

# South Africa: Flood death toll rises to more than 250

A government official says flooding in KwaZulu-Natal province has caused the deaths of 259 people. Many people are still missing and thousands of others have been displaced. Shipping containers carried away and left in a jumbled pile by floods in Isipingo, south of Durban. Flooding has not only caused a devastating human toll, but has

mortuaries," Simelane-Zulu said. The minister confirmed the figure when asked by the eNCA reporter and said they were directly linked to the floods. That number rose a short while later with the spokeswoman for disaster management confirming that the number had now hit 259 deaths.

lapsed on her. In the neighbors house three people passed away. An old lady with her two grandchildren. The youngest was three." South Africa's president has pledged support to those affected. "President Cyril Ramaphosa is currently here, he's talking to the residents, assessing their needs trying to help. At the

issued in the neighboring province of the Eastern Cape. Torrential rain swamped communities in the coastal city and surrounding areas over the past few days. According to the South African Weather Service more than 300 millimetres (13 inches) fell on Monday, making it the heaviest total of rainfall seen in a single day in 60 years.



also impacted infrastructure and businesses in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. Flooding in South Africa's eastern province of KwaZulu-Natal has killed at least 259 people, officials announced on Wednesday. The latest figure eclipses the previous number of 59 fatalities reported by government. Earlier on Wednesday, the province's health chief Nomagugu Simelane-Zulu told local news station eNCA that late on Tuesday over 250 bodies had been received at mortuary facilities. "As of late last night, we had received something close to 253 bodies in our two different

Sorry, the video player failed to load.(Error Code: 101102) Watch video03:31 Dozens dead after floods in Durban: DW's Adrian Kriesch reports Heavy rain causes flooding and landslides The torrential rain has caused homes to collapse and hillsides have been swept away. DW correspondent Adrian Kriesch is in the port city of Durban and tweeted from the scene where homes had caved in on families sheltering inside. "Shocking and sad how many kids died during the floods. Those are the books of 10-year-old Ayanda, her room col-

lapsed on her. In the neighbors house three people passed away. An old lady with her two grandchildren. The youngest was three." Kriesch said. According to local government officials, many people are unaccounted for. Stranded people stand in front of a bridge that was swept away in Ntuzuma, outside Durban. Houses, roads and bridges have been swept away in flooding caused by record rainfall in South Africa. Record rainfall continues falling. Rain has continued to fall in parts of the province and flood warnings have also been

"Some areas in KwaZulu-Natal have received more than double the maximum rainfall recorded during previous record rainfalls," the service's spokeswoman, Hannelee Doubell, told AFP news agency. KwaZulu-Natal was one of the worst-affected provinces in last years outbreak of violence and looting in July, which saw at least 330 people killed. The violence broke out after the imprisonment of former president Jacob Zuma, for failing to appear before an inquiry into corruption during his presidency.



# India: Why are women seeking unsafe abortions?

Although abortion is legal, over two-thirds of abortions in India are considered to be risky. Barriers to safe abortion include a shortage of doctors in rural areas, a lack of confidentiality and widespread stigma.

A billboard in New Delhi encourages the birth of girls, in a country which has a high rate of sex-selective abortion

DW.

"My boyfriend was there to support me, but I was afraid they would force me to ask for my family's permission. I would never want to go through this ordeal again," she said.

Abortions have been legal in India since 1971. An amendment to the Medical Termination of Pregnancy

technical advisory committee for the World Health Organization (WHO), following the amendment. Sorry, the video player failed to load.(Error Code: 101102) Watch video02:47

India's female lawyers fight for equality and basic rights Women die 'every day' due to unsafe abortion The United Nations Population

Unseen: The case for action in the neglected crisis of unintended pregnancy," said that one in every seven unintended pregnancies occurs in India. An abortion is considered safe if it is done using a method recommended by the WHO. The UNFPA report noted that the amendment to the MTP Act in 2021 appears encouraging, but added that a lot more needs



Women often attempt to carry out abortions at home due to stigma in doctors' offices. Chitra (name changed) had to travel more than 40 kilometers (25 miles) from her home to the city of Gurgaon to get an abortion so that her family members would not find out. "The contraceptive failed, and I did not wish to have a child," she said. "I was repeatedly questioned and treated rudely by the doctors as well as nurses and other staff at the clinic," the 20-year-old student told

(MTP) Act last year expanded women's access to safe and legal abortions from 20 to 24 weeks, among other changes. It also added a confidentiality clause, and added failure of contraception as a reason to seek termination of pregnancy, regardless of a woman's marital status. "As the next step, we need to work towards advocating a more rights-based approach by giving women greater autonomy and choice," said Dr. Nozer Sheriar, who serves on the

Fund (UNFPA)'s State of the World Population Report 2022 has stated that about 67% of abortions in India were unsafe. It also said that eight women die each day due to unsafe abortions, which were the third most common cause of maternal mortality in the South Asian nation. Chitra's experience sheds light on what many women go through, and on one of the reasons why they may opt for illegal methods of abortion. The report, titled "Seeing the

to be done to prevent unsafe abortions and maternal mortality.

A lack of privacy with doctors. In India, a woman does not require her husband's, partner's or family member's approval if she is an adult of sound mind and wishes to get an abortion. Despite this, there are several hurdles that women face in accessing safe abortions. "In a society that is highly patriarchal, women find it difficult to access abortion," Kajal Jain, program coordinator at the





many patients come to the center after purchasing illegal at-home abortion kits or getting surgical abortions from fraudulent doctors. "There are many complications and risks with such patients," she said. "Recognize abortion as a reproductive need" The WHO says that the average maternal

Pune-based Mahila Sarvangeen Utkarsh Mandal (MASUM) NGO told DW. "Healthcare providers often ask women to get the permission of their husband, or family members, even though it is not required by law. Often, the privacy and confidentiality of the woman is not protected." "Marginalized women, such as sex workers, HIV positive

tions," Jain added. Sorry, the video player failed to load.(Error Code: 101102) Watch video12:00 World Stories - Girls: The unwanted daughters of India Another issue which many women face is that of geographical access. About 66% of India's population lives in rural parts of the country, where there is a severe short-

As a result, many abortions are often performed by midwives, auxiliary nurses, or birth attendants and are therefore considered unsafe. The 2015-16 National Family Health Survey (NFHS) showed that only 20% of abortions took place in public sector healthcare facilities. Private clinics and hospitals, which are concentrated in

mortality rate is three times higher in countries with more restrictive abortion laws (223 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births) compared to countries with less restrictive laws (77 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births). The UNFPA report added that girls between the ages of 15 and 19 were at the highest risk of dying from an abortion-related complication.

Unintended pregnancies are heavily correlated to lower education and income levels, especially for younger women and girls.

"If comprehensive sexuality education is not offered in her school, she may lack accurate information. Pregnancy may be her default option because she has few opportunities and choices in her life. Without a chance to finish her education, for instance, she may not see a reason to postpone childbearing," the report said. According to Section 312 of the Indian Penal Code, "causing a miscarriage" is considered to be an offense, so the MTP act was then introduced to protect doctors who provide abortions. "The MTP bill only protects the doctor from criminalization of abortion services," said Jain.

"The act, which comes from a legal standpoint, needs to be more women-centric. It needs to recognize abortion as a genuine reproductive need, and not punish women," she added.



women, tribal women, single women, and youths find it even more difficult to access abortion. And a lack of access is what leads to unsafe abor-

age of obstetrician-gynecologists, according to the 2019-20 Rural Health Statistics Report of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

urban India, were responsible for 52% of the abortions. Dr. Rupali Mishra, who runs a medical and diagnostics center in New Delhi, told DW that



# Kashmir: Businesses call for reopening cross-border trade with Pakistan

Three years after trade was halted across the "Line of Control" between India and Pakistan-administered Kashmir, the impact is being felt by thousands of villagers in remote areas who had depended on free trade. Trucks behind a barbed wire Before the crossing was closed, trucks loaded with goods would enter India-administered Kashmir four times a week

for common goods. Hilal Turkey, chairman of the LoC traders' association in Kashmir, told DW that the prices of commodities have increased by 200% after the suspension. "Buying fruits like grapes, oranges, dates, Miswakhs (teeth-cleaning twigs), or spices that were traded through the LoC is now beyond many people's budget," he said. Informal trade has big impact

drivers, and daily wage workers. The route also allowed the remote region cheaper access to food staples and commodities that otherwise would enter Kashmir from mainland India at a higher price. Even cotton items and suits brought from Pakistan-administered Kashmir would be sold at cheaper rates on the Indian side of the border.

A truck crosses a crowded bridge in the mountains. The trade route was opened in 2008 to much fanfare. Traditional Pakistani footwear and suits became a big hit. Many boutiques came up across Kashmir, selling

and truckers that provided and moved goods also benefited. After the route was closed, many traders either stopped the business or are under heavy debt. "We became victims of the harassment from investigative agencies and banks," said Turkey, whose fruit business has closed. Laborers in the once-bustling border towns now struggle to find work. Before the suspension of trade, laborer Mushtaq Ahmad used to earn \$10 a day. "I have three children and one of them quit his studies to work in a hotel in Srinagar because there was no income for the family," Ahmad said. Trade was a bridge between India and Pakistan. The cross-LoC trade was an important contributor to economic and social development in the conflict-torn Himalayan region. A sign at a bridge crossing the LoC reads: "From home to home, we extend a very warm welcome to our Kashmiri brethren."

"The objective of the trade was to bring peace to the region. It did create a virtuous cycle between trade, trust and people-to-people connectivity, with its impact spilling over to the overall India-Pakistan dynamics," said Afaq Hussain, an economist who has done extensive research on the LoC trade route. According to him, the ban has resulted in the loss of goodwill and cooperation that had gradually built because of trade. Hussain has found that trade was critical to promoting peace and regional cooperation in the region, and said it should resume immediately. "The LoC trade may be only a minuscule part of India's overall economy, but its impact goes beyond standard metrics. The cases of thriving businesses and reunited families on both sides of the LoC stand testimony to the effectiveness of these confidence-building measures."



Traders in India-administered Kashmir are demanding authorities reopen trade routes with Pakistan as the prices of goods and food continue to skyrocket. In 2008, India and Pakistan opened trade across the "Line of Control (LoC)," a heavily militarized de-facto border dividing Kashmir between India and Pakistan. The move was seen as a "confidence-building" measure between New Delhi and Islamabad. However, New Delhi stopped cross-border trade in April 2019 as it prepared to scrap India-administered Kashmir's semi-autonomous status. India claimed the route was being misused by people with links to terrorist groups. During the Islamic holy month of Ramadan, more people are eating fruits and buying other commodities in Muslim-majority regions of India-administered Kashmir. The closure has led to high prices

on rural communities. When cross-border trade in Kashmir was active, 21 items were allowed to be traded, including varieties of fruits, vegetables, and handicrafts. The trade was carried out duty-free using a barter system and did not involve exchanges of currency. Trucks would cross the border at the Chakan-da-Bagh station near the town of Poonch, and at a crossing near the town of Uri to the north. The trade route created a frontier economy and provided livelihoods to thousands of people living in remote areas that usually see meagre economic activity. Uri and Chakan-da-Bagh turned into business hubs and thousands of traders from across northern India would converge there to buy commodities at cheaper prices. New shops, warehouses, and restaurants sprang up, engaging local youth as managers,

Pakistani suits. Within ten years, annual trade via the LoC route was estimated to be at the \$1.2 billion mark. However, as the trade continued to grow, it also drew controversy as traders in mainland India paying taxes on their goods complained that the cheap, tax-free goods entering India via Kashmir were distorting competition. Additionally, authorities became concerned after reports of narcotics, weapons, and counterfeit currency being trucks coming from Pakistan, raised suspicions that the trade was being used to promote anti-India militancy. In April 2019, New Delhi suspended the trade indefinitely. Border closes and money dries up. Official data shows more than 4,000 families were directly involved in the day-to-day trade operations across the LoC. Manufacturers, farmers,



# Do Morals Change With The Passage Of Time?

Zalghi Khan

Morals are principles of right and wrong, good and evil. So according to the scriptures of the Jews, Christians and Muslims, murder is evil, though execution of a criminal by the state is not; on the contrary, scripture teaches, that executions of murderers, rapists and drug-dealers is a moral good that must be carried out by the relevant legitimate authorities.

This standard of right and wrong is known as the criterion according to Islam. In fact, the holy scripture of Muslims, the Quran refers to itself as "the criterion" the standard distinguishes between right and wrong, moral, and immoral.

In this essay I shall analyse the topic if morals change with time.

According to naturalists, morals change with the passage of time, so homosexuality was condemned by society for many years in the Western world, but in the beginning of the 21st century, the condemnation of homosexuality is a criminal offence not homosexuality.

This complete U-turn by entire states in the Western world on the issue of homosexuality is proof, according to the naturalists, that morals change with the passage of time.

Other examples of things that were considered moral but now immoral include: child-marriage, slavery, child-labour, forced marriage, honour-killings, religious persecutions, genocide, racism, sexism, etc.

The naturalist Richard Dawkins does not consider worshipping false gods, idols, and other elements of creation to be a moral evil, but scripture teaches that it indeed is.

Therefore, the naturalist relies on the authority of science, society, and his reasoning to conclude what is right and wrong.

Sam Harris, a neuroscientist has written an entire book attempting to lay the scientific foundation of morality, the book is called The Moral

Landscape: How Science Can Determine Human Values. Other scholars and theologians have, such as Alister McGrath asserted that Dr. Harris has failed to yield any such foundation.

Epistemology is the study of the nature of knowledge, and someone's epistemic authority is the cause of their beliefs about things whether facts or morals.

So, someone who considers metaphysics and theology to be a waste of time and nothing of any value, such as atheists and naturalists like Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris etc. then these folks will not consider the validity of The Ten

Testament and for Muslims it is the Quran and the Prophetic Sayings, the Hadith.

Any claim requires a foundation, such as the claim that a certain action is illegal requires a law, for example in the UK it is illegal to lie in a court proceeding when you are a witness to a crime. This legal rule is the Perjury Act 1911. So, when I tell someone that in the UK lying in a judicial proceeding is illegal, I can reference this Perjury Act 1911 as proof that I am telling the truth. And the foundation of this claim is the British legal system. In the same way, if I claim that murder is immoral, I can claim reference to the Old

Testament and The Quran which forbids murder. Therefore, my moral claims are grounded in a foundation, in a source which has written commands.

The ultimate reference for an 'act' in the UK legal system is the Parliament and Royal Assent, the law is grounded in the foundation of the political system of the union. Its epistemic authority is man-made, but the believers of a religion claim that their rules and regulations are grounded in the eternal unchanging all-powerful all-knowing God. So theological truths are timeless and universal with consequences for behavior and outcome after death.

The belief that morals change with time is grounded in a worldview, which is not proven and is accepted on philosophical grounds identical to blind religious faith. But religious faith is not based on blindness but on facts such as the fact that the world exists, and we can extrapolate that it has a Creator behind it.

The answer to the question, 'Do morals change with the passage of time?' is that it

depends on what the worldview of a person is answering this question, if an atheist looks at this question he will say 'yes' but a believer in the three Abrahamic faiths will say 'no'. The perspective of a person determines how the question is answered.

The evolution of technology, business, society, law, thinking and habits of entire races and nations across the boundaries of time and space does not logically necessitate those morals change too. Even if the conceptions of morals change, that does not prove that no eternal unchanging objective standard of morality does not exist and if morals exist as posited by scripture, then morals do not change.

It depends on your beliefs about the world, whether you believe in God and scripture or not, and this foundational view reflects what someone will believe about the change of morals through time.

In conclusion the fundamental presuppositions of your worldview determine if you think that morals change with the passage of time or remain constant through time. Before anyone can answer this question, they must know if morals are a thing by itself, that exists in the world like other empirical facts such as the law of gravity, electromagnetism, strong and weak nuclear force, the sun, stars, moons, planets, asteroids, comets etc.

This depends on your beliefs on the nature of reality itself and the ultimate explanation of all things, so atheists will not agree that morals exist in the sense that laws of nature exist. And this is because for them only nature exists, the only thing that exists is material reality and not metaphysical tablets of unchanging right and wrong rules. But theists do believe in the metaphysical tablets that have moral codes because God is the lawgiver in theism and the ultimate authority for all theological, moral, and metaphysical truth.



Commandments of Judaism and Christianity, the Shariah legal code of Islam and so on. I do not believe morals change because I believe that morals come from God, therefore, morals are objectively true, transcending time, space, matter, and energy. God created all things, including time, space, matter and energy, and morals come from Him, they are the essence of his nature. Scripture is my epistemic authority, the standard by which I judge where something is moral or immoral and since scripture comes from God, I consider the morals to be unchanging since God is unchanging and eternal.

And this is a legitimate position because the foundational basis of any worldview requires something so for the atheist the foundational basis is science and reason, for Jews it is the Old Testament, for Christians it is the Old Testament and the New



# ALGERIA: SPAIN FORSAKES INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS IN APPALLING REFOULEMENT OF ALGERIAN WHISTLEBLOWER

**T**he undersigned organisations strongly condemn the deportation by Spain of Algerian activist Mohamed Benhalima, in the evening of 24 March 2022, despite the risks of torture and serious human rights violations he faces in Algeria, and therefore in blatant violation of Spain's international obligations on non-refoulement.

The authorities had been made aware, through civil society and legal appeals, that Mr Benhalima faces a high risk of torture, arbitrary detention and unfair trial in Algeria, where such violations are increasingly common against prisoners of opinion and peaceful activists. Mohamed Benhalima is an Algerian citizen and a former army corporal, who became a whistleblower to expose corruption among Algeria's high-ranking military officials in 2019. He left Algeria after receiving information that his name was on a list of wanted military officials at risk of detention by the Algerian army for their participation in the Hirak, a mass pro-democracy protest movement.

He sought asylum in Spain on 18 February 2020 and again on 18 March 2022 Spain refused him asylum both times. On 14 March 2022, authorities opened an administrative file of expulsion for infringement of Art. 54.1.a. of Immigration Law 4/2000, alleging that Mr. Benhalima took part in "activities contrary to public security or which may be harmful for Spanish relationships with foreign states".

Spanish authorities justified the opening of an expulsion file based on Mr. Benhalima's alleged association with political opposition group Rachad, which was listed as a terrorist group by Algeria on 6 February 2022[1]. Spanish authorities claimed that



Rachad's objective was to infiltrate radical youth into Algerian society to protest against the Algerian government, and concluded that the activist was member of a terrorist group.

Spanish authorities did not provide any proof of use of violence, advocacy of hatred, or any other action taken by the activist that could be considered as "terrorism" in accordance with the definition proposed by the UN Special Rapporteur on the protection of human rights while countering terrorism[2]. Authorities also do not appear to have considered a context in which Algerian authorities have been

increasingly levelling bogus terrorism and national security charges against peaceful activists, human rights defenders and journalists since April 2021. On 27 December 2021, UN Special Procedures warned[3] that the definition of terrorism in the Algerian Penal Code was too imprecise and undermined human rights. They stated that the procedure for registration on the national terrorist list did not comply with international human rights standards and expressed concern that it could give rise to abuse.

On 24 March around 7pm, Mr. Benhalima's lawyers were notified of the resolution of

expulsion and promptly filed a request for an interim suspensive measure at the National Court of Spain, which was rejected; however, it was revealed later that the activist was already being escorted on a plane to Algeria at the time. On 21 March 2022, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) submitted a non-public report to the Spanish government stating that Mr. Benhalima's asylum request should be studied thoroughly in a regular procedure and not rejected expediently, arguing that the risk of torture was credible and that Algeria's criminalisation of peaceful opposition was internationally





recognised.

On 27 March, Benhalima appeared in a video broadcasted on Ennahar TV, in which he "confesses" to the crimes of conspiracy against the state and states that he was not treated badly in custody. However, the undersigned organisations call into question the reliability of such statements which might be the result of duress. In addition, Benhalima had himself released a video from the retention centre in Valencia, before his deportation to Algeria, in which he warns that such videos would not be genuine and would show that he "was subjected to severe torture at the hands of intelligence services."

In January and March 2021, in Algeria, Mohamed Benhalima was sentenced in absentia to a total of 20 years in prison for charges including "participation in a terrorist group" (Article 87bis 3 of the Penal Code) and "publishing fake news undermining national unity" (Art.196 bis) among other charges. The overly broad formulation of both articles has been used by Algeria repeatedly to criminalise people who have expressed any form of dissent. In one of the two verdicts, issued on 9 March 2021, the judge sentenced Benhalima to 10 years in prison for his online publi-

cations, including videos exposing corruption in the army, a form of expression which is protected under the right to freedom of expression. Spanish authorities additionally motivated the expulsion based on Mr. Benhalima's close relationship with Mohamed Abdellah, another Algerian whistleblower and

former member of the military, who also sought refuge in Spain in April 2019 and was forcibly returned on 21 August 2021 using Art. 54.1.a. of Law 4/2000, in similar circumstances and for the same motives.

Mohamed Abdellah, currently detained in the military prison of Blida, stated in court on 2 January 2022 that he had been subjected to torture and other ill-treatment upon his return to Algeria, including

physical abuse and prolonged solitary confinement in a cell with no light, according to a witness who attended the hearing. He was also deprived of access to a lawyer.

Despite the strong similarities between both cases providing a compelling precedent about the actual risk of torture and other ill-treatment of activists and whistleblowers in Algeria, notably former members of the military, the Spanish government showed its determination to forcibly return someone where

their physical and psychological integrity was not guaranteed. In doing so, Spain flouted critical international law obligations that forbid governments to return individuals to a country where they would be in danger of suffering torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punish-

measure are in contravention of Article 3 of the UN Convention against Torture (CAT) ratified by Spain in 1987, which provides for an absolute protection against refoulement of persons in danger of being tortured or otherwise ill-treated in a State to which they are to be expelled, returned or extradited. According to the UN Committee against Torture, nobody can be excluded from this protection even if they are deemed to pose a threat to national security and are not eligible for asylum[4]. The Committee has shown that once a person alludes to a risk of torture, a State party can no longer cite domestic concerns as grounds for failing in this obligation[5], and that such considerations emphasise the importance of appropriate review mechanisms[6]. The Committee further explained that diplomatic assurances could not be used as a justification for failing to apply the principle of non-refoulement[7].

Similarly, Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) has been interpreted by the European Court on Human Rights as providing an effective means of protection against all forms of return to places where there are substantial grounds to believe that the

person would be subjected to torture, or to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment[8]. For the Court, this obligation prevails over any obligation to return, expel or extradite arising from other international or bilateral commitments[9]. Article 3 is further listed in Article 15(2) of the ECHR as a non-derogable provision,

which leaves no scope for limitations under any circumstances, whether they be safety, public order or other grounds[10].



ment. The government's decision to expel Mr. Benhalima and the decision of the National Court not to apply a suspensive



# Expectancy Theory In Real Life

There should always be something in our lives which triggers us to take the next step, even if we fall back, we rise again due to that force inside us. Motivation is that force making us to do more and more on a daily basis. Humans are living their lives just because of this force, motivation. It implies the idea that for desirable outcomes, we work accordingly. If a person wants to achieve something, he works in that direction. He thinks that doing something will surely give positive outcomes and that will lead to desired results. For example, if a person works hard, he does so because he has made up his mind that this hard work will give him good performance, and that will automatically give him desired results. It shows that efforts and expectations are directly proportional, which means that if expectations are high, a person will put in more effort to get results. This theory gives two variables; expectancy: this is the probability of getting a desired result; valence: this is the strength of someone's desire for something. So, this motivation is the product of the strength of one's desire and the perceived probability of get-



ting something good.

$V + L = M$

Valence, which is the value of reward, and expectancy, which is the belief of hitting a specific goal, join together to give a person motivation. Furthermore, expectancy depends upon an individual's past experiences and the confidence which an individual has in his abilities to achieve his target. The more he knows about upcoming circumstances due to his past experiences, the more the chances that to hit his target. Also, the more he

makes his firm about certain things, the more likely he is to get the desired thing. Expectancy ranges from zero to one depending upon an individual's perceiving the possibility of an outcome. If an individual has no optimism regarding outcomes, his expectancy will be zero. On the contrary, if he is an optimist that a certain outcome will come, his expectancy will be one. Moreover, Valence varies from -1 to +1. If the achieved outcomes are those which an individual expected, his valence

will be +1. If the achieved outcomes aren't as per his expectations, his valence value will be -1. For example, he thought that after working day and night, he would get the position of a manager, but he got just a 10% rise in his income, which didn't meet his expectations.

The expectancy theory is applied in real life as well, like, a school teacher working for a school from the past six years would expect a rise in salary after a certain period of time, but she gets recognition as a senior teacher but doesn't get the desired outcomes. On contrary, she observes that the new colleagues are getting higher pay than her. In this situation, her expectancy was high, but her valence was -1, as she didn't get what she expected; she got the recognition, which she really didn't want, and her income wasn't increased.

To sum up, this expectancy theory is something which people apply both consciously and unconsciously. Putting effort into something isn't a painful thing when the target is an individual's desirable thing to him. Not everyone can rise after putting effort because so many factors are involved in the process of achieving target goals.



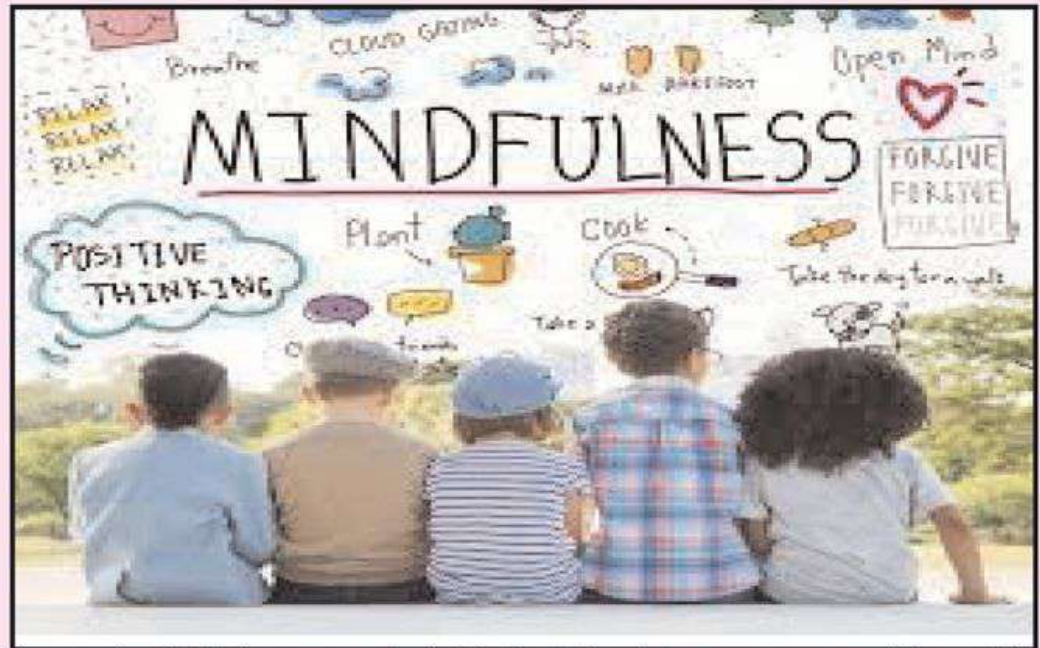


# Need Of Mindfulness In The Age Of Social Media

Muhammad Noman

Never ending social media pop ups, unsolicited news feeds, omnipresent adverts, or collectively the rampant distractions of digital world are fast taking away our ability to focus and exercise mindfulness. Ironically, we don't even have time to ponder over this rapid change drastically altering our priorities such as allocating the most precious hours, like day-break, on absurd entertainments and the laziest ones sorting our crucial matters. Indeed, internet and mobile phones have brought about enormous improvement and ease in our lives. They are providing livelihoods, connectivity, information, education, and pastime. Perhaps, the rapidity of these changes did not allow users to appropriately adjust patterns of life. For example, it took around 100 years for a wired phone to upgrade to mobile (from 1880s – 1980s) but only 30 years to high tech features such as seamless internet connectivity, facial recognition, camera, exploding number of cell phones to around 7 billion today. Consequently, many side effects were consciously or unconsciously absorbed, for instance, excessive use of social platforms.

Repercussions of internet social interactions are hot topic for psychologists today and research found that optimizing its use is vital to avoid emerging psychological issues. For example, one harmful outcome of excessive social networking is "fear of missing out" or FOMO. Simply defined, FOMO is an anxious mental state tempting people to think poorly of themselves when compared to social media posts showing off success and possessions. Even if true, such claims may not necessarily corroborate with overwhelming fan following blowing the achievement out of proportion



thus causing inferiority complex in people. This is due to the basic reason that internet users tend to juxtapose their ordinary times with extraordinary moments of others.

Relatively recent trend of short clips popularly branded by TikTok reaffirms that desperate desire for instant popularity has fast outweighed the quality of content. The trend has prompted other video hosting companies to initiate 'Shorts' substantiating the fact that users now have less time to spend on videos due to plethora of available content.

Another negative aspect of pervasive distractions is diminishing attention to details and mindfulness. Keeping the mind present and meticulous examination of information are paramount for correct understanding, decisions, and dissemination. Few key benefits of exercising mindfulness are:

- Prevents judgmental reactions and helps regulate better relationships with family and friends. This is not uncommon for a rift to trigger after a misunderstanding on chatting app
- Helps with time management

and prioritization. Being mindful of daily routine can knock out time wasters, for example, by start monitoring mobile screen time which can reveal surprising self-assessment about apps usage. That time can be invested on productive activities like books and exercise.

• Mindfulness teaches ways to enhance productivity of tasks that may otherwise get undermined by distractions. This holds true for high-stress professional world as well as homely chores such as cooking while socialising on phones vs doing the same with undivided attention

In the age of 24/7 connectivity, the teaching of Islam on information authenticity cannot be emphasized enough. There are numerous fake accounts, unfounded news, and misleading reports becoming viral every next hour. In this regards, Surah Hujraat [49:6] instructs to verify authenticity of news before making judgments. This contrasts strong temptation to react, share and comment on social sites. The verse came after a near-miss of

war upon receiving a false information related to non-payment of Zakat from a tribe. Pertinently, a tradition in Sahih Muslim is reiterated: "It is enough of a lie for someone to narrate all that he hears".

From a materialistic view an article in Business Insider analyses lifestyles of 600 millionaires and reveals that accomplished individuals like Bill Gates, Mark Zuckerberg, and Tim Cook (Apple CEO) are very strict about use of social media and instead prefer to read, exercise, work and enjoy uninterrupted moments with family. Similarly, the iconic Amir Khan recently left social media altogether to focus on his work. All this is an eyeopener for the moments we casually scroll down mobile screens without fetching any useful information and later regret how quickly the day passed. This is high time to ask whether the life got busier, or the distractions are generating such perceptions while devouring up precious hours.



# Why do people support Imran Khan despite his poor report card?



With former prime minister Imran Khan ousted from power, there are concerns that he could now resort to agitation tactics like he did during his dharna (demonstrations) days before coming to power. Indeed, his supporters are out in the streets marching to the tune of a populist leader who has deflected the issue away from personal accountability towards foreign conspiracies, and is instead accusing the opposition of treason.

Imran's fan base comprises of the educated middle and upper middle classes that see him giving voice to their pet concerns that define their perceived identity. Many of Imran's supporters also reside in the West. This was evident from the fact that many Pakistani Americans drove for hours just to listen and see him speak when the former PM visited the United States in 2019. More recently, some Pakistani Americans were seen on social media burning their

old Pakistani passports, in protest of Imran's ouster. This would have been unthinkable in the case of Non-Resident Indians (NRIs), as desh (country) is to Indians what din (religion) is to Pakistanis.

While such Pakistanis speak fluent English and enjoy western comforts, they also deal with Islamophobia. Therefore, many such Pakistanis in the West cling on to their identity by resorting to conservative Islamic beliefs on LGBTQ issues, upholding their prejudice against Ahmadis, downplaying the West on imperialism, and nursing pet issues of Palestine and Occupied Kashmir. Imran has been able to cater to them in a way that previous leaders have not. As an educated, handsome, and well-known man, he has given a voice to their concerns, affirmed their Muslim identity, railed against the West, and has been successful at the United Nations in getting May 15th to become the

International Day to Combat Islamophobia.

It is irrelevant to his supporters that such a day is largely symbolic, that harping on Palestine and Occupied Kashmir is a dead end which deflects from the pressing economic issues in Pakistan, and that demanding the condemnation of Islamophobia but perpetuating institutionalised discrimination against Ahmadis and religious minorities in his own country is hypocritical. Many of Imran's U-turns while being in power, as captured hilariously by Khurshid Shah, are also conveniently ignored by his faithful supporters. The issues of loans from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), skyrocketing electricity and gas prices, currency depreciation, lavish protocols, and political compromises remain as relevant today as they were in 2019.

A cursory look at the data on the key economic indicators reveals a dismal economic per-

formance during Imran's tenure as prime minister, compared to the last three years of Nawaz Sharif's government from 2015-2017 despite charges of corruption and nepotism. The numbers speak for themselves. Indeed, despite all of Imran's rhetoric, growth has been much lower, and food inflation, unemployment, debt, taxes and corruption, all considerably higher.

\*data from 2021; +March 2022; ++February 2022; ^roughly around 5%

Source: Macro Trends; Trading Economics

The data also reveals that despite Imran's milk and honey rhetoric on making Pakistan a destination where foreigners would arrive to seek jobs, a rudimentary comparison with Bangladesh completely dismantles that rhetoric. Despite being ranked higher on corruption, Bangladesh boasts a much higher growth rate, and much lower debt, food inflation and taxes.

The proof is in the pudding. However, Imran's overseas supporters, and the affluent in Pakistan, are not affected by the issues that afflict their compatriots in Pakistan, who reel under heavy taxes, poor services and the skyrocketing cost of living. Generally, most voters do not know enough about the pressing economic issues with all the nuances to contribute to any meaningful public discourse. They are usually driven by symbolic concerns and personality cults.

Thus, as long as their symbolic issues are kept alive, their identity remains safe, and so remains firm their support for Imran Khan. They can afford to do so, as they have the luxury to both criticise the West and extol Imran as an exercise in identity thumping. Yet, for all their blind worship of a populist demagogue, the truth remains clear that Imran Khan's report card has been abysmally poor.



# Pakistan's unexplored startup potential

**It's a massive, untapped market with significant potential for international venture capital and private equity firms**

**I**n recent years, the startup space in Pakistan has exploded, with startups raising nearly \$365.8 million in 2021, a staggering 450 percent increase over funding raised in 2020. Airlift and Bazaar were two notable startups that raised capital last year, raising \$85 million and \$36.5 million respectively. These emerging startups are primarily focused on revolutionising the country's e-commerce, fintech and transportation sectors. However, despite the exponential growth in the startup space over the last two years, much progress remains to be made before we can compete with global benchmarks.

Global investment in startups grew rapidly in 2021, reaching a whopping \$621 billion. This was aided by the coronavirus pandemic, which made companies realise that innovation and digitalisation in the traditional ways of doing business was required. Furthermore, advancements in communication technology, such as video conferencing and file transfer systems, has made it easier for international investors to enter untapped markets such as Pakistan.

Pakistan is dominated by small-scale businesses that are not able to obtain financing from banks and public markets. This can clearly be seen from the fact that out of 60,000 businesses registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP), merely 576 are listed on the Pakistani Stock Exchange. Hence, there is a large proportion of companies that have little access to capital that could be used to finance their growth and provide employment opportunities

within the country.

Venture capital and private equity provide much-needed assistance to small and medium-sized businesses. These businesses will benefit not only from additional funds, but

still relatively low. However, the country's internet user base has grown by 300 percent in the last five years to 110 million.

Furthermore, many Pakistanis are comfortable conversing in

order systems. Under normal circumstances, the government and social networks are required to get things done. Besides that, competing with large local businesses that have dedicated back offices for

the sole purpose of going through cumbersome processes is difficult. To deal with this difficult environment, international investors must hire powerful lawyers with the ability to push things through.

In addition to a complex regulatory framework, Pakistan's macroeconomic landscape is highly volatile, with the Pakistani rupee rapidly depreciating due to an unfavorable balance of payments, rising geopolitical tensions and a fluid political regime. Even now, Imran Khan's government is in danger of being deposed by a no-confidence vote. Due to these factors, international

investors are hesitant to invest in Pakistan.

Given that Pakistan is the fifth-largest state in terms of population, primarily made up of young people, there are numerous opportunities for global investors to enter this untapped market. Furthermore, it is high time for Pakistan to begin focusing on these areas and start working to provide international investors with a peace of mind when investing in companies within the country. Now is the time to act because global investment in startups is rapidly rising, and Pakistan must work to take full advantage of these dynamics by making it easier for Pakistani entrepreneurs to convince international investors to fund their businesses.



also from the advice of professional investors who can help them get on the right track and tweak their business models to raise their chances of success. Aside from the benefits for local companies, the Pakistani market offers numerous opportunities for international investors to profit as well.

Pakistan is a massive, untapped market with significant upside potential for international venture capital and private equity firms. One of the country's greatest assets is its large population of nearly 225 million people, two-thirds of whom are under the age of 30. Despite the rise of digital payment systems and e-commerce, the majority of Pakistani citizens still shop using cash, and the number of people with bank accounts is

English since it is commonly used in courtrooms, schools and organisations. This factor facilitates foreign investors' discussions and coordination with local entrepreneurs, making Pakistan much easier to operate in. Entrepreneurs in Pakistan have also demonstrated a willingness to go the extra mile, and instead of simply copying ideas from businesses in similar countries such as India and Indonesia, they are working on developing innovative solutions tailored to local market needs.

However, Pakistan must continue to implement supportive policies in order to attract much-needed investment. This is because foreign investors are usually wary of entering the Pakistani market due to issues such as weak law and



# India's love for The Kashmir Files is a cautionary tale for Pakistan

The movie *The Kashmir Files* has recently taken India by storm. One of the most interesting responses to the movie was by an Indian Hindu man in a theatre who could not contain his emotions. Instead of lashing out at Muslims or Pakistan, he used strong words against "secular Hindus". His honest words reflect a narrative of those Pakistani

becoming a Hindu Republic. Maybe this is the reality of the Indian subcontinent where, despite hundreds of years of Hindu-Muslim co-existence, the two communities now appear to be irrevocably split. It seems that the fusion experiments of the likes of Guru Nanak, Kabir and Amir Khusrau among others have been oddities in light of the

Muslims in housing societies. In other words, the Hindutva narrative channels rage not against the places from whence emerged past invasion and plunder but towards their fellow Indians. Similarly, it appears that the greatest prejudice in Pakistan is reserved for Ahmadis. Contrary to stereotypes, religious fanatics are not necessar-

from targeting "Hindu seculars" and "Muslim liberals" respectively, is the latching onto perceived grievances. Just as the Hindutva nurses hundred-year-old grievances against Muslims, Islamists offer an overwhelming narrative that Muslims are being persecuted across the world. In essence, the narrative is one of complaint instead of a desire to

help bring change. In both instances, selective half-truths are presented to project one's perpetual victimhood at the expense of denying, minimising or sidelining the suffering of others.

It is this selective projection of pain that has been crafted by the upper-class Brahmin director of *The Kashmir Files*, Vivek Agnihotri. The Pakistani analogy would be that of a Sunni Muslim director who ignores the suffering of the Ahmadis, the forced conversions of Hindu girls in Sindh, the terror struck on Christians through blasphemy laws in Punjab, and instead projects Sunni Muslims as victims and presents Ahmadis as vicious villains without any humanity. Such a director would be called



Muslims who are willing to 'accommodate' non-Muslims but rail heavily against 'liberals'. Hence, it can be argued that if some Pakistanis do not like what they see happening in India, it is because they are only looking at a mirror.

The overwhelming response to *Kashmir Files* in India reflects a Hindutva awakening that had perhaps been buried by the thin veneer of the "largest democracy" label over the decades. However, this facade is increasingly being replaced by a brazen display of Hindutva politics which may eventually lead to India

resurging Hindutva in India and Islamism in Pakistan.

While some may try to blame the British for accentuating this communal difference, it is equally true that Hindu-Muslim stereotypes and grievances against one another seem to go back to Mughal times instead of the British. It is also true that as India exports beef to the Middle East and has retained good relations with Iran, Afghanistan and Uzbekistan (where Babar emerged from to found the Mughal dynasty), it is fraught with cow lynch mobs and systemic discrimination against

ily madrasa students or temple monks. They are instead educated, well-paid individuals who weave a narrative to sway others into their stranglehold. Consider for instance the Bulli Bai App, which targeted Muslim women, was created by university students in India. Similarly, much of the anti-Ahmadi prejudice in Pakistan is echoed by the youth which supports their prime minister's decision to sideline Ahmadis like world renowned economist Atif Mian from any position of influence in Pakistan. Another similarity between Hindutva and Islamism, apart

out as a cheap propagandist. But in an age of the corporatisation of education and cheap sound-bites, the world is full of incompetent people who can't think critically enough to save their humanity from jingoism. Indeed, the masses and internet trolls are but pawns of the much craftier and more intelligent narrative weavers who make millions at their expense by toying with their emotions and instigating them towards mob violence and mayhem through their poisonous narrative. And as such, Hindutva is but a mirror image of Islamism.



# India's institutionalised prejudice against Islamophobia

**The whatbaoutism of the Indian state to deflect attention away from Islamophobia towards “religion-phobia” is evident**

India recently called out the United Nations (UN) resolution which declares May 15th as the International Day to combat Islamophobia. TS Tirumurti, India's permanent representative to the UN, expressed concern that an emphasis on one religion takes away attention from the phobias against Hinduism, Sikhism and Buddhism. He states that India had offered sanctuary to Zoroastrians, Jews and others in the spirit of pluralism and expressed concern regarding the attack on gurudwaras (Sikh temples), the destruction of Bamiyan Buddhas in Afghanistan, and the glorification of the breaking of idols. Tirumurti further said he instead preferred the generic term religion-phobia to combat hatred against all religions.

Such a position was to be expected from the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) India, which is bent on 'decolonising' the influence of past Muslim invaders by furthering the dharmic faiths (Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism and Jainism) at the expense of demonising present-day Muslims and Islam. The fact that the ruling party remains strategically quiet when calls for genocide of Muslims are made is a testament to this observation. Scores of Hindutva trolls are usually out and about on Pakistani and other social media sites where they demonise Muslims and perpetuate their victimhood despite being an overwhelming majority in India. It is against this backdrop that the Indian representative brazenly projected his country's institutionalised prejudice.

However, Tirumurti conveniently failed to recognise and mention the systemic genocide of the Rohingya Muslims by Buddhists in Myanmar, the



concentration camps of Uighurs in China, the mass destruction of Afghanistan, Syria, and Iraq in a post 9/11 world that has led to the universal singling out of Muslims and Islam. He ignored the fact that two billion Muslims are often generalised and stereotyped as terrorists and that many Sikhs in the West are targeted not because of their Sikhism but because they are perceived as Muslims. In other words, the targeting of people of colour and Sikhs in the West is also because of Islamophobia.

It is true that Hindu girls face forced conversion in the Sindh province of Pakistan, but this oppression is unique to that province (based on feudalism) and is not found in Arab countries. Similarly, the destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas was perpetrated by the rogue Taliban and not other Afghans who have enjoyed good relations with India. In fact, the

United Arab Emirates (UAE) has recently facilitated the construction of a large Hindu temple as well. The same goes for Pakistan that unilaterally took steps to facilitate Sikh pilgrims to their holy sites in Pakistan. If anything, it was the Indian government that took draconian steps against Sikhs and the Golden Temple in the mid-80s.

The Indian representative mentioned the glorification of the breaking of idols, which is reminiscent of the past Muslim invaders from central Asia in the age of empires. However, those Muslim invaders from Persia, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, and other central Asian places are long dead. It was a different time where human rights violations were perpetrated by anyone and everyone. The sacking of Baghdad by the Mongols is one such example. However, the BJP and its leader Narendra Modi seem fixated

on the past and not on the present where their government has singled out and marginalised Muslims through the Citizenship Act.

The whatbaoutism of the Indian state in an attempt to deflect attention away from Islamophobia towards “religion-phobia” is clear for everyone to see. The words of Tirumurti remind us of those white supremacists who argue against “Black Lives Matter” by responding with “All Lives Matter”, or of those homophobes who argue against the Pride Parade by resorting to the inanities of “what about Straight Parade”.

It is time India stops comparing itself to Pakistan, which itself has huge issues of intolerance, and starts addressing its internal issues of the systemic discrimination and Hindutva calls for genocide of their own Muslim minorities.



# Mass graves and destruction in Bucha and Hostomel

**N**ow that Russian troops have withdrawn, Kyiv's suburbs are being cleared of mines – and bodies are being exhumed. DW's Alexander Savitsky reports from Hostomel and Bucha, where journalists have been granted access again.

A dog wanders around destroyed houses and Russian military vehicles

Kyiv's northwestern suburbs of Bucha and Hostomel are in ruins

It is an eerie scene. Hostomel was one of a group of pleasant suburbs on the northwestern edge of Kyiv. Now, following the withdrawal of Russian troops, its streets are empty. The first blossom is on the trees, spring birdsong is in the air – but there is also the creaking of broken metal lampposts, and the barking of stray dogs that have lost their owners. The asphalt is strewn with fallen electricity pylons and decimated fences. With every step, broken glass crunches under-



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foot.

There are burnt-out houses, garages, and cars everywhere. Many of the buildings are five-story apartment blocks – the majority now have no roof.

Shooting and shock waves have shattered the windows. On one of the remaining balconies, some laundry flutters in the wind, abandoned in the panic of the Russian invasion.

In all the time we – a group of journalists – are in Hostomel, the only other people we see are one man and one woman, middle-aged, who turn toward the press buses with hope in their eyes.

Destroyed houses in Hostomel

Hostomel suffered significant destruction

Antonov Airlines: A dream destroyed

Hostomel airport, around 20 kilometers (12 miles) from Kyiv, was the main hub of Antonov Airlines. It is known for its cargo planes, which include the biggest aircraft in the world: the Antonov An-225 "Mriya" – "Dream." The road to the airport has been badly damaged by shelling. A billboard with a portrait of the aircraft designer Oleh Antonov, after whom the cargo and passenger plane manufacturing company is named, remains undamaged. There is a great deal of burned-out Russian military equipment scattered



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about the airfield. Shells have gouged craters in the earth. After days of bombardment, the doors, walls and roofs of the hangars are riddled with holes.

All that remains of the only An-225 "Mriya" are its nose cone and wings, with the remains of the six engines. The enormous aircraft's burnt-out interior is visible through a gaping hole in the middle. We journalists are allowed to take photos of the uncanny sight, but we can't get too close to the debris, as the airfield is still littered with heavy machine gun cartridges and unexploded ordnance. "The experts will only be able to inspect the plane once the area has been cleared," says Ukraine's minister of internal affairs, Denys Monastyrskiy, who is accompanying us.

A Ukrainian serviceman walks past the burnt-out Antonov An-225 aircraft

After fierce battles at the airport of Hostomel, Ukrainian forces managed to recapture it. Hostomel: Defended, but deserted

Monastyrskiy says the Russian invaders occupied the airfield on the very first day of the assault on Kyiv, February 24. Dozens of Russian helicopter gunships flew in very low over the Kyiv reservoir, so as to be invisible to radar. The first 500 Russian paratroopers then landed in Hostomel. "The Ukrainian defenders succeeded in shooting down six enemy helicopters in an extremely brutal battle," the minister says. He tells us that hundreds

of paratroopers were killed, and the Ukrainian military, using rocket launchers, also wiped out one of Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov's elite units with all its equipment.

Monastyrskiy says the Russians subsequently sent such massive reinforcements that they were able to take the airport and the town. The

intention, the minister says, was for Hostomel to serve as a landing place for Russian forces that would conquer and occupy Kyiv. However, the Ukrainians had blown up the runway, and eventually, after more fierce battles, they forced the invaders to retreat. "But Kyiv is not out of danger," Monastyrskiy says. "We are preparing for the possibility of fresh attacks."

A car in Bucha, riddled with bullet holes

Many civilians

were shot dead with sniper rifles or machine gun fire. Bucha: Bodies must be identified

Hostomel and Bucha are directly adjacent: Only a town park marks the administrative boundary between the two. But the difference now is astonishing. Just one week after Bucha was liberated from Russian occupation, there is life in the town again. We see people and civilian cars; more houses here are intact than in

Hostomel. Here too, though, damaged buildings, wrecked supermarkets, and roadblocks are reminders of the recent battles.

And the peaceful impression is deceptive. The images of bodies on the streets of Bucha are still fresh in the mind, not only for the town's inhabitants but for people all over the world.



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Even as municipal services are busy clearing the streets, graves are also being dug up, providing more and more evidence of the murder of civilians.

The press bus stops at an Orthodox church. Beside it, bodies are being exhumed from a deep pit. The workers are wearing white protective suits, while the dead lie in black plastic sacks. The priest says many people from Bucha who had lost contact with

members of their family are fearfully watching the opening of the graves. "They're hoping that they won't find their relatives among the dead. They're hoping that perhaps they've been taken prisoner, or are in hospital, but have at least survived." The body bags are open, the faces of the dead visible; by now, though, most of them have turned black.

Officials exhume the bodies of civilians who died during the Russian attacks

The dead are being exhumed from mass graves to identify them

Andriy Nebytov from the National Police, Kyiv region, tells the reporters that, so far, 40 people have been found in the grave beside the church. A municipal employee got permission from the Russian occupiers to collect the bodies from the streets of the town. "We are now handing over the corpses to forensic experts," Nebytov says. "Many have bullet wounds to the head or on their bodies. We can say that they were targeted and shot with machine guns or sniper rifles."

The police chief says that, with

the exception of two military personnel, the dead are male and female civilians of different ages. "In addition to these 40 bodies, more than 400 from the entire Kyiv region have been taken to forensic institutions," says Nebytov. "More than 360 of these are from Bucha, Hostomel and Irpin." And the search is not over yet: "Many people were buried in gardens, because they couldn't be taken to the graveyards during the shelling," he explains.



# Ukraine crisis shows Europe's discrimination against non-white refugees

In the wake of the escalated tensions between Ukraine and Russia, at least one million Ukrainians have fled the country since the start of the Russian attacks, crossing into Poland and other Central-Eastern European states. The ramifications from the incursion of Ukraine are anticipated to be huge with the refugee crisis taking centre stage in Europe in the times to come. Some are considering it the biggest attack in the continent by one state on another since World War II. The United Nations estimates around 4 million people could be displaced. Ukraine's defence minister, in December, had warned a Russian invasion could force between three and five million people to flee their homes.

In an emotionally uplifting show of solidarity, the Visegrad Four countries — comprising of Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic and Slovakia — which were once part of Moscow-backed Warsaw Pact, have pledged to accept Ukrainians escaping war and vowed to help them while condemning Putin's



actions at the same time. Poland, which only recently was criticised by human rights groups for its treatment of migrants and refugees — mainly coming from the

Middle East and Africa — on the border with Belarus and whose police used water cannons to push refugees back into Belarusian forest, with the aim of letting them freeze to

death, will set up reception centres and provide meals and medical care to those fleeing Ukraine. Not long ago, Warsaw started constructing a wall to prevent refugee cross-





ings in the future.

In a similar vein, Czech Republic and Hungary, whose leaders have had sympathies with Moscow in the past, condemned the latter's actions — as it should be by all means — while agreeing to accept refugees from Ukraine and providing them with humanitarian aid.

Slovakia, a fairly small country in the region with a population of about 5.5 million, said it will welcome Ukrainian refugees and they will be given a temporary status with free healthcare and a possibility of

coalition governments in the Czech Republic — has been synonymous with a hard-line towards migration for quite some time; more so because of the ethno-religious backgrounds of refugees hailing from Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan.

By 'racialising' the immigrant threat, normalising anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim rhetoric and terming and presenting refugees as economic migrants trying to steal resources — in an attempt to take away from their plight — these parties have a history of cashing on

France, vowing to "never bring even a single Muslim to Slovakia" and asserting that Islam has no place in the country.

Czech Republic's Miloš Zeman warned Europe of an "organised invasion" of migrants and advised men coming from the Middle East to take up arms and fight against the Islamic State instead of heading for Europe to seek asylum; again ignoring and blatantly disregarding the suffering they had endured and associating them with terror and security challenges solely

The xenophobic attitude and concerns about the incompatibility of brown Muslim refugees in these states is also reflected in the public opinion, and despite a small Muslim population compared to the Western Europe, only few people see integration with refugees from a distant culture possible. A 2019 report by Pew Research Centre revealed that "more favourable views of Muslims exist in Western Europe, Russia and Ukraine while more negative attitudes persist in Southern, Central and Eastern Europe," adding



doing legal work, showing the world how it should be done. Ukrainians are facing a crisis of biblical proportions and this is the kind of compassion they deserve. Probably more. The geographical proximity and a shared communist past further binds these countries together. And yet, I cannot help but compare the attitude of the aforementioned countries towards the victims of war coming from some other parts of the world, predominantly the Middle East, and assess their double standards and a lack of moral superiority and high ground.

The backsliding of liberal democracy in these Central-Eastern European states through concentration of power in the hands of populist parties — the Law and Justice Party (PiS) in Poland, Viktor Orbán's Fidesz party post 2010 in Hungary or ANO party led

votes and the public sentiments by spreading xenophobia and making their already sceptical populations fearful and wary of the 'unwanted outsiders', mainly brown Muslims.

The influx of refugees escaping war and persecution was projected as some kind of 'Muslim invasion'; a point of view often repeated by populist leaders like Orbán, who in opposition to multiculturalism, along with Czech Republic's Miloš Zeman, has acted as a defender of traditional Christian values spearheaded by white supremacists, and hence opposed any kind of integration with the Muslim refugees.

Most of the xenophobic statements are on record.

In 2016, then Slovak prime minister Robert Fico blamed migrants for terror threats citing attacks in Germany and

based on their faith, background and colour of their skin. Former premier Andrej Babiš too opposed large formation of the Muslim community in the Czech Republic.

Most recently, this xenophobic tirade was visible in the statement of Orbán who in December last year said, integrating Bosnia into the European Union would be a challenge because of its 2 million Muslims, drawing condemnation from Sarajevo.

It is common for workers from neighbouring eastern countries to get to the V4 states; tens of thousands economic migrants come every year and their presence isn't opposed or met with any resistance. A threat of brown Muslim brown refugees, as meagre as it may be, however, is exacerbated and politicised, and it speaks volumes about the status quo in these countries.

that majorities in Slovakia, Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary along with Lithuania, Greece and Italy had unfavourable views of Muslims. A lack of heterogeneity and no exposure with Muslims and refugees further fuels and feeds misconceptions about them.

Adding to this, bigoted views now being openly expressed during the coverage of Ukraine crisis have revealed and reminded of the prevalence of quite a few things: naked racism, hypocrisy, white superiority and dehumanisation of non-white refugees. It was an open secret that discrimination existed but for it to be expressed openly is bone chilling and forcing many to point out detestable double standards in treatment of migrants and refugees solely based on the latter's religion and skin



# EU uses development aid to strongarm Africa on migration

**E**U development programs like the Emergency Trust Fund for Africa prioritize curbing migration over fostering development, critics say. How does the EUTF square with the stated aims of the European Union's aid policies?

Migrants sit onboard a boat navigating in agitated waters between Sangatte and Cap Blanc-Nez (Cape White Nose),

negotiations, EU countries often use development funds as levers for their own political agendas. In recent years, migration control has been at the forefront of these efforts. Africa has been the focus of Western European development policy since the precursors to the EU were established in the 1950s. With large parts of Africa still colonized by the inheritor states of the

geopolitical tool

Political agendas continue to shape where aid goes — and which projects get prioritized. "The main agenda in Africa continues to be geopolitical," said Jan Orbie, the director of the Centre for EU Studies at Ghent University. "In the past 10 years, development policy has become more connected to migration, to energy policy, to trade."

focus on migration control is the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa, which just concluded its six-year funding period. After large numbers of irregular migrants reached the European Union in 2015, EU policymakers were eager to prevent a repeat. A result of the ensuing negotiations was the now roughly €5 billion in "emergency" project funding for the EUTF, largely redirect-



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in the English Channel off the coast of northern France, as they attempt to cross the maritime borders between France and the United Kingdom on August 27, 2020

As the EU tries to curb irregular migration to Europe, development aid gets co-opted for leverage

In raw numbers, the European Union and its members provide the most development aid in the world, about €75 billion in 2019 alone. About one-third of that aid currently goes to Africa. With historical inequities keeping African nations at a disadvantage in

European empires, structures such as the European Development Fund aimed to continue the development policies of the former empires, historian Sara Lorenzini said: "The idea was to build European-style welfare states in the colonies and for Europe to retain geopolitical weight as a third force during the Cold War."

As African nations started to gain independence in the 1960s, development policies allowed European countries to maintain their influence on the continent.

Development aid is still a

Data on official development aid collected by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) shows, for example, that EU institutions and member states spend a lot more of their development aid north of the Sahara than other donors do — often in countries considered the origin or transit states for migrants who make their way to the European Union.

Visualization: Distribution of EU aid in Africa, with 71% of funds north of Sahara

One instrument that exemplifies the European Union's

ed from existing development funds. Its purpose was to disburse money quickly — without much parliamentary oversight and the bureaucracy it would bring. "The trust fund illustrates that the EU can act very quickly, efficiently and cohesively when it wants to," Orbie said. "Whether that's a good thing is another question."

Success defined as fewer Africans arriving in EU

The funds are officially meant to "address root causes of irregular migration" in the recipient countries. But the priority of policymakers seems





to be to prevent migrants from arriving at EU borders, as an Oxfam report found. In one board meeting, the head of the Directorate General for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, Christian Danielsson, happily asserted how the EUTF for Africa had "confirmed its value in supporting an effective management of migration flows from, to and within" North Africa. Data visualization shows distribution of EUTF funding by recipient country

The Oxfam report also found that most of the funding goes to development cooperation projects in nations perceived as countries of origin for migrants, while transit countries receive more money for migration management projects. Only about 1% of the EUTF, €56 million, was spent on fostering legal pathways for African migrants.

€5 billion isn't much compared with total aid volume

The fund's total volume may not seem like much: €5 billion in funding commitments, spread over five years and about 30 recipient countries. Between 2016 and 2020, the time period for which the OECD provides complete data, official development aid donors committed over \$1.7 trillion (€1.6 trillion) to these countries, with about one-third of that coming from the European Union and its member states.

Data visualization shows the EUTF development aid budget for the 2016-2020 period

But the EUTF often goes hand in hand with other funds managed by the European Union and its member states — and the political interests behind them. Refusing to cooperate with one program might disadvantage recipient countries when it comes to future funding.

And the money from the

"African countries now have to negotiate about migration so that they can get aid, they can gain access to foreign currency and other diplomatic support," said Mehari Taddele Maru, a professor at the Migration Policy Centre and formerly the program coordinator for migration at the African Union Commission.



EUTF still makes a difference in individual countries. The fund makes up more than a third of the total EU development money that goes to Sudan and Libya, which also receive among the highest absolute sums from the EUTF. Visualization shows EUTF contributions as percentage of national development income. Even countries with more diverse funding sources can be susceptible to political pressure from the European Union.

In 2017, for example, the European Union negotiated a deal with Ethiopia to accelerate the return of nationals deported from EU countries, voluntarily or involuntarily. The European Council attributes Ethiopia's cooperation to "the financial instruments ... in particular the EU Trust Fund." Records on EUTF projects show that Ethiopia was allocated funding at first in December 2016. Then funding flows stopped for almost the

entire year of 2017. Days after the agreement had been reached, €14 million in EUTF funding for "stimulating economic opportunities and job creation for refugees and host communities in Ethiopia" was approved. The country has now received more than €300 million from the fund.

"The government was cash-starved, so they agreed," Mehari said. "The same with Niger, Nigeria and others: The hardening of borders is happening in Africa because of European intervention."

A study by the German Development Institute suggests that this is particularly the case in West Africa, where EU programming tends to hinder free movement — even within the region. On the Horn of Africa, in contrast, EU interventions tend to support projects that allow people to move freely within the region.

From 'emergency' to steady flows: The future of EU aid spending on migration

At the end of 2021, the EUTF for Africa stopped accepting new projects. And the European Union is restructuring its development spending. A range of schemes, including the EUTF, will now be combined in one big fund:

the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI).

Visualization: Sources of funding for the Neighbourhood Development, Integration and Cooperation Instrument

It spans €80 billion for the funding period from 2021 to 2027, 10% of which is designated for migration-management programs. "There were political objectives to have a prominent figure and a clear focus

on migration governance," said Anna Knoll, the head of the migration program at the European think tank ECDPM. The acute feeling of emergency guiding EU policymakers in 2015 has passed, but Knoll said the NDICI would likely continue some of the current trends: The European Union retains a strong focus on controlling migration, and it continues to use aid funds as a tool to further EU interests in