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**ASSOCIATION OF  
FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

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THE ASSOCIATION OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS LUND

DEEP DIVE

THE PERSPECTIVE

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**THE PERSPECTIVE**

SINCE 1963

**DEEP DIVE**

***DELVING INTO CONTEMPORARY  
GLOBAL ISSUES***



Editors' Note

Dear Reader,

Starting a new semester can feel like getting hit by a rogue wave. A sudden surge of new people, routines and information sweeps you up, as exhilarating as it can be overwhelming. When the water subsides you're left, breathless and disoriented, finding your feet in a changed landscape.

Having spent many late nights navigating these waters, glued to our computer screens with brains coated by a caffeinated glaze, we proudly present DEEP DIVE. For this edition, our writers have thrown themselves in at the deep end, exploring a wide array of topics. From the protection, control and pollution of the oceans, seas and waterways of the world, we journey to in-depth explorations of countries, cases and the climate crisis.

As daylight hours dwindle and bone-chilling cold closes in, we hope this magazine will distract you from the weather and your worries for a while. Take a deep breath and dive straight in.

Sincerely,  
Ffion & Philippa

Presidents' Address

Dear Members,

The Vice-President and I are thrilled to address you in the inaugural issue of The Perspective magazine. We would first like to extend our sincerest congratulations to the Magazine Committee for their exceptional efforts in consistently surpassing our expectations and delivering high-quality content.

Every generation goes through times of great uncertainty and conflict, and it is through the open exchange of ideas and respectful debate that we can gain a better understanding of the complex challenges we face and determine our path forward. At UPF, we embrace the diversity of thought that exists within our association, and we aim to be a community, a place of refuge, where independent and thought-provoking discussions anchor us together.

We want to express our gratitude to you for joining our association. For those members who are actively participating in our community, we look forward to seeing you soon. Encourage your friends and classmates to join us, and attend our events with them. Engage in discussions that resonate with your interests but also be willing to explore viewpoints that challenge your own.

We look forward to inspiring you to think critically about foreign affairs, and we will continue to work to provide a forum for thoughtful and enriching intellectual debate. We wish you all great success in your academic pursuits this year and hope you embrace the opportunities that lie ahead with enthusiasm.

Sincerely,  
Claudia Muñoz-Rojas and Freeman Elliott Gunnell  
President & Vice President

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**United States** | Amanda Rossling

In August, young activists in Montana won a landmark climate change lawsuit. A success story for youth-led climate litigation, a US court ruled for the first time that young people have a 'right to a climate system that is safe and stable'. In Alaska, the Biden administration cancelled oil and gas leases in the country's largest national wildlife refuge, an area of special significance to Indigenous peoples.



**Wales** | Ffion McEvoy

Ffos-y-Fran, the UK's largest coal mine, will close on 30 November. The mine's operators continued to mine for over a year after their permission to do so expired. Sustained campaigning by environmental groups and the local community – which has suffered severe pollution and health impacts due to the mine – has finally met with success.



**Sweden** | Mathilde Perrin

Women are around 73% more likely to be seriously injured and 17% more likely to die in a car crash than men. Car companies are only required to use crash-test dummies based on average male proportions. A team of Swedish engineers led by Astrid Linder have developed the first ever female crash-test dummy adapted to womans' average measurements.



**Democratic Republic of Congo** | Ffion McEvoy

Denis Mukwege, a Nobel peace prize-winning gynaecologist and human rights activist, announced he will run for president in December. In 1999, Mukwege founded Panzi Hospital in eastern DRC, treating thousands of victims of conflict-related sexual violence and campaigning to end sexual violence in conflict zones.



**Ecuador** | Ffion McEvoy

In a referendum on oil exploration, Ecuador's citizens voted to stop all oil drilling in the Yasuní National Park. Protecting Indigenous communities and nature in one of the world's most biodiverse regions, Ecuador became one of the first countries to limit fossil fuel extraction by popular vote.

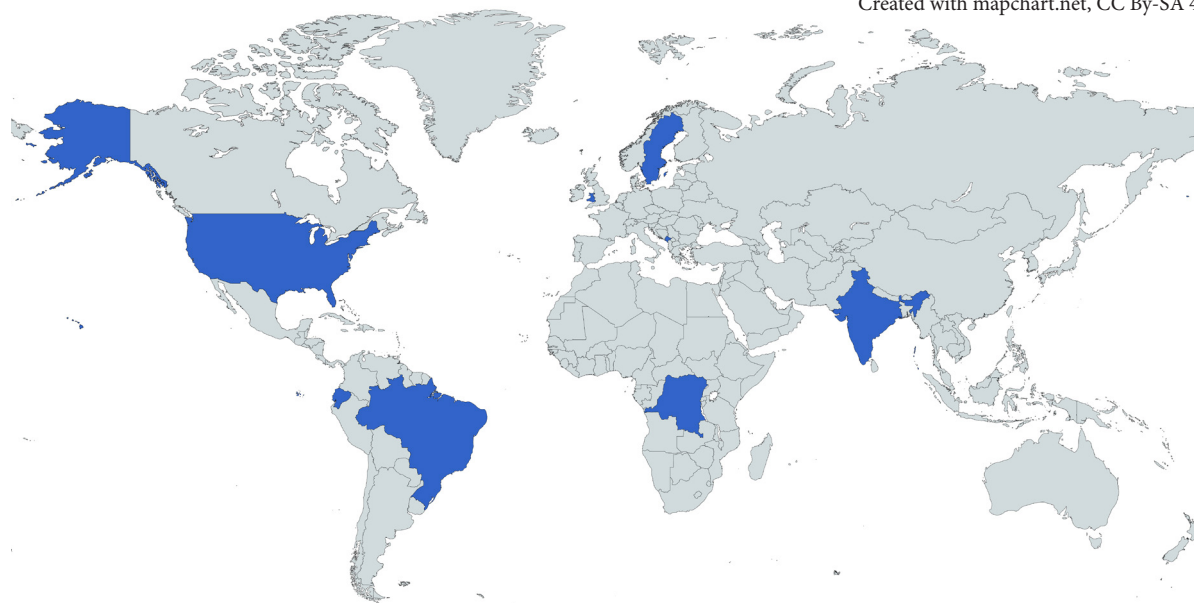
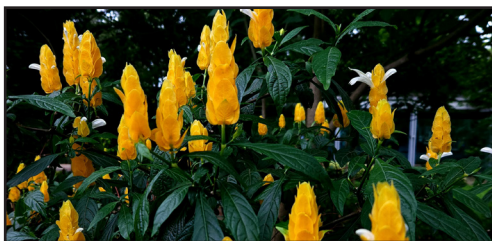


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Created with mapchart.net, CC By-SA 4.0.



**Montenegro** | Ida Gribajcevic

Montenegro's annual 'Laziest Citizen' contest mocks the myth that the people in the Adriatic country are slothful. Participants lie down to compete for a €1000 prize and to be crowned the laziest citizen. This year, a record was broken as 4 of the 21 participants lay down for more than 30 days.



**Brazil** | Paulina Zajac

The activism of Indigenous people, namely the Xokleng, around Brazil have culminated in a landmark ruling in favour of ancestral land rights. Previously, the 'Marco Temporal' argument meant that demarcation of land was only possible if proof of one's residence on native land could be dated to 1988.

# Global Report

In a world torn apart by conflict and humanitarian crises, uplifting news can be a welcome distraction. Our writers have assembled a smörgåsbord of stories to encourage and inspire. Take a quick spin around the globe to soak up some positivity.



**India** | Ida Gribajcevic

India's first deaf lawyer, Sarah Sunny, made history in the country's Supreme Court. Assisted by interpreters, she presented her arguments and broke stereotypes. Her presence in the top court could help to make the Indian legal system more inclusive towards people of the deaf community.



HOW DOES one own something that can not be held, nor easily kept still or measured? This is not a riddle from tales and myths. It is a very real issue, with high stakes. Ownership is often tied to the physical possession of a thing, such as a book or a piece of land. Similar concepts are difficult to replicate when it comes to vast or abstract things like outer space, the environment, or the oceans. While physical possession is an intuitive way to make a claim to something (I had it first!), it does not lend itself well to the oceans. Boat houses might be very stylish, but habitation is not a compelling ground for claiming ownership over water. For millennia, people have brandished their swords and sharpened their pencils, ready to defend their answer to the elusive question: who owns the sea?

The United Nations set out to settle this question once and for all in the middle of the last century. The result, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), is one of the finest pieces of international cooperation that the world is ever likely to see. Adopted in 1982, and entered into force in 1994, it now has 168 parties. The mandate of the Third Conference on the Law of the Sea, which led to the adoption of UNCLOS, was to reach an agreement on 'all matters

relating to the law of the sea'. Countless people laboured over its creation. The result is 320 stunningly detailed articles, spelling out the rights and obligations of states on everything from the protection of anadromous stocks (e.g. salmon and other species that live in the ocean but spawn in freshwater) to the right of military submarines to pass by the coast of, say, England (allowed, but only at surface level and never with hostile intentions). UNCLOS deals with topics ranging from piracy to the conservation of fish stocks, to the delimitation of maritime borders, to the prosecution of tax evaders at sea.

The Convention is also a brilliant tool for teaching social and legal students something about physical geography – and humility. In reading UNCLOS one soon realises that one has never actually considered the depth of a bay compared to its width, nor the exact size and distance of a rock (or is it maybe an island?) from the shore, nor exactly what the sediment of the continental shelf consists of. And that is all before reaching the classification of archipelagic states.

The Convention's attention to detail and its ambitious scope sometimes give rise to Terry Pratchettesque discussions and word

wrangling. It also provides ample employment opportunities for legal experts contributing to these discussions.

So, according to this textual behemoth, who owns the sea?

The Convention settled the issue by uniting two concepts that had been around for a long time. Not the first, but famously, Hugo Grotius argued for complete freedom of the seas in the 17th century. Conversely, John Seldon argued that the oceans can and should be controlled and managed by coastal states.

The two concepts have been united in the zonal approach that gained popularity in the 20th century and subsequently made it into UNCLOS. Essentially, the coastal state has jurisdiction over the sea that is in immediate connection to its coast. The state's control then 'fades' successively the further from land that one travels, to end completely in the high seas some 200 nautical miles (around 370 km) from the coast. Plenty of discussions have been had regarding the exact measurements, and still many states attempt to claim control over areas that go beyond what UNCLOS prescribes.

For the purposes here, the zones are the following: the first zone adjacent to the coast is



## The Orphan Ocean: An Ode to UNCLOS

Sofia Gierow | Analysis

A drill rig on site at the Deepwater Horizon disaster well  
containment efforts © NOAA | Unsplash



the territorial zone. In the territorial zone, the coastal state can exert the same jurisdictional powers as it does on land, but other ships have a right of innocent passage through the waters. Anything beyond the territorial sea is subject to the freedom of the high seas. However, in the valuable exclusive economic zone, the coastal state enjoys exclusive rights to exploit the economic resources, both living and nonliving.

As such, the coveted answer to the question, 'Who owns the oceans?' can be a simple 'no one'. By the provisions of UNCLOS, the oceans beyond the territorial sea are owned by none and all at the same time. The high seas are subject to the freedom of the high seas and can not be owned, and the deep seabed beneath it has been declared a common heritage of mankind. The regime holds both ultimate freedom and imminent doom. The current

state of fish stocks, oceanic garbage patches, and marine pollution illustrate all too clearly the tragedy of the commons. Experts estimate that there will be more plastic than fish in the oceans by 2050.

Ownership typically means the right to exploit, but it also entails an incentive to care. The oceans have been left orphaned and without a guardian, and they are struggling for survival.

### *The oceans have been left orphaned and without a guardian*

However, there is some hope. This summer, the UN adopted a monumental Treaty of the High Seas. According to the new treaty, states will have to conduct proper environmental

impact assessments when planning activities at sea beyond their jurisdiction. It also contains rules that promote conservation efforts. In 2022, states agreed that 30% of both land and maritime areas should be subject to effective conservation protection to combat biodiversity loss by 2030. The Treaty of the High Seas is a further step up the same ladder. While the high seas are still something of a captainless ship, efforts are being made to mitigate the problem.

The Law of the Sea and the declaration of the high seas as a shared and ownerless entity also function as an analogy when discussing ownership over outer space, and it holds plenty of lessons for international environmental cooperation. Environmental issues, much like maritime regulation, are truly global matters in which everyone is a stakeholder. The environment does not allow for physical

possession, and yet it would undoubtedly benefit from the care that comes from being the property of a sole owner.

The recent progress made for the protection of the high seas indicates that exclusive ownership is not the only way to ensure that resources and more abstract things are cared for. There might still be room for care through communal efforts. It lends some hope to the idea that similar steps can be taken for the care of the environment; the tragedy of the commons may be real, but that does not mean that it is irrevocable. UNCLOS is a testament to international treaty-making. For anyone yearning for a comprehensive document in the area of environmental protection, there is reason to look to the UNCLOS and the recent Treaty of the High Seas for a moment of hope and inspiration.



Plastic pollution and juvenile fish.  
© Naja Bertolt Jensen | Unsplash



# Sewage Dumping: Soiling Anglo-French Relations

Clara Klint | Analysis

THE UK's crumbling sewage system is causing a diplomatic stink, with French Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) growing increasingly frustrated by the UK's dumping of raw sewage into rivers and seas. This is the story of the UK's wastewater mismanagement and why diplomatic pressure is unlikely to solve the unsavoury situation.

The UK sewage system often gets overwhelmed, causing untreated excrement to be released into larger bodies of water. In 2022, several French MEPs launched an official complaint, accusing the UK of treating the Channel and North Sea as a 'dumping grounds' and pointing out that the UK is bound by environmental obligations spelt out in the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement.

The UK's predicament is remarkable considering that the first modern sewage system was pioneered in the UK. In the first half of the 19th century, London's booming population tipped excrement straight into the Thames. This not only caused an abhorrent stench but resulted in frequent cholera outbreaks. In the summer of 1858, an unusually long heatwave brought the odour from the Thames to new heights and the public outrage finally sparked political action. Joseph Bazalgette was commissioned to design and execute a solution. His mammoth network of tunnels was finished in 1875, allowing sewage to be transported out of populated areas. Sanitation was revolutionised forever, and other cities soon copied London's water-borne sewerage.

In most of the UK, the Victorian tunnels are still operating today. Built to support a far

smaller population, they are hopelessly out of capacity. Modern cities make the problem worse, too. In urban areas, green space is paved over, allowing less rainwater to be soaked up by the ground. When it rains, the system overflows and untreated sewage water is released into rivers and seas. According to data released by the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs, sewage dumping has skyrocketed since 2016. Last year, there were at least 389,000 instances of raw sewage being dumped, corresponding to 2.4 million hours where pollutants were pumped into rivers and seas.

*Last year, there were at least 389,000 instances of raw sewage being dumped*

A likely reason for this aggravation is climate change. The UK is witnessing more frequent occurrences of extreme weather conditions. With extended droughts and spells of extreme rainfall, the dried-out ground loses its absorption capacity, and more rain is forced into the overwhelmed sewage tunnels. Water companies should mitigate, but British law allows sewage dumping in 'extreme weather conditions'. This encourages short-term profit-seeking and putting off critical investments.

Fines from the Environmental Agency are infrequent and do not appear to change behaviours either. In a rare spell of legal action, the Environmental Agency fined now infamous private water company Southern Water a record £90M fine for 6,971 instances of sewage dumping in 2021. The same year, the

company still brought home £139M in profit for its shareholders.

In the 1980s, the malfunctioning water system was high on the political agenda. The Thatcher government diagnosed the issue as chronic underinvestment under public management and privatised the entire system in 1989. While investment rose slightly in the years immediately after privatisation, it plummeted to record low levels in the 2000s, where it has remained since. According to an analysis by the Angling Trust, Southern Water invests at such a low rate that each PVC pipe in the company's network would have to last 2000 years (a PVC pipe has an estimated life-span of 50-100 years).

British discharge has increasingly become an international nuisance. In 2012, UK sewage

dumping was deemed a breach of EU law and the UK was forced to pay a hefty fine. Post-Brexit, the UK's closest neighbours are growing increasingly agitated by the stink. In the autumn of 2022, French MEPs called for action from the European Commission, arguing that British sewage poses a serious threat to marine life, fishing and tourism along the French coast.

*British sewage poses a serious threat to marine life, fishing and tourism along the French coast*

The French MEPs have made appeals to the European Commission with reference to the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement



Polluted water ©budgetstockphoto | iStock



(TCA), which mandates non-regression on environment and labour standards. The non-regression clause requires the parties to maintain the environmental standards in place prior to Brexit at a minimum. The MEPs are now calling for the Commission to investigate whether the UK can be held accountable for sewage dumping on these grounds. But the TCA is unlikely to allow France to put pressure on the UK for three reasons.

Firstly, while the TCA-agreement is connected to a dispute mechanism, meaning that either party can impose consequences if the agreement is not followed, action can only be taken as it relates to trade between the two countries. For example, the EU could take action if the UK regresses on environmental standards to gain an unfair competitive advantage over the EU. The dispute mechanism is not designed to tackle systematic problems harming both parties.

Secondly, the interpretation of non-regression may provide the UK with leeway to avoid responsibility. Some argue that the TCA refers to comprehensive non-regression, so that environmental protection could improve in

some areas and regress in other areas, while others argue non-regression applies to each separate point of environmental legislation. Even with a point-by-point interpretation, the European Commission has warned that the EU-UK TCA suffers from shortcomings on several ecological aspects, including the protection of aquatic and marine life.

A final issue concerns the UK government's plan to move away from EU legislation. Today, it is relatively easy to track breaches as the UK has primarily retained pre-Brexit environmental laws. Some more hardcore Brexiteers have expressed their will to remove the UK statute book of the EU laws. If the UK government reformulated laws, it would become a more complex task to prove violations of the non-regression clause.

In the UK, legal action is brewing on the grass-roots level, which might inspire the French. In 2022, a group consisting of British NGOs and affected oyster farmers launched a lawsuit against the UK government for its failure to act on sewage dumping. If successful, this might provide fuel and concrete pathways to hold the UK accountable for its excretions.



## Centre for Advanced Middle Eastern Studies

The Centre for Advanced Middle Eastern Studies (CMES) supports, creates, and coordinates multidisciplinary research on the Middle East at LU.

### Upcoming events:

**23 November:** *Radio and State Power in North Africa* research seminar with Arthur Asseraf (University of Cambridge)  
13:15-14:30, at CMES (Finngatan 16) and on Zoom

**30 November:** *Muhammad 'Abduh – Modern Islam and the Culture of Ambiguity*, book launch with Oliver Scharbrodt (CTR Lund University)  
13:15-14:30, at CMES (Finngatan 16) and on Zoom

**7 December:** *Green Growth Hegemony and Counter-Alternatives in Turkey* research seminar with Mine Islar (LUCSUS)  
13:15-14:30, at CMES (Finngatan 16) and on Zoom

For more information about the events, please visit [www.cmes.lu.se/calendar](http://www.cmes.lu.se/calendar)



Kingdom © Dan Senior | Unsplash





# 'Blue Homeland': Turkey's New Strategy in the Eastern Mediterranean

Edoardo Campanile | Analysis

ON 27 November 2019, Turkey and the UN-recognised government of Libya, then chaired by Fayez al-Sarraj, signed an agreement to establish a common maritime border between the two countries. The deal, which implicitly rejected Greece's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), was condemned by many countries in the region and beyond. The message was crystal clear: Turkey is ready

to become a central player in the Eastern Mediterranean and is not afraid to confront other states in the region if necessary. Even though Ankara's aggressive attitude in foreign policy is not new, this degree of interest in controlling the sea represents an unprecedented novelty for the country. But where does this strategic twist come from?

In the mid-2000s, many believed that Turkey's entry to the European Union was fast approaching. In 2004, Ankara and the Turkish Cypriots approved the UN's Cyprus reunification plan (rejected by the Greek side of the island). The same year, Cyprus joined the EU and defined its EEZ according to the 1982 Montego Bay Convention (in this case, Turkey, which is not part of the Convention, opposed this EEZ demarcation).

## *The sea was the means of conquest, not the end*

In the context of these regional shifts, high-ranking officials within the Turkish Navy feared that the country was giving up primary national interests. In 2006, Admiral Cem Gürdeniz asserted the vital necessity of Turkey redrawing its EEZ through a plan that he named 'Mavi Vatan' ('Blue Homeland').

A few years later, in 2009, Admiral Cihat Yaycı elaborated on this tenet by defining a specific geographical boundary for Mavi Vatan. According to Yaycı, while Turkey already possesses the EEZ it is rightfully entitled to within the Black Sea, in the Aegean and the Mediterranean the country should expand the maritime space under its control. The first tangible demonstration of this doctrine arrived only in 2019 when Turkey carried out a massive naval drill named 'Mavi Vatan 2019' in each of these three seas. From the military environment, where it originated, the concept rapidly expanded to the general public and became a topic of debate in the political arena.

Historically speaking, the expansion of maritime territory in this region has been neglected, first by the Ottoman Empire, and then by the Turkish Republic. The sea was the means of conquest, not the end: it was used to dominate land. The most astonishing Ottoman military conquests took place or were successful due to decisive action on the

ground. Mavi Vatan represents a historical novelty for the inhabitants of Anatolia, and it demonstrates Turkey's belief that the sea will be of fundamental importance to the geopolitics of the 21st century. The 2020 intervention in Libya constitutes a stand-alone event in Ottoman-Turkish history. Not only did the campaign rely heavily on the intervention by sea, but the main target was the sea itself.

Nevertheless, as with any innovation, period of adaptation has been required. Recently, the Turkish government launched a pedagogical and cultural plan to convince Turkish citizens that the conquest and control of the sea is as crucial, physically and emotionally, as that of land. An example of this is the 2021 TV series, 'Barbaros: Sword of the Mediterranean'. Portraying how Admiral Hayreddin Barbarossa became a hero of the Ottoman Empire thanks to his maritime successes against the Christians in the 16th century, this visual representation stimulates the imagination of the Turkish viewer by associating the battle at sea with heroism and eternal glory. The sea becomes a 'homeland', a space capable of contributing to the development of society and the nation, worthy of fighting and dying for. Concepts traditionally applied to the land surface are extended to the sea, thus overturning a millenary geopolitical and strategic vision.

## *The sea becomes a 'homeland', a space capable of contributing to the development of society and the nation, worthy of fighting and dying for*

Mavi Vatan's goal is threefold. Firstly, it is a geopolitical vision. Controlling the Eastern Mediterranean equals bolstering the country's regional and international status, monitoring the maritime crossroad between the Mediterranean and the Indo-Pacific,

Istanbul, Turkey © Imad Alassiry | Unsplash



and strengthening its influence over Cyprus. Secondly, it addresses Turkey's security concerns. By establishing a nautical buffer zone, the country could mitigate its worries over Greece's and Europe's alleged ambition to limit and confine it. Moreover, by sharing a maritime border with Libya, Ankara could simultaneously reach out to an ally and prevent the consolidation of an uninterrupted Cypriot-Greek EEZ. Thirdly, it satisfies specific economic interests. The recent discovery of vast natural gas deposits in the area has attracted the curiosity of several countries. Ensuring control over these resources would allow Turkey to support its economy while alleviating its dependence on external energy suppliers.

### ***Ensuring control over these resources would allow Turkey to support its economy***

However, the doctrine displays some evident weaknesses. Overall, it lacks a coherent analysis of several crucial matters. It does not

analyse the involvement of other actors in the Eastern Mediterranean. It does not clarify Turkey's position in the international arena. It does not explain how the control over the Eastern Mediterranean could positively boost Turkey's active involvement in the Horn of Africa, a region at the core of Ankara's foreign policy. Furthermore, it does not mention the significant technological gaps in the military sphere that the country would need to invest in if it wants to enact Mavi Vatan's ambitions.

The major strength of the doctrine lies in its ideology. Or, rather, in the absence of a specific ideology. Mavi Vatan was born in a military environment and is often associated with the ultranationalists of the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) and the Eurasianist movement, which looks favourably at Ankara's alignment with Moscow and Beijing. However, the doctrine received the compliance of almost every political entity in Turkey (except for the pro-Kurdish People's Democratic Party, or HDP), thus fulfilling the purpose envisioned by its creators: unifying the Turkish nation.

Nevertheless, the relationship between Mavi Vatan and political Islam, embraced by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's Justice and Development Party (AKP), is far more complex. On the one hand, during its two decades in power,

the AKP shaped foreign policy according to its precepts. It pushed out the military from the political sphere. It attributed a special role to religion in foreign policy. It condemned countries such as Egypt and Israel for their treatment of the Muslim Brotherhood and the Palestinians, respectively. On the other hand, Mavi Vatan entails a return of military influence in the political sphere, a return to a secularist approach to foreign policy, and the possibility of negotiating with other states in the region, including Egypt and Israel. In this case, why does President Erdoğan support the doctrine?

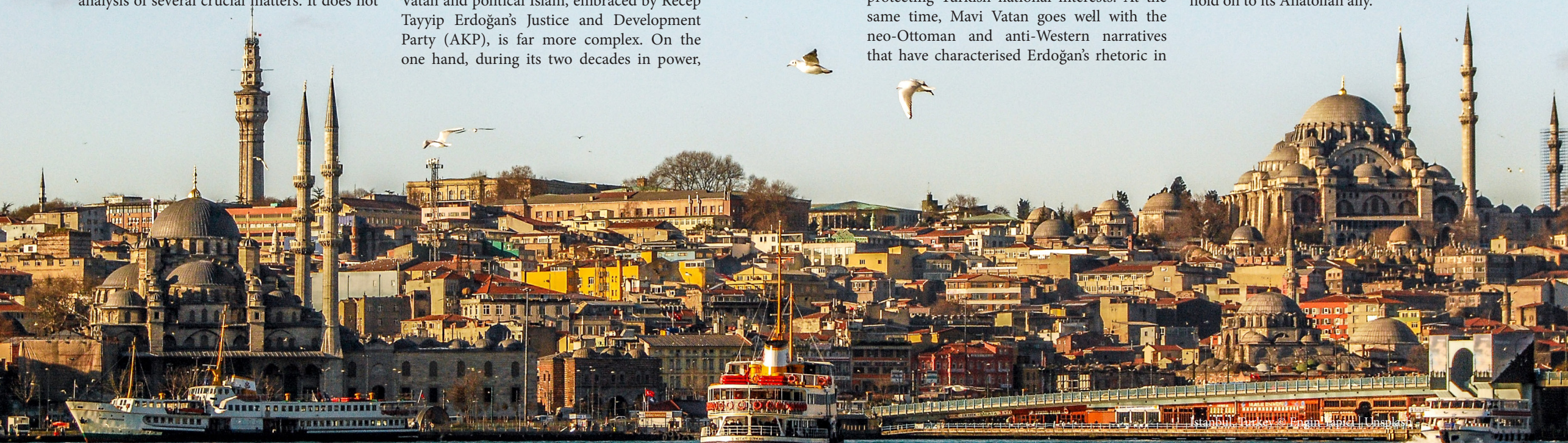
### ***The relationship between Mavi Vatan and political Islam is far more complex***

Despite all the differences with political Islam, Mavi Vatan serves a long list of interests, domestically and internationally. It is in accordance with Erdoğan's wish to reconcile with the military and secure votes from the nationalists by projecting the image of protecting Turkish national interests. At the same time, Mavi Vatan goes well with the neo-Ottoman and anti-Western narratives that have characterised Erdoğan's rhetoric in

recent years. Above all, it allows Turkey to gain leverage in the Eastern Mediterranean, an area considered particularly strategic by the AKP, and to consolidate Turkey's influence in Libya.

Although Mavi Vatan appears to further alienate Turkey from the West, one should remember that Ankara's convergence toward Moscow or Beijing is far more problematic than it seems. So far, the economy has been the main point of conjunction with Russia and China. However, in regional politics, their interests diverge and are defined by both cooperation and competition, especially with Russia.

The next few years will reveal whether and how Turkey decides to implement Mavi Vatan. According to some observers, the country may try to stick to the doctrine as much as possible without breaking its commitments to NATO. This apparent distancing from the West, which always seems imminent but never definitive, could be a way for Turkey to improve its standing with the United States and Europe. It is as if Ankara is trying to give the West a taste of its estrangement to remind it of the need to hold on to its Anatolian ally.





# Drowning in the Mediterranean or deserted in the desert: ‘Team Europe’ to whose rescue?

Renee Nienhuis | Analysis



Ship Wreck © Motortion | iStock

WHEN THINKING of former colonies and mandates, we often think of artificially imposed borders that were drawn with a ruler to the advantage of foreign powers. Looking at a map of the world, African and Middle Eastern countries have suspiciously straight borders when compared to those in Europe. What this map doesn't tell us, however, is that all the borders creating countries in our world are artificial. No border in the world was already drawn out as if by a groundsman having painted a line on a football field.

So why is it then that these borders can embrace some while they deny others? Why do 'expats' lift us up while 'immigrants' take us down? Why are some refugees more welcome than others?

Approximately 186,000 migrants have crossed the Mediterranean and arrived in Europe since the beginning of 2023. Over 100,000 of these departed from Tunisia. During this time, more than 2500 migrants have gone missing or lost their lives at sea. Against this hopeless backdrop, a memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed to give action to the 'Tunisia deal', a deal to help curb migration across the Mediterranean. The MoU was signed in July by the Tunisian President, Kais Saïed, and 'Team Europe' (European Commission President, Ursula von der Leyen; Dutch PM, Mark Rutte; and Italian PM, Giorgia Meloni).

*More than 2500 migrants have gone missing or lost their lives at sea*

The deal allocated over €150 million to Tunisia as a direct form of financial support in return for Tunisia helping to halt migration to the EU. €100 million was intended to support Tunisian border management. An additional €900 million was set to be contributed as part of a long-term macroeconomic support plan.

Currently, the proceedings of the deal are in troubled waters. Nonetheless, 'Team Europe' comes to the rescue. Not only will a Tunisia deal alleviate pressures from the migration crisis in the EU, the Dutch demissionary Prime Minister, Mark Rutte, claims that the new Tunisia deal is crafted with an eye to preventing 'dangerous crossings on the Mediterranean Sea' and breaking down the 'business model of the boat smugglers'. Similarly, Von der Leyen has referenced the 'tragic shipwreck' that occurred just a few weeks before 'Team Europe' arrived in Tunisia to sign the MoU.

The rhetoric employed by Rutte and Von der Leyen around this new migration deal may sound admirable but it stands in stark contrast with the images of the migrants encompassed in the deal, those who have now been 'dumped' in the desert bordering Tunisia and Libya.





A desert © Jean Wimmerlin | Unstock

Earlier this year, President Kais Saied, leader of the country that constitutes the main point of departure for migrants crossing the Mediterranean to Italy and Greece, made comments about black African migrants. He vocalised that they had brought ‘violence, crime, and unacceptable practices’ with them to Tunisia. Saied believes that the migration of black Africans to Tunisia is part of some conspiracy to change the Tunisian demography, to make Tunisia ‘just another African country that doesn’t belong to the Arab and Islamic nations anymore.’

After these discriminatory comments were made, videos emerged on the internet showing dozens of black migrants and asylum seekers having been evicted to a buffer zone between Tunisia and Libya. Hundreds of people were forcefully taken to this desert area. The people stranded there explain how Tunisian security forces destroyed their phones and abused them. In August, a month after the MoU was signed, Libyan authorities reported that in the desert on their border they found 27 migrants who had died after having been evicted from Tunisia. Tunisia does not have an asylum law or official migration policies; migrants and asylum seekers cannot acquire a legal status and are thus left to fend for themselves while being subjected to detentions and brutal forced returns.

The violent crackdowns on black migrants in Tunisia occurred after a Tunisian man was stabbed to death in the Tunisian city Sfax. This stabbing was a result of some commotion between a few Tunisians and migrants. Three Cameroonian migrants were arrested and after a call for vengeance, violence and protest erupted against black migrants. This is when the Tunisian authorities started to evict migrants from Sfax.

These events all occurred before and around the time at which ‘Team Europe’ arrived in Tunisia to ‘seal the deal’, meaning that they were aware of the discrimination and abuse taking place in Tunisia. The rise in attacks against black migrants in Tunisia has furthermore sparked an influx of boat migration across the Mediterranean. Since the MoU was signed, an increase in attempted sea crossings between Tunisia and Europe has taken place.

Not only have the intended effects of the deal yet to materialise, on October 2, the Tunisian president refused the direct installment of the financial aid that ‘Team Europe’ allocated for the deal. Moreover, there are members of the EU that feel unheard. The European Parliament and human rights activists who have little trust in the situation, draw attention to the growing authoritarian rule of Saied and the dire humanitarian situation for migrants in Tunisia.

Tunisia became the starting point of the Arab uprisings in 2010, as a result of which autocrat Zine El-Abidine Ben Ali was overthrown. The country was seen as the ‘success story’ of the Arab uprisings due to its perceived commitment to democracy. Tunisia’s current president was elected in 2019. Since coming to power, however, he has arrested opposition figures; expanded presidential power through rewriting the constitution; and dissolved the parliament.

Regarding the Tunisia deal, MEP Birgit Sippel thus stated: ‘We are now again financing an autocrat without political, democratic scrutiny here in the house. This will not be a solution. It will strengthen an autocrat in Tunisia.’

***‘This will not be a solution.  
It will strengthen an  
autocrat in Tunisia.’***

All things considered, to whose rescue is ‘Team Europe’ really coming? Currently, the future of migrants and refugees in Tunisia is uncertain as they still risk drowning in a boat crossing; being exposed to deadly circumstances in the

desert; or facing persecution sanctioned by President Saied’s racist statements. President Saied himself now also appears dissatisfied with the financial element of the deal.

As the leader of a country that is the main point of arrival for boat crossings from Tunisia, Giorgia Meloni’s involvement in the deal is most prominent given her election promise to crack down on migration. In an attempt to appease his party, Rutte had similarly committed to restrict the influx of asylum seekers. Additionally, Von der Leyen sees the EU to be in need of an ‘answer’ to irregular migration and is thus incentivized to make a deal with Tunisia. Meloni and Von der Leyen have called the Tunisia deal a model for future deals in Africa.

With the Tunisia deal not forecasted to bring much positive for all those involved, apart from ‘Team Europe’ itself, it might not be such a bad thing for the deal to collapse at the hands of the Tunisian President. In the end, is this attempt at closing European borders really worth the harm done to migrants and refugees who are simply looking for a life less burdened by economic hardship, discrimination, and abuse?



View of the medina sfax, Tunisie © Taha Loukil | Unstock



# The Geopolitics of a Yemeni Partition

Santeri Rönty | Analysis

EVER SINCE the unification of North Yemen and South Yemen on 22 May 1990, the country has struggled with weak internal stability. The turbulent era of a united Yemen has witnessed poor political integration, escalating into a disastrous civil war in 2014. Actors, such as Al-Qaeda, were soon involved in what has been called the world's largest humanitarian crisis. Out of a population of 32

million, more than 21 million people are currently in urgent need of humanitarian aid. There have been numerous calls to attempt a new political and territorial division of Yemen in order to end the conflict. In practice, this could mean the establishment of two separate states, possibly along the old borders that divided North Yemen and South Yemen until 1990. This begs the question – what if a new partition takes place in Yemen?

The two main actors in the Yemeni civil war are the internationally recognised Yemeni government, supported by a Saudi-led military coalition, and in opposition to the Houthi rebels, backed by Iran. The former has links with other Sunni-majority Arab states, such as the UAE, Egypt, Jordan, and Kuwait. The West – especially the US – has also become involved, as its interests in the conflict include maintaining the security of Saudi borders as well as securing a government in Yemen's capital, Sanaa, that is willing to cooperate with

US counterterrorism programs. In addition, it is in the political interest of the US to ensure free passage in the narrow Bab el-Mandeb strait between the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea, a geopolitically strategic channel for the global transport of oil.

The Houthi movement, officially known as Ansar Allah, pushes for religious and cultural revivalism among Zaydi Shiites in the north of Yemen. Being a predominantly Sunni Muslim country, the Zaydi Shiites are a minority in Yemen. Iran is the Houthis' primary support, reportedly having provided the Houthis military assistance, especially weapons. While the civil war sees the two factions clashing for control of the country, the international dimension suggests that the conflict has become an arena for a proxy war between Saudi Arabia and Iran. Yemen lies in a geopolitically strategic position, and gaining control over it is an appealing prospect for numerous actors.

*The conflict has become an arena for a proxy war between Saudi Arabia and Iran*

If a Yemeni partition became a reality, there would likely be several rounds of negotiations on territorial possessions. For the moment, the territories that each party in the civil war controls mostly overlap with the territorial division of Yemen before the unification in 1990. This analysis will thus divide the country into two in accordance with the old borders and dissect the

Queen Arwa Mosque in Jibla, Ibb province, Yemen © asamw | Unsplash



consequences of such a partition. The capitals of North and South Yemen in this scenario are Sanaa and Aden.

The partition of Yemen would most likely be a last resort to terminate the ongoing civil war. The immediate consequence would hopefully be the end of full-scale conflict between the parties. This would, however, not ensure the end of all conflict-related activities. It is worth noting that the conflict caused by internal division would be provisionally solved by a two-state solution. North and South Yemen could then possibly find means to establish at least adequate ties with each other, and thereafter with other countries. It is equally possible that internal struggles would continue to exist within the newly formed states, and that the two would not establish bilateral relations in the short run.

Another consideration would be the new geopolitical reality in terms of territorial waters. Three maritime territories would be divided between the two Yemens: the Red Sea coastline would belong to North Yemen, the coastline of the Gulf of Aden would belong to South Yemen, and the narrow strait between

the two seas, Bab el-Mandeb – one of the most strategic maritime points in the world – would be divided between Sanaa and Aden. A dispute over control of the strait would be likely. The strait provides access from the Indian Ocean to the Red Sea and onwards to the Mediterranean via the Suez Canal. Both Yemens and their respective allies would undoubtedly strive for influence over the strait, whether the maritime border was disputed or not.

The main allies of Yemen – Iran and Saudi Arabia – would both likely have a greater capacity for influence in the territories. In this scenario, the Saudis would have to share the Yemeni sphere of influence with one of its traditional regional rivals, Iran, which would gain a stable foothold in the region. It is probable that Saudi Arabia and Iran would remain in a state of regional rivalry upon Yemen's partition. It is possible that the peace deal between Saudi Arabia and Iran brokered by China in March this year could endure. Nevertheless, the Iranian presence in South Arabia would most likely go against US interests, especially around the maritime territories of Yemen, which would consequently reflect on the political stability of the region.

Control over natural resources is another major consideration. The territory of Yemen sits on hydrocarbon reserves of around 3 billion barrels of crude oil and 481 billion cubic metres of natural gas. The territory has two primary crude streams: the Marib Stream (North Yemen) and the Masila Stream (South Yemen). While the former holds much of the natural gas on the territory, the latter holds more than 80% of the territories' total reserves of crude oil. Therefore, while the North and the South would be in possession of oil and gas deposits we cannot assume that the distribution of deposits between the two Yemens would be equal.

Yemen has one of the highest levels of water scarcity in the world, another crucial natural resource. The main sources of fresh water in the Yemeni territory are aquifers, which would not be equally distributed between the North and South. Much of the highly productive aquifers would be located in the territory of South Yemen, while the moderate or poorly productive aquifers, as well as areas with essentially no groundwater resources would be located in North Yemen. The distribution of natural resources between Sanaa and

Aden would be a key matter in the process of partition alongside territorial division. It is likewise potential that the question of natural resources would cause any possible negotiations to go into a deadlock.

## ***Yemen has one of the highest levels of water scarcity in the world***

While the course of the civil war does not currently indicate the imminent partition of the Republic of Yemen, the country has for its 33 years of existence witnessed a deep internal division. This has not only caused internal instability but also allowed foreign powers to enter the territory and establish rivalries for influence in the region. A partition of Yemen would be a protracted process, involving several rounds of negotiations between the parties involved. If no other solution can be found to end the civil war in Yemen, the partition of the country might be inevitable.



Ruins of "Crow Fortress", Thula, Yemen  
© Asamw1 Unsplash



# Kosovo: What are the Future Prospects?

Amanda Rossling | Opinion

ON 17 February 2023, Kosovo marked 15 years of independence from Serbia. Celebrations took place while the country faced heightened tensions with Belgrade, which still refuses to recognise the autonomy of its former province. This year, political tensions between Kosovo and Serbia have once again bubbled up and boiled over into military violence. In September, a shootout between Kosovo and Serbian paramilitary forces broke out in the northern region, killing one local Kosovan police officer and three Serbian gunmen. Serbia responded by inserting a military buildup at its border with Kosovo, and the situation is now claimed to be the 'worst in years'. Could renewed tensions between Pristina and Belgrade escalate into an armed conflict?

Kosovo, a small and young country located in the Western Balkans region of Southeast Europe, declared its independence from Serbia in 2008. The long-running dispute leads all the way back to the Ottoman Empire in the 1300s and had its breaking point during the dissolution of Yugoslavia in the 1990s, when Serbian soldiers collided with the Kosovo Liberation Army. Yugoslav forces started a brutal campaign of violence against Albanians and displaced the majority of Kosovo's population by driving them out into neighbouring countries, namely Montenegro, Albania and North Macedonia.

When trying to understand the root causes of the Kosovo conflict, one cannot ignore the fact that the protracted break-up of Yugoslavia was strongly influenced by the new world order emerging at the time. The end of the Cold War and the East-West division that



Kosovo National Flag  
© Aboodi Vesakaran | Unsplash

followed paved the way for US influence in the Western Balkans. In this new unipolar world, the US faced no major threat to its increasing power. The rising violence in the region and particularly in Kosovo, triggered the US interest to intervene. The international community's repeated, unsuccessful attempts to stop the ongoing bloodshed spread fear that the conflict could escalate into a regional war. The United Nations (UN), following failures to prevent massacres in both Rwanda in 1994 and Bosnia in 1995, was stained by accusations of incompetence and unreliability. It was, therefore, predominantly a US-led initiative when the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) started its invasion by launching its first-ever air strikes against Serbia on 24 March 1999.

NATO intervention is sometimes cast as the backdrop to the genocides in Rwanda and Bosnia. It is also credited with resolving the war in Kosovo. When NATO replaced Serbian forces with its own peacekeeping force (KFOR) in June 1999, there was hope that Europe could start integrating former communist countries into Western alliances such as NATO and the European Union (EU). The EU became a key stakeholder in Kosovo's political and economic development, and the majority of EU member states recognised the country's autonomy in 2008.

I visited Kosovo this summer together with students from all over the world to learn more about the conflict. Walking the streets of Pristina, we could see US, NATO and EU flags waving everywhere – on streets and squares, outside restaurants, hotels, bars, and even government buildings. The loyalty has its roots in the willingness of the US to fight for Kosovo's autonomy and the EU's determination to mediate in the dispute. The 11-foot bronze statue of former US President Bill Clinton and the nearby boutique named 'Hillary' are further demonstrations of this. Today, there are many Kosovars named Klinton, Hillari and ToniBler.



Bill Clinton Boulevard in Pristina, Kosovo  
© Amanda Rossling

*The loyalty has its roots in the willingness of the US to fight for Kosovo's autonomy and the EU's determination to mediate in the dispute*

Looking at the broader context of the dispute between Kosovo and Serbia today, Serbia is closer to completing its accession to the EU. The EU continues to face internal challenges of Russia's ongoing war in Ukraine and five EU member states (Cyprus, Greece, Romania,



Slovakia and Spain) refusing to recognise Kosovo's independence. In promoting long-lasting peace in the Western Balkans, these are not only challenges to the EU but to the entire transatlantic community. The complexity of Russia-Serbia relations seems to have weakened the West's position in the region during the last decade and hampered the EU's attempts at normalising the situation since the end of the Kosovo war. As Russia and China block Kosovo from the UN with their vetoes while Belgrade seems intent on undermining Kosovo's right to self-determination and international recognition, Kosovo is obstructed from fully joining the international community.

As much as the region is becoming more integrated with the EU in terms of trade, investment, a common regional market and visa-free travel to the Schengen Area, Kosovo was the last country in the Western Balkans to apply for EU membership. On 15 December 2022, the Prime Minister of Kosovo, Albin Kuri officially submitted an application to join the EU saying, 'We want no back door, no fast-track, we want to build the EU in our country with our people'.

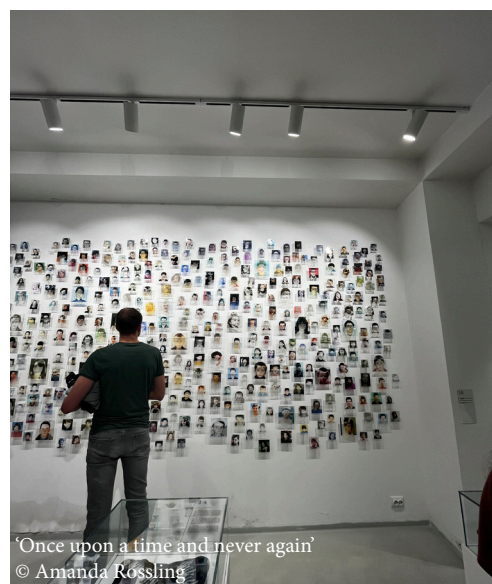
*'We want no back door, no fast-track, we want to build the EU in our country with our people.'*

The Western Balkans have been a region of challenge for the international community since the break-up of Yugoslavia. While the West has turned its attention to Ukraine, its continued support for Kosovo and attempts to normalise its relations with Serbia have perhaps been neglected. If the West does not manage its resources strategically, Moscow could benefit from exploiting the conflict and trying to divert attention. The EU's continued support for normalising Kosovo's relations with Serbia is not only of importance to the entire continent, but is crucial for unlocking

any further political, economic and democratic developments within Kosovo.

Even though it may seem unlikely that Serbia would start a full-scale invasion to retake its former province, given that such a provocation would create direct conflict with NATO and the EU, jeopardising Serbia's accession attempt – there is a growing fear that even the smallest incident could lead to uncontrollable violence and an armed conflict.

In terms of recent failures to deliver upon negotiations and agreements, the international community seems to be frustrated by the blame traded between Belgrade and Pristina. With that said, all stakeholders have issues to deal with. The US and the EU should change their narrative that the Western Balkans are a challenge in the periphery and accept the fact that the end of the Kosovo War opened up space for Kosovo's dependency on the West. Normalisation can first and foremost be achieved through dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo, meaning that the continued mistrust between the two governments must stop. This requires that the West puts Kosovo back as a top priority on the international agenda and that, once and for all, the EU accelerates its enlargement before it, perhaps, could be too late.



'Once upon a time and never again'  
© Amanda Rossling



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# Serbia: Torn between East and West

Ida Gribajcevic | Opinion

JANUARY 2024 will mark a decade of accession negotiations between Serbia and the European Union. Since the 1995 Dayton peace agreement, European integration of the ex-Yugoslav countries was said to be the leading path to secure the region's stability and security. The idea of European enlargement in the Western Balkans has since ground to a halt and is currently in a state of stagnation. This stagnation does not only depend on the EU's reluctance to accept the Western Balkan states as members but also on internal factors, such as the inability to let go of historical legacies, problems with clear government structures and the large, and some would say problematic, role of international actors in ex-Yugoslav countries.

Only 33% of the Serbian population is in favour of the country joining the EU. The number of Serbians who are against EU membership (44%) has never been higher, according to a survey conducted by Demostat in 2023. Other ex-Yugoslav countries show a much higher willingness to join the EU, with 76% in favour in Bosnia & Herzegovina, 74% in North Macedonia and 94% in Kosovo. With EU enthusiasm dwindling, Serbia has been developing its relations with powerful players in the East, Russia and China.

In the past decade, Serbia, led by President Aleksandar Vucic, has become one of the most autocratic countries in the world and faces issues with truth and openness both in politics and press. This development has coexisted with EU membership negotiations but it seems the EU has not paid it sufficient attention.

The geopolitical situation in Europe has been shaken by Russia's attack and war on Ukraine. A looming conflict in the Balkans between Serbia and Kosovo does little to stabilise the current climate. With hostilities and the latest armed attacks in Kosovo, the EU can not just stand by and let another war break out on its territory. With such a low proportion of citizens wanting to join the EU, the imposition of sanctions on Serbia following the attacks in Kosovo on 24 September would possibly push the Serbian people further towards an anti-EU opinion.

On 13 October 2023, President Aleksandar Vucic announced that urgent parliamentary elections will be held in December. Serbia and Vucic have denied all participation in the attacks but their claims have been met with criticism from some. Vucic is aware that his party (Serbian Progressive Party, SNS) is losing votes and an early election in troubling times might win him favour in the polls. Despite this, the EU seems to be doing nothing, even appearing to actually

trust President Vucic when he says that Serbia is not looking to start a war in Kosovo. Whether that is true or not, a war could still break out since relations are so strained.

If Kosovo was recognised as an official EU member, the chances of Serbia cooperating with the EU would decline. Serbian society is facing difficulties and is in need of new infrastructure, free press, energy development and more stable domestic decision-making. The country has powerful allies in the East that have been helpful in this respect, investing in infrastructure and energy development but they have also used Serbia for their own advantage in some aspects.

***Serbian society is facing difficulties and is in need of new infrastructure, free press, energy development and more stable domestic decision-making***

China has been quietly increasing its presence in the Western Balkans region during the last several years. The Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN) has identified

over 130 Chinese-funded projects in the Western Balkans, worth a total of over 32 billion euros since the early 2000s with little or no political strings attached. In Serbia alone (China's regional hub in the Balkans), China has been reopening old steel plants, building bridges and highways, and donating medical supplies and other equipment. This has been met with hesitation by some due to allegations of corruption, human rights violations and environmental issues. Others are thankful for the new roads, bridges and medical aid. The long-term costs of Chinese investment in Serbia are hard to determine now, but it is clear that China is quickly becoming one of Serbia's closest allies.

Chinese interest in the Balkans stems from the region's strategic geographical position both in relation to the EU and the Western markets, but also to the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The BRI is an infrastructure project ushering in a new era of trade and growth by linking countries together and expanding Chinese influence in the world. In the Western Balkans, China's 14+1 framework (also known as China-CEE) is a strategy for promoting relations between China and 14 countries in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). The framework focuses mainly on strengthening cooperation on business and infrastructure investments. The ex-Yugoslav countries, Serbia included, are a part of this strategy.

Russia is another of Serbia's close allies and has offered support in domestic politics, especially regarding the Kosovo conflict. Since the 1829 Treaty of Adrianople/Edirne, when Serbia gained autonomy from the Ottomans, Russia has promised to look after Serbia's interests, a promise that they have more or less kept to the present day. But the relationship isn't without its difficulties. The Kremlin has managed to use its influence in the Western Balkans to spread disinformation, false narratives and support far-right organisations. All of this is in the hopes of establishing Serbia as their





foothold in the Balkans and destabilising a region that has difficulties in those areas. Some of the Russian narratives have led to people having a positive image of the country and its political leadership.

***‘We have a traditionally good relationship, but it doesn’t mean that we support every single decision or most of the decisions that are coming from the Kremlin.’***

Since the invasion of Ukraine, the ties between Russia and Serbia have faced new problems. Although Serbia voted in favour of the UN resolution to condemn Russia’s invasion of

Ukraine and to expel Russia from the UN Human Rights Council, they did not want to impose sanctions on Russia. In January 2023 Serbian President Vucic clarified the status of the relationship with the following words: ‘We are not always jubilant about some of their stances. We have a traditionally good relationship, but it doesn’t mean that we support every single decision or most of the decisions that are coming from the Kremlin.’

Russia has backed Serbia in the Kosovo conflict and Putin has personally stated that the recognition of Kosovo as an independent nation would entail a chain of unpredictable consequences. This differs from the Serbian approach presented above. As the Russian ambassador to Serbia, Aleksandr Konuzin, once said, ‘Russia’s stance is rather simple – we are ready to back whatever position Serbia takes with regards to Kosovo’. While Serbia condemns the attack and war on Ukraine, they still do business with the Russians and

Air Serbia has regularly scheduled flights to Moscow. Even military cooperation has grown stronger, with Serbia having purchased military hardware from Russia despite the threat of sanctions from the US. Serbia and Russia are undoubtedly still in business together. Russia still remains Serbia’s primary gas supplier.

The 1999 NATO bombings of Serbia (Yugoslavia, at the time) left deep wounds and mistrust in Western powers, undermining Serbia’s potential EU membership and strengthening its ties to Russia and China. On the one hand, Serbia applied for EU membership and is still somewhat on track with the application. On the other hand, the majority of the population is negative or ambivalent on the matter.

This raises several questions, but most importantly: would Serbia and its population thrive under the European Union? How can the EU let China and Russia come so close

to spreading their influence if they value European integrity and values? This and much more need to be brought to the table. Serbian foreign policy is torn between potential EU integration and close ties to Russia and China. A possible outcome is that Serbia joins the EU while maintaining its relations with both Russia, a historically important ally, and China, a major investor in the country.

The EU needs to decide whether they are serious about Serbia joining the Union and if so, what measures need to be taken regarding internal issues and the situation with Kosovo. China and Russia are getting closer to Europe and the Western markets which some would argue is a big threat for the future. Serbia, although small geographically, has become a playground for the East and the West, torn between a love and hate relationship with them both.





# Fossil Fuelled Conflict: Lundin Oil and War Crimes in Sudan

Samuel Lithner | Analysis



Wounded man near Rier, May 2002  
© Sven Torrfinn and Hollandse Hoogte

FORMER EXECUTIVES of Lundin Oil, Ian Lundin and Alexander Schneiter, stand accused of helping the military dictatorship in Sudan to commit crimes against humanity during the second Sudanese civil war. A decades-long investigation has culminated in a criminal investigation stretching over 80,000 pages and finally, in September of this year, a trial. The war crimes in question took place over 20 years ago, between 1999 and 2003, at a time when former Swedish prime minister, Carl Bildt, sat on the company's board of directors. Lundin Oil has since rebranded itself a few times, most recently as Orrön Energy.

The prosecution claims that the Sudanese government's offensives in the region were necessary for the company to be able to work in the area. These offensives were conducted in a way that went against international law. The attacks were either directly targeting civilians or at the very least indiscriminate between civilians and rebels. What exactly is Lundin Oil accused of? They are accused of commissioning the crimes as a way to enable their operations in the area. They also stand accused of supporting local pro-government militias in the area with logistics. In short, Lundin Oil is accused of enabling and profiting from crimes against humanity.

*Lundin Oil is accused of enabling and profiting from crimes against humanity*

According to the prosecutors, Lundin and Schneiter were aware of this, but continued to rely on the military and its allies for security in the areas that were of interest to the corporation. The human rights abuses have been reported by many NGOs like Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International and Christian Aid. The most famous report, which led to the Swedish investigation, is called 'Unpaid Debt', written by the Dutch peace organisation, Pax.



The executives face life imprisonment. The prosecutor also demands that all profits relating to the crimes, close to 1.4 billion SEK, should be confiscated from the company.

Between 1983 and 2005, Sudan was ravaged by a vicious civil war. The main struggle was between the government in Khartoum and armed groups based in southern Sudan. In 1997, Lundin Oil formed a consortium together with four other oil companies and got permission from the government to start looking for oil in the area known as Block A5. Notably, the area was not under government control when the contract was signed. The government therefore had to take control of this area. According to the report 'Unpaid Debt' this offensive was bloody and brutal. The list of heinous acts are long, but some examples are arbitrary attacks on civilians, unlawful killing, rape, enslavement, torture and the recruitment of child soldiers. The report claims that 12,000 people died as a result of the offensive from various causes, 160,000 people were forcibly

displaced and 20,000 people were permanently uprooted having lost their livelihood.

***12,000 people died,  
160,000, people were  
forcibly displaced and  
20,000 people were  
permanently uprooted***

Oil, a vast economic resource that can be used to fund the purchase of weapons and to buy important friends in high places, was central to the conflict. Enabling the prospecting and extraction of oil in the area was, therefore, a high priority for the government. In the beginning of 2002, conflict escalated in the area and Lundin Oil ceased all operations as they could no longer guarantee the security of their personnel. Lundin Oil's involvement in the area ended in 2003 when they sold their part in the consortium. Almost a

year later the other European partner, OMW, also sold their part. Lundin Oil made a \$92,6 million profit from the sale.

At present, there have been no other trials against people involved in the civil war. The International Criminal Court (ICC) has an open investigation, which has accused and issued arrest warrants against several high-profile politicians and military officers. However, given that Sudan has not signed the Rome Statute, the ICC lacks the legal obligation to execute its warrants.

The defendants claim to be innocent and they are not without support. Among those who defend them are some notable Swedish names. Former prime minister, Carl Bildt, who sat on the board of directors of Lundin Oil as the alleged crimes took place, has voiced harsh criticism of the investigation, claiming that it has taken far too long and that this shows how weak of a case the prosecutors actually have against Ian Lundin and Alexander Schneider. Carl Bildt does not deny that human rights abuses have been committed in Sudan, but claims that Lundin Oil has not been party to them. He is called as a witness by the court, but will first get a chance to testify in 2025.

Swedish journalist and author, Bengt G Nilsson, has written a number of books and reportages about conflicts in Africa and Asia. During the years crimes are alleged to have taken place, he travelled to southern Sudan together with Lundin Oil after several NGOs had released alarming reports about human rights abuses in the area. Nilsson questioned these reports and in a recent interview claimed that the reports are not consistent with what he saw during his travels. He also dismisses many of the reports as hearsay, misunderstood and biased. It should be said that his criticism is specific to what he said that he saw and he has chosen not to comment on anything beyond this.

Crimes against humanity are defined in the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court as widespread and systematic. The crimes that can be considered, to mention

a few, are murder, slavery, sexual violence, torture and deportation. The actions must also be committed by a state or an organisation and directed against a civilian population. The current trial is set to conclude in the beginning of 2026. Whatever the court's verdict will be, we can expect that the legal proceedings will continue through the Swedish court system. The defence attorneys have said that they will appeal until their clients get acquitted and we can expect more trials to come. What does this mean for the victims? It means that they will be stuck in legal limbo for the foreseeable future, with no guarantee that they will ever get any compensation for their suffering.

At the moment the victims taking part in the trial have asked for 110 million SEK in compensation. Even if the victims get paid for their damages it will never replace the loved ones that they have lost and the suffering they have had to endure. Potential reparations will also only be paid out to the few victims taking part in the trial. This means that thousands of victims will be left without justice or means of achieving it.

***Thousands of victims will  
be left without justice or  
means of achieving it***

These kinds of trials are rare but nevertheless important. This trial is the first instance since the Nürmburg trials of corporate executives standing trial for alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity. We can only hope that the Swedish trial will be the first of many. Lundin Oil was only one of several companies operating in Sudan. With any luck, other European countries will follow suit and hold their corporations accountable for their actions in Sudan. Crimes against humanity are among the worst crimes that can be committed against your fellow humans. That is why we can never let these crimes go ignored and unpunished. At the moment we can only hope that justice gets its way.

Human rights for future poster by  
Amnesty International  
© Christian Lue | Unsplash





# Before She Dies: The Sinking Floating City

Alice Scholander | Travel

IT'S TOO hot. Too many people. Too little space. A man in the crowd takes his T-shirt off. The women behind him glance at one another. Despite crystals of sweat gathering around their hairlines, they stay put. The guide seems unbothered by the heat. She must be used to it by now. It's September in Italy, but there are no signs of the summer ending. They've been standing here for ten minutes. The man without the T-shirt has started fussing and fretting. For how long can someone go on about bridges?

The floating city. La Dominante. Serenissima. Queen of the Adriatic. A loved child has many names. And loved, Venice certainly is. Everyone wants to see her before... Before what? Before they die, some answer. Before she dies, others say. Venice is a prime example portraying the paradox of climate tourism. That is, wanting to see the world before it's too late, and thereby contributing to its demise. The city is unsurprisingly listed by UNESCO as 'highly vulnerable' to climate change.

With the first settlers as early as 450 A.D, and known for its architecture and history, Venice was added to the World Heritage List in 1987. The list, initially being a measure aimed at preserving important destinations, has with time evolved into a bucket list among people seeking to discover the world. And in a time when a flight can cost under \$100, who doesn't?

Under the hashtag #eurosummer, tourists TikTok their way through Europe. The video concept '24 hours in [insert any place anywhere]' is always a guaranteed social media view-guzzling success.

As the first crowd of tourists move on into the city, they're instantly replaced by another. A man selling I<3Venezia t-shirts makes his way through the outdoor seating on the other side of the road. A waitress tells him off in Italian. He shakes his shoulders. He's not from here.

Over-tourism can be defined as any destination suffering the strain of excess tourism. The local population of Venice declined by two-thirds in the last 50 years, as tourist numbers exploded. Tens of thousands of people visit the 11 km long island each day.

*The local population of Venice declined by two-thirds in the last 50 years, as tourist numbers exploded.*

Venice's decades-long tourist boom has led to heated debates about overtourism. However, the economic consequences of abandoning tourism may be too high for a society dependent on the income it brings. This Janus-faced character of tourism makes it hard to approach.

Starting next year, visiting Venice will require a pre-booked ticket. It is a first step in countering the damage and disruption caused by overtourism. Perhaps it is also a first step in redefining what it means to travel. As individuals in free and open, wealthy and spoiled societies, what privileges should we abstain from? Should we really, always, have the right to see?

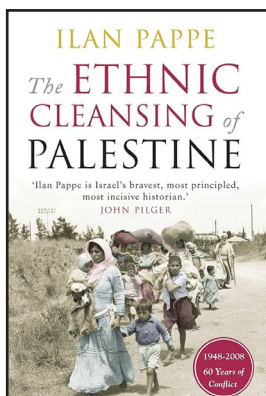


Venice © Stijn te Strake | Unsplash



## Reading Recommendations

While watching the news, it is all too easy to feel overwhelmed or believe we lack enough knowledge to formulate an educated opinion on current affairs. Headlines are skim-read on phones, magazines are absentmindedly flicked through and opinions are formulated on topics based on what we learn by word of mouth. Although all intrinsic to today's media landscape, sometimes it is nice to delve deeper. The following are book read and recommended by the Magazine Committee that members have found useful when doing just that.

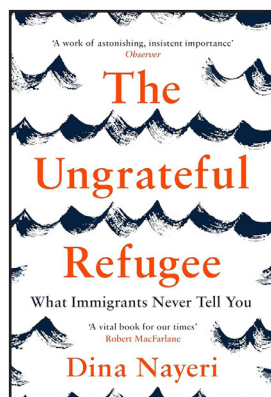


### *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine by Ilan Pappé* – Adla Jebara

A courageous and groundbreaking book by Israeli historian, Ilan Pappé, details the 1948 ethnic cleansing of Palestinians, during which over 750,000 Palestinians were forcibly expelled from their homes, civilians were massacred, and hundreds of villages were emptied and destroyed. Pappé argues, with compelling archival evidence, that from its early days, a fundamental element of Israeli ideology was the forcible expulsion of the indigenous population from their homeland – a strategy that continues to the present day.

### *Venomous Lumpsucker by Ned Beaman* – Ffion McEvoy

Set in a near-future world that has passed 2°C of global warming, *Venomous Lumpsucker* is a comic dystopia of environmental collapse and disaster capitalism. Whizzing past the coast of Sweden, an Estonian nature reserve poisoned by chemical waste, and a Finnish labour camp plagued by flesh-eating fungus, the story ends in 'the Hermit Kingdom', 'Europe's demented satellite module' (formerly known as the UK). Speaking to the grief of mass extinction and the intrinsic value of biodiversity, this bleakly humorous book will make you laugh and pause and think.



### *The Ungrateful Refugee by Dina Nayeri* – Paulina Zajac

Dina Nayeri's powerful retelling of her challenges as an asylum seeker emerges as a nuanced exploration of the refugee experience. Amplified by inspiration taken from the voices of people she encountered, this novel is an insightful, stereotype-breaking work of creative fiction. Born in Iran, Nayeri details the events that followed her mother's conversion to Christianity and their subsequent exile which took them across Italy, the UK, and the US. The themes explored include assimilation, resilience, nostalgia, and family, but most prominently, the demanding burden of gratitude that comes with being a refugee.

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# Narges Mohammadi: Woman, Life, Freedom

## Belen Bringas | Profile

ON 6 October 2023, the Norwegian Nobel Committee announced Narges Mohammadi as the winner of the Nobel Peace Prize. Mohammadi's lifelong activism dedicated to fighting for Iranian women's rights was honoured and celebrated across the globe, yet she remains a prisoner in Tehran, serving a 10-year sentence at Evin Prison for the crime of spreading anti-government propaganda.

*Mohammadi's lifelong activism dedicated to fighting for Iranian women's rights was honoured and celebrated across the globe, yet she remains a prisoner*

Born in 1972 to a middle-class family in Zanjan, Narges Mohammadi studied physics at Qazvin International University, where she became involved in activism for the first time and met her husband, Taghi Rahmani, who taught an underground contemporary history class which she attended in 1995. The couple had twins but because of their intense and passionate commitment to defending human rights, and intermittent imprisonment, the family hasn't been together since their children were toddlers.

Mohammadi has been an activist for roughly 30 years; her 'criminal' record proves it. Her passport was taken from her by authorities in 2009. The next year she was arrested in her own home without warning, the crime being her



Niklas Elmehed © Nobel Prize Outreach,  
<https://www.nobelprize.org/>

collaboration with the Defenders of Human Rights Center. This resulted in an 11-year sentence, but she was released in 2012 on bail due to severely declining health. Mohammadi has suffered seizures, temporary paralysis, and other illnesses throughout her prison sentence. She was once again arrested in 2015 and given a 16-year sentence for 'spreading propaganda'. She was freed again in 2020 but arrested again just 6 months later, this time for participating in a ceremony honouring a protester murdered by the Iranian security forces. She is currently serving a 10-year sentence which includes a 2-year ban from online platforms and membership of any political or social group, as well as 154 lashes.

A prison cell is not enough to contain Mohammadi. Even while behind bars, her activism continues. In August 2023, she was sentenced to an additional year for giving an interview regarding the treatment of female detainees. During her time in prison, she has managed to publish a book called 'White Torture', a collection of interviews with Iranian women in jail, documenting the inhumane conditions and brutal punishments within Evin. Mohammadi isn't afraid to speak up about the mistreatment she has received during her many years in prison. She has made public her experience regarding sexual assault, which other detainees also suffered through. Mohammadi has been advocating for Iranian women prisoners for decades, criticising the use of solitary confinement and executions. Her strength is made evident by her continuous activism even when imprisoned. She has organised countless protests in the last year that revolutionised Iran, and she continues her work by writing essays and giving workshops to women to teach them about their rights.

*A prison cell is not enough to contain Mohammadi.*

Mohammadi is also well known for her opposition to the compulsory hijab rule, writing several letters to news networks exposing the hypocrisy of the Iranian religious regime enforcing the compulsory hijab while allowing sexual violence against female prisoners. Only nine days after winning the Nobel Peace Prize, Mohammadi was denied a hospital visit to a heart specialist due to her refusal to wear the hijab.

Narges Mohammadi winning the Nobel Peace Prize is a testament to her remarkable journey and lifelong dedication to fighting for Iranian women's rights. She is the embodiment of Woman, Life, and Freedom, the revolutionary chant of women in Iran. Against all adversities, she remains a beacon of hope, even in the darkest cell of Evin Prison. Her story is a powerful reminder that there is still a long battle to fight for women's rights across the world.



Iranians and Germans demonstrate together against the oppression of women and the violent suppression of protests in Iran. © Max Zindel | Unsplash



# CBAM: Uncharted Borders of Climate Justice

Emanuel Pinochet | Analysis



Forest Fire © Unsplash +

INTERNATIONAL CLIMATE policy poses an intricate diplomatic puzzle for states. As the debate finally shifts away from acknowledging whether climate change is driven by human activities, a salient remaining area of conflict is how to tackle the problem from a policy perspective. While there is a broad consensus on the urgency of avoiding a severe climate scenario, the reluctance to bear the financial burden remains for all. A controversial policy recently released by the European Union (EU) illustrates this well.

As part of the European Green Deal, the Commission adopted this year the first import tariff on carbon-intensive goods: the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM). The introduction of this piece of legislation has already created political turmoil. Many developing countries voiced their strong opposition to the policy. One concern is related to climate justice and raises the following question: should developing countries pay for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in the EU? This article addresses this topic by explaining the problem of carbon leakage and providing a comprehensive assessment of the CBAM. The focus then shifts towards climate justice, trade, and moral dilemmas underneath.

## The problem of carbon leakage

The EU has taken a decisive step by committing to reduce its net GHG emissions by at least 55% compared to 1990 levels by 2030, with the ultimate goal of achieving carbon neutrality by 2050. A cornerstone of this climate policy has been the inception in 2005 of a cap-and-trade system, the EU's Emission Trading System (ETS). This system regulates carbon-intensive industries such as steel, aluminium, electricity, fertiliser, iron, and cement. It also covers approximately 40% of the EU's GHG. With its implementation, the EU imposed a cap on emissions, established a market price on pollution and provided financial incentives to reduce emissions by investing in low-carbon technologies.

The regulatory scope of the ETS, nonetheless, only applies to companies operating within EU borders. In a globalised environment, this has been an Achilles heel. If the EU raises its environmental standards, there is a risk of companies outsourcing production elsewhere. This phenomenon is called 'carbon leakage' and occurs when countries have different regulatory landscapes. It is defined more precisely as a displacement of carbon emissions from a region with stricter climate policies toward a region with less stringent climate policies. A detrimental consequence of companies relocating their activities elsewhere is that net reduction of emissions does not materialise. Furthermore, carbon leakage can contribute to other problems like unemployment, deindustrialisation, and the reinforcement of trade deficits with other regions of the world.

*Carbon leakage occurs when countries have different regulatory landscapes*

## The Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism

The CBAM seeks to prevent carbon leakage by levelling the playing field for both EU and non-EU actors, resulting in a more balanced regulatory landscape. This is achieved by extending the ETS to non-EU actors importing products into the local market, such as a Chinese steel-producing company located in Guangzhou. In that case, the Chinese company would pay a carbon price (tariff) equal to what companies pay under the ETS for their emissions. It is crucial to emphasise, however, that the CBAM exclusively applies to activities within the scope of the ETS. As articulated by the European Commission, the CBAM aims to mirror the ETS. The rationale is to ensure both foreign and domestic products are treated equally, in accordance with fundamental World Trade Organisation (WTO) principles.





NYC © Thijs Stoop | Unsplash

How does it work? Companies under the realm of the ETS currently have to buy allowances to cover their industrial activities. A company emitting 1000 tonnes of GHG at a cost of €85/tonne will have to buy allowances for the equivalent of €85,000. With the CBAM, the same principle is applied to the imported products. The emissions in producing goods will be measured with a method called life cycle analysis (LCA). Companies importing products to the EU will then have to buy CBAM carbon certificates. These certificates will report the embedded emissions of their product. The tariff to be paid will basically be determined by the level of emissions in their products and the cost of carbon allowance in the ETS during that period.

### Climate justice, trade, and moral dilemmas

Climate justice highlights the significance of equity and fairness in discussions about climate change. It sheds light on the aspects of responsibility, the unequal distribution of impacts across time and space, and the imperative to address resulting injustices.

An inconvenient reality is that countries have historically contributed unevenly to the problem of climate change, which is also reflected in their level of wealth and development: the bottom 100 countries account for less than 3% of global historical GHG emissions, while the top 10 accounts for 60%. The most vulnerable states are additionally the most exposed to the impacts of climate change. Therefore, recognising historical responsibility implies that developed countries have a moral obligation.

### *An inconvenient reality is that countries have historically contributed unevenly to the problem of climate change*

In accordance with the principle of 'common but differentiated responsibility', developed countries are expected to shoulder the majority of the burden of climate mitigation. In contrast, developing countries are entitled, to a certain extent, to continue emitting GHGs under the umbrella of 'right to development'.

The introduction of the CBAM illustrates the moral challenges embedded in the policy. Many developing countries perceive with a lot of hostility an environmental tariff as reducing market access or denying economic opportunities. Critics argue that the CBAM is in fact green protectionism; it consists of unfair and illegal trade practices. It may even reinforce asymmetric economic relations in favour of the Global North. A study from France revealed that the CBAM will indeed mostly impact developing countries, chiefly Russia and China, but the most exposed countries are small non-EU States in the Balkans and Africa. Furthermore, revenues collected by the CBAM will be directed to the EU's budget to finance the innovation funds, supporting mitigation efforts in Europe. In essence, poorer countries will finance technological innovations in the EU. Obviously, that situation raises legitimate moral concerns.

A critical approach combining climate justice and trade policy supports a more nuanced perspective. Over the past decades, trade liberalisation has significantly blurred the boundaries between nations, leading to a race to the bottom concerning environmental standards. The underlying logic is that weak environmental regulation enhances national competitiveness. This issue has been a focal point in trade negotiations, but addressing it has been difficult. The WTO maintains that the most effective approach to dealing with international environmental issues is through environmental agreements. This viewpoint presupposes that trade and environmental concerns should be dealt with separately.

The introduction of the CBAM marks a significant departure from this. It firmly asserts that trade policy plays a pivotal role in climate mitigation. From an ethical standpoint, CBAM challenges the notion of leveraging weak environmental regulations as a competitive advantage and undermines the construction of a 'safe-haven' for pollution. International trade is based on the concept of competitive advantage, yet it becomes morally questionable to consider weak environmental regulation as a competitive advantage in a climate change context.

As the window of opportunity to tackle climate change steadily closes, the CBAM emerges as an attractive tool to reduce emissions. It allows

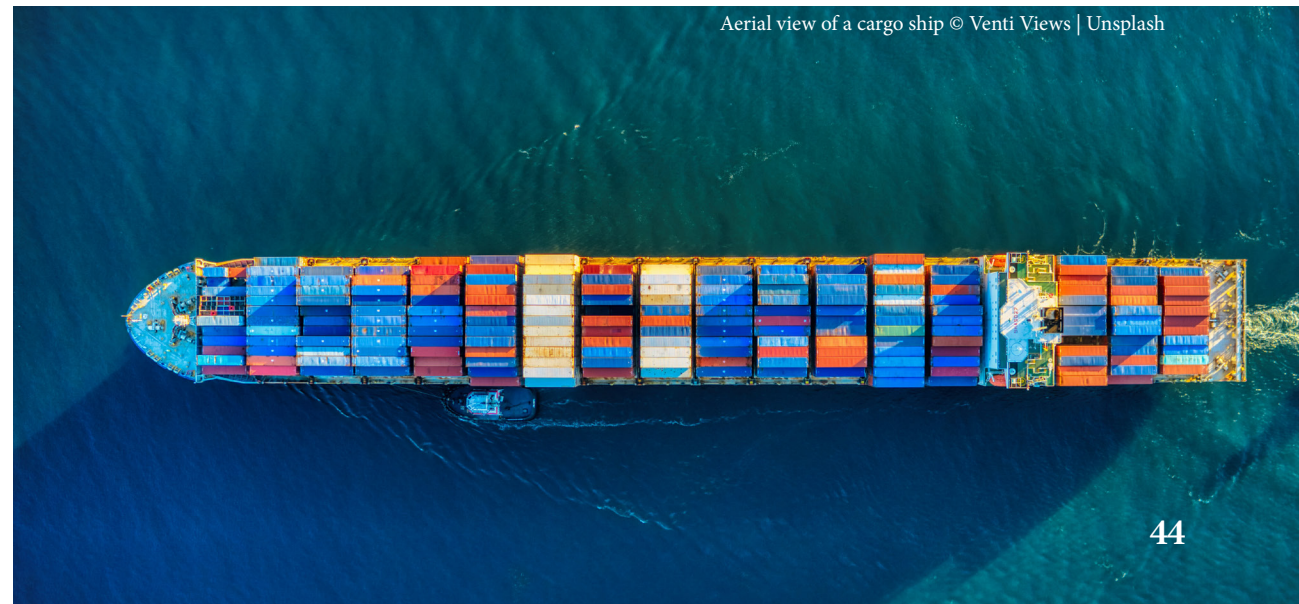
states to implement and enforce environmental policies without fearing the loss of their industry to other countries. However, from a climate justice perspective, it seems unfair for developing countries to be held responsible for mitigation efforts in the EU.

### *It seems unfair for developing countries to be held responsible for mitigation efforts in the EU*

The principle of 'common but differentiated responsibility' should have a more prominent role in the policy. On the other hand, a competitive advantage based on weak environmental regulation should no longer be allowed, even under the basic principle of 'right to development'. An unfair playing field hampers much-needed climate mitigation efforts.

To conclude, there is a need to better align the right to development with climate mitigation in the future. For the common good, compromises should be found within the scope of 1.5-2.0°C of global warming. While this discussion on climate justice primarily focused on a developing country, it is important to remain mindful of future generations.

Aerial view of a cargo ship © Venti Views | Unsplash





# 'They weren't even sweating!' Greenwashing Sweatshops

Frida Månsson | Opinion



Who made your clothes? © Francois Le Nguyen | Unsplash

ON 24 April 2013, scenes reminiscent of a horror film were taking place on the outskirts of Dhaka, Bangladesh. The Rana Plaza, an eight-story commercial building housing garment factories, collapsed. Large structural cracks had been discovered just one day before the accident but after factory owners threatened to withhold pay, garment workers had no choice but to return.

1134 people lost their lives. Survivors suffered horrific injuries and permanent harm. One survivor recounted her uterus being crushed by the rubble and later having to have it surgically removed. Others were forced to amputate their own limbs in order to escape the crushing concrete blocks.

After the accident, The Rana Plaza Donors Trust Fund was set up to compensate victims for medical bills and loss of income. Even though substantial evidence was put forward, mainly thanks to NGOs and journalists present at the scene, many of the brands accused of facilitating malpractice in the factories never contributed to the fund.

When the images of this horrific event spread across media outlets worldwide, one could have hoped that they would imprint upon the global consciousness of the fashion industry and lead to improved conditions for garment workers, invoking permanent change. The tenth anniversary of this disaster came and passed earlier this year, begging the question – what is the state of fast fashion today? And who is responsible?

Fast fashion, for anyone unfamiliar with the term, is clothing mass-produced by big brands who keep prices low by keeping labour costs at a minimum: paying workers as little as possible while holding them to extreme standards. Newer brands emerging as big players on the market, such as Shein or Temu, are even opting out of owning physical stores. Maintaining their business completely online allows them to push down prices even lower.

UN reports suggest that the fast fashion industry is responsible for 8-10% of global emissions. Most of the environmental impact comes from the raw materials needed to produce the garments. The oil needed for making polyester is estimated at 342 million barrels yearly and the dyeing of textiles requires millions of tonnes of chemicals.

The detrimental impact the fashion industry has on the environment and climate change is widely known. It seems only natural companies are trying to (green)wash this image away.

In June 2023, a group of influencers garnered attention after posting videos of a paid brand trip to the Shein 'innovation center' in Guangzhou, China. The goal of the trip was to defend and advertise the company's 'healthy' working environments in what seemed to be a model factory. In one of the videos the camera pans across the room where garments are being assembled at a calm pace while the influencer scoffs that, 'They weren't even sweating, we were the ones sweating', ridiculing the term sweatshop.

***'They weren't even sweating, we were the ones sweating'***

The subsequent engagement on the social channels of the TikTokers concerned was not as positive as they might have hoped. Criticism flooded the comment sections as the influencers were accused of promoting a brand facing serious allegations of inhumane working conditions. All the original videos of the trip have since been taken down.

As tempting as it is to join forces and mock the seemingly clueless influencers for their transgressions, the phenomena of fast fashion brands and accountability is a complex mega machinery of production and consumption chains spanning across the globe. Blaming individuals, even those with a considerable following, might be counterproductive to the



cause. Let he who is without an H&M t-shirt cast the first stone. But if everyone is complicit – who can be held responsible?

### ***Let he who is without an H&M t-shirt cast the first stone***

The power of change is often argued to be in the hands of the consumer. Individuals are encouraged to simply choose better options when shopping. In the same manner that the influencers could have chosen not to cooperate with a ‘big bad brand’. The arbitrary nature of individual responsibility was recently satirised in a TikTok trend where people joked about the absurd situation of debating ‘which level of chicken happiness can I afford today when buying eggs?’

Constantly faced with choices, or at least the semblance of choices, related to the wellbeing of the planet – responsibility for the conditions of manufacturing is shifted to consumers. Convenient perhaps, for governments and producers.

When fast fashion brands are debated, a recurring argument is how the consumption patterns of Gen-Z shoppers are fueling the unsustainable trend. Once again the cause of the issue is placed on the individual level. Yet, recent surveys show that younger consumers are more susceptible to changing behaviours, shopping second-hand and excluding mass-produced items. If the problem is ever to be solved the lens needs to be focused elsewhere, leaving the prompts of personal action behind. Instead, global and multilateral agreements need to be introduced.

A glimmer of hope might be found in the EU Strategy for Sustainable and Circular Textiles. As the name reveals, the strategy is a collection of initiatives aimed at ensuring a more sustainable and environmentally conscious fashion industry. A multitude of initiatives are presented, and although



Chittagong, Bangladesh © Mumtahina Tanni | Pexels

reducing production of microplastics and limiting the use of chemicals certainly seems like a step in the right direction, the strategy lacks an articulated human rights perspective. The rights and lives of garment workers are overlooked – or at least not a priority. Textile waste and its export from wealthy countries is a huge issue; directives targeting this would be more than welcome. But if companies were required to minimise waste, the compensation for the increased costs would have to come from somewhere. Hopefully, workers will not have to pay that bill.

Furthermore, the implementation plan of what the policies actually entail and how the initiatives are to be executed leaves much to be desired. One of the ‘key actions’ is described as ‘[e]mpowering consumers in the green transition and ensuring the reliability of green claims’. Another is the campaign #ReFashionNow. The discourse used holds an uncanny resemblance to the ‘green’ marketing strategies of the very fashion brands this directive supposedly seeks to restrict. If the

policies that are supposed to be remedying the issue are in fact greenwashed themselves, demands of radical change needs to be promoted. Encouraging young people to rent, borrow or purchase second hand will not be enough to solve this global issue of human rights and imminent environmental disaster.

### ***If the policies that are supposed to be remedying the issue are greenwashed themselves, demands of radical change need to be promoted***

When a supranational organisation like the European Union proposes hashtags and ‘conscious consumption’ as a solution to the fashion crisis, it begs the question of who it is really trying to protect. The sight of crushed workers severing their limbs seems like a

distant, almost fictitious past. Some might argue that imposing demands directed at producing a more sustainable product is concurrently helping garment workers. I wish they were right. More likely however, higher demands on products, cancellation and sanctions are likely to affect the most vulnerable rather than shareholders. Change needs to commence by enforcing workers rights rather than sanctioning their employers.

In Bangladesh, the lingering impacts of the 2013 accident serve as a grim reminder of the global injustice of who will ultimately be in the greatest peril from fast fashion and climate change. Photographer Ismail Ferdous, present at the scene ten years ago, has been following up on the victims’ lives and documenting them throughout the years. In honouring the fates of the victims, spreading awareness could be a step in combating the abhorrent practices still taking place, inspiring action. Reminiscing is important but it has little value if it does not invoke change.



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# Double Vulnerability: When Climate Change Meets Migration

Mathilde Perrin | Feature

CATAclysmic WILDFIRES in Canada and Greece, devastating floods in China and Libya, major droughts in Europe, and increased water scarcity in Senegal: the consequences of the climate crisis are more prominent than ever. According to the latest report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), 3.3 to 3.6 billion people live in contexts that are highly vulnerable to climate change. Each year, an estimated 21.5 million people are forced to leave their homes to flee weather-related sudden-onset hazards. In Iraq's southern governorates, 94% of displaced people cited water scarcity as the main reason for their displacement. In 2019, 146,000 people were internally displaced following the strike of Tropical Cyclone Idai on the southeast coast of Mozambique.

Climate change can be said to constitute a 'threat multiplier' in the context of armed

conflicts. In countries that are already facing violence and armed conflicts, environmental degradation and climate change may worsen the situation. In the case of Syria, a five-year drought in the northeast caused the displacement of approximately 1.5 million people and preceded the ongoing civil war. Likewise in Mali, where around 65% of employment is in agriculture, a lack of natural resources such as grass led to conflicts.

In countries affected by armed conflicts, it can be difficult for the authorities to cope with the consequences of climate change: their capacity and resources are limited by the conflict. The weakening of institutions and their focus on restoring order prevent them from effectively responding to climate change and from taking preventative measures to counter it. Consequently, people in those areas are disproportionately affected and left vulnerable.

Sinjar Mountains, Iraq © Levi Meir Clancy | Unsplash



As of 2022 , approximately 8.7 million people were internally displaced because of disasters, such as storms or floods, and this number is only expected to grow.

Many factors can hinder the movement of climate migrants. As underlined by the UNHCR, ‘climate change sows seeds for conflict, but it also makes displacement much worse when it happens’. It is important to underline that in countries that are enduring armed conflict(s), people are often prevented from moving because of insecurity and the fear of violence. People are often doubly affected: first by climate change and environmental disruption, and then by the violence of armed conflicts that hinder them from moving to a better place.

***People are often doubly affected: first by climate change and environmental disruption, and then by the violence of armed conflicts that hinder them from moving to a better place***

Following the 2018 floods in Mali that destroyed more than 3200 houses and caused the loss of approximately 1800 cattle, the prospect of encountering armed groups or bandits along the way dissuaded herders and pastoralists from travelling along roads with their livestock. As climate change often affects areas already facing violence and armed conflicts, people affected by climate disasters are left more vulnerable to migration. In many places, people do not have the financial means to leave and thus suffer more of the consequences of climate change because they cannot escape them.

Internally displaced people are affected by the instability of their situation. People may have to move several times because the place they moved to initially suffers adverse impacts of climate change as well. In Mali, the vulnerability of people who were initially displaced within the country by the conflict was exacerbated by the harsh climate, as underlined in an ICRC report, *When Rain Turns to Dust*. Thus, people already suffering from the effects of displacement may be pushed to move again to escape other local disasters they are victims of. Displaced people ending up in displaced

people camps or refugee camps tend to live in precarious accommodation that is not strongly constructed. As underlined by the UNHCR, around 84% of the world’s refugees live in climate change ‘hotspots’.

Another problem that people displaced due to climate change face is the denial of refugee status. To be considered a refugee under international law, certain conditions must be met. According to Article 1 of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, a person must fear persecution on the grounds of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership of a particular social group. A person fleeing their country because of climate change and climate disasters does not necessarily fear prosecution. Consequently, they may not meet the requirements of the Refugee Convention, and may not be granted refugee status and all the rights that come along with it.

Finally, one should not forget the difficulties that all migrants encounter. As stated in the ICRC report, ‘displacement can save people’s lives. But it also tends to make them less safe and to undermine stability, as they lose

their assets, their homes, their livelihoods and social networks and must learn to live in new environments with limited support for their recovery’. In addition to the feeling of instability and the need to adapt to a new culture, migrants often struggle to have their human rights respected, especially social and economic rights such as the right to health or the right to adequate food, but also civil and political rights, such as the right to education.

***‘...displacement can save people’s lives. But it also tends to make them less safe and to undermine stability’***

Solutions should be sought immediately to support those who are suffering the consequences of climate change. However, perhaps the most sustainable solution is to mitigate and adapt to climate change in order for people not to have to flee their homes in the first place.





# Fängelse för framtidskamp?

Annika Ellenrieder | Opinion

Åtgärderna mot fredliga klimataktivisterna blir allt hårdare. Samtidigt som det mediala tonläget har trappats upp blir åtalerna allt allvarigare. Innan 2022 hade åtal för sabotage aldrig tillämpats för demonstranter som blockerar trafik. Nu blir sabotagedomar allt vanligare. Pontus Bergendahl är den förste aktivisten som har suttit i fängelse för fredlig civil olydnad i Sverige. Den 12 september 2023 stod han återigen anklagad inför Lunds tingsrätt för sitt deltagande i en fredlig vägblockad i protest mot Sveriges subvention av fossila bränslen. Åtalet är sabotage, att påföljden blir fängelsestraff är inte otänkbart.

Sedan 2022 har 25 aktivister dömts för sabotage, en dom som kan ge upp till fyra års fängelse. Den har tidigare endast utfärdats för gärningar som utgjort en allvarlig samhällsfara. Tidigare har demonstranter som blockerat trafik dömts för egenmäktigt förfarande, olaga intrång, och när de dessutom vägrat lämna platsen på polisens uppmaning, dömts för ohörsamhet mot ordningsmakten. Detta är brott som ger böter eller fängelsestraff på högst sex månader upp till ett år. Nu håller rättsstatens norm på att förskjutats. De hårda åtal och domar mot fredliga aktivister är helt oproportionerliga till den störning som aktivisterna har orsakat.

## De hårda åtal och domar mot fredliga aktivister är helt oproportionerliga

I Bergendahls fall blev trafiken i en korsning i Stockholm störd i tre timmar. Det är visserligen en samhällsstörning men en störning som är i proportion till den kris klimatförändringarna ställer samhället inför.

Det är viktigt att understryka att aktivisterna i vägblockader är utbildade i och beredda att flytta på sig ifall det skulle uppstå en nödsituation. Till exempel om blåljustrafik skulle behöva släppas fram. Civil olydnad är i sin kärna en fredlig och demokratisk protestform. Dess förmåga att påverka samhället har påvisats av stora historiska ikoner så som Rosa Parks.

Även klimataktivismen i Sverige har rönt stora framgångar: det är aktivisternas förtjänst att politiker stoppade anslutningen av en fossilgasterminal i Göteborg 2019. De bidrog även till att Preemraff 2021 drog tillbaka sin ansökan om utbyggnad av ett oljeraffinaderi i Lysekil som skulle ha blivit den största koldioxidproducenten i hela Sverige. Utöver politiker och företag har Pontus Bergendahl och andra klimataktivisterna även påverkat samhällsdebatten genom att ständigt belysa klimatkatastrofen. De har lyckats förmedla till många människor hur allvarlig situationen faktiskt är.

Med dessa framgångar i åtanke är det mycket oroväckande att Sveriges klimat- och miljöminister Romina Pourmokhtari (L) påstår att klimatrörelsens demonstrationer inte har 'gjort ett skvatt'. Att styrande politiker vägrar erkänna aktivismens påverkan säger mycket om hur högt de värderar demokratin.

Klimatförändringarna utgör ett hot av katastrofal dimension för samhället, för hälsan och för livet. Solomon Hsiang, professor på UC Berkeley, liknar klimatkatastrofen mot ett jättelikt, tungt lastat tåg som styr direkt mot ett stup. Efter man bromsar så fortsätter tåget rulla ett tag. Det är för sent att förhindra konsekvenserna av de utsläpp som redan befinner sig i atmosfären. Men det är inte för sent att förhindra att ännu mer släpps ut.



Protests for the launch of the Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill  
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XR Protest Stockholm  
© Samuel Regan-Asante | Unsplash

Det är heller ingen hemlighet att politikerna inte agerar snabbt nog. Enligt forskningsorganisationen Climate Action Tracker kommer jorden, med de policies

och åtgärder som beslutats om, i nuläget nå en uppvärmning på 2,5 till 2,9 grader. Detta kommer att få katastrofala konsekvenser.

## *De har lyckats förmedla till många människor hur allvarlig situationen faktiskt är.*

Klimatfrågan är också en fråga om social rättvisa. De som bidrar mest till utsläppen är välbärgade samhällen som det svenska, medan de som lider mest av krisens konsekvenser är fattiga samhällen i andra delar av världen. De rika samhällena har de största möjligheterna och därför även det största ansvaret att motarbeta en klimatkatastrof.

Det är farligt för demokratin när möjligheterna att påverka samhället och uttrycka sitt missnöje mot en bristfällig politik inskränks. I Sverige är aktivister skyddade av demonstrationsrätten som är en del av både grundlagen och Europakonventionen. En begränsning av demonstrationsfriheten får aldrig vara utöver vad som är nödvändigt med hänsyn till syftet. Sabotageåtalerna är inte proportionerliga till den samhällsstörning som aktivisterna orsakar i hänsyn till det nödläge som klimatkrisen ställer oss inför. Normförskjutningen är alarmerande. Den kan i längden leda till förändrad rättspraxis och är ett allvarligt ingrepp i den svenska demonstrationsrätten. Men klimatfrågan är inte bara en demokrati och rättvisefråga, det är en fråga om människors överlevnad.

## *Det är farligt för demokratin när möjligheterna att påverka samhället inskränks*

Ansvaret ligger på hela samhället att skydda aktivisters rättigheter, att skydda demokratin och att skydda mänskligheten från en katastrof. För att uttrycka det med FN:s generalsekretär António Guterres ord: 'Climate activists are sometimes depicted as dangerous radicals. But the truly dangerous radicals are the countries that are increasing the production of fossil fuels.'

Extinction Rebellion, 2020, London  
© Ehimetalor Akhere Unuabona | Unsplash





# The Highway to Climate Hell: A Conversation with Pontus Bergendahl

## Ffion McEvoy | Interview

I AM sitting in a courtroom at the bottom of the sea. Furniture floats by, mismatched shades of grey and beige, as I sink into the muddy brown carpet. Watery figures at the front of the room, judges and officials, are illuminated by a sickly fluorescent light. Small fish dart around their drawn, grey faces.

The drone of the prosecutor's voice drags me up to the surface. He lists off charges in a bored voice. Climate activists. Blocked a crossing. Carried out a boat. Sat and sang. 'Sabotage', he calls it, 'ohörsamhet mot ordningsmakten' [disobeying police order]. Their weapons of resistance were glue and holding hands.

He reads out police communications documenting a bizarre dance: activists glueing themselves to the boat and the road, police spraying acetone to unstick them, the activists glueing and re-glueing themselves in more significant numbers. I drift back down into the depths.

The defence lawyer tries to explain the climate crisis to a room of blank faces. She brings up graphs, maps, statistics and quotations. The audience is unreceptive, inscrutable. The unlined face of the prosecutor twitches almost imperceptibly as the defence lawyer accelerates

through slide after slide, trying desperately to convey the urgency of the situation.

*'Klimatnödläge', 'demonstrationsfrihet'* [climate emergency, the right to demonstrate], she says.

*'Allvarlig trafikstörning', 'proportionalitetsprincipen'* [serious traffic disruption, proportionality principle], he strikes back.

The prosecutor lists out the 'cost to society' caused by the activists. I choke back silent laughter and wish I could scream a torrent of bubbles at their expressionless faces. I inhale deeply, and my lungs fill with water.

Nausea punches me in the gut. Things shouldn't be like this. The people trying to save us, to do something, anything, are prosecuted. The villains act with impunity. We are, in the words of UN secretary-general António Guterres, hurtling down the 'highway to climate hell with our foot still on the accelerator'. Surely, anyone trying to block that road is an inspiration, not a criminal.

Two weeks after watching his trial, I met with climate activist Pontus Bergendahl to reflect.



*Five years ago, you abandoned a comfortable life to pursue climate activism full-time. You've stopped traffic and aeroplanes, blockaded oil terminals and refineries, occupied offices and glued yourself to a whole host of surfaces. You were the first climate activist in Sweden to serve a prison sentence. How did you get here?*

I'm still very surprised that I'm so radical. I've never been a person that stands out. The only answer I have is that it is the only rational way to handle the climate crisis. I feel that I have to do it.

*Could you explain why you were in court?*

In April 2022, Extinction Rebellion blocked two of the main roads in central Stockholm. It was totally peaceful, as it always is. In court, I was charged for 'sabotage' and 'disobeying police order'. That was a big surprise. The prosecutor suggested a two-and-a-half-month prison sentence.

*How does it feel to be taken to court for climate activism?*

It's very sad. I always trusted Swedish society. I was proud of paying taxes and contributing.

Now I feel outside of society because I think that the social contract is broken. The system is everywhere, and whatever you do, it works against you. If we do something like blocking a street, the whole machinery – newspapers, politics, police – is working towards business as usual. If you disturb something, it snaps back control again.



© Extinction Rebellion Sverige

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*What goes through your head when you're sitting in a courtroom like that?*

It gets very emotional because you have to talk about the climate emergency and its effects. I think for all of us, there is a deep sorrow. It's not conscious all the time, but now and then, it just comes up. You feel the horror that we're facing and the sadness of all we are losing.

**You feel the horror that we're facing**

The court wants court cases to be a certain way. They want it to be about where I was standing how much traffic was stopped. They want to be clinical. I want to talk emotionally about the climate crisis. That is a struggle between me and the court.

*What would you say to people who don't approve of these tactics: direct action, blocking roads, glueing yourself to things?*

You should make a distinction between what people think about our goals and what they think of our methods. That's what Martin

Luther King Jr. wrote from the Birmingham jail. We don't care if people like us as long as we can create public opinion about climate change and what we should do about it. You also need to put things into perspective. If you're mad about people stopping cars while the whole world is ending, then we're not on the same page.

*You, your wife, and your daughters have been arrested and tried in court for climate activism several times. How has this shaped your opinion of the legal system?*

When one of my daughters got her first sentence, the court wrote that it's up to the government to handle the climate crisis. Whatever risks the government accepts, you are forced to accept, too. When they say that to a young person, it makes me extremely mad. I don't trust in the system anymore. It was exactly as Greta Thunberg said: we don't have the political system or the legal system to handle the climate crisis. So we need to fight them both.

*In Sweden, climate activists are receiving harsher sentences. Road blockades are now*





*often classified as 'sabotage', a much more serious crime than the previously common 'disobeying police order'. How have you experienced these changes?*

The repression has definitely increased. When we started, we didn't even get fined for roadblocks. Then we got fined and jailed. Now they charge us with sabotage, which is basically a prison sentence. I have mixed feelings about it. It's tougher to get people to join our actions. On the other hand, I see the repression as a sign that we are affecting society.

### ***I see the repression as a sign that we are affecting society***

Sweden has received international criticism for the sabotage convictions. The UN states that prison is never appropriate for peaceful civil disobedience. It's significant that Sweden goes against that.

*What would you say to people who think of Sweden as a shining example of dealing with climate change?*

It's absolutely not true. The government wants to paint this picture of Sweden. The Swedish people think that we are the best in the world when it comes to climate change. But all countries have their own story.

Norway has the highest proportion of electric cars in the world. It is also one of the biggest oil producers in the world. But Norwegians can think they are the best in the world. They say that they have the 'greenest' oil in the world, which is ridiculous. Australia claims to have the 'greenest' coal in the world.

*Thinking about the climate crisis often leaves me paralysed by fear and hopelessness. What would you say to people struggling with climate anxiety?*

I don't think you should push away climate anxiety. I think it is a natural way to feel and you can try to embrace it. But if it becomes too much, you should seek professional support.

I remember when the Extinction Rebellion youth were sitting outside the offices of the Swedish Social Democratic Party. For a whole week, they sat outside. No politician spoke to them. On the last day, an employee came out and told them they should read more 'happy news'. That makes me so mad. It was so patronising. The system and the politics dismiss the worry people feel about the climate crisis.

*How hopeful are you about the future?*

I think hope is overestimated. You don't need hope to act. If you look at resistance movements throughout history, it's not hope that motivates people to go out on the street and take big personal risks. It's about justice and doing the right thing. Studies have shown that people taking down dictatorships don't believe beforehand that they can win. They are surprised when a dictator falls. It's not fair that we have a government that kills us. That is much more motivating than hoping for a better future.

### ***I think hope is overestimated. You don't need hope to act***

When I started as a climate activist, my goal was to save the world. That is too big of a task to have. I became burned out. When I was in prison, it felt like a retreat. My mindset changed. I want to be a person who stands up for good values. It doesn't matter if I win or not. My wife said early in our climate activism: 'I don't want to go down without a fight'. That is in my head all the time. That is enough to motivate me to continue.

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