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A Note From the Editors-in-Chief

A great deal has changed over the past year, and as we write this note, we notice rapid shifts permanently changing the fabric of our communities. However, not all hope is lost. Across the globe, efforts are underway to build more just and equitable communities. Communities where women can access equal education, children can laugh and play freely in the streets, and families torn apart by conflict or hardship can finally reunite. While it might seem naive to hold these aspirations, still standing are places committed to sustained and meaningful efforts to protect fundamental human rights, despite how few they may be. We look to these places as a reminder of our work here and the journal’s responsibility.

Our focus as a journal is to provide a platform for writers to engage with global issues from their unique perspectives and positionalities. In this issue, we invited our writers to reflect on what journalism can and should be in advocating for human rights. They explored diverse approaches to storytelling, tailored to best convey the nature of the issues they chose to address, urging readers to critically examine their roles in these pressing matters. No story is complete with just facts and numbers.

The resulting pieces reflect a wide spectrum of journalistic styles. Some adopt a narrative, citizen-focused lens, amplifying the voices of those directly impacted by crises (such as individuals navigating life under the resurgence of the Taliban in Afghanistan or exploring the harmful effects of DeepFake in South Korea). Others employ investigative techniques, uncovering the historical roots and systemic dynamics of conflicts. Despite the variation in styles, all the contributions share a common thread: they are acts of advocacy.

This issue is not confined to any one topic or region but takes a holistic approach, amplifying stories often overshadowed by conflicts dominating mainstream media. Our writers deeply engaged with their topics to uncover the truth about injustice. Tenaciously, they listened to those surviving through horrors to capture the varied realities. They challenge all of us to consider how one can contribute to positive change in the face of disheartening realities.

We would like to thank everyone who made this issue possible. Our writers, editors, and board dedicated hours to refining each piece. We extend special thanks to our faculty advisory board and the World Fellows at the Jackson School of Global Affairs, who provided invaluable feedback throughout the editorial process. We are also indebted to Roba El Husseini and Leon McCarron, who generously hosted workshops to share their journalistic insights, and to the professors and faculty who held teach-ins and discussions that enriched our understanding of complex issues. To all touched by the issues we explored, thank you for trusting us with your stories. These pages are a testament to your courage.

Daliya Ali El Abani & Aly Moosa
Editors-in-Chief
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Shattered Silence: Bangladesh's Youth Uprising

Jabiah Suhrawardhy

Scrolling through my feed, the screen flickers with images of bloodshed and tears—disturbing reminders of the violence erupting in Bangladesh. In conversations with two Dhaka University students who spoke anonymously, I began to grasp the on-the-ground realities. One student passionately stated, “We are not just fighting for jobs; we are fighting for our right to exist as equals in our own country.” What began as protests over a controversial job quota has evolved into a broader movement—a fight not only against government corruption¹ but also for democracy, justice, and the right to live without fear.

The unrest intensified on July 15, when violent clashes broke out between students and pro-government groups, especially after the Awami League’s student wing, the Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), attacked the protesters. One of the victims, 25-year-old Abu Sayed², became a symbol of the violence after police shot him during the protests. The government’s harsh response, including the use of live ammunition, led

1 Democracy Now, “Bangladesh: 174 Killed, 2,500 Arrests in Student-Led Protests over Jobs, Inequality & Corruption,” Democracy Now!, July 23, 2024, https://www.democracynow.org/2024/7/23/bangladesh_student_protests.

2 Harindrini Corea and Nazia Erum, “What Is Happening at the Quota-Reform Protests in Bangladesh?” Amnesty International, July 29, 2024, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/07/what-is-happening-at-the-quota-reform-protests-in-bangladesh/>.

to widespread violence. By early August, nearly 300 people had been killed. Public anger mounted, and calls for Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina’s resignation grew louder. On August 5th, following another wave of protests and a nationwide curfew, Hasina resigned and fled to India, ending her 14-year rule.

The military, which had operated under Hasina’s governance, stepped in to restore order. Army chief General Waker-uz-Zaman, whose troops had initially stood aside during the protests, pledged full support³ for the interim government led by Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus. “I promise you all, we will bring justice,” Zaman stated, reaffirming his commitment⁴ to support the administration’s reforms and a transition to democracy.

Human Rights Watch (HRW) and Amnesty International have condemned Bangladesh’s violent crackdown on peaceful student protests. Security forces used excessive force, including live ammunition, tear gas, and rubber bullets, while the military was deployed to suppress demonstrators. HRW reported the imposition of shoot-on-sight curfews and an internet shutdown to prevent the spread of information. “Bangladesh has a history of security forces targeting opponents, and we are seeing it again,” said HRW’s Meenakshi Ganguly⁵, calling on the international com-

3 Devjyot Ghoshal, “Bangladesh Army Chief Gen Waker-Uz-Zaman Pledges Support to Yunus’ Interim Govt ‘Come What May,’” ThePrint (theprint, September 24, 2024), <https://theprint.in/world/exclusive-bangladesh-army-chief-pledges-support-for-yunus-interim-government-come-what-may/2281122/>.

4 Human Rights Watch, “Bangladesh: Prime Minister Hasina Resigns amid Mass Protests,” Human Rights Watch, August 6, 2024, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/08/06/bangladesh-prime-minister-hasina-resigns-amid-mass-protests>.

5 Human Rights Watch. “Bangladesh: Security Forces Target Unarmed Students,” Human Rights Watch, July 23, 2024, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/07/22/bangladesh-security-forces-target-unarmed-students>.



Anik Rahman/AP, October 28, 2023, Police clash with Bangladesh Nationalist Party supporters in Dhaka, Bangladesh, during a protest for a fair election.



Andrew Lichtenstein/Corbis via Getty Images, Pro-Palestinian students occupy a central lawn on the Columbia University campus, New York City.

munity to hold the government accountable.

Amnesty International also criticized the government’s imposition of a nationwide internet blackout⁶, which lasted several days, cutting off communication and obstructing the flow of information. This media blackout hindered transparency, preventing reliable reporting on the violence and limiting the ability of citizens and journalists to document human rights abuses during the protests.

Despite these efforts to suppress student voices, social media has become a vital tool for organizing and amplifying the protests. Platforms like Facebook and WhatsApp have allowed students to share updates, raise funds for those affected, and mobilize quickly. “Social media is our lifeline,” said one student activist, emphasizing how these platforms have been essential in their fight for change. Through digital solidarity, students connect local movements to broader struggles for justice, illustrating how online platforms can unite people across borders.

The protests are not solely driven by student dissatisfaction; they represent a broader challenge to authoritarianism. The growing alliance between students, workers, and civil society organizations demonstrates the enormity of the movement’s demands and its fight for Bangladesh’s future. Workers, especially from the garment sector, have joined the protests, highlighting shared struggles over stagnant wages, rising costs, and inequality.⁷ The garment industry, a cornerstone of Bangladesh’s economy, faces these same issues, underscoring the broader discontent with political and economic systems that have failed the people.

The protests in Bangladesh, like recent youth-led

⁶ Coreia and Erum, “What Is Happening at the Quota-Reform Protests in Bangladesh?”

⁷ Tithi Bhattacharya, “Bangladesh’s Protests Have Been Decades in the Making,” TIME (Time, September 4, 2024), <https://time.com/7015595/bangladesh-protests-austerity/>.

demonstrations at U.S. college campuses, including Columbia University⁸, in solidarity with Gaza, share a commitment to challenging authoritarianism and injustice. As one Dhaka University student put it, “When we see the youth in Gaza rising, it inspires us. It’s the student intifada across the world. Our struggles may differ, but we fight against injustice and for our rights.”

In the face of overwhelming adversity, the resilience of these young activists is undeniable. As one student put it, “Silence is the enemy of change,” while another declared, “We will not be silenced until the system is held accountable.” Their resolve is unshakable, and they will continue to challenge those in power until their demands for justice are met. The protests in Bangladesh are not isolated; they are part of a broader global movement, driven by a collective demand for political and economic reform—a unified stand against oppression and injustice.



Jabiah Suhrawardhy, July 2024, Times Square, New York City. Protesters rally in support of Bangladesh’s student-led protests.

⁸ Yasmeen Altaji, “Israel War on Gaza | inside the Columbia Protest | Today’s Latest from al Jazeera,” Al Jazeera, May 4, 2024, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/5/4/we-wont-stop-how-columbias-students-etched-a-new-gaza-protest-legacy>.



Rajib Dhar/AP, August 3, 2024, Protest march in Dhaka, Bangladesh, demanding justice for victims of deadly clashes.

Writer’s Reflection:

Growing up as the child of Bangladeshi immigrants, I’ve always straddled two realities: one shaped by my parents’ stories of survival and sacrifice, and another by the opportunities their hard work made possible for me. Watching the recent protests in Bangladesh unfold, I felt a deeper connection to the history my parents taught me—their stories of resilience and the fight for justice during the 1971 Liberation War. In July, I joined demonstrations in New York City with my family, where I saw how the struggle for justice and equality transcends borders. What stood out to me most was the courage of Bangladesh’s youth, risking everything for a better future. Speaking with students and activists involved in the movement helped me connect these struggles across borders and generations, reminding me of the global nature of the fight for dignity, justice, and equality.

U.S.-Mexico Border Security Failure: How Gun Smuggling to Mexico Has Created A Culture of Fear

Joselyn Galicia



On March 22, 2023, Mexican authorities of the 22nd military zone destroyed weapons which were seized by organized crime. (Photo credit: Arturo Hernandez/ Eyepix Group/Future Publishing via Getty Images)

The deafening sounds of bullets shattering school windows is a vivid nightmare for elementary school students in the small Triqui community of Tierra Blanca Copala, Oaxaca. Located in the southernmost region of Mexico, this rural community is a testament to how gun violence and fear can reach even the most remote areas of the country. Coveted by armed paramilitaries for its resources and strategic location, this community became the target of violence to intimidate and assert dominance by shooting rounds of bullets near an elementary school —underscoring the larger

humanitarian issues in Mexico. The increasing smuggling of U.S. firearms depicts a negligence that has emboldened criminal organizations, leading to violation of human rights and a pervasive culture of fear in Mexican society.

Gun trafficking is a prominent issue in regards to the U.S.-Mexico border. Intense political debates in Mexico and the U.S. alike focus on immigration, drugs, and violence within the Mexican state. These truisms, however, neglect the extent of American gun trafficking

across the border. Tight regulations in Mexico have surged the number of illegally purchased and sold U.S. firearms. Only one government owned gun shop exists in the entire country and customers must go through a series of background checks before purchasing¹, thereby making gun smuggling an indispensable activity for Mexican crime organizations. The Mexican Institute² has reported that around 50% of firearms in Mexico can be traced back to manufacturers in the U.S. in 2022. Hartford, CT was the largest contributor with around 1,656 arms.

The 2007 “Project Gunrunner” by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) intended to “reduce cross-border drug and firearms trafficking” the official U.S. review of the initiative found that it had the adverse effect of facilitating gun smugglers instead³. A CBS News report collected testimonies from veteran ATF officials who reported that ATF was aware of the guns winding up in the hands of “drug cartels where they would be used to kill.”⁴

In Mexico, gun smuggling severely impacts the well-being of its citizens by allowing criminal organizations to gain political power, economic growth, and territorial control of the borderland region. The growing availability of firearms allows cartels to dom-

inate larger areas, protect their interests, and instill fear through the intimidation and terrorization of local communities. This, in turn, has fueled grotesque human rights violations such as arbitrary civilian murders, forced displacement, attacks on freedom of expression and journalism, and forced disappearances. From 2006 to 2018, at least 37,435 people had disappeared in Mexico.⁵ Of these people, many more remain unreported as migrants kidnapped are not counted in official records. Migrants moving across the country to the U.S. border have also been subjected to sexual violence and assaults. Groups primarily affected by this are journalists, human right defenders, women, children, indigenous groups, and more. Internal displacements have increased as violence increased, with some occurring silently and without notifying authorities as victims fear that revealing their identities could worsen their situation by exposing themselves to their aggressors.⁶ Similarly, self-censorship of journalism and expression has become vital to safeguard rights to life for many journalists and media workers.

In May, two towns in the state of Chiapas were held hostage by cartels. Food, electricity, and communication, all vital resources, were limited and only obtainable by permission from cartels.⁷ Additionally, many

1 Linthicum, Kate. “There Is Only One Gun Store in All of Mexico. So Why Is Gun Violence Soaring?” Los Angeles Times, May 24, 2018. <https://www.latimes.com/world/la-fg-mexico-guns-20180524-story.html>

2 Lemus, Guillermo. “Infographics | Arms Trafficking across the US-Mexico Border.” Wilson Center, 2024, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/infographics-arms-trafficking-across-us-mexico-border>

3 U.S. Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General Evaluation and Inspections Division. “Review of ATF’s Project Gunrunner.” November 2010. I-2011-001. <https://oig.justice.gov/reports/ATF/e1101.pdf>

4 Attkisson, Sharyl. “Gunrunning Scandal Uncovered at the ATF” CBS News, March 3, 2011. <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/gunrunning-scandal-uncovered-at-the-atf/>

5 Báez Zamudio, Natalia Paulina, Lucía Guadalupe Chávez Vargas, John Lindsay-Poland, and Montserrat Martínez Téllez. Gross Human Rights Abuses: The Legal and Illegal Gun Trade to Mexico. Mexican Commission for the Defense and Promotion of Human Rights, Aug. 2018. https://www.stopusarmstomexico.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/THE-LEGAL-AND-ILLEGAL-GUN-TRADE-TO-MEXICO_August2018.pdf

6 Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. The Human Rights Situation in Mexico. OAS, OEA/Ser.L/V/II.Doc. 44/15, 2015. <https://www.oas.org/en/iachr/reports/pdfs/Mexico2016-en.pdf>

7 Avelar, Bryan. “Two Towns Held Hostage by Drug Traffickers on the Southern Border of Mexico: Checkpoints, Murders and Control over Phone Service and Food.” EL PAÍS English, 19 May 2024, english.elpais.com/international/2024-05-19/two-towns-held-

cartel activities, including extortion, are targeted at Mexico's indigenous groups, primarily due to their business in the forestry and agriculture industries. Much of the land in Mexico is operated through the ejido system, which describes the shared communal lands managed by indigenous communities. As profitable regions for the cartel's expanding industries, leaders target indigenous communities and activists fighting criminal expropriation of their lands, mass exploitation of the community's resources, and destruction of the natural environments.⁸ As Mario Galicia stated in an interview, "Cartels cause fear in society because of their crimes. In Mexico, [cartels] established a prominent drug market but have begun extorting farming and commercial sectors. They have expanded to more industries than just drugs."

Felipe Calderón's – former Mexican president – War on Drugs has not succeeded in eradicating criminal activity or gun trafficking in the region. Ricardo Galicia, a retired Mexican Marine living in the state of Puebla, attributed the rise of criminality and violence to a broken judicial system that is beneficial to cartels. "Here, the crime has even reached the government." Since 2017, the New York Times has reported on the corruption of political officials in Mexico's Institutional Revolutionary Party for embezzling dollars and accepting bribes from cartels.⁹ The 2014 disappear-

hostage-by-drug-traffickers-on-the-southern-border-of-mexico-checkpoints-murders-and-control-over-phone-service-and-food.html

⁸ Pearson, Tamara. "Indigenous Mexicans Risk Their Lives to Defend the Environment from Organized Crime and 'Insatiable, Predatory' Transnational Corporations." The Real News Network, 10 Mar. 2023, therealnews.com/indigenous-mexicans-risk-their-lives-to-defend-the-environment-from-organized-crime-and-insatiable-predatory-transnational-corporations

⁹ Malkin, Elisabeth. "Corruption at a Level of Audacity 'Never Seen in Mexico.'" The New York Times, April 19, 2017. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/19/world/americas/in-mexico-mounting-misdeeds-but-governors-escape-justice.html>

ances of 49 students in Guerrero is a notorious case depicting the horrific violations of human rights in connection with cartel activity. The murders of each of the students exposed deep-seated corruption, as the government allegedly conspired to cover up the incident with cartels.¹⁰ More recently, Al Jazeera reported that Mexico's judicial system suffers from high levels of impunity, with more than 90% of crimes never brought to court.¹¹

Expanded weaponry has fortified other cartel industries such as human trafficking. Ricardo Galicia described the unsettling fact that cartels are kidnapping young children to join their groups. "Children from middle and high schools are disappearing. [The cartels] come to their homes and tell their parents they will be gone for 6 months and then the children will be returned. Parents can do nothing but bless their children [for their safety]," Galicia describes. Although there is little coverage of this pressing issue, the forced recruitment of children is familiar among Mexican communities. Increasing arms are the resource needed for cartels to kill at liberty, fear monger, and terrorize communities, creating an atmosphere of insecurity and danger in the livelihoods of citizens.

Gun smuggling's ability to foster the power of Mexican criminal organizations has engrossed the minds of many Mexican citizens to feel confined, unsafe, and at risk. Despite forced displacement, lack of vital resources, or fear for one's own life, the Mexican people have exhibited fierce resilience, leading mean-

¹⁰ Council on Foreign Relations. "Mexico's Long War: Drugs, Crime, and the Cartels." August 5, 2024. <https://www.cfr.org/background/mexicos-long-war-drugs-crime-and-cartels>

¹¹ Melimopoulos, Elizabeth. "Mexico's Obador Enacts Divisive Judicial Reforms: What Happens Next?" Al Jazeera, September 16, 2024. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/9/15/mexicos-obador-set-to-enact-divisive-judicial-reforms-what-happens-next#:~:text=In%20Mexico%2C%20more%20than%2090,concern%20within%20the%20judicial%20system>

ingful lives under the watchful eyes of cartels. Ricardo Galicia summed this up, "Yes, we live in fear but life goes on."

American made firearms are at the core of this issue as Mexican crime organizations outsource through U.S. border negligence. Hence, U.S. firearms sustain a culture of fear by arming the cartels to commit rights violations. While corruption and impunity within Mexican politics have given way to criminal organizations, the U.S.'s refusal to pass stronger gun legislation makes it partly responsible for violence across the border. It is necessary to address the US's implicit cooperation with gun smuggling and advocate for gun control from this side of the border. An ethical and political approach into gun restriction and exportation could provide stronger control over reducing violence in Mexico. Through this, we can begin to mitigate the disastrous implications of Mexican cartels' power over the livelihood of Mexican citizens and empower citizens to regain a sense of security and stability.

Writers Reflection:

After writing this paper, I learned about the letter that Mexican President Sheinbaum wrote to president-elect Donald Trump. Alongside a myriad of other criticisms, Sheinbaum highlighted how illegal gun smuggling and high drug consumption in the U.S. has resulted in the tragic loss of Mexican lives. Reading her letter made me realize the importance of creating discussion around U.S. actions and effects on Latin America. I wrote this piece thinking about current U.S. rhetoric on Mexico and Latin America, which I've noticed is increasingly xenophobic and racist, and its lack of humanitarian concern. Having family in Mexico, I felt a larger motivation to write and document how people are currently being impacted by our government's actions and negligence.

Dreams Beneath the Taliban's Veil

Hameeda Uloomi

All names in this article are pseudonyms to protect the women's identities. Those still in Afghanistan face severe risks, including imprisonment, violence, or even death for defying Taliban edicts.

A Return to Darkness

"My peshak [cat], dear Hameeda, my peshak has more rights than I do."

These were the words of Amina, a 64-year-old former teacher from Kandahar, now in hiding. Once a passionate educator, Amina now spends her days confined to her home, reflecting on the dreams she once nurtured for herself and the young girls she taught. Her words, though simple, carry a heavy weight, capturing the lived reality of millions of Afghan women and girls who find themselves stripped of their rights for the second time in their lifetimes.

"Teaching was my zindagi's [life's] purpose," Amina laments. "Now, my classroom is empty, and my girls' futures are lost."

The situation for Afghan women under Taliban rule is not new. It is a tragic echo of their first rule in 1996 when they systematically dismantled women's rights. Today, history repeats itself with terrifying precision, forcing Afghan women into the shadows once more.

Thriving Before the Fall: Women's Lives Before the Taliban's First Rise

The period before the Taliban's first rise to power in 1996 was one of significant progress for Afghan women, particularly during the 1960s and 1970s. This era

saw the introduction of progressive policies aimed at modernizing Afghanistan, with a particular focus on women's rights.

Women began attending universities in large numbers, pursuing careers in medicine, law, journalism, and politics. The Constitution of 1964 granted women the right to vote and participate in political life, leading to the appointment of female members of parliament.¹

Laila, now 78 living in California, was one of those women. "In the 1970s, I was a journalist in Kabul," she recalls. "I covered qesas [stories] on women's education, political reforms, and cultural advancements. We debated freely, walked the streets with confidence, and felt like we were shaping our nation's future."

By the 1980s, Afghan women were thriving in various sectors. Female doctors, lawyers, and professors were common, and Kabul's streets were filled with young women in both traditional and modern attire. The capital, Kabul, became a hub for cultural exchange. Cafés, theaters, and libraries were filled with both men and women discussing literature, politics, and art. Afghan women participated in sports, attended international conferences, and even represented Afghanistan on the global stage.²

"We had royahas [dreams]," says Laila. "Royahas of contributing to a modern, equal Afghanistan. For a time, it felt possible."

The First Fall: The Taliban's Rise to Power in 1996

The Taliban emerged in 1994 during a period of deep instability. Following the Soviet Union's withdrawal in 1989, Afghanistan plunged into civil war. Rival mujahideen factions fought for control, leaving the

country devastated.³ Amid this chaos, the Taliban, led by Mullah Mohammad Omar, capitalized on public frustration with warlords' corruption and violence.

The Capture of Kabul

By September 1996, the Taliban had seized Kabul, marking the beginning of one of the darkest periods in Afghan history. Their strict interpretation of Sharia law imposed the following severe restrictions on women:

- Girls were barred from attending school.
- Women were forbidden from working.
- Women could not leave their homes without a male guardian.
- Public flogging and execution of women accused of moral crimes became common.

"We lost everything overnight," says Laila. "My career, my identity, my azadi [freedom]. I went from reporting the news to hiding in my own home. I was afraid of being punished for simply existing as a woman."

Destruction of Institutions

The Taliban's regime dismantled decades of progress. Schools and universities were emptied of female students and staff. Hospitals that once employed women as doctors and nurses became inaccessible to women seeking care. According to a 1999 United Nations report⁴, Afghan women's participation in the workforce dropped to near zero, and the literacy rate for women, which had been rising steadily, plummeted.

"Women became invisible," recalls Laila. "The streets of Kabul, once alive with the sound of children playing and women shopping, fell khamoosh [silent]. It was like the city itself had lost its soul."

1 <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/womens-rights-afghanistan-history>

2 <https://www.pbs.org/wnet/wideangle/uncategorized/women-in-afghanistan-politics/2201/>

3 https://1997-2001.state.gov/global/human_rights/1996_hrp_report/afghanis.html

4 <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/286099?v=pdf>

Rebuilding After 2001: A Second Chance

The U.S.-led invasion in 2001, following the September 11 attacks, marked the decline of the Taliban's first regime. Instability wasn't gone, but Afghan perseverance flourished. For the next two decades, the Afghans embarked on a journey of rebuilding, with significant progress in women's rights and societal participation.

One of the most significant achievements was in education. By 2018, 3.6 million girls were enrolled in schools, according to UNICEF, and female literacy rates had climbed from 17% in 2001 to 30%.⁵ Universities reopened their doors to women, and female enrollment soared.

Amina reflects on this period with pride. "I reopened my classroom. My girls were so eager to learn, to dream again. Every time they solved a problem or read a new kitaab [book], it felt like we were reclaiming what was stolen from us."

Women also re-entered the workforce in large numbers. By 2020, 22% of Afghanistan's workforce consisted of women, many of whom worked in healthcare, education, law, and media. Female entrepreneurs established businesses, and women's organizations flourished, advocating for gender equality and social justice.⁶

Maryam, 46, living in Kabul, Afghanistan, and a mother to three daughters, who became a doctor during this time, recalls: "It was an incredible feeling to walk into a hospital as a professional, to know that I was making a difference in people's zindagi. We were building a better Afghanistan, brick by brick."

Women's participation in politics was another significant milestone. Afghanistan's parliament reserved

5 <https://www.e-ir.info/2022/04/23/female-education-in-afghanistan-after-the-return-of-the-taliban/>

6 <https://www.cesifo.org/DocDL/CESifo-Forum-2022-1-albrecht-et-al-afghan-women-january.pdf>

27% of its seats for women,⁷ and several women held ministerial positions. Afghan women's voices were increasingly heard in policymaking, advocacy, and international forums.

"We had omaid [hope]," says Maryam. "Hope that our daughters would grow up in a country that respected and valued them. That is not the case anymore. I look at my daughters and want to cry."

The Second Fall: The Taliban's Return in 2021

The Taliban's return in August 2021 shattered those hopes. The Doha Agreement, signed in February 2020 between the United States and the Taliban, was intended to pave the way for a peaceful resolution to decades of conflict. It outlined the withdrawal of U.S. and NATO forces in exchange for the Taliban's commitment to prevent Afghanistan from becoming a haven for terrorist organizations.

However, the deal was deeply flawed. It excluded the Afghan government and women from negotiations, undermining its authority and legitimacy, and failed to secure any guarantees for the protection of women's rights or human rights in general. The agreement emboldened the Taliban, who saw it as a victory, allowing them to expand their influence across Afghanistan.

In the months that followed, they launched a rapid offensive, culminating in their takeover of Kabul in August 2021. For many Afghans, especially women, the Doha Deal symbolized a betrayal, as it prioritized political expediency over the hard-fought gains of the past two decades.⁸

Collapse of the Afghan Government

7 <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news-stories/feature-story/2023/08/women-in-afghanistan-from-almost-everywhere-to-almost-nowhere>

8 <https://www.voanews.com/a/analysts-doha-agreement-flawed-as-us-taliban-accuse-one-another-of-violating-terms-/7510892.html>

The fall of Kabul was marked by chaos. Afghan President Ashraf Ghani fled the country, and with his departure, the government dissolved. The Taliban – having learned from their previous governance failures – quickly re-established control, but their policies remained as oppressive as ever.

“The day they entered Kabul, I knew everything was over,” says Maryam. “I burned my certificates and hid my kitaabs. My daughters cried, asking why they couldn’t go to school anymore. I did not have the heart to give them an answer. I would not wish this on my worst enemy.”

The Taliban’s second reign has brought a renewed wave of repression. According to Human Rights Watch, 90% of Afghan women are now excluded from public life.⁹

- **Education:** UNESCO: Over 1.1 million girls have been denied access to secondary school. Universities have closed their doors to female students, reversing decades of progress.¹⁰
- **Employment:** Women have been banned from most public and private sector jobs. A report by the International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that 25% of working women lost their jobs in the first year of Taliban rule.¹¹
- **Healthcare:** The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) reports that 87% of Afghan women lack access to adequate healthcare. Maternal mortality rates, once on the decline, are expected to surge. Every two hours, a woman loses her life due to pregnancy or childbirth complications—deaths that could be avoided with adequate medical support and trained professionals.¹²

9 <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2024/06/gender-country-profile-afghanistan>

10 <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/afghanistan-14-million-girls-still-banned-school-de-facto-authorities>

11 <https://www.ilo.org/resource/news/women-bear-brunt-afghanistan-job-losses>

12 <https://www.unfpa.org/afghanistan>

Maryam, who now runs a secret clinic, shares the grim reality: “Women are dying of preventable conditions because they’re too afraid to seek help. We do what we can in khamooshi, but it’s not enough. It will never be enough.”

Violence and Intimidation

Public floggings, forced marriages, and honor killings are rampant. Amnesty International has documented numerous cases of women being executed for defying Taliban edicts. In one harrowing instance, a woman accused of adultery was publicly stoned in 2022.¹³

Protests by women demanding their rights have been violently suppressed. In September 2022, women demonstrating in Kabul for the right to education were met with gunfire and arrests.¹⁴ “The brave women marched for our daughters,” Maryam says. “They beat us, but they can’t khamoosh us. Education is our weapon.”

International Response

The international community has largely condemned the Taliban’s actions, but tangible interventions have been limited.

Sanctions

One of the first responses to the Taliban’s return was the imposition of economic sanctions. The United States froze nearly \$7 billion in Afghan central bank assets, while the European Union and other countries halted financial aid that had previously sustained Afghanistan’s economy.¹⁵

13 <https://www.voanews.com/a/taliban-publicly-flog-afghan-woman-3-men-amid-un-outcry/7843308.html>

14 <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2023/03/women-protest-and-power-confronting-the-taliban/>

15 <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/11/us/politics/taliban-afghanistan-911-families-frozen-funds>

These sanctions aimed to pressure the Taliban to form an inclusive government and respect human rights. However, instead of incentivizing policy changes, the sanctions deepened Afghanistan’s economic crisis. According to Human Rights Watch, 90% of the Afghan population now lives below the poverty line, with women disproportionately affected.¹⁶

Diplomatic isolation has further complicated efforts to address the crisis. No country has officially recognized the Taliban government, a move meant to delegitimize their rule. However, this approach has also limited the international community’s ability to engage directly with Taliban leaders on issues such as women’s rights. The lack of recognition has created a diplomatic impasse, where discussions about human rights and governance reforms are often stalled.

Humanitarian Aid

In response to the growing humanitarian crisis, the international community has mobilized aid through organizations like the World Food Programme (WFP) and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF). Despite these efforts, the distribution of aid has been fraught with challenges, including restrictions imposed by the Taliban.¹⁷

Women-led households, which make up a significant portion of Afghan families due to decades of conflict, often face barriers to accessing aid. The Taliban has restricted female aid workers from operating freely, limiting the ability of international organizations to reach women in need. In December 2022, the Taliban banned women from working in NGOs, prompting organizations like CARE International and Save the

Children to suspend operations temporarily.¹⁷ Human

html

16 <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2023/country-chapters/afghanistan>

17 <https://www.csis.org/analysis/talibans-increasing-restrictions-civil-society-and-aid-organizations>

Rights Watch (2023) highlighted that this ban severely undermines humanitarian efforts, as women are often the only ones who can access and support female beneficiaries in conservative regions.

Calls for Legal Accountability

Human rights organizations, including Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, have called for the United Nations to classify the Taliban’s treatment of women as gender apartheid—a term that captures the systematic and institutionalized oppression of women.¹⁸ This designation would not only increase international pressure but could also pave the way for legal action under international law.

Additionally, there have been calls to refer Taliban leaders to the International Criminal Court (ICC) for crimes against humanity. The Rome Statute of the ICC includes gender-based persecution as a prosecutable offense.¹⁹ However, bringing Taliban leaders to justice faces significant legal and logistical hurdles, including Afghanistan’s current lack of ICC membership and the Taliban’s control over key territories.

The Path Forward: Recommendations for Action

Several NGOs and international organizations have proposed urgent measures to address the crisis: The world must act decisively. Afghan women are not merely victims; they are the creators of resistance. Their courage demands more than sympathy—it demands

18 Farid, Naheed, and Rangita de Silva. “AFGHANISTAN UNDER THE TALIBAN: A STATE OF ‘GENDER APARTHEID’?” Princeton School of Public and International Affairs, https://spia.princeton.edu/sites/default/files/2023-02/SPIA_NaheedRangita_PolicyBrief_07.pdf. Accessed 22 October 2024.

19 Ahmadi, Belquis, et al. “What an ICC Case on Mali Means for Prosecuting Taliban Gender Crimes.” United States Institute of Peace, 18 September 2024, <https://www.usip.org/publications/2024/09/what-icc-case-mali-means-prosecuting-taliban-gender-crimes>. Accessed 22 October 2024.

justice. This is not the end of their story. As long as even one Afghan woman dares to dream, hope remains.

1. **Recognition of Gender Apartheid:** Advocating for the United Nations to formally classify the Taliban’s actions as crimes against humanity.
2. **Support for Underground Networks:** Providing funding and resources to women-led initiatives within Afghanistan that continue to educate and empower women in secret.
3. **Legal Accountability:** Pursuing investigations and prosecutions through the International Criminal Court (ICC) to hold Taliban leaders accountable for their crimes.
4. **Sustainable Aid and Education Programs:** Developing long-term strategies to support Afghan women and girls, both within and outside the country.

In the words of Layla, “I am a woman and I have the power to bring change. It matters if the world will agree to listen. We beg you to listen.” I am listening, are you?

Writer’s Reflection:

In 2015, when the Taliban’s influence was already growing, my school was shut down. My dad read the email aloud: “Due to security concerns, the school will be closed until further notice.” I remember the sinking feeling in my chest, realizing that my education was being taken away. Soon after, my family made the difficult decision to leave Afghanistan. It wasn’t an easy choice, but my parents knew that staying meant a life of fear and lost opportunities, especially for me. Leaving was heartbreaking—we left behind our home, our friends, and everything familiar. But I was one of the fortunate ones. In a new country, I could return to school and begin to rebuild the future that had almost been stolen from me.

Many of my friends didn’t have that chance. They remain in Afghanistan, where the Taliban’s grip

tightens every day. Their dreams of becoming doctors, teachers, or leaders have been replaced with the harsh reality of survival. I still hear from them sometimes, and their words haunt me. “You’re lucky,” one friend said. I carry their stories with me as a reminder of the privilege I’ve had — and the fight that remains for those who couldn’t leave.

The world must act decisively. Afghan women are not merely victims; they are the creators of resistance. Their courage demands more than sympathy—it demands justice. This is not the end of their story. As long as even one Afghan woman dares to dream, hope remains.

“My Life is Not Your Porn”: Deepfakes and Conservatism in South Korea

Haeun Rho

In the last year, an epidemic of digital sex crime using deepfake technology has pervaded South Korea. Deepfake is a form of artificial intelligence that creates video and photo content with an individual’s face, voice, or other characteristics. As seen on short-form media platforms like Instagram and TikTok, deepfakes are used to mock politicians or edit civilian faces onto pop stars. Such videos are easily produced through a downloadable app, such as Deepfake Studio, Re-

face, or Face Swapper, which is free and accessible to anyone.¹ However, users may abuse this technology to manipulate the faces of celebrities, friends, teachers, and family members into pornography.

“Send a picture of your crush now”:

Abusers of deepfake technology operate in group chats on a widely used messaging app called Telegram. Some of these deepfake pornography group chats contain over 400,000 international members. Pervasively advertised on Twitter, X, and Instagram, these chats are often promoted with an eye-catching phrase like “send a picture of your crush now.” Telegram chat ‘bots’ are utilized to transact money into a cryptocurrency called “diamonds” (an equivalent to 650 won or \$0.49). With one diamond, these bots produce deepfakes in a matter of seconds. Users also have the option to customize body parts—similar to how one can adjust the size of their eyes or face on a photo editing app—in return for more diamonds.² By offering three free trials upon joining and an additional diamond for each invitation to a friend, the allure and operation of these chats expand greatly.

³

“Your mom’s video’s highlight is when she...”:

In the case of South Korea, deepfake crimes became viral as Telegram group chats categorized by city, school, and age started to form rapidly. These group chats are called 능욕방 (“neung-yeok bang”), which

1 Mustak, Mekhail, Joni Salminen, Matti Mäntymäki, Arafat Rahman, and Yogesh Dwivedi. “Deepfakes: Deceptions, Mitigations, and Opportunities.” *Journal of Business Research*, October 26, 2022. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0148296322008335>.

2 Park, Goeun. “[단독] 딥페이크 텔레방에 22만 명...입장하니 ‘좋아하는 여자 사진 보내라.’” *한겨레*, August 22, 2024. https://www.hani.co.kr/arti/society/society_general/1154764.html.

3 Im, Cheolhwi. [단독] 22만 “딥페이크” 텔레방에 이어 40만 유사 텔레방 확인, August 27, 2024. <https://n.news.naver.com/article/003/0012750768>.

directly translates to ‘humiliation chat,’ targeting 겹지인 (“gyeop-ji-in”) or ‘mutual acquaintance.’ Most require new members to send ten deepfake photos or videos to the administrator to be permitted in the chat, mostly of their own mutuals. Along with the creation of deepfake media, the members expose the victims’ names, ages, phone numbers, social media tags, residences, and schools to further exploit the vulnerability of their acquaintances.⁴

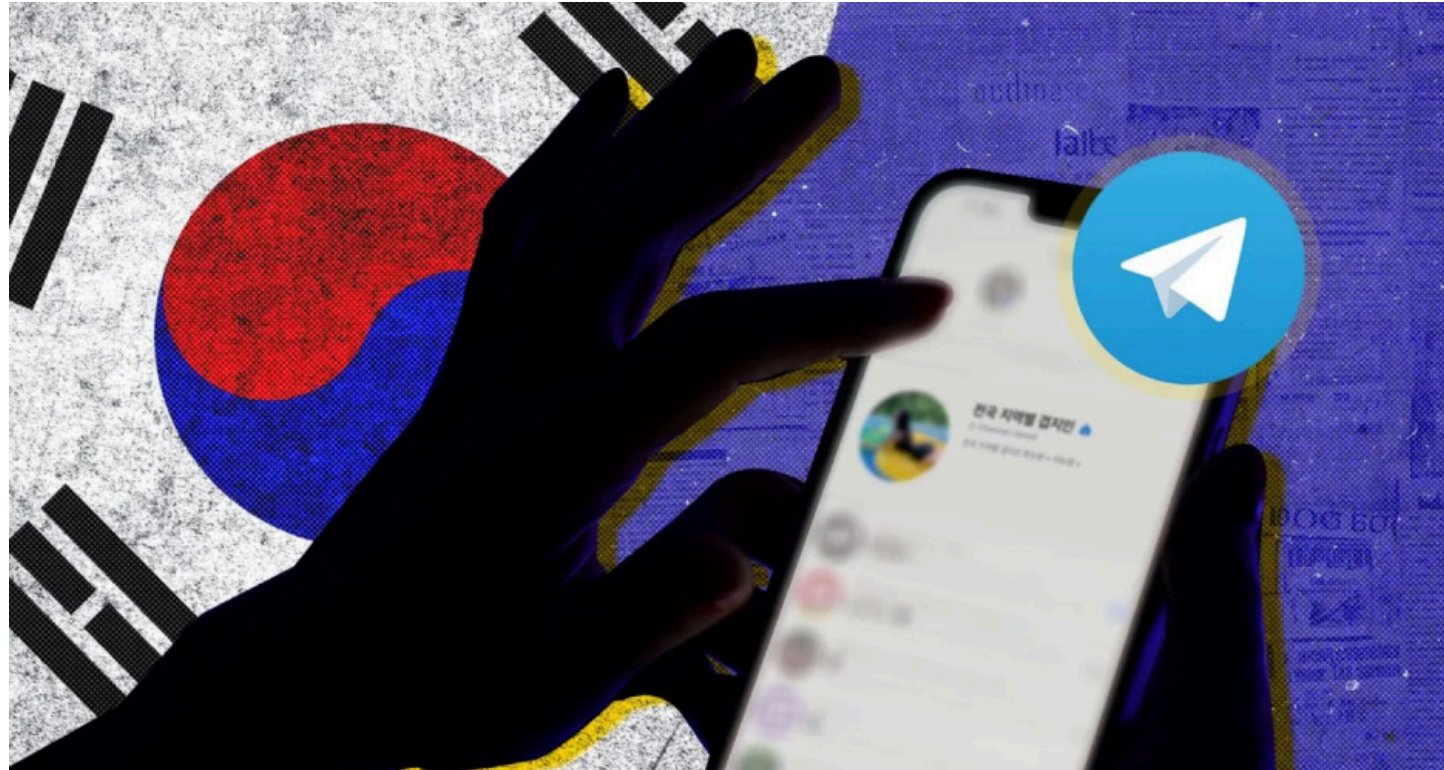
Many abusers exacerbate the harassment by blackmailing the victims by sending convincing deepfakes to family in return for money or even sexual intercourse. Another common way teenagers torment victims is by trapping them in group chats flooded with inappropriate deepfakes and incessantly inviting them. They emotionally abuse victims by pretending to warn them about the victim’s exposed information and deepfakes while recording their petrified reactions as another form of entertainment. In other cases, dehumanizing images of acquaintances are used interchangeably with emojis and memes in group chats.⁵

“A new playground for teenagers”:

Deepfake is a relatively new feature of AI, making it more common among teenagers to understand and use this technology. A 2023 study revealed that 75.8 percent of the deepfake victims in Korea were teenagers, with the number decreasing to 70 percent in 2024. High school, middle school, and even elementary school students are being told by school administration to take down any media of them on social platforms for protection. In an interview, a Korean female

4 Go, Narin. “[단독] ‘○○○ 능욕방’ 딥페이크, 겹지인 노렸다...지역별·대학별·미성년까지.” *한겨레*, August 22, 2024. https://www.hani.co.kr/arti/society/society_general/1154763.html.

5 Kang, Nayeon. “고백 거절하자’ 딥페이크’로 협박...선물·식사값 돌려받기 위해 (‘영업비밀’).” *TV리포트*, November 12, 2024. <https://tvreport.co.kr/hot-issue/article/854636/?organic=1>.



Source: BBC

high school sophomore said the horror is that anyone from her seat partner and trusted friends to teachers might have created or seen a deepfake photo of her, and she would never know. Her friend, who is a victim, fought against endless rumors following a fabricated video. The mental distress as a result of deepfakes is unimaginably omnipresent in South Korea. A Korean news reporter on the radio described these Telegram chats as a “new playground for teenagers.”⁶

“No Shame. Yes Anger.”:

Since this upturn, there have been over 900 digital sex crime cases in 2024, with most resulting in impunity.⁷

6 Kim, Hyeonjeong. “[인터뷰] ‘텔레그램 성착취 딥페이크방 잠입해보니... 중고생이 홍보책.’” YouTube, August 27, 2024. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YHyVg08W7G0&list=TLPQMDkxMDIwM-jS1MTORBWN8XA&index=5>.

7 Reuters. “South Korea to Criminalize Watching or Possessing Sexually Explicit Deepfakes.” CNN, September 27, 2024. <https://www.cnn.com/2024/09/26/asia/south-korea-deepfake-bill-passed-intl-hnk/index>.

To investigate the owners of Telegram group chats, police departments need permission from Telegram. The company doesn’t cooperate, making it impossible to investigate the deeper work of this crime. Korean law requires explicit evidence that proves an individual had malicious intent, and even if perpetrators are charged, their crime is spreading false media online and defaming others, for which the punishment is only up to 18 months. In response to the impotent support from the Korean government, the public has responded by fighting for legal protection against AI technology. Campaign phrases like “no shame, yes anger” and “my life is not your porn” circulate among advocacy groups.⁸

On October 10, 2024, the government passed a partial

[html#:~:text=South%20Korean%20police%20have%20so,perpetrators%20are%20teenagers%2C%20po-lice%20say](https://www.southkorea.com/html#:~:text=South%20Korean%20police%20have%20so,perpetrators%20are%20teenagers%2C%20po-lice%20say).

8 Barr, Heather. “South Korea’s Digital Sex Crime Deepfake Crisis.” Human Rights Watch, August 30, 2024. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/08/29/south-koreas-digital-sex-crime-deepfake-crisis>.



legislature criminalizing the possession, purchase, and viewing of sexual deepfake media. It attempts to prohibit the spread of deepfake media with a maximum sentence of three years in prison or ₩30,000,000 (equivalent to \$22,000) for viewers and seven years for creators and distributors. This measure will be enacted after receiving President Yoon’s approval.⁹

Opinion:

According to a study, South Korea was ranked number one in the susceptibility rate to deepfake pornography in 2023.¹⁰ While researching this topic, I wondered why, in such a country known for its conservative

9 Yoon, Hyejoo. “딥페이크 성착취물, 소지만 해도 최대 징역 3년.” 매일방송, October 10, 2024. <https://www.mbn.co.kr/news/society/5062919>.

10 “State-of-Deepfake-Infographic-2023.Pdf - Home Security Heroes.” 2023 State of Deepfakes, 2023. <https://www.securityhero.io/state-of-deepfakes/assets/pdf/state-of-deepfake-infographic-2023.pdf>.

culture, there was an outbreak of, ironically, the most non-conservative crime around the world. I took this question and viewed it through a psychological and historical lens. South Korea has a prominent culture of competition in which people are constantly in a race, comparing themselves to others.

South Korea is a comparatively recent country, with its founding year being 1948. Even then, this country had to be reconstructed after the Korean War 1953. Despite their novel and poor starting point, today, Korea marks its presence as a global leader in industries, including technology, pop, fashion, and more.¹¹ South Korea was able to get to its elite status in less than 100 years by firing up competition within the country, selecting a small number of elitists out of an

11 Lew, Young Ick. Brief History of Korea, 2000. https://www.koreasociety.org/images/pdf/Korean-Studies/Monographs_GeneralReading/BRIEF%20HISTORY%20OF%20KOREA.pdf.

overpopulated country, which eventually centered on competition amongst one another.¹² One example of Korea's competition is the insane study culture. Since preschool, Korean students go to after-school tutoring called 학원 ("hakwon") to preview content years and years in advance. All this effort is for them to do well in a single college entrance exam (수능 or "suneung") in their last year of high school. The results determine which universities students will attend, and since only about three colleges are considered elite by employers, the fierce competition puts students in constant competition mode. In Korea, it seems that it is not about finding their own path or themselves but rather about doing better than those around them. In such a small country with overpopulated people, people in Korea constantly look for one more thing to be a step further than others.

The root cause of Korea's deepfake incident lies in the way people can feel like they have control of others through the possession of a deepfake video. In a conservative country like South Korea, an individual being a subject of sexually inappropriate media is considered a disgrace to that person's family and is looked down upon regardless of its authenticity. For these criminals to automatically inherit that power by possessing these media of their mutual is what draws them more to digital sex crimes.

However, these deepfake incidents are not far away from us. The United States of America was ranked second highest (Korea being first) for its susceptibility rate to deepfake pornography in 2023. Although deepfake pornography crimes have not been as concerning compared to South Korea, there have been many

¹² Lee, Chung Min. "The Future of K-Power: What South Korea Must Do after Peaking - Carnegie Endowment for International Peace | Carnegie Endowment for International Peace." Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, August 22, 2024. <https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2024/08/the-future-of-k-power-what-south-korea-must-do-after-peaking?lang=en>.

victims. With further development of AI, it would not be surprising if the epidemic of deepfake pornography that South Korea is under occurs in the United States any time soon. We must devise national and global precautionary measures to protect our people against the harmful use of AI.

Writer's Reflection:

My motivation for writing this piece was to shed light on a human rights violation where anyone is subject to becoming the victim. You could be a victim with just a picture on social media or a phone. People are trembling with fear, having no one to trust. If artificial intelligence is supposed to make our lives easier, why does it create discord among us? Through writing this piece, I understood that while technological advancements are inevitable, continuously failing to regulate their use can lead to uncontrollable consequences.

Education Under Siege: Gaza's Struggle for Knowledge and Dignity

Ayaisha Alsaedi

Tents that once hosted final exams, weddings, and funerals are now packed with Palestinian families bound by displacement and not by blood. School desks are being used as partitions to create "family units" and

chalkboards fuel cooking fires.¹ Children once wore headphones to drown out the noise of bombings.² Now they've given up that small comfort.

Thallgeea Shihadeh, a 26-year-old Palestinian American who works as a nurse and teacher, remembers a different version of school in Palestine—a time before classrooms were forced into bomb shelters and kids forced into adults.

She recounts the excitement of singing the Palestinian anthem and reciting Surat Al-Fatiha every morning. Seemingly trivial sources of joy—sports practices, early dismissals from school, and poem recitations—characterize her formative memories. Threats of hunger, safety, and political instability loomed, yet state tests and college applications consumed Shihadeh's worries.

Now, as the Gaza Strip is bombarded, her memories bear no resemblance to her current reality. The region, once home to 2.3 million people—including 625,000 students

¹ Emerald, Maxwell, "Our School Books Are Used to Spark Fires: Nearly a Year Without Education for Gaza's Children," France 24, September 4, 2024, video, <https://www.france24.com/en/video/20240904-our-school-books-are-used-to-spark-fires-nearly-a-year-without-education-for-gaza-s-children>.

² Miriam Berger, "How Do We Forget This?: Children in Gaza and Israel Face Trauma of War," The Washington Post, May 19, 2021, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2021/05/19/gaza-israel-children-trauma/>.

eager to start the school year—is now a graveyard of schools and playgrounds reduced to rubble.³

Since October 7th, organizations like the Education Cluster Assessment Team (ECAT) have been tracking reports of damages to schools from intense Israeli military assaults. Through their "Satellite-derived Damage Assessments,"⁴ ECAT concluded that 82.5% of schools in Gaza have sustained varying damages, and 67% are completely destroyed.⁵

The war on Gaza has killed more than 40,000 Palestinians, 16,456 of them children.⁶ Children who should have been starting their first day of school are instead making their second and third round trips to fill up buckets of water for displaced relatives huddled



Photographer: AFP (Agence France-Presse)

³ UNRWA, "Education Under Attack," UNRWA, accessed November 26, 2024, <https://www.unrwa.org/newsroom/photos/education-under-attack>.

⁴ ReliefWeb, "Verification of Damages to Schools Based on Proximity to Damaged Sites in Gaza, Occupied Palestinian Territory: Update #2, 26 March 2024," ReliefWeb, March 26, 2024, <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/verification-damages-schools-based-proximity-damaged-sites-gaza-occupied-palestinian-territory-update-2-26-march-2024>.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Al Jazeera, "Israel Kills More Than 40,000 Palestinians in Gaza, 16,456 of Them Children," Al Jazeera, August 15, 2024, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/8/15/israel-kills-more-than-40000-palestinians-in-gaza-16456-of-them-children>.

dled in tents.⁷ Among their peers killed, 11,347 were under 18, some so young they had yet to be named.⁸

UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, condemned Israeli strikes on schools as “dramatic violations of international humanitarian law.”⁹ Israel’s relentless, indiscriminate bombing of children and schools suggests an underlying narrative: all Palestinians are combatants.

Amidst the bombardment, Shihadeh views the pursuit of education an act of resistance. As Israel and its allies attempt to blur the line between civilian and combatant, the power of international bodies and procedures to hold Israel accountable continues to erode. Despite a precedent of international negligence, Palestinians have seized the power of education to assert their humanity, preserve their culture, and resist erasure under Israel’s siege on Palestine.

The Limits of International Accountability

The first document to recognize education as a fundamental right for all, irrespective of nationality, race, or gender, was the Universal Declaration of Human Rights signed in 1948.¹⁰ UDHR was established in a

⁷ Sufian Taha, “In Gaza, Getting Drinking Water Has Become a Daily Challenge,” Haaretz, November 14, 2024, <https://www.haaretz.com/middle-east-news/palestinians/2024-11-14/ty-article/.premium/in-gaza-getting-drinking-water-has-become-a-daily-challenge/00000193-2a59-dad9-a9f3-af7982950000>.

⁸ ABC News, “Gaza Death Toll: The Numbers of Those Killed by Israeli Strikes and the Gruesome Scene of Buried Body Parts,” ABC News, October 19, 2024, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-10-19/gaza-death-toll-numbers-killed-israel-strikes-buried-body-parts/104259532>.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ United Nations, “Universal Declaration of Human Rights,” United Nations, accessed November 26, 2024, <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>.



Photographer: Mahmoud Zaki/Xinhua news

world recovering from World War II and the terrors of the Holocaust.¹¹

Shortly after, the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and 1977 obliged governing powers in occupied territories to facilitate the proper working of schools. The mandate prohibited attacks on educational institutions, thereby granting them protected status.¹²

¹¹ “UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights,” Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center, accessed November 26, 2024, [https://www.ilholocaustmuseum.org/current-exhibitions/take-a-stand-center/un-universal-declaration-of-human-rights/#:~:text=In%20response%20to%20the%20atrocities,of%20Human%20Rights%20\(UDHR\)](https://www.ilholocaustmuseum.org/current-exhibitions/take-a-stand-center/un-universal-declaration-of-human-rights/#:~:text=In%20response%20to%20the%20atrocities,of%20Human%20Rights%20(UDHR)).

¹² International Committee of the Red Cross, “Summary of the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and Additional Protocols,” International Committee of the Red Cross, accessed November 26, 2024, https://www.redcross.org/content/dam/redcross/atg/PDF_s/International_Services/International_Humanitarian_Law/IHL_SummaryGenevaConv.pdf.

By 1998, following atrocious wars in the Balkans and the Rwanda Genocide of 1994, the Rome Statute was adopted and would serve as the founding treaty for the International Criminal Court (ICC). The statute established the ICC’s power to prosecute individuals internationally with serious offenses such as genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and the crime of aggression.¹³ Similar to the Geneva Convention, the Rome Statute prohibited intentionally directing attacks against buildings dedicated to education.¹⁴

¹³ International Criminal Court, Understanding the ICC, accessed November 26, 2024, <https://www.icc-cpi.int/sites/default/files/Publications/understanding-the-icc.pdf#:~:text=According%20to%20the%20Rome%20Statute%2C%20it%20is,out%20the%20investigation%20and%20prosecute%20the%20perpetrators>.

¹⁴ Human Rights Watch, Schools and Armed Conflict: A Global Survey of Domestic Laws and State Practice, July 20, 2011, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2011/07/20/schools-and-armed-conflict/global>.

Both treaties, however, allow exceptions when educational institutions are actively used for military purposes— a loophole often exploited by Israel to justify its bombing of schools and hospitals.

Institutions like the ICC face significant limitations in enforcement. The Rome Statute, bound by the principle of complementarity, can only intervene if a state is ‘unwilling or unable’ to investigate its own crimes.¹⁵ Israel, not being a signatory to the Rome Statute,¹⁶

survey-domestic-laws-and-state-practice.

¹⁵ Alan Dershowitz, “The ICC Lacks Jurisdiction Over Israel in Gaza,” The Hill, October 23, 2024, <https://thehill.com/opinion/international/4664475-the-icc-lacks-jurisdiction-over-israel-in-gaza/>.

¹⁶ Daniel Benoliel and Ronen Perry, “Israel, Palestine and the ICC,” International Criminal Court, May 2011, <https://asp.icc-cpi.int/sites/asp/files/NR/rdonlyres/D3C77FA6-9DEE-45B1-ACC0-B41706B->



Photographer: Mahmoud Zaki/Xinhua news

conducts its own investigations into alleged violations.¹⁷ Even if the UN Security Council were to refer a case to the ICC, or Israel willingly accepts the court's authority to investigate such violations, its political allies—most notably the United States—can veto these referrals. The United States has done so 45 times since December 2023 and 89 times since 1945.¹⁸ Over half of U.S. vetoes have been used on resolutions critical of Israel alone.¹⁹

Child or Combatant: The Rejection of Palestinian Humanity

These legal frameworks, designed to protect civilian life and liberties but riddled with limitations, collapse under the weight of deliberate mischaracterization and dehumanization. In this twisted narrative, the protected status of schools is being denounced; claims of schools turned military bases are justified by the infiltration of two-foot, pacifier-toting terrorists who were deemed threats before they could crawl.

The Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) has on numerous occasions accused schools of being “used by Hamas terrorists to plan and execute terrorist attacks against IDF troops and the state of Israel.”²⁰ These assumptions have been unequivocally disproved by organizations like the United Nations Relief & Work Agency

B41E5/281910/BPIsraelPalestineandtheICCMay2011.pdf.

17 Dershowitz, “The ICC Lacks Jurisdiction Over Israel in Gaza”

18 Hope O'Dell, “How the U.S. Has Used Its Power at the U.N. to Support Israel for Decades,” *Global Affairs*, October 2024, <https://globalaffairs.org/blue-marble/how-us-has-used-its-power-un-support-israel-decades>.

19 Ibid.

20 Abeer Salman, Kareem Khadder, Lauren Izso, Kara Fox, Sana Noor Haq, and Mohammad Al Sawalhi, “Israeli Airstrike Hits UN Facility in Gaza's Nuseirat Camp,” *CNN*, September 11, 2024, <https://www.cnn.com/2024/09/11/world/israeli-airstrike-un-nuseirat-intl-latam/index.html>.

(UNRWA). Far too many casualties later, the agencies confirmed that the teachers were simply educators.²¹ As a result, historically protected spaces like schools and hospitals have become the theaters of the war, and the international community has become a spectator.

Misclassification extends beyond schools. In an interview on October 29, former IDF intelligence officer Eliyahi Yossian stated that, “there are no innocents in Gaza, there are 2.5 million terrorists.” He called for “maximum corpses” and “zero mortality” in the assault on Gaza.²² When Eylon Levy, former spokesperson for Israel, was asked if he supports the release of innocent Palestinian children, he responded, “I do not support the release of terrorists.”²³ UNICEF designated Gaza the most dangerous place in the world to be a child.²⁴

But Israel is not alone in this dehumanization.

When the walls of our own Yale residential halls are defaced with the words “Death to Palestine,” “children of whores,” and “they are pussies,” in Hebrew,²⁵ and our university defends it as “political sentiment,”²⁶ we

21 Ibid.

22 Martha Lincoln, “Palestinian Children Are Not Terrorists,” *Mondoweiss*, November 2023, <https://mondoweiss.net/2023/11/palestinian-children-are-not-terrorists/>.

23 Open to Debate, “Were Israel's Actions in the Gaza War Justified? Eylon Levy vs. Mehdi Hasan,” YouTube video, September 24, 2024, <https://youtu.be/DQzKw30LeTA?si=C1hJrFShqbSgAboJ&t=2290>.

24 UNICEF, “UNICEF Geneva Palais Briefing Note: Gaza, the World's Most Dangerous Place to Be a Child,” October 30, 2023, <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/unicef-geneva-palais-briefing-note-gaza-worlds-most-dangerous-place-be-child>.

25 Molley Reinmann and Tristan Hernandez, “Messages Declare ‘Death to Palestine’ on Hopper Whiteboard,” *Yale Daily News*, October 16, 2023, <https://yaledailynews.com/blog/2023/10/16/messages-declare-death-to-palestine-on-hopper-whiteboard/>.

26 Message from Yale's Office of Institutional

are forced to confront an unsettling truth: the dehumanization of Palestinians is not confined to Israel—it thrives here, in our educational institutions, in our communities. This is not an anomaly; it is the sickening status quo.

Such legal and psychological alibis erode the power of institutional accountability. Palestinian humanity is mocked when ancestries are erased²⁷, and thousands of kids are hiding in the basements of crumbling hospital buildings, bracing for the next bomb to drop.²⁸ It is mocked when seven-year-olds grow up in refugee camps that are torn apart by explosions,²⁹ only to be thrown in cells along with their fathers before the age of eight.³⁰ It is mocked when classes are held in cemeteries.³¹

How can we expect international treaties to protect

Equity and Accessibility in Response to Messages on Hopper Whiteboard, October 31, 2023.

27 Mohammed Hussein, Mohammed Haddad, and Konstantinos Antonopoulos, “Know Their Names: Palestinian Families Killed in Israeli Attacks on Gaza,” *Al Jazeera*, October 8, 2024, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/longform/2024/10/8/know-their-names-palestinian-families-killed-in-israeli-attacks-on-gaza>.

28 Geoff Brumfiel, Becky Sullivan, Ruth Sherlock, Daniel Wood, and Connie Hanzhang Jin, “Here's the Available Evidence of What Happened at Al-Ahli Arab Hospital in Gaza,” *NPR*, October 18, 2023, <https://www.npr.org/2023/10/18/1206795861/heres-the-available-evidence-of-what-happened-at-al-ahli-arab-hospital-in-gaza>.

29 Amjad Shabat, “Memories and Scenes from the Nakba Relived,” *UNRWA USA*, November 1, 2023, <https://www.unrwausa.org/voices-of-unrwa/memories-and-scenes-from-the-nakba-relived>.

30 Human Rights Watch, “Israel: Security Forces Abuse Palestinian Children,” July 19, 2015, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/07/19/israel-security-forces-abuse-palestinian-children>.

31 “Gaza Children Attend School at Cemetery,” *Middle East Monitor*, December 20, 2024, <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20241220-gaza-children-attend-school-at-cemetery>

these spaces when we refuse to distinguish between a combatant and a civilian, a kid and an adult, a toy and a weapon?

We can't.

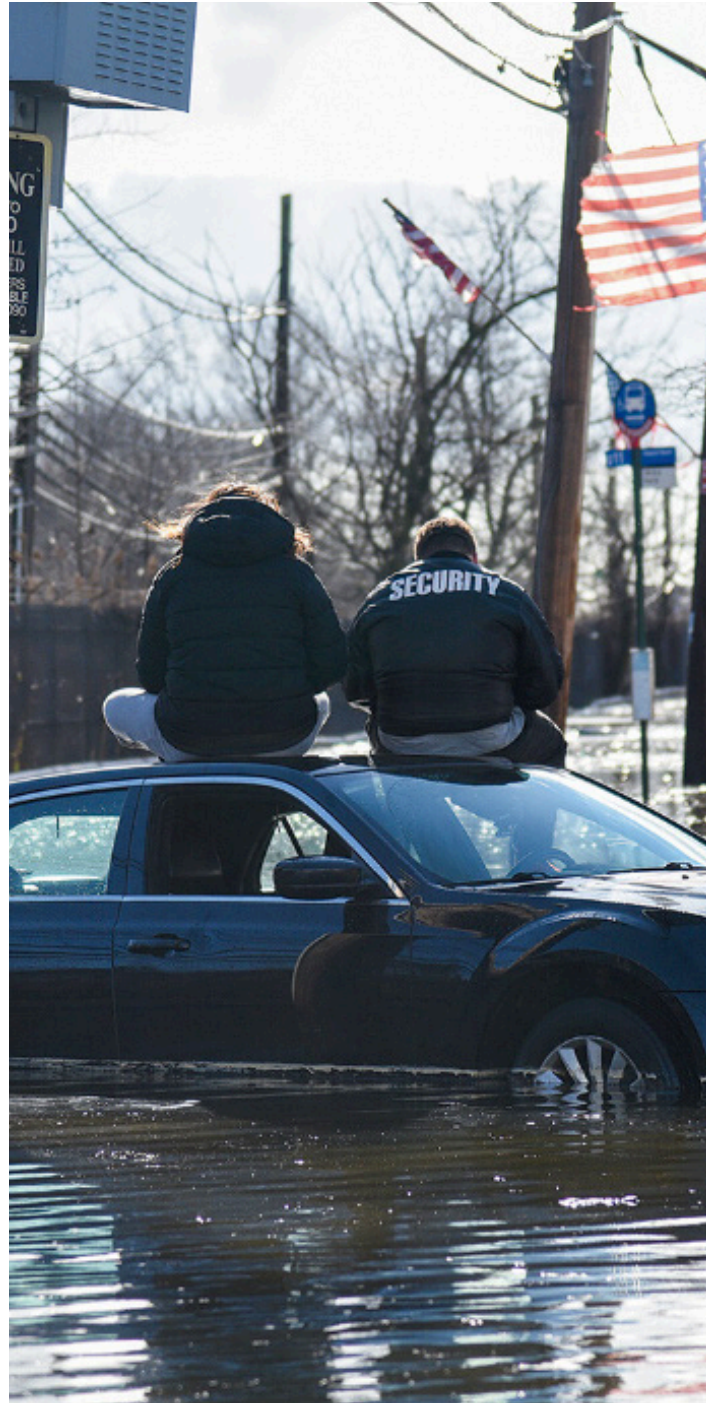
What's scariest to the Israeli occupation about a child living past a single digit number in Gaza is not that they will join Hamas; it's that they will follow up on their promise to rebuild every destroyed school building, to re-staff every massacred hospital, and to restore the dignity of the next generation of Palestinians who resist the occupation's attempt to erase their national identity and their right to self-determination. Thallgeea Shihadeh is an embodiment of this promise – to rebuild, reclaim, and resist erasure.

Writers Reflection:

Upon hearing that Gaza, a land historically suffocated by occupation and now genocide, champions one of the highest literacy rates in the world, I initially set out to write this piece on a more hopeful note. I knew this was a testament to the resilient culture and values of the Palestinian people, a priority that countries enduring other atrocities rightfully struggled to maintain, let alone flourish. My optimism quickly dimmed, as I was forced to confront that the reality on the ground reflected a brutal and complete annihilation of this very source of pride. There is no light at the end of the tunnel, and the happy ending I once sought was impossible.

Climate Refugees: An Unprotected Population

Alexandra Ruiz



Nathan Kensinger/Columbia Magazine

“I never wanted to leave,” Ali Al-Eidani wrote to the *Journal* regarding her family’s displacement from Iraqi marshes after “everything became dry.”

These words reflect the harsh conditions in Iraq’s most fertile region, which had once sustained a unique agricultural life for millennia. Yet, today, Iraq is one of the five most vulnerable countries to the effects of climate change.¹ A five-year old drought and severe water scarcity threaten its once vibrant wetlands. As the effects of climate change worsen, stories like Ali’s will become more common.

Climate change is a critical and growing global threat on an unprecedented scale. Climate scientists project that, by 2050, 3.2 billion people will reside in water-scarce regions.² Such environmental impacts have critical health impacts too: droughts contribute to malnutrition due to crop failure and floods correlate with cholera outbreaks.³

1 “Migration, Environment, and Climate Change in Iraq,” United Nations, August 11, 2022, <https://iraq.un.org/en/194355-migration-environment-and-climate-change-iraq>.

2 Ana Gil, Pamela Lizette Cruz, Kelsey Norman, Ivonne Cruz. “How Can We Protect ‘Climate Refugees?’” Baker Institute. (2022) <https://www.bakerinstitute.org/research/how-can-we-protect-climate-refugees>.

3 Saverio Bellizzi et al., “Global Health, Climate Change and Migration: The Need for Recognition of ‘Climate Refugees,’” *Journal of Global Health* 13 (March 24, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.7189/jogh.13.03011>, 1.

Climate crises threaten the right to a “clean, healthy, and sustainable environment” that the United Nations General Assembly declared in July 2022.⁴ Furthermore, climate migrants’ lack of protection under the 1951 Refugee Convention deprives them of the legal capacity to escape climate catastrophe and violates the freedom to leave and return to one’s country outlined in Article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Dr. Ivonne Cruz, who researches US-Mexico borderlands, explains that climate refugees face cross-cutting economic and environmental stimulants of migration. Of the 260 million people at risk of rising sea levels, 90% live in impoverished countries.⁵ Consequently, these individuals face significant financial barriers to fleeing environmental catastrophe.

Most climate migrants in the Global South cite poor economic conditions as the primary motivator of their relocation.⁶ However, they overlook how climate-driven impacts, like crop failures, underpin their economic circumstances.⁷ For instance, Christian Espinosa Schatz, Yale Environmental Studies PhD candidate, explains that many Guatemalans that migrate to the United States focus on the economic opportunities migration would offer them, rather than the climatic

4 United Nations Environment Programme, “In historic move, UN declares healthy environment a human right,” UNEP, July 28, 2022, <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/historic-move-un-declares-healthy-environment-human-right>.

5 Bellizzi et al., “Global Health, Climate Change and Migration: The Need for Recognition of ‘Climate Refugees,’” 1

6 Helene Bevnveniste, “Effect of Border Policy on Exposure and Vulnerability to Climate Change,” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, 2020, <https://www.pnas.org/doi/10.1073/pnas.2007597117>, 26693-4.

7 Benveniste, Oppenheimer, and Fleurbaey, “Effect of Border Policy on Exposure and Vulnerability to Climate Change,” 26693-4.

conditions that engender their poor financial circumstances in the first place.

While international displacement frequently dominates conversations of climate migration, climate experts emphasize that internal displacement accounts for the majority of cases. For instance, Cruz highlights how droughts depleted water access in northern Mexico, forcing many to migrate to southern Mexico.

Climate displacement also happens in our backyards. Four million Americans are displaced annually by natural disasters, yet many lack the resources to leave their homes permanently.⁸ Residents in coastal areas face heightened challenges: they cannot escape disaster regions and damage from climate disasters devalues their homes, decreasing their opportunity to move in the future.⁹

In fact, climate-impacted individuals all over the world cannot escape the harrowing conditions they face. Over 90% of migrants in Africa’s Sahel region lack sufficient financial resources to leave the droughts, floods, and heatwaves that devastate the region.¹⁰ Climate-driven resource deprivation in already resource-scarce areas deteriorates residents’ capacity to sustain a lucrative way of life.¹¹ Consequently, individuals remain economically trapped as climate catastrophe worsens.¹²

8 Craig, David. “America’s Great Climate Migration Has Begun. Here’s What You Need to Know.” *Columbia Magazine*, 2024.

9 Craig, David. “America’s Great Climate Migration Has Begun. Here’s What You Need to Know.” *Columbia Magazine*, 2024.

10 Stefano Torelli, “Climate-Driven Migration in Africa,”

11 Benveniste, Oppenheimer, and Fleurbaey, “Effect of Border Policy on Exposure and Vulnerability to Climate Change.”

12 Benveniste, Oppenheimer, and Fleurbaey, “Effect of Border Policy on Exposure and Vulnerability to Climate Change.”

The lack of legal protections for climate migrants exacerbates this crisis. Ana Gil, manager of the Baker Institute Migration Initiative, explains that climate migrants lack international legal protections. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees refuses to classify climate migrants as “refugees” under the claim that they can receive protection from their home nations, unlike traditional refugees.¹³

Although addressing these gaps in legal protections is crucial, Gil warns that reforming the Refugee Convention to include climate migrants “opens a Pandora’s box” that threatens narrowing existing

13 Gil, et al. “How Can We Protect ‘Climate Refugees?’”

protections given today’s politically hostile environment towards immigration. Instead, Gil supports expanding national and regional efforts to address the climate migration crisis.

She urges nations to take inspiration from Latin America’s Cartagena Declaration, which protects refugees affected by “other circumstances which have seriously disrupted public order”.¹⁴ She and other legal scholars believe that climate disasters would fulfill this categorization.¹⁵ In fact, Mexico’s 2011 Law on Refugees, Complementary Protection and Political Asylum, which was inspired by the Cartagena Declaration,

14 Gil, et al. “How Can We Protect ‘Climate Refugees?’”

15 Gil, et al. “How Can We Protect ‘Climate Refugees?’”



Meridith Kohut/New York Times

authorized Haitian refugees from the 2010 earthquake and 2016 hurricane to enter Mexico.¹⁶

To address the forgotten crisis of internally displaced peoples (IDPs), Gil points to the Kampala Convention in Africa, which explicitly describes “natural or human-made disasters, including climate change” as grounds for IDP protection.¹⁷

What can we do?

Gil believes that advocating for legislation like the Cartagena Declaration would build “political will” to protect climate migrants and “propel the issue forward.” She also encourages individuals to “make a difference on the ground,” like supporting Every Shelter and Better Shelter – organizations that provide sustainable sheltering solutions to refugees.

Yet, the most powerful response to this crisis is not to merely retroactively protect climate refugees. Rather, the international community must combat the root problem of climate change to eliminate the conditions that create climate refugees in the first place.

Writer’s Reflection:

Having grown up in a family of immigrants, I hope to pay forward their immense sacrifices by supporting migrant populations with more arduous migration journeys than my family’s, like climate migrants. I wrote this article to combine my passion for protecting vulnerable migrant populations with my desire to raise awareness about what I consider the most pressing global challenge: climate change. While I had been aware that climate catastrophes have influenced international migration patterns, interviewing experts and conducting online research opened my eyes to the relevance of internal displacement provoked by

16 Gil, et al. “How Can We Protect ‘Climate Refugees?’”

17 Gil, et al. “How Can We Protect ‘Climate Refugees?’”

the worsening effects of climate change. Ultimately, I hope that, beyond merely raising awareness about climate displacement, this article inspires readers to take action to support such a vulnerable, yet under assisted population.

Stateless on the Island: A Divided Hispaniola

Michaell Santos Paulino

The Dominican Republic and Haiti have had a complicated history since their inception. In 2010, this relationship worsened when the Dominican Republic reformed its constitution to restrict the definition of citizenship to only those born in the Dominican Republic to Dominican parents with legal status. This reform expanded three years later in 2013, when the Constitutional Court made a 168-13 decision declaring that this constitutional reform was retroactive, applying to anyone born between 1929 and 2010.¹ This reform and decision by the court was a direct response to the growing number of Haitian immigrants in the country. The Dominican Republic’s use of constitutional and legal reforms over recent decades targeted Haitian immigrants and Dominicans of Haitian descent, effectively creating a class of stateless individuals.

1 Amnistía Internacional. “República Dominicana: Autoridades deben poner fin al trato racista y garantizar el derecho a la nacionalidad.” Amnistía Internacional. 2023. <https://www.amnesty.org/es/latest/news/2023/09/dominican-republic-racist-treatment-right-to-nationality/>.

Much of the conflict between the two countries has developed due to Haitian migration to the Dominican Republic. Haiti has faced economic difficulties, natural disasters, and a lack of government structure, making it the poorest country in Latin America. Conversely, the Dominican Republic has been able to economically benefit in sectors such as tourism and agriculture, setting themselves up to be part of the international stage.² Due to the economic struggle that Haiti is experiencing, many Haitian citizens migrate to the Dominican Republic. However—without a formalized system—many have done so without documentation. While Haiti has consistently suffered from a lack of resources and democratic leadership over the years it has also endured natural disasters such as the earthquake in 2010, which left approximately 1.5 million people homeless.³ This earthquake was a step further into the crises that Haiti was facing and caused many more citizens to leave for the Dominican Republic in search of not only work but now also a home. In 2021, the Haitian president, Jovenel Moïseue, was assassinated, leaving the country once again in despair, with a government in disarray and a country ruled by gangs.

From an early age, Dominicans were taught in school that Haitians were part of the reason they had to fight for independence. The country's independence day is not celebrating its independence from Spain but from Haiti. Before 2004, it was easier for Haitian descendants to obtain Dominican citizenship. If you were born in the Dominican Republic to “parents who resided in the country for periods exceeding 10 days” you were recognized as a citizen.⁴ Although this was

2 Brooks, Dario. “Los 22 años en los que Haití gobernó Santo Domingo y cómo dieron origen a la actual República Dominicana.” BBC. 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias-62102537>

3 Abassi, Logan, and António Guterres. “UN marks anniversary of devastating 2010 Haiti earthquake.” UN News.2022. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/01/1109632>.

4 Open Society Justice Initiative. “Dominicanos de ascendencia haitiana y el derecho quebrantado a la nacionalidad.” Open Society Justice Initiative, Open

possible for people of Haitian descent, it was still difficult to prove their identity. When going to the civil registry, many were denied a birth certificate proving they were Dominican.

This situation worsened in 2004 when the government adopted Law No. 285-04. The law “effectively ended the automatic right to Dominican nationality.”⁵ With the law, being born in the Dominican Republic did not guarantee Dominican citizenship, which opened the possibility that children born in the country would become stateless. Citizenship would only be obtained if a child was born to Dominican parents or someone had the legal documentation to prove they were Dominican. The country had to find a system that would allow them to continue to count children born in the country to non-Dominican parents. They began distributing pink cards to mothers who were not residents of the Dominican Republic.⁶ These pink cards were used to register the birth, but not for the children to receive a birth certificate or a cédula, the official identity document required in the Dominican Republic. This pink card is still in use today and allows children born to non-resident mothers a form of proof of birth.

In 2013, the country took a step that surprised the country and the international community. The Constitutional Court, in decision 168-13, decided that law No. 285-04 was to be interpreted retroactively, meaning that the law passed in 2010 on citizenship was to apply to anyone born between 1929 and 2010, even despite the fact citizenship laws during those years did not focus on the legal status of the parents.⁷ This law targeted Dominicans of Haitian descent and meant that even if you had your documentation, were born in the country, and had been living there for decades, if your parents were

Society Justice Initiative. 2010.

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid.

7 “República Dominicana: Autoridades deben poner fin al trato racista y garantizar el derecho a la nacionalidad.”

not citizens, then your citizenship would be revoked. This left thousands of Dominican citizens stateless, as the country they called home revoked their citizenship with no other country to turn to.⁸

Even with the criticism the Dominican government received, in 2014, Congress adopted a new naturalization law, Law 169-14, hoping to lessen the damage and legal chaos \ occurring with more than 200 thousand Dominicans being deprived of citizenship. This law had a system where those affected were divided into two groups. The first group was the people who were registered in the Civil Registry at birth.⁹ This group received their citizenship back and was given the necessary documentation to prove they were Dominican citizens. The second group consisted of people not part of the civil registry as their parents did not register them at birth. For this group, the plan established by Law 169-14 was to declare themselves foreigners and wait two years to apply for nationality. In the meantime, they were given an identity document.¹⁰ However, on this identity card, the nationality was written as “Haiti” rather than the Dominican Republic, although the place of birth described the country in which the person was born.



Ventas, Leire. “Nací en República Dominicana pero soy extranjera en mi propio país y en cualquier otro, nos volvieron apátridas.”/BBC

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid.

For many, it was very frustrating, as they were born in the Dominican Republic but assigned a Haitian nationality, even if they had never set foot in Haiti and the only connection they had was that their parents were born there. This was the case for Nertania, who did not know Haiti beyond knowing that her parents were from there.¹¹ For many, this document became the only thing they had to be able to prove their identity and existence, but this was threatened in February 2020 when the office that was used to renew the ID document was closed. Without an official ID, these people fall victim to being stateless.

Instead of creating an efficient immigration system, the government has focused on stripping Haitian immigrants of any rights they possess. Without proper documentation, Dominicans of Haitian descent cannot go to school or get a job, leaving them in an endless cycle of poverty and increasing the likelihood that they will begin working without permission. What worsens this situation is that many of these policies are born out of the discrimination and colorism that have historically existed in the country. Throughout the discussion of immigration laws, the topic always focuses on Haitians, but the reality is that many immigrants from different countries are entering the Dominican Republic; however, they are welcome and do not receive the same legal attacks as Haitian immigrants. These attacks target the country's dark-skinned population. For example, when going from the east to the west of the island, one encounters military checkpoints that stop all vehicles but only ask for identification from those with dark skin. This is the case of Venezuelans, who “have been largely spared from immigration raids, as immigration officials use racial profiling against black or darker-skinned people to identify those in irregular status.”¹² This difference in

11 Ibid.

12 Lacarte, Valerie. “Addressing the Next Displacement Crisis in the Mak.” Migration Policy Institute. 2023. <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/news/haiti-next-displacement-crisis-americas>.



Ricardo Hernandez/AP

treatment gives us insight into the injustice that exists with Haitians in the country and why they are the only country of focus when we talk about immigration in the Dominican Republic.

Despite most of the laws and reforms mentioned having been passed within the last 20 years, the treatment of Haitians has not changed, if not worsened. The government of Luis Abinader, the current president of the Dominican Republic, has a goal to continue regularizing the immigration of Haitians. His government has begun the construction of a border wall between the two countries to prevent the entry of more Haitian immigrants. Recently, in September, the border was closed, not allowing the passage of any person coming from Haiti.¹³ Every presidential administration, regardless of political party, has been guilty of continuing with strict immigration laws that inhibit the

¹³ Melgar, Ana, et al. "Luis Abinader advierte en la ONU sobre Haití tras cerrar la frontera de República Dominicana." CNN en Español. 2023. <https://cnnespanol.cnn.com/2023/09/20/el-presidente-de-republica-dominicana-advierde-ante-la-onu-sobre-haiti-dias-despues-de-cerrar-la-frontera-comun/>.

Haitian population of the Dominican Republic.

We must look for a way in which the two countries can coexist peacefully. Each country has the right to defend its territory and its nation. Instead of creating more conflict, the Dominican Republic should be able to help its neighbors, with the help of the international community, to find a way to prosper as an island and as two separate countries. The law should be used to create a society with more peace and organization, not to create more chaos and problems.

Writer's Reflection:

The relationship between the Dominican Republic and Haiti is fascinating to me, especially as someone who was born in the Dominican Republic. To me, it's crucial to highlight the flaws of the Dominican state in how they engage with Haiti and its citizens. As we continue to navigate this complex relationship between the two countries, I hope that the Dominican government is able to approach the issue in a much more humane way and that other countries, like the U.S. follow.

