of the country. The fires have killed over 27 people, burned more than 12 million hectares, and have killed or injured over a billion animals, according to The Diplomat.

Amidst all the chaos, Prime Minister of Australia Scott Morrison has

been heavily criticized for his lack of action and proactivity over the devastating fires. During the most active weeks of the fires, The New York Times reported that Morrison had taken a trip to Hawaii with his family to celebrate the holidays.

Many citizens of the New South Wales region have spoken out against the Prime Minister. According to BBC, protestors have been claiming that more climate action needs to be taken. One protestor

wrote on her sign that Morrison's "climate crisis destroyed [her] home."

Morrison later announced at a press conference that he would be deploying the Australian Defense Force to help the RFS contain the fires. Many were relieved by this news until an advertisement ran praising Morrison and his government regarding the fires. Some saw the advertisement as partisan, serving Morrison's political agenda. The Prime Minister is

not the only one who has received pressure from citizens of New South Wales. Many believe that the government as a whole has abandoned the people. There are requests to give more funding to the firefighters of RFS.

Recently, the government of Australia and the Prime Minister have called for a state of emergency in the Canberra region, according to BBC. The Prime Minister has also claimed that he could have done more to prevent the worsening of the situation and to give relief to those in need during the peak of the fire season according to the Telegraph.

Due to the lack of assistance that the RFS and the people of Australia were receiving, many people took to social media to ask for help in gaining awareness of the fires. Multiple celebrities from Australia have developed fundraisers to help support the firefighters. Comedienne Celeste Barber has raised over \$50 million for the RFS, according to BBC.

Other celebrities like Pink, Nicole Kidman, and the Hemsworths have also pledged support and donations to multiple organizations. The Irwin family, who manages the Australian Zoo, has helped save over 90,000 animals, CBS News reported.

International support from other countries has also been pouring in. New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, and Singapore have all pledged military support to help assist the RFS. President Macron of France has also pledged support to Australia.

Firefighters from the United States have also traveled to Australia to help support and relieve RFS firefighters. They receive applause and hospitality at the airport for their involvement with fighting the fires.

The recent fires have been studied and observed by scientists. Some believe that the fires were caused by a recent pattern due to climate change around the world. Wildfires within this region are

relatively normal. However, recent droughts cause the land to dry out more than usual. This, in turn, fuels the fires, allowing them to spread faster and burn much stronger.

The weather in Australia has been a major catalyst for the wildfires in New South Wales. Temperatures of 120 degrees Fahrenheit have been consecutively heating up the region. Mixed in with low humidity and high winds creates a dangerous situation, result in the inability of firefighters to get close enough to contain the flame.

Currently, the fires in Australia, specifically in New South Wales and Canberra, are not entirely contained. Many citizens wonder as to when the fires will end or when the government will respond. Others continue to protest and donate in order to support those in need.

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The 50th World Economic Forum's annual meeting took place in the Swiss city of Davos on January 21, where world leaders discussed the issue of climate change and possible strategies of efficiently addressing it, Forbes reported. The issues of climate change and environmental sus-

tainability have been part of the World Economic Forum's agenda for the last several years, and they continually are one of the major discussion topics in 2020 as well. Additionally, the aftermath of the fires in Australia made it clear: global warming has become a huge threat to the economy as well as the planet.

In order to address the environmental crisis, the

DAVOS WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM 2020: WORLD LEADERS AND YOUNG ACTIVISTS SPEAK ON CLIMATE CHANGE

World Economic Forum came up with a new Davos Manifesto that outlines a goal of growing and conserving 1 trillion trees over the next 10 years in order to "unite the world to save forests

and climate," Al Jazeera reported. The disasters caused by climate change have resulted in a total of \$525 billion in the U.S. only, and seem to grow exponentially. The World Economic Forum recently released its global risk report stating that extreme weather shifts, increasing emissions and biodiversity loss are rising concerns at Davos.

Nevertheless, the report encouraged the immediate start of a conversation around climate change, especially after BlackRock's global head of sustainable investing, Brian Deese, shared that "those risks are more pressing on the market today than most participants

understand," The Wall Street Journal reported. The statement was used by the media and activists to draw attention to the climate problem. The International Monetary Fund commented that the crisis "already endangers the health and economic outcomes."

Some experts criticize the World Economic Forum for the empty promises and meaningless conversations about global warming that are constantly held but seems to improve nothing. They condemn the fact that most of the leaders invited to the forum arrived at the city of Davos in their private planes and expensive luxury cars, which directly contradicts the theme of the forum, Forbes reported. In order to defend

the leaders attending the World Economic Forum, it has been claimed that private jets are used as a way to limit the emissions from their planes and positively contribute to the environment.

Nonetheless, the World Economic Forum made the finance giants look at the problem from a fresher perspective, not fogged by their desire for quick profit. As further reported by Forbes, some companies have, in fact, offered their help and assistance in the process of finding and enforcing the solution. They have been receptive to the activists' complaints and the devastating reports made prior to the World Economic Forum.

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President Trump meets with Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan at Davos. Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

NORTH MACEDONIA GETS REJECTED FROM JOINING THE EUROPEAN UNION

Stephanie Miller
Editor-in-Chief

In an attempt to revive Albanian and North Macedonian European Union (EU) membership prospects, Croatian Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic announced plans to revamp methods for evaluating potential member states' readiness, reports Bloomberg.

"We'd like to find a solution unblocking the process with Albania and North Macedonia by the time of the Zagreb summit," Plenkovic told reporters. "We have a chance to strengthen our influence in Europe and we feel responsible for supporting the European path of our neighbors in the region."

Croatia's move for reforms to member state evaluation methods comes as the Central European country takes over as the EU's president, a rotating position that began on January 1, 2020, and will last approximately six months. It follows French President Emmanuel Macron's decision to veto Albania and North Macedonia's begin-

ning membership talks in October 2019 talks that would have taken place during Croatia's presidency. Macron stated that the EU needed to tighten its vetting processes for states seeking accession.

The continued push for Albania and North Macedonia's EU membership comes at a time of political and financial turmoil for the two Balkan states. North Macedonia is now headed to snap elections after Prime Minister Zoran Zaev's resignation over a "politically painful" battle to change the country's name and resolve a decades-old dispute with Greece, according to Bloomberg Politics. Albanian central bank Governor Gent Sejko wrote that the euro's continual economic slowdown combine with domestic political tensions tied to Albania's EU membership snub could trigger "uncertainties and potential shocks to the exchange rate," shifting it away from equilibrium.

Since submitting their applications for accession over a decade ago, both countries continue to prioritize alignment with

EU standards. Because of this, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen insists that the "door is open" for Albania and North Macedonia to join the European Union under current rules, reports Euronews. This statement follows former Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker's statement in October, which called the bloc's failure to agree on starting membership talks a "grave, historic error."

European Commission leaders are not the only ones voicing their dissent over the Balkan states' blocked accession. According to Radio Free Europe, new U.S. special envoy to the Western Balkans Matthew Palmer labeled Macron's decision a "historic mistake" that sends "a bad message" to the region. Acting U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs Philip Reeker

also shares Palmer's sentiments: he said the United States was "disappointed" with the decision and criticized "certain leaders" in the European Union for holding what he called a "19th-century view" of the Western Balkans.

Due to years of political uncertainty and border disputes, the EU displays a particular reluctance to commit its support to the Western Balkans. However, as the European Council on Foreign Relations points out, nationalist leaders will exacerbate tensions with neighboring countries in the region

should EU's support and influence wane. France's veto on North Macedonia's EU membership prospects could threaten the future of the Prespa Agreement with Greece, and overlapping ethnic identities with the Serbian Orthodox Church continuously exacerbates tensions in Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia, and throughout the Balkans.

Luckily, it appears that the tide may be shifting in Albania and North Macedonia's favor. French Presidential Advisor for European Affairs Clément Bonnet reportedly

stated that France could still withdraw from blocking accession talks with Albania and North Macedonia, according to the Centre for Contemporary Politics in Belgrade.

"Now that the UK has left the EU," Bonnet said, "France wants to switch its focus towards the East. After Brexit, it is more important than ever to overcome differences within the EU and focus on what brings us together."

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European Union membership halts for North Macedonia.

Courtesy of LSE blog.

THE BEGINNING OF THE END TO THE HEGEMONIC DISPUTE BETWEEN CHINA AND THE U.S.

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may be interpreted as Beijing viewing this deal as being rigid and abiding. There is no way to predict if this indicates a possible lack of commitment of the Chinese government with the trade deal.

To make sure China will comply with the continuity of the next two phases of the trade deal, the U.S. has established and intends to maintain 25 percent tariffs on about \$200 billion on imported Chinese goods, according to CNBC, with the promise of China's increase in the number of imports on American goods and services, focusing mainly on agricultural products and energy exports. This amount has been roughly divided in the following manner: \$77.7 billion worth of manufactured goods, \$37.9 billion on services, \$52.4 billion on energy exports, and \$32 billion on agricultural commodities. President Trump aims to benefit American farmers, who have suffered a great deal since the beginning of the trade war.

With such a significant investment in this trade relationship, other countries involved in trade with China, especially those in the European Union, are uncertain about the effects of this new American-Chinese trade deal on their economies and whether it will harm their own relations with China. However, according to Euractiv, ne-

gotiations between China and the EU are resuming

As stated by Forbes, the Chinese government has also promised to take measures to improve business ethics President Trump criticized. Among the unethical behavior is the theft of intellectual property, with which U.S. businesses have long struggled with this issue in the Chinese market. Having this in mind, it was one of the main reasons for the commencement of negotiations with China. With the signing of phase one of the trade deal, China vowed to require transfers of valuable technology and trade secrets no longer.

Another issue within the US-China trade relationship was the Devaluation of the Yuan, the Chinese exchange currency, in relation to the U.S. Dollar. Logically, the more devalued China's currency is, the more compelling become its goods and services, increasing demand for Chinese export to America. The devaluation of the yuan also increases the deficiency of the American trade balance. However, this agreement determines that China's foreign exchange reserves will be ultimately supervised, slimming the possibilities of China "manipulating its currency," as President Trump has claimed.

Dr. Johnston, from the Stillman School of Business, comments on the matter: "I'm excited to see

China and the U.S. making small improvements to end the trade war. As an economist, I am a believer in free trade. I have some concerns about how China and the US will enforce the new deal if either side violates the terms of the agreement as specifics about enforcement are light in the signed deal. Additionally, I have concerns about what will happen after 2021 as the deal is very short term in nature. Any uncertainty about trade in the future can make it difficult for businesses to make decisions and invest in the future thus potentially shrinking economic growth for both countries. Overall, the trade deal is positive progress in evading the trade war and I hope to see phase two of the trade deal signed in the near future."

This trade deal is clear about its terms during the period between January 1, 2020, and December 31, 2021. However, it is unclear what will happen afterward. According to The New York Times, even though there is still an expected increase in American exports to China through 2025, there still remains a gap of insecurity and uncertainty. All there is to do is stand by and observe closely while the next steps are taken on the American-Chinese trade deal.

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PUERTO RICO HIT BY EARTHQUAKES: GOVERNMENT HOLDS BACK AID, PROMPTING PROTESTS

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of Governor Wanda Vazquez of the New Progressive Party (PNP) and her team have been mismanaging the provision of resources in the most affected areas.

The movements began intensifying earlier this week after the discovery of abandoned government-operated warehouses filled with unused emergency supplies such as canned food, water, and hygiene artifacts. The governor announced on Monday night that the bureau of investigations will be conducting an investigation regarding such issues. ABC News indicates that Vazquez has also fired three top government officials that have been speculated to be responsible for such issues.

The citizens of Puerto Rico have shown resentment towards the Vazquez administration, and have been questioning the legitimacy of her statements and her position in the government.

Vazquez was placed in power after the resignation of governor Ricardo Roselló last summer after massive public protests broke out pressuring his removal from office.

Residents have been gathering in front of the governor's mansion calling for Vazquez's resignation and demanding answers on why she does not approach such controversial issues earlier in such a case of emergency.

However, Vazquez blames the head of governmental departments and agencies claiming that it was their function to "inform the governor." Public figures such as singer Rene Perez of the group Calle 13 have been helping to organize demonstrations against the governor after the events of the earthquakes and the discovery of the abandoned warehouses, AP News reported.

President Donald Trump has approved a major disaster declaration that intends to provide assistant for

dozens of municipalities affected by natural disasters, including the city of Ponce, which is believed to have caused over \$200,000 in damage, the Los Angeles Times reported. Officials are still awaiting millions of dollars in federal aid towards Hurricane Maria's damage, which hit the island in 2017. Meanwhile, the people on the ground have been pulling in much needed resources from donations and fund raisers, supporting each other in a time of crisis.

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HORN OF AFRICA

Tien Phan
Layout Editor

In contemporary times, glorious notions of the buccaneering eras have long been replaced with the terror of modern piracy. This is a relevant issue in the Horn of Africa, stretching along the waters of the Somali coast.

Piracy in Somalia is deeply rooted in the realities of individuals desperate for survival. The Jewish Policy Center states that the 1991 civil war, the 2004 tsunami, and ongoing severe droughts contribute to spikes of unemployment and food insecurity. This correlates with unprecedented increases in criminal activity over the past decade, especially in young men who must look for alternatives to meet basic survival needs.

Oxfam reports that in June 2019 at least 5.4 million people were in dire need of humanitarian assistance in Somalia. Out of those 5.4 million, there

are about 2.6 million displaced persons throughout the country – almost 40% of the country's population. The generation after the civil war and tsunami still have not recovered.

Constant lack of basic necessities feeds desperation, which in turn feeds conflict. Young adults join up with small organized cohorts to attack cargo ships with outfitting fishing boats, demanding huge ransoms in return for their release, according to *The Economist*. With just one of these cargo ships, pirates can make millions more than with conventional jobs. With such financial motivation, the path to piracy is easier as ever. Utilizing the country's lawlessness, a loosely-guarded naval border, machetes, and machine guns are enough to seize a large oil tanker.

The Gulf of Aden, the Arabian Sea, and the Red Sea are hotbeds for these activities, especially during their peak from 2007 to 2012. In 2011,

the losses endured by business- es alone reached 8.3 billion dollars.

Since 2012, the international community banded together to limit pirate activities. Citing a report by the International Maritime Bureau, Foreign Policy states that there were only three incidents in Somalia in 2016. Under United Nations Resolution 1851, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) facilitates cooperation from anti-piracy regional law enforcement units along the coast of Somalia. The UNODC can acquire funds and coordination to assist with military operations from both the United States and the Eu-



International forces and their effort in preventing piracy in the Horn of Africa.

Courtesy of Flickr.

ropean Commission.

Furthermore, the repatriation process has seen some progress. CNN reports a Danish-based NGO called "FairFishing" combats the ineffective patrolling of the Somali coast. Somalia has the potential to develop its economy through maritime agriculture, but the men who knew how to fish either already perished during the civil war

or turned to piracy. Fair-fishing intends to take on the responsibility of helping young Somalis rebuild their economy. A flourishing fishing industry, combined with a more stable central government could ultimately contribute to piracy's decline in Somalia.

This turn around in Somalia shows tremendous effort on the part of both Somalia and the in-

ternational community in combating modern piracy. However, these efforts must be kept constant, as many fear piracy's resurgence if donor states suddenly pull their armed forces and economic support from the region.

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GULF OF GUINEA

Ariana Keshishian
Staff Writer

With at least nine vessels attacked and 89 crew hijacked for ransom by the end of 2019, the Gulf of Guinea is now considered one of the most dangerous routes for international shipping. Insurers make ransom payments to pirates in West Africa, who kidnap sailors and charge between \$30,000 to \$50,000 per kidnapped crew member.

London-based maritime lawyer and piracy specialist Stephen Askins says that Nigerian pirate gangs are "...now 'maximizing returns' by seeking to seize larger vessels in order to abduct higher number of crew," according to Lloyd's List Maritime Intelligence. The Gulf accounted for more than 90% of global crew member kidnappings in 2019, with 121 crew members compared to 78 in 2018.

An AP report listed "162 incidents of piracy and armed robbery worldwide in 2019, including 130 boarded vessels, 11 vessels that were fired upon 10 of them in the Gulf of Guinea and 17 attempted attacks." As of December 30, 2019, two piracy groups working in the Gulf were responsible for recent attacks on tankers and the kidnapping of crew members.

One pirate vessel was identified as the main op-

erational ship used by one pirate group to operate offshore. Another vessel was identified as a separate pirate group patrol is the outskirts of Nigeria's Economic Exclusion Zone, which stretches for 240 nautical miles.

"These criminal actors are using the EEZ as a cover from Nigerian forces and the international naval forces," said Dryad Global chief executive Phil Diacon. "We are seeing a lot of local attempts

to deal with piracy. A lot of people are being vocal about it, but it's not in a lot of people's interest to tackle the problem."

Pirates operating on the margins of the zone advantage of the ineffective co-ordination between Nigerian patrols and confusion on who has jurisdiction. This is because the mothership has not been operating with its automatic identification satellite, which was purposefully done to mask its location during attacks. Another ship, a tanker named *Adeline Jumbo*, has also been closely observed.

Many security analysts believe that pirates in the Gulf of Guinea are using mother ship vessels to aid their operations deep offshore, reports Hellenic Shipping News. "Where acts of piracy are committed by criminal organizations in cooperation with some state actors, [piracy] becomes difficult to eradicate."

In spite of this, West Africa has made signifi-

cant progress in fighting piracy. The 2013 Yaoundé Code of Conduct aims at improving maritime security in West and Central Africa and addresses many maritime security issues, according to The Conservation. However, because labor and financial resources are scarce and maritime security is not as highly regarded as other land-based security challenges, insecurity at sea is less of a priority.

Still, by hurting activities related to the maritime environment, piracy impacts economic stability in a big way. To combat such insecurity, maritime businesses must factor in security-related expenditures to maximize the potential of the maritime environment and foster economic growth and development.

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U.S. and Cabo Verde Coast Guard patrolling the Gulf of Guinea.

Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

ONLINE PIRACY

Gabrielle Goldworm
Staff Writer

Since computer scientist Tim-Burners Lee first created the “World Wide Web” in 1990, online piracy has been on the rise, ranging from the simple film or music piracy that people around the world regularly indulge in to data piracy by powerful states collecting massive caches of documents, emails, and analytics data from their rivals. According to *Variety*, the year 2017 saw over 300 billion visits to online piracy sites worldwide, up 1.6% from 2016.

As seen with the rise of services like Disney +, CBS All Access, YouTube Red, and other current trend towards “a streaming service for everyone” has outlets like *New York Magazine* speculating that any piracy lessened by the streaming era is now looking at a massive comeback.

Online piracy may be most associated with finding the newest episodes of the year’s hottest shows, but its connection to international affairs,

because online piracy has high profits, low barriers to entry and comparatively low risk, it is a prime way to fund more serious criminal activities.

gaged in piracy alongside more serious crimes, including human smuggling, contract killing, narcotics trafficking, and money laundering.

pers that often otherwise required expensive subscription fees to access.

Sci-Hub founder Alexandra Elbakyan, whose supporters refer to her as

“The Robin Hood of Science,” in Japan also occurred in 2019, when a Chinese group allegedly hit the company with a “massive” cyber-attack, gaining personal information on some 8,000 individuals, including “email exchanges with the Defense Ministry and Nuclear Regulation Authority,” according to the *Japan Times*.

Efforts like these demonstrate the potential for online piracy to effect much more than the bottom line for media distribution companies. The full extent of the effect online piracy has and will continue to have on international crime and international relations between states is still unknown.

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An internet meme addresses the uncertainty of modern online security.

Courtesy of Digital Trends.

global networks of organized crime, and even terrorism have become clearer in the last several decades. In a 2009 report on online piracy’s connection to larger networks of international crime, Rand Corporation argues that

The report draws connections between groups like the Barakat Network, who use funds from piracy alongside others to raise substantial money for Hezbollah. Overall, the report examines 17 cases, all of which en-

This proposed connection appears in more recent cases as well. In December 2019, the United States Justice Department investigated the founder of Sci-Hub, a website that provides access to academic pa-

Post, Senior US Intelligence officials claimed Elbakyan was working alongside GRU, the intelligence arm of the Russian military, a claim which Elbakyan herself denied.

While the investiga-

THE SINGAPORE STRAITS

Natalie Sherman
Staff Writer

Southeast Asia, despite common misconceptions, is actually the world’s most active piracy zone. The UN declared the waters of Southeast Asia to be “the most dangerous in the world.” *TIME* reports that “Southeast Asia was the location of 41% of the world’s pirate attacks between 1995 and 2013.” In the same time period, 136 seafarers were killed in the region in incidents related to piracy.

The straits of Malacca and Singapore faced troublingly frequent incidents of piracy in 2019. The *Regional Guide to Counter Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships in Asia (RECAAP)* recorded 31 incidents over the course of the year. This is a significant increase from just eight incidents reported in 2018.

During the last weeks of December 2019, there was a sharp upswing in attacks. Pirates carried out five attacks in five days between December 19 and 24. The pirates boarded ships armed with knives in the early hours of the morning. These pirates

target large, slow-moving ships far out on open waters, stealing goods such as scrap metal and spare ship parts.

In the past, the Straits of Singapore itself has not been the most active area for piracy in the region. However, pirates seem to have focused on the large ships that often travel through the Straits. Their low decks making it easier for pirates to board.

One of the most commonly stolen goods in South East Asia is fuel. Pirates siphon oil from tankers in a practice known as bunkering. *TIME* describes the process of bunkering, in which the pirates board the ship, round up the crew, and force them to open the fuel valves, often while the vessel is still out to sea. The Singapore Port Authority claims Singapore is the “largest and most important bunkering port in the world.”

After stealing the fuel and mixing it with the pre-existing fuel inside pirate vessels’ tanks, it is almost impossible to identify stolen fuel. The fuel is often resold to a buyer who is completely unaware of its origins.

The issue is not a shortage of groups working to stop piracy in the region, but rather a lack of intelligence coordination between Southeast Asian countries. Many leaders in the region distrust Singapore, which has led them to be left out of meetings and agreements on the subject in the past.

Local corruption perhaps plays the largest role in fueling the piracy industry. Pirate mafias have formed in the many small islands that dot the strait countries. These pirate bosses are very influential and hold major sway in their communities. They even influence their men’s treatment in prison, from determining the quality of the food they receive to even organizing early re-

leases. Many jailed pirates are freed after serving just a few months of sentences that should have lasted several years.

The majority of attacks in Southeast Asia occur in the waters of the strait off the coast of Indonesia. There, it is believed, the low salaries of police officers and naval personnel often drive complicity and even cooperation. Malaysian extremists, notably the Abu Sayyaf Group, also committed acts of piracy last year, kidnapping sailors in the hopes of being paid a ransom.

Many acts of piracy are carried out in Filipino waters as well. President Duterte took a hard stance against piracy and even declared, “If they

(Philippine Navy) are positive that they (suspects) are pirates, you blow them to kingdom come. You kill them all.” The *New Straits Times* notes that he has been a vocal supporter of forming an international task force composed of Filipino, Malaysian, and Indonesian sailors to patrol the waters of the Singapore Strait for pirates.

According to The *Straits Times*, there have already been three instances of piracy in the straits in just the first month of 2019. Two of the incidents occurred when the same group of pirates targeted the same ship twice in one day. These attackers have not yet been caught.

In January, the Repub-

lic of Singapore Navy hosted the Malacca Straits Patrol Joint Coordination Meeting. Representatives from Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand discussed the recent increase in piracy within the straits, according to The *New Paper*.

“The representatives signed a revised set of standard operating procedures, pledging to strengthen information sharing and enhance mutual understanding and collaboration,” noted The *New Paper*.

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Indonesian Navy patrolling the Straits of Singapore.

Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

IF THE WHO DOESN'T DO ENOUGH, WHO WILL?

Daniela Maquera
Staff Writer

What the world is witnessing is a deadly virus outbreak: this is a serious statement to make. It can naturally lead to panic, but it can also prompt passive governments action. The World Health Organization (WHO) has the responsibility to make this call. However, in previous cases of public health emergencies of international concern (PHEICs) - H1N1, Ebola, and Zika - the speed of their response has worsened. It would be understandable if the impact was minor, but it is not. We are talking about human lives.

As the main global authority to mobilize the world and coordinate international health work, WHO should be turning on the red alarm when it has enough evidence that the world is at risk, but this process does not happen as fast as we would like it to. In a 2018 report by the U.S. National Library of Medicine analyzing the responses to earlier PHEICs, public health researchers Steven Hoffman and Sarah Silverberg showed that slow political mobilization following outbreak detection seems to be the crucial source

of delay. The report shows that as time has progressed, WHO has increasingly taken a longer number of days to declare a PHEIC after having detected the pathogen at hand. It went from one month, in the case of

Rather than utilizing their own specialists, WHO only relies on governments' transparency to collect and provide information on the disease. After the data collection, the Emergency Committee then meets with

to strengthen its emergency-response capabilities", according to the Wall Street Journal. It is inconceivable to know that one of the largest epidemics on record could have been averted if the WHO had acted quicker

al to shorten the period between an outbreak's emergence and global collective actions. Clearly, the entity does not lack resources nor specialists. What keeps it from making changes to their archaic system of com-

wake-up call. With the latest declaration made on January 30th, the novel coronavirus is indeed a global emergency, in which the agency appears to be on a quest for redemption for their previous mistakes.

This time, even when there were 7,800 people affected in over 35 countries, WHO had not yet made calls for intervention. No reaction came neither after the Emergency Committee met with Chinese authorities on January 22 to examine new epidemiological information. According to CCN, experts drew criticism with the fear that not declaring a global public health emergency would lead to predictions of a faster spread, and thus rising deaths. It was only when the disease began to take host in people who had not traveled to China that WHO finally made the declaration, says the New York Times. The push from the international community has clearly shown an impact, but for how long must we do it?

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The flag of World Health Organization.

Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

H1N1, to eight extensive months for Ebola. What concerning is that in both cases the countries of origin for the respective epidemics had declared national emergency early on.

Why isn't WHO acting at the speed that the circumstances demand? In order to recognize that an outbreak is a global concern, there must be strong evidence of the severity of the impact.

the General Director to discuss the given conditions to declare a PHEIC.

"WHO does not have a robust emergency operations capacity or culture," stated Barbara Stocking, the leader at a 2015 panel that discussed WHO's response to the Ebola outbreak. Members of the discussion called on WHO member states to "pour extra investment into the agency

to seek outside support."

Even though the NCBI explained that much of the delay derived from an inaccurate diagnostic - the thought that deaths were from cholera or Lassa fever - the agency did not devise any international mobilization or consistent communication strategy.

The inefficacy of WHO's response demands an urgent solution; it demands a new propos-

munication and strategic planning? It is not enough to wait until a state reaches out to them. Rather, WHO has to monitor closely for any signals of future danger and provide effective follow-up. Perhaps they could simply enhance their clinical management and mathematical modeling.

It seems the strong backlash WHO received has at least served as a

WHY AUSTRALIA MAY NEVER STOP BURNING

Axel Songerath
Staff Writer

Over the course of the past four months, the world bore witness to an unprecedented climate disaster in Australia. Over 16 million acres burned and counting, these mega-bushfires have reminded the world of climate change's violent global effects.

What is most worrisome, however, is not that climate change exists and along with it climate disasters - those are global issues that have tangible solutions - it is the lack of reply from those who bear the responsibility of finding the tangible solutions. The leaders of the world are not only failing us in this regard, but they are blatantly staring us in the face and telling us

they do not care. Australia's prime minister is no exception to this form of corrosive political rot.

When referring to the new reality of both the ecosystem and the communities affected by the fires, Danielle Celermajer, a professor of sociology at the University of Sydney specializing in human rights, invoked the term "omnicide," the New York Times reports. Omnicide is the killing of everything. Billions of animals, by some estimates, "bloating and rotting," have perished or are facing starvation or dehydration in devastated habitats.

The NYT included that hundreds of Indigenous cultural and spiritual sites are damaged or destroyed, with more than 2,500 homes leveled to their founda-

tions. Smoke generated by the fires have covered Sydney, Melbourne, and Canberra, at times giving them some of the worst air quality in the world. The prolonged exposure of smoke to millions of people has raised fears of health effects that cannot be determined for years, the Sydney Herald says.

The NYT added that the destruction is not confined to the homes and wildlife; the economic costs are enough that local communities may never recover. There are over \$100 billion Australian dollars (\$68 billion USD) in damages, and many locals don't have the necessary means to rebuild what has been lost.

Why are these fires so particularly disastrous? According to a report from the New York

Times, its climate change has set the table. Australia is used to hot summers, but climate change is bringing longer and more frequent periods of extreme heat. Last year was the hottest and driest year on record for Australia, and along with it comes high temperatures, strong winds, and extremely dry forests. All Australia needed to ignite the worst natural disaster it has ever known were a few lightning strikes, the main cause of these fires.

Many would see this disaster and assume that Australia's government would immediately react to this disaster and catapult itself forward as the leading country fighting against climate change and for the world economy to decarbonize its industries. Those peo-

ple have had the fortune of not hearing about Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison.

Mr. Morrison is a special kind of political refuse. He has looked at his constituency in the face and told them, while their world is burning around them, Australia is only responsible for 1.3% of the carbon emissions, as if any effort towards curbing emissions is irrelevant, The Guardian reports. This is surprisingly progressive for him, as he just recently reversed his claim that climate change and the bushfires are not linked.

Despite its apparent irrelevance, Mr. Morrison stood tall and told his people that Australia is on track to "meet and beat" its pledge under the 2015 Paris climate accord.

The pledge is pitiful, with Australia promising to cut 2005-level greenhouse gas emissions by 26% to 28% before 2030, said the New York Times. Experts claim Mr. Morrison's statement to be false. On current trends, from a study by Ndevr Environmental Consultants, an environmental auditing company, calculated that the 2030 target won't be met until 2098.

In sum, Mr. Morrison is lying to his people and doing nothing constructive or helpful to aid in preventing further disasters. So, what is the Prime Minister actually doing? According to a recent United Nations report, Australia is undertaking "one of the world's largest fossil fuel expansions" with propos-

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WHY ARE IRAQIS PROTESTING?: IRAN'S INFLUENCE IN IRAQ

Ali H. Aljarrah
Staff Writer

After the U.S. assassination of Iran's Qasam Suleimani, the world held its breath waiting for the Islamic Republic's 'vengeance' for the death of one of its powerful figures. The internet reacted with speculations of World War III, reminiscent to the start of the First World War. Nevertheless, as the world waited, Iraqis were out celebrating the death of a troublemaker, mourning the death of a martyr, or fearful their country will become a battleground for another war. It comes as no surprise for anyone paying attention to Iraq that the emotional responses were divided.

Since October 1, Iraqis from all backgrounds took to the streets to demonstrate against the government for maintaining the sectarian muhasasa political system that has brought corruption and inequality to Iraqi society, according to Al Jazeera. Setting up camp in Baghdad's Tahrir Square, demonstrators immersed themselves with national

symbols - from emblems of the ancient Mesopotamian civilizations to the modern Iraqi flag. The protests quickly spread from metropolitan Baghdad as Iraqis organized in the oil-rich province of Basra, Shia-dominated cities of Najaf, Karbala and Nasiriyah, and Sunni-dominated Mosul.

This is not the first time Iraqis have protested against the government. During the 2011 Arab Spring, Iraqis organized and called on the government to root out corruption, improve basic services, and reform the sectarian-based constitution. The protests ended unsuccessfully as Prime Minister Nour al-Maliki's government alleged the protests were led by members of Al-Qaeda and former Baathist Party loyalists, which led to more Sunni persecution, and inevitably, the ISIS insurgency.

The issues from 2011 are the same today except with one addition: foreign influence. Before the current protests, the Iraqi public knew that the United States and Iran held significant influence on Iraqi

state affairs. However, the demotion of top General Abdel-Wahab Al-Saadi, a respected military leader who is credited to have defeated ISIS, in late September sparked frustration and led the public to believe Iran was behind Prime Minister Adil Abdel Mehdi's decision, according to Foreign Policy.

To protesters, Al-Saadi's demotion was the final straw, as it represents how the government operates on patronage instead of merit which diminishes the country's potential. Since the fall of Saddam Hussein's government, Iraqi leaders who helped to create the current constitution and form the new government were primarily part of the Islamic Dawa Party, a Shia Islamist political party with strong ties to the Iranian government.

As time continued, Iran's ties with the Dawa Party and other Shia political organizations grew. Iran would provide support and resources in exchange for favorable terms, as revealed by The Intercept's "The Iran Cables." Iran's encroachment on Iraq's govern-

ment became more apparent during the war against ISIS, where they supported Iraqi militias by sending resources and advisors, including General Suleimani. After the defeat of ISIS, political organizations incorporated the militias as part of their security apparatus to protect themselves from rival parties.

Given the protests threaten to dismantle the current political structure, Iran sent Suleimani and other officials to meet with Iraqi officials to reassure their support and advise them on "handling" the protests, according to Business Insider. As the Iraqi government became increasingly emboldened on suppressing the protests, it was evident that it was with Iran's endorsement. Regardless, the pressure from protesters affected Iran's grip on the country as PM Medhi resigned. Parliament passed new

election laws, began the discussion on reforming the constitution, and one of the most powerful Shia clerics, Moqtada al-Sadr, threw his support behind the protests. However, almost all progress stopped when news broke of Suleimani's assassination.

Days prior to Suleimani's assassination, an Iranian-backed militia, Kataib Hezbollah, held a demonstration outside and successfully entered the U.S. Embassy in an attempt to look like the wider Iraqi protests in response to American airstrikes against the paramilitary organization days before. After the airstrikes, Iraq was emotionally divided as Suleimani and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, the commander of Kataib Hezbollah, were viewed as responsible to have defeated ISIS. On the other hand, there are Iraqis who view them as responsible for Iraq's

incompetent and corrupt governance. However, all Iraqis held their breath in anticipation of a war between Iran and the United States in Iraq.

Although Iran's response did not trigger a war between the two countries, Iraq is not as united under the protests as before and progress is slower. Nevertheless, a day after Suleimani's assassination, Iraqis were still protesting on the street in Nasiriyah against the government and foreign influence, as reported by the Economic Times. As the Parliament is selecting the next Prime Minister to replace Abdel Mehdi to sanction early elections, the question remains - how much influence will Iran have?

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Iraqi demonstrator holds the flag in the October revolution. Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.



The Diplomatic Envoy



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For more information on sources, go to TheDiplomaticEnvoy.com.

WESTERN STATES SHOULD SUPPORT SUDAN'S TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT



A young girl with the South Sudan flag.

Courtesy of WikiWand.

Jungin Kim
Associate Editor

In the wake of the deposition of autocrat Omar al-Bashir and his replacement by the Transitional Military Council (TMC), Sudan has been fraught with violence and confusion. In Khartoum, the provisional military regime notoriously slew student protesters on June 3, 2019, according to The

New York Times. Since the TMC's succession, the citizens of Sudan have been vehemently opposed to the new militaristic government. The Sudanese people and the transitional military junta have been at an impasse when trying to establish a new government, leading to increasing protests and further violence by paramilitary groups. As stated by Al Jazeera,

through the power-sharing agreement, the Forces of Freedom and Change (FFC) have continuously negotiated the reestablishment of a government Sudan but have yet to produce results. The Sudanese Revolutionary Front (SRF), a conglomeration of separate rebel groups, and the Sudanese Professionals Association (SPA), both participants in the FFC, have been the

main sources of opposition to the TMC. In September 2019, both the TMC and the SPA took measures to work toward peace. AP News reports that should the two parties not come to an agreement within the next couple of months, the already fragile cease-fire may erupt into a deadly conflict. The peace talks include scheduling negotiations, trust-building, possible extension of the cease-fire, as well as addressing the human rights violations committed by paramilitary groups. Though Sudan's ongoing turmoil only prolongs the stagnation of its economy, there has been progress in the country's political scene, namely the nomination of Ab-

dalla Hamdok to the seat of Prime Minister in the transitional government. Appointed by the FFC, Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok leads the charge in repealing restrictions on women's rights and aiming to abolish other archaic statutes imposed by the previous regime. In an interview with NPC, Hamdok explains how the U.S.'s listing of Sudan as a state sponsor of terrorism crippled the economy. She says that delisting Sudan would be a vital step toward remedying the nation's fiscal crisis. The prime minister hopes for international businesses to invest in the nation's resources so that Sudan's economy could slowly regenerate. It is necessary for countries such as the U.S. to resume trade with Sudan to allow Sudan to develop. Many of Sudan's current issues originated from the country's shattered economy and it should be of paramount interest to revive the country's industries. Foreign invest-

ment, especially from U.S. industries, would exponentially increase the possible output of Sudan's resources and in turn, ease much of the current tension between the citizens and the government. Future negotiations should look to cater toward the immediate needs of Sudanese. However, it is equally crucial for the parties to consider setting the groundwork for the forthcoming government. The Sudanese people have been met with great adversity from all fronts. The international community has a critical role in the harmonious inception of a new government in Sudan. Though the Transitional Military Council and Forces of Freedom and Change have largely disagreed on how to move the country forward, the commitment to further negotiations brings hope for a peaceful and prosperous future.

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WHY AUSTRALIA MAY NEVER STOP BURNING

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als for 53 new coal mines. These projects will be continued under the current Prime Minister. The projects aside, Australia's fossil fuel industry is already massive, thanks to enormous taxpayer subsidies - around \$29 million in 2015, according to the International Monetary Fund. This means that every Australian citizen is paying \$1,198 to fund their own climate fueled annihilation. It is no coincidence that Mr. Morrison's senior staff and key ministers are former fossil fuel executives or have ties to the industry. It is no coincidence that fossil fuel companies are major donors to his campaigns. Shockingly, as it stands there are no measures being taken to contain or reduce carbon emissions on a domestic level. That is no coincidence either. In an opinion piece in The Guardian, Mr. Morrison should have listened to all those who warned him earlier in the summer; instead, he decided

to take a trip to Hawaii in December 2019, while his country suffered from the violent fires. This is the summation of his character. He hides from the issue while others face the brunt of the damage. He insists that Australia will simply "adapt to climate change," instead of focusing on decoupling from the fossil fuel industry. According to The Guardian, Australia has the highest emissions per capita of all major nations. The average Australian has four times the carbon footprint of the average global citizen. That is going to take serious public policy to reverse. Under this current Prime Minister, that will not happen. The severity of the science and its predictions, coupled with the brutal and unprecedented fires, should make any logical and reasonable individual leading the affected country immediately rush to action. Put in place a carbon tax, end fossil fuel programs, and shift the taxpayer subsidies to fund renewable industries, for instance. That individual would go to the climate

talks in November and fight to cut carbon emissions around the world. They would see that if they do not contribute and enact constructive policy, their country will

surely be destroyed. According to American climatologist Michael Mann speaking with Reuters, it is conceivable that this will already be the case in the coming decade. In a per-

fect world, Mr. Morrison would be that reasonable individual. Unfortunately, in the world we currently find ourselves in, he is not.

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A firefighter in the name of Brian Sterns saved an endangered kangaroo.

Courtesy of Australian Forest Service.

'THE GLOBAL CURRENT' PODCAST COMBINES DIPLOMACY WITH DISCOURSE

Stephanie Miller
Editor-in-Chief

Fifteen years after the term was first coined, podcasting has since emerged as a worldwide phenomenon. As millions of listeners tune in every day to catch the latest news from around the world, the staff of The Global Current tuck themselves away in a cozy WSOU recording studio with a soundboard and a spider-like microphone to deliver top international news stories right to listener's ears with a diplomatic twist.

"The Global Current's mission is to report and analyze international news through the art of radio production," executive producer and Diplomacy sophomore Isabella 'Bella' Fisher tells the Envoy. "We provide a professional training platform to any Seton Hall University students who want to learn or gain experience in broadcasting."

Sponsored by the

School of Diplomacy and International Relations, The Global Current also airs on 89.5 FM WSOU radio station at 7:30 am on Sunday mornings. However, its primary listening platform is Apple Podcasts, and Ms. Fisher hopes to expand to Spotify within the next year.

"Podcasting is different from writing," she explains. "Instead of someone having to go out of the way and take time to read, they can hop on the train and listen during their daily commute."

When asked why The Global Current is so important, Ms. Fisher notes that participating in a radio show provides Diplomacy students with an outlet for putting ideas taught in the classroom into practice.

"I think that in classrooms we are provided with our professor's views, but everyone has their own opinion. The Global Current gives students the opportunity to voice those opin-

ions and be heard."

That is not to say that podcast only works with Diplomacy students. The Global Current pulls expertise from a wide range of majors across Seton Hall and encourages everyone to try their hand at radio. Ms. Fisher says that broadcasting develops multiple skills useful across the modern workforce, including communication, teamwork, and time management.

"We do operate under tighter deadlines, which does hinder students with busier schedules from participation," the producer admits. "To combat this, we are transitioning from a one-week turn around to a two-week turn-around, where students can sign up and research show topics for a week before they book time in the recording studio."

As a program, The Global Current seeks to answer the question "Is Diplomacy the Answer?" Facilitated by a host, the podcast regularly fea-

tures a roundtable discussion where students debate diplomatic solutions to trending topics in international affairs. In recent months, the Current aired roundtables addressing the Uighur prison camps in Xinjiang, the 2019 UN Climate Change Summit, and the Mexican War on Drugs.

"We touch on international politics a fair amount," Ms. Fisher says, "but we have aired some pretty unique stories too. One of my favorites was an article about the NBA and the huge following that American basketball has in China. You really do not hear about sports diplomacy in the classroom, so it was fun to bring our listeners something a little out-of-the-ordinary."

In addition to roundtables, The Global Current also hosts interviews with experts from across the international relations field.

"We recently had one of our writers run a segment with a journalist from the Wall Street Jour-

nal. Last semester our producer talked to an Algerian Fulbright Scholar, who used to work for Al Jazeera," Bella said, outlining the opportunities for networking afforded to students involved with the Current. "We are also about to air an interview with a Coast Guard admiral who has a background in counterintelligence. If you cannot tell, we have been very busy!"

When asked about some hurdles The Global Current must overcome as a student-run organization, Ms. Fisher was honest.

"Currently, we have been facing a couple of challenges regarding student involvement and staffing in general. Over the winter break, we lost our Associate Producer, so we're a little understaffed."

The Current also reports experiencing a huge lull in freshman involvement that "we frankly did not anticipate," Bella admits. "In the past, we have

had greater freshman participation, so we are trying to recover from losing that this past semester."

Despite these recent challenges, however, The Global Current's staff are more optimistic than ever as they move into the new semester; they recently announced a partnership with The Diplomatic Envoy. With the consent of staff writers, articles submitted to the Envoy will be automatically considered for airing on the podcast, which Ms. Fisher hopes will increase interest in both organizations. The two news organs will also host joint meetings starting in February to encourage writer participation.

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THE

GLOBAL CURRENT

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

SETON HALL MODEL UN TEAM BREAKS INTO TOP 25 IN NATIONWIDE RANKINGS

Luisa Chainferber
Senior Correspondent

The Seton Hall United Nations Association (SHUNA) Model United Nations team reached the Top 25 for the North American Fall 2019 College Model United Nations ranking for the first time in team history, reports Best Delegate.

The Seton Hall team now ranks number 12 out of more than a hundred competing teams.

According to the rankings, Seton Hall finished second at the Specialized Crisis Simulation at Yale, behind only the University of Pennsylvania. Additionally, Seton Hall also recently won an award at the Boston Area Unit-

ed Nations Conference.

The ranking explained that a change in the weighted score methodology helped push Seton Hall's ranking up. With the change, the weighting gap between small and large conferences decreased, which benefited SHUNA.

Despite not being in the top 25 in previous years, Seton Hall's Model

UN team was nonetheless consistently among the upper part of the ranking. For example, as Best Delegate notes, the team was in the top 75 for the 2017-2018 academic year. During the 2016-2017 year, Seton Hall was in the top 50.

Stephen Hoffman, the president of the team, noted that it was a pleasant surprise that Seton Hall made it to number 12. "While our goal was to be in the top 25, we did not even imagine being so close to the top 10," he said.

Explaining the success of the team this year, Mr. Hoffman mentioned that excellent work by the current freshman class was a major factor for these positive results. He also emphasized that the club worked on its stu-

dent body retention rate and that the club now has fifteen active sophomore students and a total of 40 active members. Through SHUNA's mentorship program, students can develop the skills to succeed along with the SHUNA team.

Elena Soisson, SHUNA's Treasurer, also expressed her joy with the new ranking. "I am very proud of how much our team has expanded," she said, "We are now attending more conferences per semester than in previous years."

In the spring semester alone, SHUNA will participate in five more conferences. The first one would be MUNE, Model United Nations at Emory University, from February 6 to February 9, which would be the first confer-

ence that SHUNA will fly to. Afterward, SHUNA plans to attend the following conferences: Princeton Diplomatic Invitational, the Five College Model United Nations Conference from Mount Holyoke University, Pennsylvania United Nations at Penn State University, and MUN at the College of William and Mary.

Mr. Hoffman and Ms. Soisson expressed hope that this positive trend will continue and encourage more students to join SHUNA. "I have used SHUNA to market my public speaking and teamwork skills," Soisson noted, "and so can any student who joins us, even if they are not a Diplomacy major."

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SHUNA team celebrates their new achievement.

Courtesy of Jarrett Dang.

PROMISES AND PITFALLS OF GLOBAL MIGRATION EVENT WITH THE WORLD AFFAIRS COUNCIL OF NEW JERSEY

Tien Phan
Layout Editor

On January 30, the World Affairs Council of New Jersey welcomed participants from different backgrounds to its speaker event featuring Mr. Brendan Ryan, who has numerous credentials working in the immigration system in Australia and other parts of the world. The event was organized by the Council with the leadership of Mrs. Rozlyn Engel, who emphasizes that this is the first Council in New Jersey among many in the nation. They want to further foster these discussions with new perspectives in order to provide more fruitful dialogue in the current political climate.

Amanda Gutierrez, a first-year Diplomacy student, expressed her thoughts on her first sight at a public forum. "It is good practice introducing myself to people and learning how to network," said Amanda. "I think if more students went to events like these, they would be more successful in finding internships and establishing yourself amongst professionals."

With a humorous tone, Mr. Ryan commenced the evening by address-

ing where he stands politically, saying that he is ready to receive criticisms without being apologetic toward what he does not believe in. Though he is a liberal, his rhetoric on immigration could appear radical and discriminatory, which he mentioned later in the question and answer portion.

Having said that, Mr. Ryan focused initially on the situation in Europe where Brexit is a reality. He noted that the rhetoric that caused Brexit created a domino effect throughout Europe. Interestingly, he asserted that Europeans are not very willing to assist refugees from conflict-prone regions as citizens from neighboring countries. With that, he raised the need for immigration technology, like a facial recognition system or similar mechanisms, in which people would be educated on immigration regulations.

He then spoke of the United States, where the immigration issue is at its most relevant due to the upcoming presidential election. Mr. Ryan addressed that though he believes that immigration is generally good for the U.S., he can appear as an extreme far-right on this particular issue. He as-



Mrs. Engel (left) welcomes Mr. Ryan in a discussion on the immigration dialogue.

Courtesy of Amanda Rachwal.

serts that immigration is seen as a political weapon in the U.S. and the recent travel ban policy is just intensifying the issue.

The event got heated when he laid out his ideal vision/solution for the issue. He quickly discredited the open-border policy and said that it would drastically decline the standards of living in the U.S., and also pointed out the weakness of family reunion-based immigration, which he argued currently makes the system more vulnerable than it already is.

Citing the example of Australia, his vision is to see the U.S. implement a more high-skilled immigration system where potential immigrants are

evaluated based on points and necessary skills for the workforce. Responding to a question on identifying the priorities for the point-based programs, he is astonished that only 12 percent of U.S. immigration is for work purposes, which is too low in his opinion. He hopes that there will be some reevaluation to look for long-term prospects in this context.

Another point would be to petition the government to amend its Constitution to abandon the idea of birthright citizenship, which he claims incentivizes immigrants to stay for citizenship through their children.

In regards to guest-worker programs,

there will be no guarantee of staying afterward with only a 5-6 months period of working; according to Mr. Ryan, this period is for workers to learn necessary skills to bring them back to their countries in an effort to repatriate these individuals, thus raising the standard of living within their country. He says that this, in turn, reduces the likelihood of people leaving their countries to find a better life elsewhere.

Understanding that the audience gave a mixed response to some of the questions, Mr. Ryan emphasized that while many parts of his eventual goal are unattainable, there are realistic expectations that will need to be set

in order to achieve practical reform. Unapologetically, he responded that this kind of system is discriminatory, and it is a reality that will have to be accepted by the majority.

Admittedly, in some questions regarding practicality in the context of climate change or over-sea jobs affecting migration and wages, Mr. Ryan had no substantial answer because these cases are often politicized and unpredictable. He reasserts his inputs on maintaining a long-term outlook on immigration issues despite the controversy it might inspire.

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