

inter

The compilation of featured articles on INSAMER English

# Notional

Biannual Journal (2020/2)

RECALLING  
**THE FREEDOM FLOTILLA**  
IN ITS TENTH YEAR

LEGAL STRUGGLE  
**AGAINST ISRAEL**

PEACE ENVOY ON ROAD:  
**FREEDOM  
FLOTILLA**



The Eu Values and The  
Trapped Refugees Between  
**Death and Hope.**

US-Taliban Peace Deal Under  
**The Shadow of Gloom**

The New Scramble for Africa,  
**Tragedy or Farce?**

Extermination of  
**Uighur Muslims in China**



# GOODNESS FOR A LIFETIME

If you care for an  
Orphan, your  
goodness lasts  
a lifetime

Everyone smiles  
if an Orphan  
smiles



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## EDITORIAL

We are glad to publish the third issue of *InterNotional*. It is very humbling to hear supportive feedbacks about *InterNotional*'s previous issues from our precious readers. We have chosen the Turkish Foreign Policy as our cover story and served some important and effective issues in relation to Turkey during the current global transformation era.

May 2020 is the tenth anniversary of the Gaza Freedom Flotilla and it is most worthy to dedicate this issue to remember the peaceful humanitarian movement. The Gaza Freedom Flotilla was organized to break Israel's blockade against the Palestinian people in Gaza but the mission was sabotaged. The Israel Occupation Army assaulted unarmed civilians on the flotilla and killed 10 innocent passengers and wounded more than 50 people on Mavi Marmara. On 31 May 2010 Israel wrote its conducts on the flotilla with the darkest ink in the history of humanity.

So, we woefully feel responsible to remember all the important messages carried by the Flotilla. Primarily, the Zionist idea will be discussed, as well as who are fighting against the Israeli on-going blatant acts, despite international law and human rights. Then we'll remember how the organizers organized the Gaza Freedom Flotilla in a bid to raise global humanitarian voice. Lastly, the process of the legal struggle of the Mavi Marmara attack will also be highlighted in this very issue.

Of course various topics related to global humanitarian issues have also been prepared for you in this edition of *InterNotional*.

Wish you pleasant readings..





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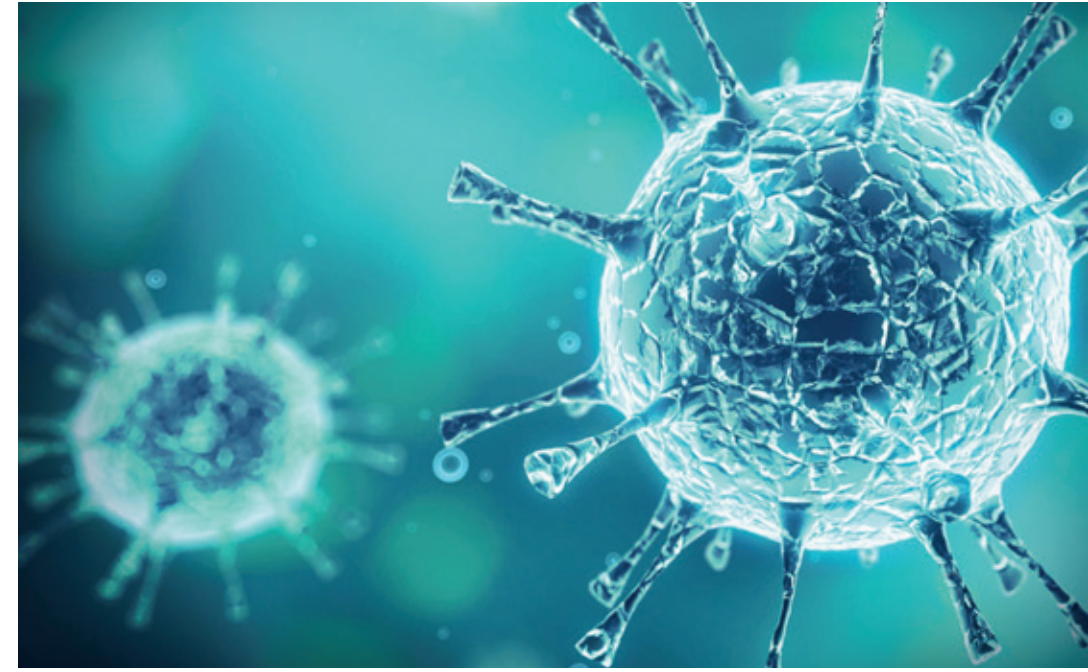
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# ISLAMIC WORLD IN 2020

(JANUARY-JUNE)

## ADDITIONAL FOREIGN TROOPS DEPLOYED TO MALI

Organized terror attacks targeting military points and civilians have increased tenfold in Africa's Sahel region since 2016. Many areas in the Sahel region have been badly affected due to the increasing violence affiliated with al-Qaida and ISIS. France, seeking to strengthen its military presence in West Africa, has declared in February of sending 600 additional troops to its 4,500 officials in Mali. Similarly, the African Union has announced the deployment of 3,000 troops to the Sahel region. As known, foreign peace troops have been stationed in northern Mali since 2012; however, stability and security in the region is still fragile.



## NAGORNO-KARABAKH CONFLICT

Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev and Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan met on March 29 in Vienna with the mediation of the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs. This was the first official meeting between the two leaders. Both parties spoke positively about the progress of the negotiations, even as expectations of a breakthrough remain low. Expectations for progress toward a peace deal between Armenia and Azerbaijan – while remaining extremely low – are nevertheless higher than they have been in years, with Pashinyan's current position.

## DEAL OF THE CENTURY

On January 28, 2020, Israel and the US announced the "Deal of the Century" plan to the public at the White House. The plan aims to expand and legitimize Israel's actual occupation of the Palestinian territory. The main goals of the new Israeli government are to annex the Jordan Valley and expand their illegal settlements in the West Bank as well as to implement the "Deal of the Century" plan. Israel's increasing aggressive policies and its improving relations with countries in the region create even more difficult situation for the Palestinians.



## HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IN GREECE

Greece continues to commit human rights violations. Greece, which does not recognize the ethnic and national origins of its own citizens and implements assimilation policies, also has inhumanely treated tens of thousands of refugees who came to the Greek borders to go to EU countries. Greece authorities are using tear gas, plastic and live bullets to the refugees; causing injuries and deaths to some of them.

## THE LANGUAGE OF THE STATE- FORMING NATION

Vladimir Putin proposed amending the Russian Constitution during a message to the Federal Assembly in mid-January. A few days later, the presidential draft amendments were submitted to the State Duma. The proposed innovations could radically change Russia's governmental system. In particular, they propose to consolidate the status of the State Council in the Basic Law, give the State Duma the right to approve not only the prime minister, but also all members of the government, increase the role of governors in decision-making process, and introduce priority over international law, which means revising one of the main provisions of the Constitution.

In this context Russian Muslims are against the amendment to the Constitution, which fixes the status of "the language of the state-forming nation" for the Russian language. Muslims are convinced that "all proposed amendments are not just separate amendments, but a blow to the fundamental principle of interethnic consent."





JANUARY FEBRUARY MARCH APRIL MAY JUNE JULY  
AUGUST SEPTEMBER OCTOBER NOVEMBER DECEMBER

# TURKEY IN 2020

(JANUARY-JUNE)



precautions to fight the spread of Covid-19. The country's healthcare system was quick to find and treat Covid-19 cases. The government took preventive measures such as closing crowded and high-risk places, altered conventional education into online mode, imposed weekend curfew and ban 65+ and 20- year-olds from going out. Until 11 June 2020, Turkey's confirmed Covid-19 cases were 173,036; with 4,746 deaths and 146,839 patients recovered.

## COUNTER-TERRORISM

As it's counter-terrorism measures, Turkey has launched two new operations against PKK/YPG at the Turkish-Syrian border, namely Operation Peace Spring and Operation Spring Shield. Operation Peace Spring was launched between 9 and 18 October 2019 with the aim to keep YPG out of the country's border. Operation Spring Shield began on 27 February 2020, with the aim to stop the potential migration wave from Syria.



## CORONA

The first confirmed case of Coronavirus (Covid-19) was found in Wuhan, China on 31 December 2019 and spread around the world, instantly morphing the disease into a pandemic. In Turkey, the first case was confirmed on 10 March 2020. Turkey is considered lucky since it had the opportunity to follow up the pandemic that hit its neighboring countries, particularly in regards to the risks the virus might cause and required measures that should be taken. Both the government and the Health Ministry took swift



and tourism are likely to suffer and weaken the country's external position, while domestic containment measures will limit economic activities at home. While fiscal stimulus could soften the impact somewhat, a recession looks inevitable.

## ECONOMY

Turkey's economy showed 0.9% growth in 2019. Turkey's year-end inflation rate is forecasted to be at 11% in 2020, driven by the declining energy prices and exchange rate pressures. The economy seemed to firm up in the first two months of the year before the Covid-19 pandemic hit, with industrial production and retail sales growing strongly in January-February. GDP reached 4.5% at the first quarterly. After contraction in March, the sector's capacity utilization rate fell to an 11-year low in April. Exports

## REFUGEE POLICY

On 12 July and 16 October 2019, 34,397 irregular migrants that arrived in Istanbul were referred to the provinces where Repatriation Centers are located. 5,945 unregistered Syrians in Istanbul were referred to the country's Temporary Refugee Centers. Turkey has launched different operations in North Syria to create safezones for the 3.6 million Syrian refugees residing in Turkey. After 33 Turkey's soldiers were killed in a Syrian government airstrike in Idlib, Ankara opened its door to Europe for migrants on 28 January 2020, citing the EU's failure to keep its promise in supporting Turkey in terms of Syrian refugees; leading to Turkey's decision in stopping the migration wave from Syria.



## AIDS OF TURKEY

Right after China and the US, Turkey comes as the third biggest contributing country in terms of medical assistance. In total Turkey has distributed various medical aids ranging from mask, PPE, Covid-19 test kit to antiseptic for 60 countries at the time of the Coronavirus pandemic. Last year alone, Turkey provided no less than 100 countries with 2,000 assistance programs in education, health, employment and entrepreneurship-support projects to name a few.





# Recalling the Freedom Flotilla in its Tenth Year

EMRE YILDIRIM





The century-old Palestinian issue has been one of the most chronic political and humanitarian problems of the modern era. The Zionist occupation, which progresses systematically in itself, has not only destroyed the lives of generations in the Middle East, but remains the most important problem area for today's contemporary politics. Due to Israeli occupation, hundreds of thousands of Palestinians have been killed, wounded or sent into exile, and their lands confiscated. While two-thirds of the Palestinian population live in refugee camps or in exile, the other one-third of them, on the other hand, live under Israeli's constant atrocity.

Apart from the unlawful practices in the past, the collective punishment methods carried out by the Israeli occupation regime today have dragged an entire Palestinian society into a catastrophic humanitarian crisis. The Israeli-Egyptian blockade upon Gaza since 2007 in particular, has resulted in a tremendous humanitarian agony leaving the people in need of all sorts of humanitarian supplies.

So, the Palestinian issue has become more of a humanitarian crisis than just being that of political. Accordingly, this very humanitarian aspect of the issue holds all sensitive and mindful world citizens responsible for helping the Palestinian people to be free in a dignified life.

## Short Story of the Flotilla

One of the most important manifestations of the Palestinian solidarity activities having been conducted in recent years was the Freedom Flotilla. Hundreds of people gathered from all over the world for the sole purpose of helping the Palestinian

people by not only delivering humanitarian aid but also showing solidarity to them and raising global awareness about the problem. The idea of a flotilla was born out of this consideration to put an end to the so-called "humanitarian corridor" to Gaza, Palestine in 2009. After a long and challenging process, organizations from Greece, Turkey, Sweden, Belgium, England, and the US designed a foolproof humanitarian action plan. The leading organization would be Turkey's IHH Humanitarian Relief Foundation given its field experience and reputation for large-scale humanitarian operations.

Eight months before the Freedom Flotilla was put out to sea, the stakeholder NGOs started a multitude fund-raising campaigns for Gaza. While the campaigns were ongoing, other infrastructural works were being carried out such as purchasing ships, determining the participants and even upgrading Gaza's harbor. During this period, a great number of meetings, conferences, press releases, concerts and publications were conducted in different cities and countries.

The flotilla, which consisted of nine (later the number shrunk into six as three smaller boats had technical problems) vessels including a big commercial ship (Mavi Marmara), two cargo ships filled with humanitarian aid, and smaller passenger boats. The biggest ship in the flotilla, Mavi Marmara, had about 600 civilians onboard from more than 30 countries including activists, humanitarian volunteers, political leaders, members of parliaments, deputies, journalists, NGO representatives, and the crew. The youngest passenger was two years old and the eldest 82.

Three ships including Mavi Marmara sailed from Turkey, while the rest sailed from Greece and one from Ireland. According to the action plan, all the ships would gather at a meeting point in the southwest of Cyprus before heading to Gaza.

The ambiance of the camaraderie on the ships was perfect and the spirit of volunteerism was high. Although the passengers were from different religious and political backgrounds, all the people were united for a particular cause, which is humanitarian aid. They shared not only their bread but also their sincerity believing in that this flotilla would break the illegitimate Israeli-Egyptian blockade.

When one looked at the scene, he or she would see different groups of people talking to one another and exchanging ideas at every corner of the ship. The main topic of all the conversations was, of course, Palestine. All people from different parts of the world had different ideas about what they would do once the ships arrived in Gaza. During the blessed one-week sail, the people managed to build a small pluralistic society. They became brothers and sisters through their principles.

Thanks to the ship's high-tech equipment, a 24-hour broadcast was made continuously from Mavi Marmara. The journalists used the broadcasting facilities in turn. The Internet room was always full. While ordinary people shared their experiences of the journey with their friends behind via social media, the journalists were busy with their articles, rushing to meet the deadlines.

The ships were all coordinated and following one another. The most important thing was to make sure that these so-called "Israeli territorial waters" were not being violated. The ships followed the route in the international waters that were parallel to and at least 80 miles away from the shore.

## The Attack and What Follows

Six days after the ships sailed, in the early hours May 31, this harmony was literally assassinated. The Israeli war machines began to get closer to the Freedom Flotilla around midnight. The Israelis employed four warships, about 20 speedboats, two submarines, four helicopter gunships and drones to harass the humanitarian flotilla.

*The ships followed the route in the international waters that were parallel to and at least 80 miles away from the shore.*

It was 4:00 a.m. The first bullet was fired while the Muslim passengers were performing their morning prayer. The captain of Mavi Marmara desperately informed the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) that Mavi Marmara was in international waters and filled with civilians, and any military action could irreversibly lead to enormous loss of life. The organizers were ready to negotiate the alternatives to enable the ships to reach Gaza. Ignoring all these reasonable requests, the IDF moved closer to the Flotilla in international

waters. Soon after, a constant shooting of rubber bullets started, sporadically targeting the passengers.

The civilians on board were terrorized and naturally tended to defend themselves trying to prevent the IDF from boarding the ship. The IDF knew very well that there were women and children on the ship. If the IDF were able to board, the lives of hundreds of people would be in danger. So, those on board decided to resist the IDF's violent attack in legitimate ways, such as throwing plastic materials, using water hoses to gush water on them as well as trying to build human shields.





Soon after the Israeli attack started, it was proved that direct shooting from the boats was unsuccessful. As their next attempt, the IDF tried to descend on to the ship from helicopters. The helicopters started to drop soldiers on the upper deck of the ship. As the soldiers landed on the deck, the passengers grabbed their guns and threw them into the sea. The soldiers were taken to the captain for confinement. But these legitimate defensive attempts were also misinterpreted by the Israeli warmongers. This time they began to use live ammunition. Their shots from above showered onto the passengers.

At least seven passengers were killed on the spot. Many were wounded. The IDF began to target more passengers. Two volunteers who were on lower decks were murdered in this way.

The innocent civilians were literally in shock. They just tried either to protect themselves or to help the wounded anyway they could. Every corner of the ship was drenched in blood and every surface on the decks was full of bullets. About an hour later, the attack was finally over. However the problem was just beginning when the flotilla was forcefully hijacked and forcefully brought to the Israeli ports.

Upon arrival on the occupied land, passengers awaited worse treatment, humiliation and torture than what they received on board. Activists taken to interrogation tents set up in Ashdod port were subjected to psychological torture with interlocutors' absurd questions lasting for hours.

Even though they tried to impose crime on the passengers during this fictitious interrogation 'ceremony', everyone's determined stance was enough to disrupt this theater. Just after finishing, all the passengers were forced into the vehicles and taken to Beersheba prison, where they would be forcibly held for the next two days.

Since there were many injured, all of them were taken to the hospital and the rest to the prison. The prisoners wondered about the condition of their injured friends and also about the real number of fatality, and this information was withheld from them.

Meanwhile, the ships were searched to the finest details, in a bid to find something to blame. The Zionists had no choice but to find any evidence as an excuse of their massacre. But they failed. After reactions from the government of Turkey and the whole world, the Zionists stepped back and they released the civilians.

In addition to the demands of personal compensation and criminal cases opened in some countries including Turkey, the UN Human Rights Council began establishing a commission of inquiry to investigate the incident. According to the official report of the Council, a series of

violations of international law, including those of international humanitarian and human rights law, were committed. The Commission's report condemned Israel for

*Despite all the scribbling campaigns and the efforts of the pro-Zionist global media to demonize the humanitarian act, the Freedom Flotilla has found its place in the conscience of humanity.*

open human rights violations and called on the international community to address all grievances.

While efforts to make the Zionists pay the legal costs in court corridors were done, the Israeli occupation regime, which has already been convicted before the world's public opinion, is trying to get through this process thanks to the unconditional support it received from the US.

### *Ten Years on...*

It has been ten years since the terrorist attack in international waters was committed against the Freedom Flotilla that set out to break the unjust blockade applied to the Palestinian people. Despite the time passed, Mavi Marmara and the Freedom Flotilla have never fallen from the world's humanitarian agenda. The civic and legal struggle has shown that it will remain in the present and the future. Despite all the scribbling campaigns and the efforts of the pro-Zionist global media to demonize the humanitarian act, the Freedom Flotilla has found its place in the conscience of humanity.

This is not a political problem between Turkey and Israel, nor this is just about a land dispute issue between any two countries; rather, it is a struggle for liberty and honorable life for the Palestinian people. It is clear that while the Palestinian people endure innumerable difficulties for their freedom, people of the world must also take on their responsibilities in this cause.

The Freedom Flotilla was just one of the ways in which the people took their part in this struggle. Therefore all approaches that try to reflect this initiative as a security issue or an objectionable attempt to harm Israel's high interests are all in vain. It was

a charity mission; it was civilian, universal, legitimate and a stepping-stone for the liberation of all Palestinian people and land including Jerusalem.

Despite some positive legal developments since the massacre, it does not change the fact that, the criminals and those in command are still free. Ten years ago, a group of volunteers challenged the Israeli injustice and it cost many of their lives. Today, the international community has a big responsibility to ensure that justice, and to make sure the criminals pay for their crime. Sooner or later justice will prevail and the criminals will receive the price that they deserve. If this does not happen, it will remain a burden on the shoulders of all humanity.

The people of Palestine are still under blockade and their troubles continue. Moreover, while the global attention is busy with different crisis areas in the Middle East, the Israeli occupation regime, which has not received any criticism due to its unfair practices towards the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, has now accelerated its aggression policies. The Zionists, who see the silence of the world as an "approval" for their actions, are preparing the ground to ward off their congestion once again under the pretext of "security".

The Zionist invaders, who received the greatest support from the US and Europe, are trying to establish a new order that suits them best at a time when the Middle East is being re-mapped. In such a period, it is paramount to show the humanitarian stance again, which has been demonstrated by the Freedom Flotilla. The torch, which was burned by the heroes of the Flotilla, is still burning in its tenth year, and it will light the way for the next generations of those with conscience and humanity to continue the fight.





# Legal Struggle Against Israel

BURAK TURAN





Judicial processes initiated after the illegal attack against the Freedom Flotilla are important tests not only for international law but also for the legitimacy of the entire international system. If the Zionist regime accounts for its attacks, this would be a gain not only for the Freedom Flotilla participants but also for all the oppressed, especially Palestinians.

In fact, the situation was quite simple, since what happened was in the eyes of everyone: Israeli military forces attacked the ships with guns, ten humanitarian aid volunteers murdered during and after this intervention, tens of people injured, the participants were detained without any legal basis, the injured people kept in the cells handcuffed for days and ill-treated, personal belongings of the participants seized and a lot of tortious act committed by causing financial damages to the ships.

All legal and administrative actions were taken to ensure that Israeli civil and military officials who are the perpetrators of all crimes to be tried in a court and punished, announce Israel's persecution to the public world and record it in the legal literature.

## National Level Criminal Jurisdiction

Criminal complaints containing lawyers' requests for the punishment of the perpetrators of iniquities and injustices made on 31.05.2010 were delivered to the Istanbul Chief Public Prosecutor's Office right after the incident. The investigation opened by the Chief Public Prosecutor lasted for two years; indictment was filed by the Chief Public Prosecutor after a difficult process of extensive reviews and research like taking statements from the victims, taking forensic reports of the martyrs, the injured and all the other humanitarian

volunteers who have participated in the fleet; and a lawsuit was filed with the file numbered 2012/264 before the Istanbul 7<sup>th</sup> High Criminal Court.

78 foreign from a total of 502 complainants took place in the file. The file called for the punishment of four senior commanders of the Israeli army; Gabriel Ashkenazi Israeli Chief of Defense Forces Lieutenant General, Eliezer Marom Vice Admiral Navy Commander, Avishai Levi Air Force Intelligence Officer Brigadier General, and Amos Yadlin Israeli Intelligence Chief Major General, for instigating the attack order to intentional homicide, attempted intentional homicide, qualified intentional injury, qualified latrocination, hijacking of the sea transportation vehicles, qualified causing damage to property, deprivation of liberty and torture, with thousands of years sentencing for each victim separately.

In the criminal case before the Istanbul 7<sup>th</sup> High Criminal Court; necessary diplomatic and legal procedures were carried out at the official level to inform the Israeli generals about the case allowing them to defend themselves at the hearings; while testimonies of all foreign and Turkish victims were taken as complainant/witness statute and evidence were investigated.

On 22.03.2013, while the national and international legal scramble continuing in consequence of the Mavi Marmara attack, Israeli Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu made a phone call with Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and apologized for the Mavi Marmara incident, notified that they were ready to pay compensation. After that, negotiations started between Turkey and Israel in order to make an agreement specifying the amount of the compensation and payment terms.

The flotilla organizers, all victims of the attack and relatives of the martyrs made statements to the press with different paths regarding the negotiations

between the parties. They submitted their demands including; the removal of the inhuman blockade imposed on Gaza, the accountability and punishment of all politicians and soldiers responsible for the Mavi Marmara attack before the judiciary, and Israel's payments for all the material and moral damages that it caused.

Law no 6743 on "Compensation Procedure Agreement Between the Republic of Turkey and the State Of Israel" made in 2016 led to a new controversy when the Public Prosecutor requested a dismissal of the case by virtue of this agreement on 02.12.2016. Attorneys of the victims expressed their objections verbally and in writing in the following matters;

- Article 4 of the agreement text is legal "PARDON" and in this case that article should be voted and obtain at least 330 votes (3/5) from Turkey's Grand National Assembly. Since this agreement itself is unconstitutional, the promises made on the basis of this agreement have no legal binding.
- The agreement regulates the grace/donation payment of the family of 10 martyrs; however, families of martyrs demand the continuation of the trial, the prosecution and punishment of those responsible.
- All Turkish victims want the trial to continue and the case cannot be dismissed based on this agreement, and if so, a lawsuit will be filed at

the Constitutional Court and the European Court of Human Rights.

- Turkey and Israel's agreement is not binding for the victims who are not Turkish citizens, and the case cannot be dismissed for the victims from other countries.

Objections based on Turkish and international law and expert opinions explaining these objections with scientific justifications are presented to the court. At the hearing held on 09.12.2016, the Prosecutor repeated his opinion and request. Despite the objections, the court made a wrong decision and decided for the case to be dismissed.

This decision, which is against national and international legislation and incompatible with the international criminal law principles was appealed by the attorneys of the victims. Now the case is still on the appellate review before the Istanbul Regional Court of Justice.

## Compensation Cases

Although this criminal case has followed a negative course, the process for compensation cases is still ongoing. Since all crimes committed in the attack by Israeli soldiers are also unfair acts committed

against the victims in terms of private law, the Israeli regime has the responsibility for compensation as a requirement of the State public legal entity in all these experiences. For all these reasons, all victims have the right to file damages in Turkish laws for all their confiscated and non-refundable property, damages arising from loss of

*With the material and moral compensation decisions given in these cases, the registration of the unfair acts committed in the attack is also ensured.*





workforce due to injury and detention, loss of support for their relatives due to deaths, and moral damages due to ill-treatment, insults, and torments. Currently, there are lawsuits filed on behalf of 85 victims in Turkey in general, and they are ongoing proceedings.

In compensation lawsuits on behalf of the victims, the Treasury of the Republic of Turkey has taken sides with Israel within the scope of procedural agreement relating compensations signed between the two sides because according to the agreement, Turkey has taken the responsibility of the compensation that the State of Israel would have to pay due to the Mavi Marmara attack. With the material and moral compensation decisions given in these cases, the registration of the unfair acts committed in the attack is also ensured.

## International Criminal Court

On 14.05.2013, Turkish lawyers who were authorized by the government of Comoros as one of the state parties to The Rome Statute and is the flag state of Mavi Marmara, applied to the International Criminal Court (ICC), for the crimes of Israeli soldiers and authorities who were responsible for the Mavi Marmara attack. Greece and Cambodia, state parties to The Rome Statute, were added as parties to The ICC's Mavi Marmara Case.

In the decision announced by the ICC

Prosecutor's Office on 06.11.2014 it was stated that Israel committed war crimes, Israel occupied status in Gaza as its effective control over Gaza continued, all participants in the Gaza Freedom Flotilla were civilians who were protected under the international law and Israeli soldiers attacked them knowing that the passengers were civilians. The ICC Prosecutor pointed that Israel's claims of self-defense was not

worth discussing and declared that, "According to autopsy reports; people were injured in the head, from their feet, were shot multiple times on their necks and the least five people were killed at close range distance."

Although all the evidence says that Israel is guilty, The ICC Prosecutor stated that, "The number of the victims and those who perished are insufficient to be charged under ICC jurisdiction and with this fact no investigative authority is valid (Gravity)." Israel was making every effort to be exempt from ICC jurisdiction and eliminate the risk of punishment to continue its unlawful policy.

Although the ICC Prosecutor decided that Israel committed war crimes during the Mavi Marmara attack, the Office terminated the investigation and justified their decision based on the "severity of the crime." The Comoros State Attorney and Mavi Marmara's victims lawyers submitted petitions for "Sentencing of Israel's committed war crime" on 29.01.2015. Pre-Trial Chamber examined the petitions and found the Mavi Marmara lawyers' objections justified.

*The ICC Prosecutor decided that Israel committed war crimes during the Mavi Marmara attack, the Office terminated the investigation and justified their decision based on the "severity of the crime."*

The ICC Prosecutor filed an appeal to the ICC Appeal Chamber to resist the decision although it was illegal. The Appeal Chamber refused the appeal of the ICC Prosecutor on 06.11.2015. Upon this verdict, the Prosecutor started to study for the examination of the Mavi Marmara case again. In its second decision, the Prosecutor resisted its decision of "not investigating" the crimes of Israel. Therefore, Comoros and victims lawyers applied the Pre-Trial Chamber for objection.

On 15.11.2018, the ICC Pre-Trial Chamber announced its decision and ruled that the Prosecutor's decision was incorrect and should be revised. Accordingly, the ICC Appeals Chamber ruled on to hold a hearing on 1.5.2019 and listened to the ICC Prosecutor and victim's lawyers during this hearing. Also, in order to keep the proceeding process short, the ICC Appeals Chamber ruled on to give time to the prosecutor to decide to open or not to open the investigation until 15.5.2019. The Prosecutor objected this verdict.

The final verdict of the Appeals Chamber stated that the Appeals Chamber overruled the Prosecutor's Pre-Trial Chamber decision's objection on 2.9.2019. The Appeals Chamber ordered

the Prosecutor to review its decision of not opening an investigation regarding the committed offense to the Gaza Freedom Flotilla at the hands of Israel.

On 2.12.2019, the Appeals Chamber ordered the Prosecutor to follow the Pre-Trial Chamber's verdict's injunctions on 16.7.2015 and to decide if an investigation was to be opened regarding the war crimes committed. Despite this verdict, the Prosecutor decided not to open an investigation regarding GRAVITY, which it stated in its first decision. The Comoros State Attorney and Mavi Marmara's victims' lawyers objected this decision again.

As a result, the legal struggle regarding the Mavi Marmara case is the breakdown of a legal immunity shield that Israel had created. The Mavi Marmara continues its cruise with the national and international legal and administrative authorities. And its cruise struggles to seek justice and punish Israel for the murders, torture, and torment they committed before the eyes of the world. These legal and administrative authorities are expected to serve the purpose of establishing justice and international law and act in accordance with their establishment philosophies.

*The legal struggle regarding the Mavi Marmara case is the breakdown of a legal immunity shield that Israel had created.*

## End Notes

<sup>1</sup> For example there are special representatives of Turkey for Iraq and Libya.





# Mavi Marmara's 10th Anniversary and the Struggle for Palestine

KADRIYE SINMAZ





It has been 10 years since Israel's attack on the Gaza Freedom Flotilla on the early morning of May 30, 2010, referred to as the "Mavi Marmara incident". This attack, which witnessed more than 50 people wounded and 10 volunteers murdered, had many legal, political, economic and even military consequences.

## Why did Mavi Marmara go to Gaza?

Following its declaration of existence in 1948, Israel was quick to expand the lands it had captured in the period of the British mandate regime after the war with Arab countries, forcing more than a million Palestinians to leave their lands. Israel also extended its territory to the Golan Heights of Syria, the Sinai Peninsula of Egypt, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, on top of its occupation since the 1967 War. During the Oslo negotiations, Israel recognized the presence of a Palestinian State under the leadership of Yasser Arafat in the West Bank and Gaza territories, but increased the number of illegal Jewish settlements there every day. In 2005, Israel decided to withdraw from Gaza by evacuating settlements in the area. The Palestinian-Israeli conflict, which had been ongoing for many years, gained a different dimension, as Hamas received the highest number of votes in the election on January 25, 2006.

The Hamas government could not secure its administration long enough

because Israel and some western states did not recognize Hamas as a legitimate political actor, and Fatah did not accept Hamas' victory in the election. Eventually, two different governments emerged in Palestine, one was Fatah under the leadership of Mahmud Abbas controlling the West Bank, the other was Hamas under the leadership of Khalid Mashal in Gaza. Israel announced on September 19, 2007 that it would restrict the entry and exit of goods by declaring Gaza, controlled by Hamas-labeled as a terrorist organization—as an "enemy zone". On January 6, 2009, a sea blockade was implemented on the

Gaza Strip. Meanwhile the Yasser Arafat International Airport had been bombed by Israel in 2001, making it unusable since then. So it is safe to say that as of today, Israel has 'locked' the people of Gaza for the past 14 years through its blockade on land, sea and air.

The San Remo Manual on International Law Applicable to Armed Conflict at Sea / SRM, 1994, which includes the customary international law rules on maritime warfare, accepts the blockade as a method of warfare, but it stipulates it. According to the SRM, an international conflict must exist in order to implement the blockade.

There are different comments on the nature of the conflicts between Israel and Palestine.<sup>1</sup> Even if we consider the existing tension as an international conflict without going into these discussions, it can be said that international law rules have been violated due to the way of implementation of the blockade.

Israel's blockade on Gaza violates the Geneva Conventions, The Hague Regulation and

*Israel's blockade on Gaza violates the Geneva Conventions, The Hague Regulation and international humanitarian law.*

international humanitarian law. According to Article 50 of the Hague Regulation, 1907 and Article 87 of III. Geneva Convention, collective punishment cannot be imposed on individual incidents, taking into account the actions of individuals. The Geneva Convention, Article 51, 54 (1) of the Additional Protocol I and Article 14 of the Protocol No II state that hunger cannot be used as a weapon of war and the advantage to be achieved by blockade should not be more than the damage suffered by the civilian population (the principle of proportionality). Article 17 and 23 of the Geneva Convention IV, Article 70 and 71 of the Additional Protocol I point out that humanitarian aid should be delivered and humanitarian workers should be protected when civilians are harmed and need help.<sup>2</sup>

Israel punishes the entire people of Gaza for electing Hamas through the blockade, thereby violating the "ban on collective punishment". Due to the blockade, 80% of the people living in Gaza are in need of humanitarian aid. Unemployment rate increased to 52%<sup>3</sup> and poverty rate to 53%. Extreme poverty rate<sup>4</sup> increased to 33.8%.<sup>5</sup> "The principle of proportionality" is violated in terms of the humanitarian consequences of the blockade, and the severity of the violations had been deepened by attacking the Gaza Freedom Flotilla, a humanitarian organization.

## What happened on Mavi Marmara?

In 2007, between August and December, the Free Gaza Movement<sup>6</sup> attempted to reach Gaza by small fishing boats. The mission succeeded in five of these attempts. Subsequently Europe-centered Viva Palestina and IHH Humanitarian Relief Foundation realized the "Viva Palestina" land convoy to Gaza in December 2009. Despite all the obstacles, the convoy succeeded to reach Gaza. Later, the European Campaign to end

the Siege on Gaza, the Free Gaza Movement, IHH Humanitarian Relief Foundation, the International Committee to Lift the Siege on Gaza, Ship to Gaza Greece and Ship to Gaza Sweden started to organize the "Gaza Freedom Flotilla", which was more comprehensive than the previous organizations. The Freedom Flotilla sailed to Gaza with the participation of more than 700 volunteers from 37 countries at the end of May 2010. The flotilla aimed to generate global public opinion regarding the humanitarian situation in Palestine, breaking the unlawful blockade of Israel and

establishing a permanent aid corridor to deliver humanitarian aid and providing humanitarian aid to Gaza.<sup>7</sup>

The attack that Israeli soldiers launched on the ship, on the night of May 30, ended when they seized control of the ship at 5.17 am on May 31. The attacks on the

*The attacks on the flotilla that were done by warships and helicopters with sound, fog and gas bombs, plastic and real bullets were announced to the world public via live broadcasts.*





flotilla that were done by warships and helicopters with sound, fog and gas bombs, plastic and real bullets were announced to the world public via live broadcasts. Mavi Marmara, carrying with it nine martyrs and more than 50 wounded participants, and accompanied by the physical and psychological torture on the volunteers by the Israeli soldiers, was docked at the Ashdod Port. The passengers, who were detained at the Be'er Sheva prison after interrogation, managed to return to Turkey on June 3.

Israeli military's assault on Mavi Marmara in international waters and the excessive use of force against Mavi Marmara is unlawful. The assault is a blatant violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention and International Humanitarian Law. In addition, the violations of human rights committed by the occupying Israeli soldiers during the attack and detention period can be examined under chapter 6.

### 1. *Violation of the right to life*

According to the statement of the International Fact-finding Mission, the force used by the Israeli soldiers on Mavi Marmara is unnecessary, excessive, disproportionate and inappropriate.

At least six people were killed by arbitrary and close-range shooting, according to the forensic reports.<sup>8</sup>

### 2. *Torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment*

The passengers of the fleet were subjected to treatments such as overly tight handcuffing for extended periods; being subject to various forms of mistreatment onboard and during detention; insult, humiliating treatment; being beaten; being forced to sign papers in a language the signatory cannot read.

### 3. *Violation of the right to liberty and security of person*

The Mavi Marmara passengers were arrested arbitrarily and unlawfully under inhumane conditions without being informed.

### 4. *Humane treatment to detained persons and right of respect for human dignity possessed as an innate quality*

The flotilla participants were detained and deprived from their rights to an attorney and to access to families and Embassy officials.

### 5. *Violation of the right to own property*

The Israeli authority confiscated a wide range of personal belongings, including considerable amount of cash donations to be distributed in Gaza; passports, electronic items such as cell phones, laptop computers, photographic and video recording equipment, where most of these items were not returned.

### 6. *Violation of freedom of expression*

During the attack, Israeli forces imposed a total blackout on the satellite communication of Mavi Marmara. Furthermore, a journalist was shot dead at close range.

## Mavi Marmara's Legal Struggle

In the immediate aftermath of the attack, victims filed complaints to the courts in Turkey and in much of the world. The complaints in Turkey were joined together in a lawsuit that was filed in 2012.

On the trial there were four defendants in the case, with 502 plaintiffs of whom 78 were foreign nationals: Former Israeli Chief of Staff Gen. Gabriel Ashkenazi, Former

Navy Commander Eliezer Alfred Maron, Former Air Force Intelligence officer Avishay Levi and Former Intelligence Chief Amos Yadlin. The case was dropped on December 9, 2016 after an agreement reached between Turkey and Israel on August 28, 2016. No decision has yet been made on the appeal of the court case.

Families of the Mavi Marmara victims filed 85 separate lawsuits for compensation in Kayseri, Denizli, Diyarbakır, Ankara, Izmir, Istanbul, Konya, Erzurum and Batman cities of Turkey. The amount of compensation demanded totaled 23 million TL. The agreement reached between Turkey and Israel means Turkey shall address any demand of compensation if Israel is obliged to pay compensation for any. For this reason, the treasury of the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Turkey was added as a party to the compensation cases.

Other lawsuits have also been filed by Freedom Flotilla participants in different parts of the world.

An investigation opened following an official complaint by Spanish participants resulted in arrest warrants issued for seven senior-level Israeli executives should Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, former Defense Minister and former Foreign Minister Avigdor Liberman, among other, visit Spain.

The family of Furkan Doğan, an American-Turkish citizen, filed a lawsuit in the US where the judge ruled that the case be dropped on the grounds of the Turkish-Israeli agreement, however, this lawsuit has yet to be concluded.

Gadija Davids, a South African journalist who was on Mavi Marmara, also filed a lawsuit in which the names of the Israeli defendants were notified to the border police so that they could be arrested upon entering South Africa.

In 2013, an application was filed to the ICC on behalf of the State of the Comoros. Subsequently, Cambodia and Greece also joined the application. A decision issued from the Office of the Attorney General on November 6, 2014 labeled Israel as an occupying party in Gaza and classified Israel's attack against the fleet as "war crime". Israel's claims for "self-defense", on the other hand, were not found worth discussing. The process for initiating an investigation into the Mavi Marmara attack before the ICC is still ongoing due to procedure-related discussions between the Office of the Attorney General and the Superior Court.<sup>9</sup>

## Conclusion

Gaza Freedom Flotilla is a paramount and most comprehensive action against Israel's invasion that it constantly expands by breaking all the rules of international law. The fact that the volunteers of "Mavi Marmara", who were all civilians, apply to the national and international courts regarding the heinous treatments they faced in the Israeli attack, strengthened the legitimacy of the Flotilla. The courageous stance of the participants during the attack as well the decisions taken in the ICC and other national courts destroyed the perception of Israel as an untouchable state. Furthermore, the propaganda to depict Israel as the most democratic country in the Middle East was damaged because the entire world has seen how the Israeli soldiers attacked "Mavi Marmara". The Freedom Flotilla has managed to draw attention to Palestine by showing the dark side of Israel to the world and largely fulfilled its mission. It also played a significant role in the improvement of Turkey's domestic production of the defense industry caused by the fragile relations with Israel after the Mavi Marmara incident. The transition to domestic production in the defense industry, especially the IHAs and SIHAs,





is one of the important results of the Freedom Flotilla.<sup>10</sup>

According to the report and testimonies prepared by the UN International Case Committee, the victimization of the participants in “Mavi Marmara” incident was registered. However, it tried to change the situation in favor of Israel with the Turkel Commission reports prepared by Israel and Palmer prepared with the pressure of the Israeli administration. Israel has not stand convicted in Turkey and the world after an agreement was signed between Turkey and Israel in 2016.

The efforts for achieving justice in the Mavi Marmara case has not yet been concluded. Gabriel Ashkenazi was appointed as foreign minister in the newly

formed Israeli government. The Ministry of Defense was replaced by Benny Gantz, who will replace Netanyahu as prime minister in the upcoming year and a half. Gantz was the chief of staff during the Operation Protective Line, where 2,147 people died and more than 10,000 people were injured in 2014.

If Israel advances with its normalization process with the Arab countries, the “Deal of the Century” plan would pave the way for projects such as the annexation of the West Bank with the support of the US. But there would always be people who will stand tall and defend the rightful cause of the Palestinians. No matter the cost. This would forever be a task for those who can still hear the voice of their conscience and maintain their faith in justice.

## End Notes

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- 10 For the explanation of Baykar Technical Director Selçuk Bayraktar, see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XHJu-CIWmXc>

## INFOGRAPHICS

[www.insamer.com/en](http://www.insamer.com/en)

### GAZA FREEDOM FLOTILLA

#### PALESTINE OUR ROUTE, HUMANITARIAN AID OUR LOAD!

The Gaza Freedom Flotilla was on its route to Gaza with the participation of more than **700 volunteers** from **37 countries** when it was attacked on **May 31, 2010**.

#### THE AIMS OF THE FLOTILLA:

- Raising attention of global public opinion to the humanitarian situation in Palestine.
- Breaking the unlawful blockade of Israel and establishing a permanent aid corridor to deliver humanitarian aid.
- Providing humanitarian aid to Gaza.



#### THE SIX NGO ORGANIZERS OF THE FLOTILLA:

- Free Gaza Movement
- IHH Humanitarian Relief Foundation
- Ship to Gaza Greece
- Ship to Gaza Sweden
- The European Campaign to End the Siege on Gaza
- The International Committee to Lift the Siege on Gaza



#### THE SEVEN SHIPS PARTICIPATED IN THE FLOTILLA:

Mavi Marmara, Gazze 1, Defne Y, Challenger 1, Stendoni, Eleftheri Mesogios (Sofia), Rachel Corrie



In the early hours of **May 31, 2010**, Israeli soldiers attacked the Flotilla in international waters. As a result, **10 civilian volunteers were martyred** and at least **50 volunteers from different nationalities were wounded** aboard the Mavi Marmara.

#### THE MARTYRS:



ALI HAYDAR  
BENGI



CENGİZ  
AKYÜZ



CENGİZ  
SONGÜR



CEVDET  
KILÇIKLAR



CETİN  
TOPÇUOĞLU



FAHRİ  
YALÇIZ



FURKAN  
DOĞAN



İBRAHİM  
BİLGEN



NECDET  
YILDIRIM



UĞUR SÜLEYMAN  
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THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE TO LIFT THE SIEGE ON GAZA



# Operation Spring Shield's Military, Political and Strategic Goals

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Following the martyrdom of 34 Turkish soldiers on February 27 by Russian-backed Assad's forces, Turkey's Ministry of Defense initiated the Operation Spring Shield, which was launched on March 1. The Operation Spring Shield's main purposes were to stop the attacks towards Idlib by the terrorists supported by Iran and the Assad forces with the Russian support in violation of the Sochi agreement signed between Turkey, Iran and Russia; to support moderate opposition groups; and to push the regime forces out of the agreed borders. The Operation shows have affected the dynamics of the Syrian civil war in many ways.

The intervention plan that was announced by president Erdoğan was initiated following the martyrdom of 34 Turkish soldiers; resulting in the severe loss suffered by the regime forces and the terrorist groups in the region. Pursuant to the operation; 135 tanks, 45 cannons, 44 multiple rocket launcher, 29 anti-aircraft weapons, 24 armored vehicles, 12 anti-tank weapons, nine ammunition depots, eight helicopters, seven ammunition ramps, five aircraft ramps, two aircrafts, two missile ramps and one SUV, all of which belonged to the regime, and 2557 regime soldiers, were neutralized.

Since 2011 when the Syrian War began, Turkey, being the first country to carry out such an intense operation against the regime in a conventional manner, limited the progress of Russian support to the Regime. Aggression of the Assad regime and Russia, which ignored the Sochi agreement, increased to a whole new level following Turkey's serial transportation of military and combatant forces to the region. The regime's and its supporters' way to increase the tension in Idlib against a possible intervention by Turkey, and their attacks that directly targeted the Turkish soldier in Baluon on February 27, made taking dissuasive steps in the region an obligation for Ankara.

## The Idlib Goal in the Moscow-Tehran - Damascus Triangle

At this point, Moscow and Tehran's approach as guarantors of the regime groups in the Sochi agreement, was attention grabbing. Both sides supported the regime's takeover of the agreed tension-decreasing zones including Homs, Daraa and East Ghouta on March 2017. With the people who had to defect these regions, Idlib, being the last standing tension-decreasing zone with around 4 million civilians, became the new target for the regime and its supporters. Clearly both Russia and Iran intended to widen their control areas in Idlib and push civilians to the Turkish border by benefiting from the crackdowns and tension in the region.

One of Moscow's pushing factors is undoubtedly is the developments in Libya. Moscow, which is supporting the Haftar forces, saw the tension in Syria as an opportunity to take over Idlib, despite sharing some of its areas parts with Turkey. Therefore, since the end of January when the Haftar forces increased their attacks on Tripoli, supported by Russian mercenary firm "Wagner", Moscow started to increase the tension in Idlib in the meantime. In this context, in terms of the process, it can be seen that Ankara's presence in Libya is also targeted. On the other hand, Turkey's preoccupation with Libya became a motivating factor to increase the tension in Idlib for the Assad regime and the militias with the Iranian support.

Accordingly, since February, the regime and its supporters have been aiming at limiting Turkey's moves by intensifying their attacks in the city. As opposed to this, Ankara, having increased the transportation of weapons to Idlib, stated that it would not allow Idlib to be taken over in the face of a possible new wave of refugees and the increasing threats. Thus, the targeting of the Turkish soldier on February 27 was the breaking point. Soon after, Turkey targeted

the regime's multiple bases of operation with TAI Ankas, UAVs, T-155 tanks, KORALs, multiple rocket launchers, and qualified smart ammunition. The battle, which came close to 13 km close to the border, turned against the regime, which took over the strategically important M5 highway, with Ankara's extension of the operation against the regime and its allies and targeting the tanks, radar systems, aircrafts, helicopters, and defense systems belonging to the regime.

## Turkey's Game Changer: UAVs

The most striking developments in the battle of Idlib are undoubtedly Turkey's strategies and methods. Not being able to use its F-16's because of the possible risks and Russia's negative approach when it is controlling Syria's air space, Turkey used Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV) and armed drones successfully prior to the deployment of its ground forces. UAVs and drones that are affectively used in Idlib, Aleppo, and PKK/YPG regions turned the aerial space into an advantage for Turkey. Using UAVs and drones rather than warplanes made the regime suffer from heavy losses. According to military specialists, this strategy will have decisive outcomes in the nature of aerial wars and wars in general.

Countries such as the USA, Russia, Israel, the UK and Turkey have been using Unmanned Aerial Vehicles in battle zones especially in wars on terrorism for many years. While the USA uses these UAVs in Afghanistan, Yemen, and Syria; Israel uses these vehicles to attack Palestine. Countries like the UK and Russia in particular used these vehicles against ISIS and other armed groups in the Syrian War. Turkey had already used these weapons successfully in Operations Olive Branch and Operation Peace Spring and against the PKK/YPG in northern Iraq; however, Turkey's performance in Operation Spring

Shield elevated Turkey to the peak of global military standards.

The UAVs used against the terrorists groups show Ankara's capacity and activity of defense technologies. The usage of UAVs against the Iran-backed Assad regime and militia groups in Idlib and the overall results gave birth to some important changes in war literature. Turkey used these vehicles to battle a government for the first time and obtained more successful and less pricey gains than using warplanes or ground forces. At this point, the operation run by the Turkish Armed Forces is an operation that should be discussed in terms of autonomous vehicle, technological advancement and defense industry usage rather than only its political and strategic results. This situation is also vital in terms of seeing Turkey as one of the several prominent actors in the use of unmanned aerial vehicles in the world. Turkey's capacities and abilities in this industry will contribute to the recognition of Turkish defense industry's function quality and it has earned Turkey the acknowledgment of its global weapon market activity.

## Political Outcomes in International Relations

Operation Spring Shield can be evaluated as an operation to prevail in the changing regional balances and transforming international system, and in strengthening its position more than just as an operation against a regime that kills its own citizens. Successful aerial operations carried out by the Turkish Armed Forces will not only provide a geographical victory, but it will also elevate Turkey's respect and prestige in international relations. Another striking point is that Turkey showed its ability at such a time when actors such as the USA, Russia, China and France are reorganizing their national security strategies with autonomous vehicles and information technologies. Turkey's reflection of its capability on the battleground with its





latest operations and its increasing progress is an indicator that Ankara can be one of the few actors in the world when it comes to autonomous weapons and vehicles.

However, this process has such a potential to create serious complications in the Mediterranean geopolitics, Libyan crisis, and the Balkans. This operation happened

during a period when the USA decreased its presence in Syria and many European countries terminated their activities in the area. This situation will also play a motivating role in strengthening the trust of countries that work with Turkey in the defense industry.

Turkey got the message across to many international actors in Operation

Spring Shield. The decision of initiating the operation despite Russia's negative approach, NATO's and the USA's support that is only being uttered rather than given. Furthermore, the possible risks that may rise from the battle is important in terms of Turkey's dissuasiveness and respect regionally and internationally. The operation, at the same time, may make other actors revise their evaluations about the Syrian War and their relations with Turkey. Those who saw Erdoğan's "delays and messages" as not rational and merely diplomatic threats must have understood Ankara's seriousness now. So and so, it is an attention grabbing decision, in this context, to open the borders to refugees who wanted to go to Europe, simultaneously to the operation in Idlib. This situation will create a shift in how actors like European countries would start to take Ankara seriously.

Following a serious and consistent policy in the Mediterranean, Balkans, Gulf and the Red Sea, Turkey is up against terrorism in many different fronts thanks to Erdoğan's determined attitude. Moreover,

Turkey also carries out affective operations against domestic terrorist organization such as FETO, as well as foreign PKK cells in northern Iraq. It is necessary to underline the fact that none of these are easy. Today, we can refer to Turkey as a powerful, determined, strategic country whose goals are clear and who is trying to maximize its interests in local, regional and international equations.

## Strategic Goals

Operation Spring Shield also comes with strategic goals besides being a humanitarian intervention. The leading ones of these goals are ensuring Syria's territorial integrity, minimizing security threats caused by the regime, Russian and their supporters in the southern borders, and preventing a possible wave of refugees. It is a major risk for Ankara to let thousands of regime supporter terrorists, Russian forces, and Iranian forces to exist alongside its borders.

Turkey sees the option to be indifferent to the events in Idlib as a factor that may lead to various risks for its own lands in the future; as NATO and generally the West showed an ineffective approach to the Crimean Crisis in 2014. For Turkey, the possibility of a Russian presence alongside its southern borders is a major threat after the Crimean crisis. Russia may pose a major risk in medium and long term in respect to Turkey's interests in the Mediterranean Sea with its increasing military presence in the region, especially the airbase that it founded in Khmeimim, which borders the Mediterranean Sea. To sum up, Turkey's presence in Idlib is important in terms of Syria's territorial integrity, stopping the refugee flow, and providing consistency in the region, besides balancing the risks posed by Moscow.

## Military Goals

Operation Spring Shield should also be evaluated in the context of military goals. Lately, Turkey has been up against many serious threats caused by terrorists groups,

governmental and non-governmental actors alongside its borders. To rid of them, it initiated military operations. Having minimized the threats on its southern borders with three military operations, Turkey aims at providing consistency with Operation Spring Shield in strategically important Idlib because of its proximity to Hatay and the Mediterranean Sea. The most important goal for Turkey is obliterating any threats to its national security. Accordingly and undoubtedly, it is the primary goal to decrease battles and provide consistency in the region alongside the border, which has 30-40 kilometers of width.

In reaching this rational and necessary goal for the sake of its security, Turkey will be decisive at specifying the limits of the operation. In this direction, a dissuasive message was conveyed to the regime and Iran-backed groups with the ongoing operation. Creating a consistent and safe zone in the area gives important clues in terms of the timing and framework of the operation. This matter will be brought to the table in the summit that will be held on 5 March between Erdoğan and Putin. Both parties are focused on the victories on the battleground gained prior to 5 March. Turkey will limit the goals of Operation Spring Shield to a framework consisting only of the provision of security and minimization of risks, as in Operations Euphrates Shield and Olive Branch.

## Expectations and Challenges

Operation Spring Shield's success is still grabbing attention in respect to Turkey's ability of showing its regional role and dissuasiveness. Operation Spring Shield

comes off as a dissuasive factor against the regime and its supporters. While previous military operations against terrorist groups are all concrete steps for Turkey to prevent "complicated security risks" in the field, it is also essential for Turkey to adopt a balancing and rational approach towards its opponents' acts and potential risks in the field. In the present equation of Syria, despite foreign actors like Moscow being on one side of the battle, they don't actively participate in the battle. Turkey's actual targets for today are the Assad Regime and its supporters who are intensifying the tension and hostility in the region. Turkey's outstanding success is extremely meaningful to enable the country to show its dissuasiveness to regional and global powers. However, Assad's capacity is weaker when compared to that of Turkey. Therefore, it is necessary to take this into consideration to prevent misleading evaluation.

What should be highlighted by analysts and decision-makers are planning and calculating the future steps of Turkey's opponents in the Syrian War in parallel to their actions. Turkey's military technology and aerial capacity are much more advanced compared to many regional and international countries. As opposed to this, considering Turkey's medium and long-term goals, it is necessary for Turkey to put a rational strategy of taking the actions of its opponents and the hybrid battles into focus. This is important for Turkey in terms of its ability to stand out between regional power dynamics. Accordingly, while shaping its national security strategy, it is also very important for Turkey to take global and regional actors' military and technological plans into consideration and to strengthen its current positions even more.





# The EU Values and The Trapped Refugees Between Death and Hope

EMİN EMİN  
KENDA HAWASLI





After the martyrdom of 34 Turkish soldiers in Idlib-Syria, Turkey started to follow a more proactive policy both in the field and on the table. During this process, Turkey, on one hand, initiated the “Operation Spring Shield” against the Syrian regime forces in Idlib; and on the other hand, decided not to prevent refugees from crossing the border to Europe anymore, whom it used to restrain from doing so in pursuant to the agreement it signed with the European Union (EU).

After more than 145,000 refugees leaned against the Greek border following Turkey’s decision, Europe came face to face with a new refugee crisis. Greece’s inhumane treatment to the Syrians that came to its border was praised rather than condemned. Ursula von der Leyen, president of the European Commission who paid a visit to the area on March 3, complimented Greece on the efforts it made. Moreover, ignoring the ferocity it committed on the refugees, she introduced Greece, which killed three refugees and injuring five others with live ammunition, as the shield of Europe.

Soon after, tens of refugees were injured because of the violence resorted by the Greek Security Forces. Besides Von der Leyen, Charles Michael president of the European Council, David Sassoli president of the European Parliament, and Andrej Plenkovic president of Croatia paid their visits to Greece’s Evros region which is in the vicinity of the Turkish-Greek border. The council members decided to take some steps after seeing the gravity of the situation there. However, at this point, it is necessary to express that the council

describes the situation as a peril for their own economies, welfare and security rather than a peril for humanity.

Thus, Leyen announced that the EU was going to give 700 million euros to Greece, 350 million of which immediately, plus 100 border guards, seven ships, two helicopters, one plane and three private vehicles to make sure that the refugees whose ultimate goal is to reach developed European countries stay in Turkey.

Greece, having the EU’s support, announced that it would not accept any asylum applications for one month. Thereon, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) remarked that Greece could not suspend asylum applications, according to both 1951 Geneva Convention about the status of refugees, and the EU Refugee Law.<sup>1</sup>

Besides its decision to support Greece in its one step back from opening its borders to Turkey, the EU called Turkey to abide to the 2016 refugee agreement. However, the EU failed to make any comment about its very obligations, such as granting visa-free entry to Turkish citizens, 6 billion euros worth of financial support, which is a small portion compared to the

money (40 billion dollars) spent by Turkey for refugees, as well as following up with new negotiations about Turkey’s accession to the EU. Whereas, Europe’s failure in fulfilling its obligations of the 2016 agreement is one of the most fundamental factors that led Turkey to open its borders. The fact that the EU didn’t support Turkey in creating a safe zone to allow refugees, most of whom are Syrian, to return to their country also played a role in the making of this decision.

*EU didn't support Turkey in creating a safe zone to allow refugees, most of whom are Syrian.*

There hasn’t been any clear information about the aftermath of the tens of thousands of refugees that made it into Greece. Even though Greek officials announced the number of refugees who are trying to cross the border to be around 40,000, understandably the real number is much greater. However, there is still an uncertainty about the refugees that were able to enter Greece. Furthermore, it is understood that those who made it to Greece would have to face Greek nationalists that are on a manhunt and who are sharing their actions on social media, aside from the Greek security forces themselves.

## What do the Syrians think?

Many Syrian families have returned to their cities disappointed, after spending their money and hoping of arriving in Europe; a place where they thought would bring them a chance for a new life.

Many returnees speak about the barbaric actions of the Greek border guard forces against them, who used tear gas, rubber bullets, and large fans. They violently beat anyone who managed to get in, stole their belongings, and burnt their papers.

Hisham. Y, a Syrian refugee who returned to Istanbul recently said, “The whole world left us alone on the Greek border. There were no foreign refugee organizations and even the foreign media coverage was so poor. Only Turkish organizations helped us; they provided medical support and food aid.

The Greek border forces threw tear gas canisters many times even though they saw the children and women with us. Many of these gas bombs were expired, which caused suffocation and shortness of breath. They also used huge fans to ensure that the gas reached the Turkish side and affected a

large number of refugees. They treated us like animals,” Hisham added.

As the border crisis escalated, The Greek Minister of Immigration stopped all assistances previously given to the refugees whose asylum applications were approved earlier. This decision included assistance programs supported by the United Nations, meaning that these refugees would have to depend on themselves.

Greece also states that all refugees who arrived on the Greek islands after March 1 would be transferred to a new closed camp established in Northern Greece while they wait for their fate.

The world treats refugees as numbers, objects, or a danger that must be faced, without noticing that each of them has a painful story in which they lost all their hopes and dreams, and that they need someone to help them.

Each of them comes from a country that suffers from too many predicaments, which the international community contributed through mismanagement of the crisis, hence escalating the already difficult situation.

It would be understandable if they flee to another place, even if it might cost them their lives.

Another issue that is not less desolating is the fact that hundreds of families have been separated, unable to come together as a result of the European asylum policies.

A 32-year-old woman who refused to reveal her name said that she had been stuck in Turkey with her children for more than two years. She could not reunite with her husband who had arrived in Europe. Her husband is still unable to obtain the asylum that would enable him to bring his family and children.

She said that she is living a very difficult life in Turkey without her husband as the family’s breadwinner, forced to work





with her son who was prevented from completing his education due to financial needs. Her children are growing without their father.

The international community deems the recent refugee crisis on the Turkish-Greek border as a Turkish problem and Turkey's responsibility, ignoring their actions that have created this very conflict to surface.

But the current refugee crisis shows a clear reflection of the international system's weak ability to manage global issues. Instead of addressing the refugee crisis by adhering to the International Law and Convention on the Rights of a Child, solutions proposed on the table are instead magnifying the crisis.

The Syrian refugee crisis can't be understood partially or separated from what's going on in Idlib, since the situation is actually interrelated. Shunning the humanitarian crisis in Idlib is evident of the international community's failure in taking actions over

the deteriorating situation there. And this is the real root of the problem.

The UNSC has adopted 15 resolutions about Syria and the steps to be taken in order to solve the Syrian crisis. None of them were applied. At the same time the "Friends of Syria" group has carried out many meetings on Syria in Geneva and Vienna to name a few. They announced many statements that had zero value on the ground. And yet today all parties appear to prefer Syrians to die silently on their land.

The recent refugee crisis has carried clear messages to the international community that if they truly care about their national interest and security, they should bear their global responsibility. Looking the other way of the problems of your neighboring countries is not the way to your country's salvation. Instead, the problem might spread and engulf a whole region into a lingering crisis.

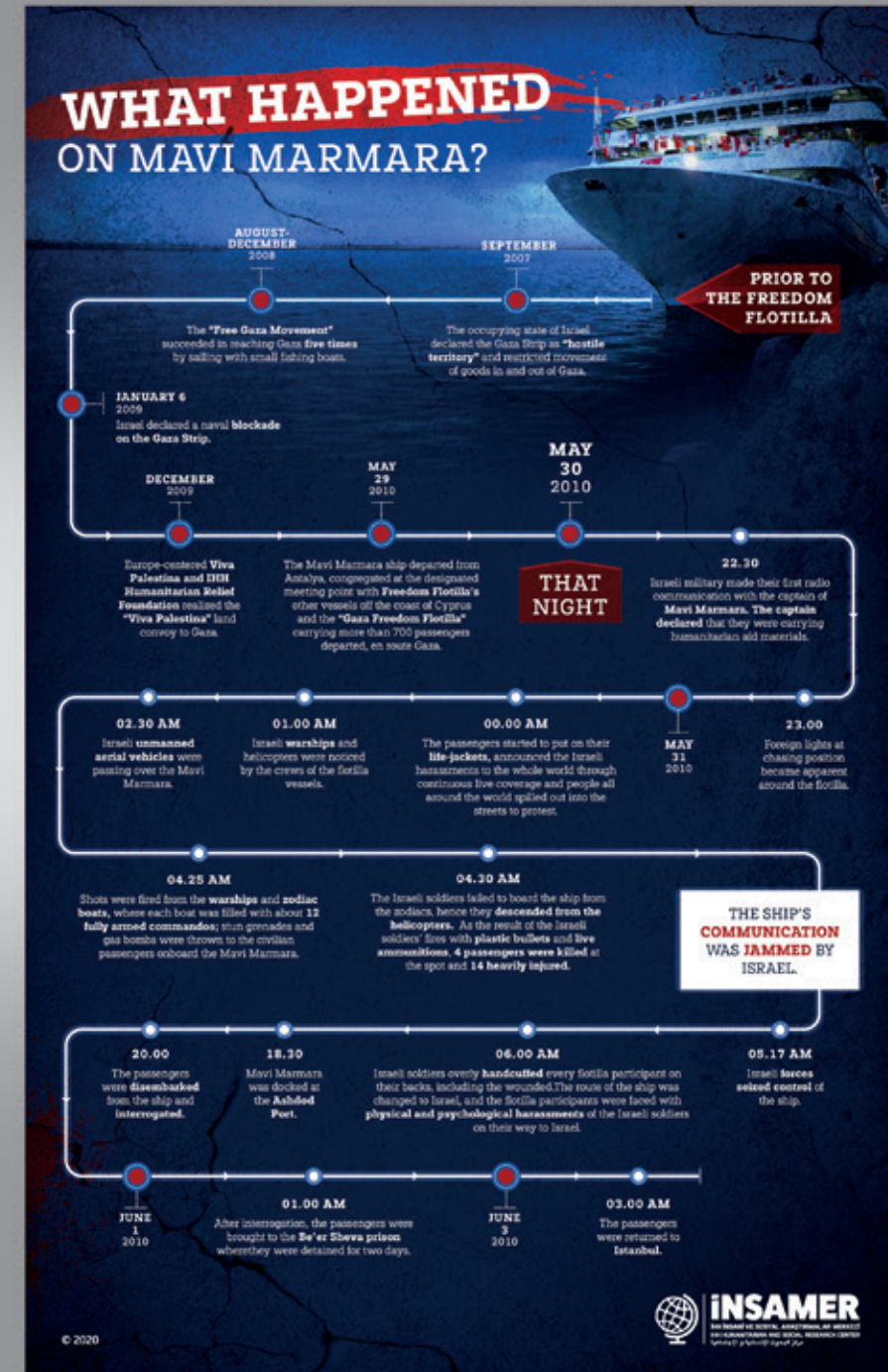
*The current refugee crisis shows a clear reflection of the international system's weak ability to manage global issues.*

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1 UNHCR, "UNHCR statement on the situation at the Turkey-EU border" (04.03.2020), <https://www.unhcr.org/news/press/2020/3/5e5d08ad4/unhcr-statement-situation-turkey-eu-border.html#>.

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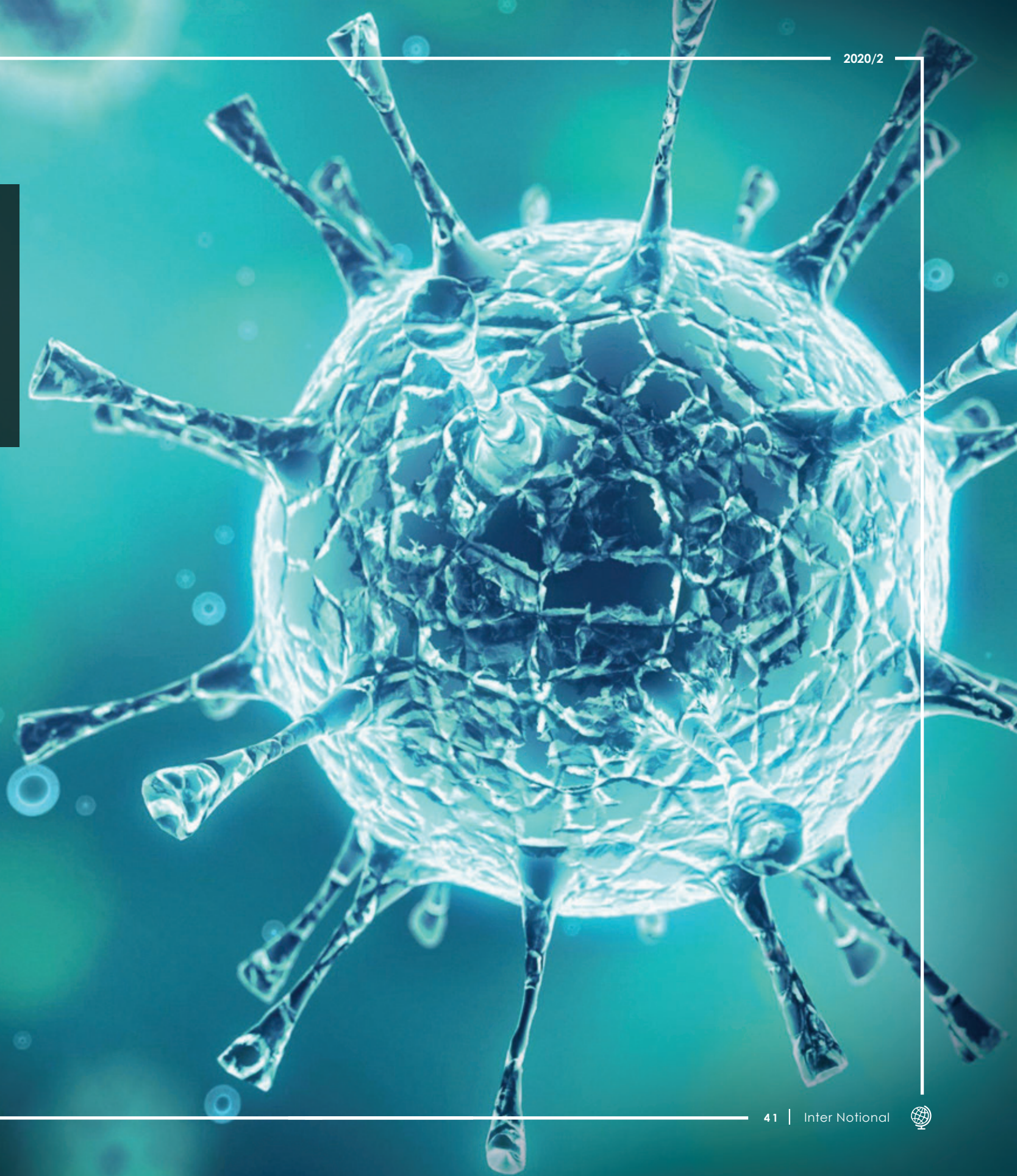
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# Humanitarianism Amid COVID-19: Humanity, Interventions and Protectionism.

HUTHAIFAH BUSUULWA





**E**rnest Mwiru, a Ugandan refugee in Kenya, committed suicide at the UNHCR compound, the very humanitarian body he had gone to seeking for aid amidst the coronavirus pandemic. Instead of assistance, it is alleged the guards beat him up. Soon afterwards he hanged himself at a tree nearby.<sup>1</sup> Mwiru's story is not a solitary case. An increasing number of people are committing suicide around the world as businesses and livelihoods are shuttered due to the coronavirus. History shows that the longer a crisis last, the worse such suicide attempts will be. In Europe and the United States, suicide rates rise about 1% for every one percent increase in unemployment, according to a research published by lead author Aaron Reeves from Oxford University. Researchers found that the surge of unemployment in 1982 cut the life spans of Americans by a collective of two to three million years. The last recession from 2007-2009, helped spike suicide rates in America and Europe, claiming more than 10,000 lives. There are valid fears that the psychological repercussions have the potential to make any tragedy look even worse. Some specialists fear that the long-term health impacts of economies in hibernation, shuttered families and social networks may become unbearable for many. That is why the world cannot afford to reduce assistance programs to help the increasing number of vulnerable people.

In many regions, the pandemic could not have come at a worse time. In Eastern Africa for instance, the locust invasion there had devastated vast swaths of land, destroying food and other crops as they trekked for

hundreds of kilometers, eating everything on their paths. In Ethiopia alone, some one million people turned to food aid after swarms of locusts damaged 200,000 hectares (half a million acres) of cropland according to the announcement on Monday April 13 by the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).<sup>2</sup> Billions of desert locusts have already left devastating impacts in Ethiopia, Somalia, Kenya, Djibouti, Eritrea, Tanzania, Sudan, South Sudan and Uganda. Of the one million individuals requiring emergency food aid, it is reported some 75 percent live in the Somali and Oromia regions, which had been long pushed to the periphery by the authorities.

*A large number of Africans were left homeless after being evicted by their landlords and hotels.*

As the coronavirus pandemic hit harder, governments around the world have raced to shut their countries in a bid to stem its spread. In the effort to protect citizens, refugees and migrants have often been ignored or at worst, targeted and blamed for spreading the virus. Foreigners are facing unprecedented stigma, many facing mob lynching by people attempting to cast away the virus. China is facing a diplomatic crisis in Africa after reports of alleged coronavirus-related discrimination against African nationals in China sparked widespread anger across the continent.<sup>3</sup> In the southern city of Guangzhou, African students and expatriates were subjected to forced testing and arbitrary 14-day self-quarantine. A large number of Africans were left homeless after being evicted by their landlords and hotels.

The crisis has at several times been manipulated for political convenience. President Donald Trump tried to sow a narrative that the globally devastating disease was caused by the 'Chinese virus',

prompting rebuttal from democrats, Chinese authorities and even the World Health Organization (WHO), which went ahead to formally name the virus COVID-19. Labelling the virus as Chinese virus only works to stir xenophobia and increase tensions among people. Now that the situation is dire around the world, arbitrary actions do not serve anyone's interests in the long run. It is a time for concerted global efforts if we are to be able to overcome this crisis with minimal cost to lives and economies. The WHO has at various occasions come out with guidelines in this direction. But despite these efforts, attacks inspired by racism have persisted, some directed at the WHO's Director General accused of being lenient towards China and not doing enough to hold them to account over what many see as the Chinese government's initial lukewarm early-stage mitigation and warning efforts.

Our common goal is to overcome the virus, but in addition to this, we should be cognizant of older problems that together ought to be ameliorated. Food security had already become a big problem even before the outbreak; and now it is exacerbated due to the virus. If nothing is done on the food security front for vulnerable people in particular, many may succumb not from the virus, but simply from hunger.

Yet food security is not the only element that should be considered parallel with the efforts to contain the pandemic. During the lockdown, reports are increasing about mothers who die in labor due

to failure to access hospitals on time. In Uganda, Scovia Nakawooya's unborn child died inside her as she struggled to reach hospital on foot. She died hours later.<sup>4</sup> Authorities in Uganda banned private and public transportation without special authorization, and in the country with few ambulances, the travel ban can be dangerous. Even when the pandemic is put under control, the ripple effects will be immense. Apart from suicides caused by extreme pressure and anxiety, the crisis may engender high crime rates as people become desperate. We should think of plans and measures to focus on the several fronts opened in this battle against COVID-19.

Among the most immediate measures should include the implementation of mental health surveillance of high-risk populations, and increasing charitable donations. This is the time for solidarity at national and global levels. Both national and global efforts are paramount, even if one country were to put the virus under control, if other countries are still affected severely, no one can guarantee that any one country can return to normality minus the cooperation of the rest. WHO director Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus for example tweeted that the rule of the game to defeat COVID-19 is solidarity at national and global levels. We have so far witnessed several examples of this vital solidarity. The example of Turkey's solidarity campaign can be emulated. The campaign launched by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan looks at the two critical fronts, in-ward and out-ward solidarity efforts. Businesses, charitable organizations

*Among the most immediate measures should include the implementation of mental health surveillance of high-risk populations, and increasing charitable donations.*





and individuals are encouraged to pool resources to help cater for the vulnerable people. In addition, Turkey has also airlifted health care products and other essential products to several dozen countries. This is commendable, and the world should look at such interventions as a template that should be followed.

As the lockdown lifting begins, some countries are phasing their restrictions starting with essential workers. Humanitarian assistance providers should be considered as essential workers and accorded assistance to help them aid the vulnerable people. Many refugees, migrants, the elderly, and poor people depend on the ability of aid workers to reach them with the aid and assistance they desperately need. Vulnerability sometimes knows no citizenship, but in

*People ought to be motivated by the ideals and values of humanity, that we are our brothers' and sisters' keepers.*

crises like this, refugees and migrants tend to be neglected as governments prioritize their own citizens. This should not be the case because every life matters, and sympathizing with the pain of another human being, and even other living creatures is what makes us human. Interventions should be wide and apolitical, otherwise we may not be able to bounce from the crisis as quickly and humanely as we should.

In doing all this, people ought to be motivated by the ideals and values of humanity, that we are our brothers' and sisters' keepers. The respect for dignity of all, the respect for human rights, for fundamental freedoms, and human dignity still hold the same value as they did before the outbreak. Yet, with the right doze of love, care and compassion, we shall rise up together and shine again.

## End Notes

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## INFOGRAPHICS

[www.insamer.com/en](http://www.insamer.com/en)

### ILLEGAL SIEGE! ILLEGAL ATTACK!

The Israeli-imposed blockade on the Gaza Strip and its interception of the Freedom Flotilla are blatant cases of violation of the **Fourth Geneva Convention** and **International Humanitarian Law**.

#### THE SIEGE ON GAZA IS ILLEGAL!

BECAUSE:

1. The Israeli-imposed blockade on the whole population of the Gaza Strip simply because they elected Hamas, violates the international ban of "collective punishment".
2. The Israeli blockade had resulted in starving the civilian population and depriving them of vital needs. It amounts to the violation of the principle of proportionality.
3. Although Israel has no legal basis to intervene ships carrying humanitarian aid, it has carried out a violent attack on the flotilla.

#### ISRAELI INTERCEPTION OF THE FREEDOM FLOTILLA IS ILLEGAL!

BECAUSE:

Israeli military's assault on Mavi Marmara in international waters and the excessive use of force against Mavi Marmara is unlawful.

##### SOME OF THE GROSS VIOLATIONS COMMITTED DURING THE FLOTILLA ATTACK:

1. **The right to life**  
The civilians onboard were deliberately shot dead at close range.
2. **Torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment**  
Overly tight handcuffing for extended periods; being subject to various forms of mistreatment onboard and during detention; insult, humiliating treatment; being beaten; being forced to sign papers in a language the signatory cannot read etc.
3. **The right to liberty and security of person**  
The Mavi Marmara passengers were arrested arbitrarily and unlawfully under inhumane conditions without being informed.
4. **Humane treatment to detained persons and right of respect for human dignity possessed as an innate quality**  
The flotilla participants were detained and deprived from their rights to an attorney and to access to families and Embassy officials.
5. **The right to own property.**  
The Israeli authority confiscated a wide range of personal belongings, including considerable amount of cash donations to be distributed in Gaza; passports, electronic items such as cell phones, computers, photographic and video recording equipment, where most of these items were not returned.
6. **Freedom of expression**  
During the attack, Israeli forces imposed a total blackout on the satellite communication of Mavi Marmara. Furthermore, a journalist was shot dead at close range.



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# Situation of Women in Islamic Countries

NEVA KAYA



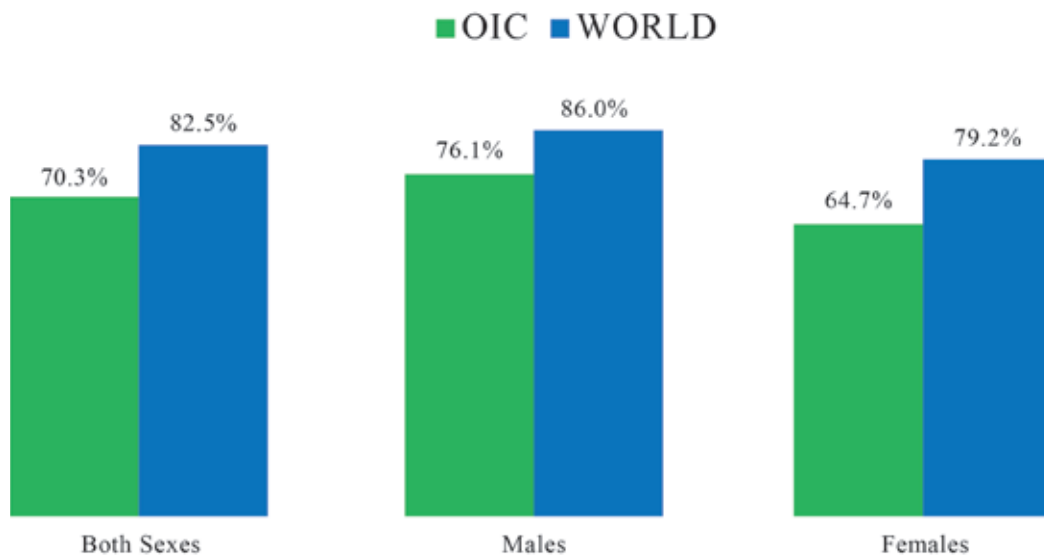


About half the total population of Islamic countries consists of women. But sadly, Islamic societies have lagged behind the world average in many issues such as education, health, economy, culture, and women are the most affected groups. In this case, there is a significant contradiction between negative human indicators in the Islamic world and the value Islam gives to women. The main reason of this contradiction is related to traditionalist perceptions and the poor economic conditions of the societies in major Islamic geography from

problem areas and provide important clues about what needs to be done. The following data series on issues such as education, health, economic equality of opportunity and victimization of war reflect some of the negative conditions for women in the Islamic world.

## Education

Between 2010 and 2016, the global male literacy was 86% while female literacy was 79.2%. In Islamic countries, both the general literacy rate and the rates between women (64.7%) and men (76.1%) have lagged behind the world average.



Adult Literacy Rate, as % of Population, 2010-2016

Source: SESRIC

Indonesia to Morocco. In the last century, Islamic countries, which have experienced serious economic, political and cultural problems, have taken a more defensive attitude on issues related to women, family and children, something that has led to a decrease in problem-solving capability.

Today, humanitarian indicators on women in Islamic countries reveal some of the

Literacy rate in 19 Islamic countries is above of the world average. Uzbekistan (99.98%, 2015) and Azerbaijan (99.72%, 2016) are the countries with the highest female literacy rate as a result of their education policies. On the other hand, more than half of the adults in 14 Islamic countries are illiterate. In sub-Saharan African countries, female literacy is even much lower. For example, the rate was

recorded at 13.96% in Chad and 22.20% in Mali.<sup>1</sup> In other words, about eight out of every 10 women in Chad and Mali are illiterate.

Girls' enrolment rates at all levels of education are much lower than boys. Between 2006 and 2016, 23.3% of girls of secondary school age and 18.8% of boys did not attend school in Islamic countries.<sup>2</sup> Some of the children who start school leave it for social, cultural and structural reasons before they can complete their education. Lack of compulsory education policies and programs for girls, inabilities of infrastructure in public schools - especially in rural areas -, lack of teachers, early marriage of girls from poor communities, their removal from school are the main reasons that prevent girls' participation in education.

In some sub-Saharan African countries such as Somalia, Niger, Chad and Burkina Faso, more than 50% of primary school-age girls are unable to attend school.<sup>3</sup> Meanwhile in Islamic countries such as Kazakhstan, Palestine, Indonesia and Kyrgyzstan, gender apartheid in education has decreased considerably and the number of girls who cannot attend school has dropped to below 1%.

## Health

Although the average fertility rate in Islamic countries fell between 2010 and 2016, it was recorded at 3.55 births per woman, higher than the world average of 2.72 in 2016.<sup>4</sup> The rapid population increase compared to other regions in the world means health sector is vital for women in Islamic countries.

Prenatal care and post-natal health care is very important for both mother and baby. However, there are some serious problems about this issue in Islamic countries. In these countries, only 54% of pregnant women have access to health service facilities when ideally pregnant women should undergo health checkups at least four times before birth. In Somalia, this rate is 6.3%. Between 2010 and 2015, doctors, nurses and midwives assisted only 63% of deliveries in Islamic countries. More than 70% of births in Somalia, Sudan, Chad and Niger occur without the access to any health care or assistance.<sup>5</sup>

The inability to obtain health services during birth increases maternal and infant mortality. According to the World Health Organization research, approximately 300,000 women worldwide died from preventable causes during pregnancy and childbirth in 2015. 49% of these deaths (149,000 mothers) occurred in Islamic countries.<sup>6</sup>

As a result of studies done to decrease maternal mortality rates, maternal mortality in Islamic countries declined from 559 per 100,000 births in 1990 to 326 per 100,000 births in 2015. The highest maternal mortality rate is in Sierra Leone at 1,360 per 100,000 births. Sierra Leone is followed by Chad and Nigeria.<sup>7</sup>

## Economy

Women have the potential to contribute to the economy in different lines of work. While the global participation rate of women in the economy is 41.19%, this rate stands at 33.60% in Islamic countries.<sup>8</sup> Reasons such as economic inadequacy, the

*The position of women in Islamic countries should not be discussed according to the values of the West, but the consequences of the transforming world.*





development of modern social structure and the development of different business lines increase the participation of women in the economy. However, traditional prejudices and intense conflicts hold down women's participation in the economy. In 2017, the lowest ratio of women's participation in the economy was recorded in Yemen (7.88%) due to conflicts and the highest ratio was recorded in Mozambique (54.82%) due to economic incapability.<sup>9</sup>

In Islamic countries, the unemployment rate among adult women was higher than adult men in 2008-2017. Young women are particularly the group most affected from unemployment. In 2017, the unemployment rate among adult women was 11.5%, while the rate among younger women was 23.8%. The ratio among women in both categories is 4 to 8 points behind men.<sup>10</sup>

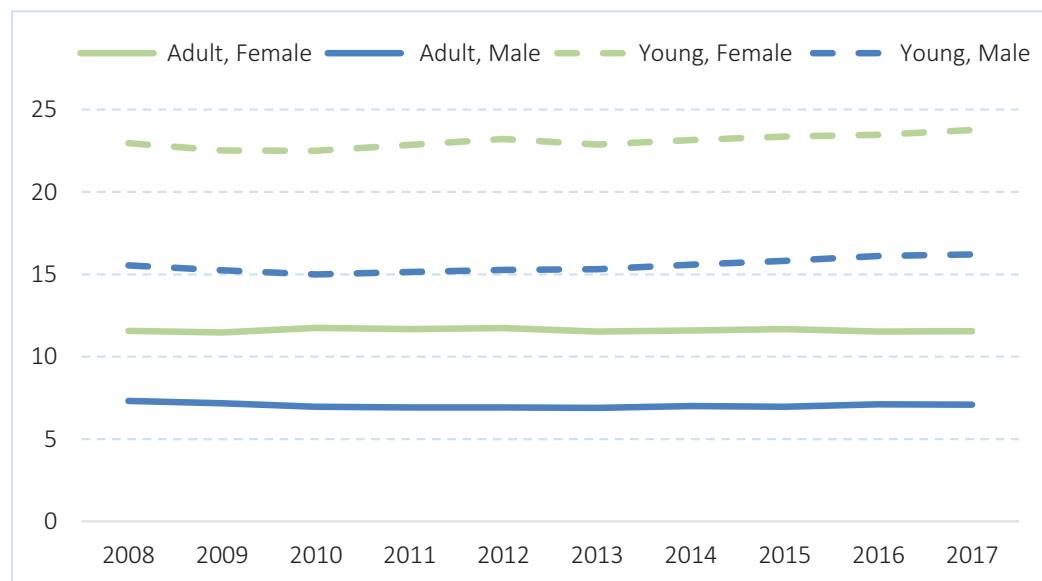
*Young women are particularly the group most affected from unemployment.*

## Conflict

Women who are most affected by the negative results of inadequacies in education and health are also severely affected by extraordinary situations such as conflicts, wars and terror attacks. All segments of society are exposed to acts prohibited in the International Law such as death, injuries, arbitrary arrest and torture.

But women suffer the most severe forms of physical, psychological and sexual violence with these acts. In addition, in conflicts, women and children are used as blackmailing means and weapons of war.

Sexual assaults on women were used as a weapon of war in the Bosnian War between 1992 and 1995. In the ongoing Syrian War that broke out in 2011, women have also been killed, injured, tortured, harassed and raped in prisons and used as



**Adult and Youth Unemployment Rates (%) in OIC Member Countries**

Source: SESRIC

a means of blackmail between opposing factions. Women who are freed from prison are rejected by their families due to the degrading treatments they receive while in imprisonment. Some refugee women who take refuge in neighboring countries also struggle with the most difficult aspects of being refugees, such as working at very low wages, being subjected to physical violence, verbal abuse and sexual assaults.<sup>11</sup>

## Conclusion

The ways of the existence of women in the social sphere of Islamic countries is a subject of debate among different ideological views. Ideological differences lead to insufficient evaluation of women's influence and the role they play in

transforming a society. Women suffer from different forms of victimization, such as child marriages, physical and verbal violence, as well as inadequate health and education in the social sphere, inability to participate in the economy and the negative consequences of conflicts. The position of women in Islamic countries should not be discussed according to the values and norms of the West, but the consequences of the transforming world.

Women's grievance should be eliminated. This could be done, first and foremost, by developing a mutual perspective about women in various aspects of life. Only then can women's potential be used, since it is unquestionable that women have the power in transforming the society.

## End Notes

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# The New Scramble for Africa, Tragedy or Farce?

SERHAT ORAKÇI





Russia's last Africa Summit in Sochi that hosted more than 40 African leaders eventually had turned into a military show displaying the latest developed Russian weaponry and war machines that definitely attracted African leaders in dealing with "terrorism" at home. Then came Germany's G20 Compact initiative with Africa aiming to promote investment in the continent. The United Arab Emirates' (UAE) 2019 Global Business Forum was the latest event that also hosted various African leaders seeking to develop business relation with the tiny Gulf country.

If there is something for sure it is that after the millennium Africa entered another phase in which the demand for the resources of the continent has increased rapidly. Today, China, India, Japan along with traditional Western partners of Africa and even the Gulf countries are all in a competition aiming to widen their sphere of influence on the continent. Major global actors compete to win Africa tirelessly. For some it is the new scramble for Africa; for the optimists it presents new opportunities for the Africans such as transferring technology, receiving foreign direct investments, low-interest rate loans and obtaining new infrastructure.

How should we see this new scramble? Is it really benefitting Africa? In this regard, reading Africa's history might provide a better understanding of today's Africa

because the tragic past builds the present Africa. One should remember what Karl Marx once wrote, "Hegel remarks somewhere that all great, world-historical facts and personages occur, as it were, twice. He has forgotten to add: the first time as tragedy, the second as farce."

As it is well known, the first scramble for Africa resulted in the colonization of the whole continent in the 19th century. Resource-hungry European powers imposed foreign domination on African soil and transferred all African wealth to the West. The colonial system remained until the 60's and it created a complex system of exploitation. However, at the end of the day, despite all nonreversible mental and material damage caused by the West, supporters of colonization said to Africans that they left modern buildings, roads, railways, ports and well-functioning infrastructure. What happened was actually not stealing Africa's resources but demolishing Africa's entire production capacity. Response to colonial administrations varied from severe tone to compulsory cooperation. In some cases, for sure, it left

people in insanity and poverty. Xhosa people deliberately killed crops and 400 thousand heads of cattle as a result of mass resistance to the British.

After the end of colonization the continent witnessed another rivalry called the Cold War. In this period two super powers reshaped Africa for the benefits of themselves. It was all about strategy and self-interest. Two global powers supported

*Two global powers supported dictators, military interventions, arm conflicts and human rights abuses in order to gain more influence on the continent.*

dictators, military interventions, arm conflicts and human rights abuses in order to gain more influence on the continent. At the end of the Cold War, the US cut foreign aid and military programs to Africa since the country did not feel the need to do so anymore.

Today, it is like history repeating itself on the continent. China is emerging as another polar pulling African leaders who seek alternative partner to the West. Unconditional low-interest loans, cheap commercial items, various infrastructure projects and special Chinese zones in the continent strengthen China-Africa relations and carry it to a level never been seen before. Japan, India, South Korea and Russia are also following China's footsteps. "African solutions for Africa's problems" or "win-win" are common slogans clung to tongues when it comes to formal statements delivered by Vladimir Putin, Narendra Modi or Xi Jinping. However, unless profit is not distributed equally, "win-win" is just a big lie!

Furthermore, in this century Africa is renamed as "China's China". However, China-Africa relations also have its ups and downs. Nowadays it is very surprising to hear that Kenya faces an interesting

situation because of unpaid huge loans. As a result the Kenyan government risks losing the Mombasa port to China. This is not one of the extreme cases when it comes to China-Africa relations because most of African countries are in debt.

Some experts claim that 40% of sub-Saharan African countries are at high risk of debt distress although Chinese sources refuse such claims.

When we adopt Marx's determinant into the status of Africa it is becoming clear that the first colonialization experience was a great tragedy; this new-colonialization is just turning to a comedy if Africans are not being very careful and critical at this point of history. It must be remembered that either European scramble or the Cold War scramble brought welfare and peace to the African continent. Repeating the same mistake and then

expecting a different result would not be possible as the great scientist Albert Einstein once said that insanity is doing the same thing, over and over again, but expecting different result. Africa has to be the active player in the history and most importantly a real history-maker. However, selling raw-materials and buying finished products is not the way of constructing a real history-maker.

*Kenya faces an interesting situation because of unpaid huge loans. As a result the Kenyan government risks losing the Mombasa port to China.*





Agreement for Bringing Peace to Afghanistan  
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افغانستان ته د سولې راوستلو تړون  
موافقتنامه آوردن صلح به افغانستان  
الدوحة قطر ٢٩ فبراير ٢٠٢٠ Doha Qatar 29 February 2020

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# US - Taliban Peace Deal: Under The Shadow of Gloom

DR. SERAJ AHSAN

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The US-Taliban peace deal on February 29, 2020 brought a glimpse of hope a resolved conflict and that peace would prevail in Afghanistan. Yet on March 25, 2020, a 400 year-old Sikh community temple was attacked by a militant group that again doomed the peace effort. It is believed that this attack was the handy work of extremists affiliated with the Islamic State. Aside from sabotaging the peace deal, this attack also happened when Afghanistan is facing Coronavirus. The country's already crippling health system that is struggling to control the spread of the virus is in an even worse agony as there is no unified government in place to deal with the current crisis. The US also refused to bail out the country if Afghanistan's political classes continued to fight for power and failed to end their political differences.

The Kabul regime ordered to lockdown the country for three weeks, leaving essential services to open such as pharmacies and grocery stores. In the Taliban's areas of control, they also take measures such as prohibiting the public from roaming freely without any necessity and to stay in their houses. They also told the people to keep themselves and their surroundings clean as much as possible. The Taliban also distributed essential goods among the people to protect themselves; they also alerted the imams to warn the people

of the consequences of spreading the virus if they don't implement the given instructions.

There is no doubt that the US-Taliban peace deal brought relief to the Afghan people. According to this agreement, the US shall be obliged to withdraw its entire military forces along with its allies and coalition partners. It includes all non-diplomatic civilian personnel, private security contractors, trainers, advisors, and supporting services personnel within 14 months.

But the lingering question is about how long this peace deal could be implemented. In general, the Afghan people perceived the US as an occupying force, not a liberating one; meanwhile, the current Afghan government is seen as a US' puppet. Currently there are two factions in Afghanistan, one of Ashraf Ghani and the other of Abdullah Abdullah, both claiming to be the head of the new government after bitterly contested in last year's election. US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo recently visited Kabul to ask both Ghani and Abdullah to resolve their differences to allow the peace deal to take place.

Afghans are also not very fond of the Taliban; the Afghan people have been resilient throughout history and they have never accepted the dominance of any power be it external or internal. Therefore no government has ever succeeded

*Successive US administrations started to realize that they were not in the position to win the war in Afghanistan despite possessing very high standard military technology and invested a lot of money.*

to establish their rule completely in Afghanistan except for some brief period.

The US also failed to finish the Taliban's insurgency after toppling their government following 9/11, and the Taliban regime lasted in different parts of Afghanistan approximately for the following five years.

Successive US administrations started to realize that they were not in the position to win the war in Afghanistan despite possessing very high standard military technology and invested a lot of money.

Finally Washington realized that military cannot be the solution of Afghan's political problem and started to negotiate with those whom the US regarded as terrorist. In this context the US tried to reach out to the Taliban in Doha, Qatar, without involving its own puppet government in confidence in Kabul. This approach created a kind of disappointment among US' Afghan allies. But Washington felt constraint to withdraw its armies from Afghanistan as soon as possible to contain the casualties, after admitting defeat in the third longest war in its war history after Vietnam and Iraq.

Therefore the US wanted a respectful exit from Afghanistan to avoid further humiliation. It also reflects the country's frustration with Afghanistan. When the US asked the Taliban to first talk to the Afghan government to develop an intra-Afghan consensus, the Taliban declined

the proposal and preferred to have a talk with the US directly, bringing its own conditions to the table. Ironically the lone super power of the world had no choice but to accept the Taliban's conditions.

The talk started in Doha in 2018 where the Taliban maintained their office. Some progress and hiccups came in their negotiation; once President Trump even refused to continue the talk with the Taliban due to a car bombing in Kabul, where it killed one US personnel. Yet after this brief disruption, talks were resumed once again.

According to US officials, as far as withdrawing the troops as per timeline is concerned, it would depend on the Taliban's sincerity on how much they are concerned about the peace deal. This means that to keep the peace deal alive, the Taliban has to distant itself from foreign militant groups such as Al-Qaida and the Islamic State and not to provide them a launching pad to carry on their

activities against the US and its internal and external alliance. But it would not be easy for the Taliban to accept the US' "democratic and liberal vision" remedy for the future development of Afghanistan. After the successful negotiation with the US, the new Taliban leadership is expected to show its flexibility as far as human rights is concerned; meaning they would not adopt measures in their governing policies as they have done before, despite their strict adherence to local tribal law and customs.

*It would not be easy for the Taliban to accept the US' "democratic and liberal vision" remedy for the future development of Afghanistan.*





# Extermination of Uighur Muslims in China

HAMZA KYEYUNE





The Uighurs are ethnically and culturally a Muslim Turkic people, living for generations in the Xinjiang region of China. The territory they live in is of strategic importance for the Chinese government's "Belt and Road Initiative," which is China's future access point to vital trade routes throughout Central Asian, European and African countries. It also sits on China's largest coal and natural gas reserves, located on the sensitive frontier with Pakistan, Afghanistan and Central Asia.

The Uighurs have long faced discrimination and restrictions on their cultural and religious activities. Human rights organizations maintain that economic benefits of resource extraction and developments are often disproportionately enjoyed by other ethnic groups in the region such as the Hans, while the Uighurs are becoming increasingly marginalized.

The Chinese Communist Party encouraged the Han ethnic to migrate to Xinjiang with the aim to change the demographic there, luring them with the promise of "hukou", a coveted status that facilitates access to essential social services like housing, pensions, health care and education.

In 1949, Xinjiang's Han population comprised merely 6 percent of the total population. By 2010, the Han population had risen to at least 40 percent. Its heavily industrialized capital, Urumqi, has a

population of more than 2.3 million, about 75% of whom are Han, 12.8% are Uyghur, and 10% are from other ethnic groups. Han-run companies only employ Hans and so are most of government jobs. It is increasingly harder for the Uighur community to find jobs; hence it is understandable when the Uighurs feel that they are being alienated in their own land.

The Chinese government claims that the Uighur Muslims hold an extremist view; it went so far to publish a policy paper last year claiming it had arrested 13,000 "terrorists" in Xinjiang province alone since 2014. The Uighurs assert that China wants to reshape their land to aid its economic and political goals, and in order

to achieve that, the Chinese government defamed Uighurs as terrorists and extremists to exterminate their identity and culture.

The Chinese government constructed facilities it calls "vocational training centers" claiming that the facilities provide the Uighurs with courses such as tailoring, electronic assembly and the Chinese language, where more than one million Uighur Muslims have been held since April 2017. Satellite imagery of the sites found that 39 of the detention camps cover a total area roughly the size of 140 soccer fields.

Unlike the Chinese government's claims about the camps, Uighur victims report that these camps are no more than concentration camps, complete with armed guards and barbed-wire fences.

*Unlike the Chinese government's claims about the camps, Uighur victims report that these camps are no more than concentration camps*

Inside, prisoners are indoctrinated with the country's Communist Party propaganda, forced to renounce Islam, and have been forced to eat pork and drink alcohol in violation of their religious beliefs.

Mass detentions of Uyghur Muslims can be traced back to Xi Jinping's first and only visit to Xinjiang as China's leader in 2014. After assuming presidency, he spent four days in the region, and on the last day of the trip, two Uighur militants staged a suicide bombing outside a train station in Urumqi that injured nearly 80 people, one fatally.

President Xi Jinping blamed the lack of control on religion, suggesting that his predecessors had let down their guard. While previous Chinese leaders emphasized economic development to stifle unrests in Xinjiang, President Xi believed that it was not enough. He demanded an ideological cure, an effort to rewire the thinking of the region's Muslim minorities.

The remarks of President Xi Jinping suggested he was alarmed by the revival of public piety. The Chinese Communist party's greater philosophy is, any religion or ideology that recognizes a higher power than the party is a threat that must be brought to heel or eliminated. Political and cultural conformity must be enforced at all costs.

The Chinese government has since come to characterize any expression of Islam in Xinjiang as extremism. The authorities laid out dozens of signs, including common behavior among devout Uighurs. In

March 2017 for example, the Xinjiang government passed an anti-extremism law that prohibited its people from growing long beards and wearing veils in public. It also officially recognized the use of training centers to eliminate extremism. Journalists reporting from Xinjiang found that many aspects of Islamic traditions have been erased. The Communist Party members have been recruited since 2014 to stay inside the homes of the Uighurs and report on any perceived "extremist" behaviors, including fasting during Ramadan or abstaining from alcohol. Officials have destroyed mosques, claiming the buildings were shoddily constructed and unsafe for worshippers. Halal food is also becoming harder to find in Urumqi as the local government has launched a campaign against it.

Despite the horrendous atrocities the Uighurs are facing, they are also faced with a muted voice from the Muslim populated countries. In July 2019, European countries signed a letter to the UN Human Rights chief condemning China's actions in Xinjiang. Thereafter, some Muslim majority countries including Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, signed their own letter praising China's "remarkable achievements" in

human rights and its "counterterrorism" efforts in Xinjiang. Turkey remains the only Muslim-majority country to voice concern when its foreign minister called on China to ensure "the full protection of the cultural identities of the Uyghurs and other Muslims" during a UN Human Rights Council session.

*Despite the horrendous atrocities the Uighurs are facing, they are also faced with a muted voice from the Muslim populated countries.*





Leaked files shared by The New York Times exposed how China organized mass detentions of Muslims. The directive was among 403 pages of internal documents that have been shared in one of the most significant leaks of government papers from inside China's ruling Communist Party in decades. They provide an unprecedented inside view of the continuing clampdown in Xinjiang, in which the authorities have corralled as many as one million ethnic Uighurs, Kazakhs and others into internment camps and prisons over the past three years.

The leaked papers consist of 24 documents, with nearly 200 pages of internal speeches by President Xi and other leaders, and more than 150 pages of directives and reports on the surveillance and control of the Uighur population in Xinjiang. There are also references to plans to extend restrictions on Islam to other parts of China.

Of the 24 documents, there is one certain directive on how to handle minority students returning home to Xinjiang in the summer of 2017. Officials in Turpan, a city in eastern Xinjiang, drafted Q&A script after the regional government warned

local officials to prepare for the returning students. The leadership distributed a classified directive advising local officials to corner returning students as soon as they arrived and keep them quiet. It included a chillingly bureaucratic guide for how to handle their anguished questions, beginning with the most obvious question such as: Where is my family? The Q&A script also included a barely concealed threat: Students were to be told that their behavior could either shorten or extend the detention of their relatives.

The papers were brought to light by a member of the Chinese political establishment who requested anonymity and expressed hope that their disclosure would prevent party leaders, including President Xi, from escaping culpability for the mass detentions.

Continued oppression of the Uighurs by China could cause great backlash not only among the people of Hans and Uighur, but it could also put China on a path of confrontation with it's own people. The international community must begin to treat this issue with the urgency it deserves.

*Continued oppression of the Uighurs by China could cause great backlash not only among the people of Hans and Uighur, but it could also put China on a path of confrontation with it's own people.*


## INFOGRAPHICS

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### MAVI MARMARA LAWSUITS IN TURKEY AND AROUND THE WORLD



#### TURKEY

**CRIMINAL CASE:**   
The complaints of Mavi Marmara victims were joined together in a lawsuit that was filed in 2012 against Israeli officials responsible for the attack. There were 502 plaintiffs in the case of which 78 were foreign nationals.

#### DEFENDANTS:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1 Former Israeli Chief of Staff Gen. Gavriel Ashkenazi | 2 Former Air Force Intelligence officer Avishay Levi |
| 3 Former Navy Commander Eliezer Alfred Maron           | 4 Former Intelligence Chief Amos Yadlin              |

• The case was dropped on December 9, 2016 after an agreement reached between Turkey and Israel in August 28, 2016.

• No decision has yet been made on the appeal of the court case.

#### LAWSUITS FOR COMPENSATION:

- Families of Mavi Marmara victims filed 85 separate lawsuits for compensation in Kayseri, Denizli, Diyarbakir, Ankara, Izmir, Istanbul, Konya, Erzurum and Batman cities of Turkey.
- The amount of compensation demanded totaled 23 million TL.
- The agreement reached between Turkey and Israel means Turkey shall address any demand of compensation if Israel is obliged to pay compensation for any.

#### AROUND THE WORLD:

##### SPAIN:

An investigation opened following an official complaint by the Spanish attendants resulted in an arrest warrant issued for seven senior-level Israeli executives.



##### USA:

The family of Furkan Dogan, an American citizen, filed a lawsuit in the USA where the judge ruled that the case be dropped on the grounds of the Turkish-Israeli agreement, however, this lawsuit has yet to be concluded.



##### SOUTH AFRICA:

Gadija Davida, a South African journalist who was aboard the Mavi Marmara, also filed a lawsuit at the end of which the names of the Israeli defendants were notified to the border police so that they can be arrested upon entering South Africa.



#### INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT (ICC)

In 2013, an application was filed with ICC on behalf of the State of the Comoros. Later on, Cambodia and Greece also joined this application.

A decision issued from the Office of the Attorney General on November 6, 2014 labelled Israel as an occupying party in Gaza and classified Israel's attack against the fleet as a "war crime". Israel's claims for "self-defense", on the other hand, were not found worth discussing.

The process for initiating an investigation into Mavi Marmara before the ICC is still ongoing due to procedure-related discussions between the Office of the Attorney General and the Superior Court.



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# Anxiety and Control

A. HÜMEYRA KUTLUOĞLU KARAYEL





Nowadays, many people think about the physical, economical and social perspectives of coronavirus; the psychological side of the pandemic has not been looked at enough. Actually, psychological impact of coronavirus could pose as the most serious one. Therefore, when people are faced with anxiety, depression or other psychological disorders, they are bound to become a target to even more severe physical disorders that weaken the immune system. For this reason, it is important to understand the psychological effects of this global health crisis and its precautions and treatments help enhance physical and psychological resistance.

For instance, feeling panic, anxiety, stress and anger during a stressful time, or whilst in the midst of an epidemic; or after a traumatic event such as traffic accidents are normal reactions and emotions. However, if these emotions continue without being treated properly, to the point that it poses as a threat, it means that the feelings are not managed well, making such cases become problematic. Signs of psychological problems could be seen if for example, a person who previously experienced a war is hyper-aroused when hearing the sound of a plane in a safety place; or when a person tends to wash their hands to the extreme until wounding their hands out of the fear of disease and hygiene obsession.

When people acknowledge what is normal and what is abnormal, and they behave to the extreme during a critical period, this means they can still control their stress and anxiety level. However, showing some any level of extremism under the name of precaution and the inability to control anxiety means there is a development of psychological disorders. Anxiety disorder can be seen especially today, amid the coronavirus pandemic. The skill to self-acknowledge of any symptom to these

disorders is the first step to cope and heal. This article will discuss about anxiety disorders and the coping methods.

## What is Anxiety Disorder?

Anxiety is the state of feeling some presence of danger against one's self, family, health, wealth, status, belief system, values and perceive them as threat. Accompanying this situation, people can feel panic, stress, worry and unrest. Children and adolescents can experience anxiety as well as adults. Anxiety effect people's lives negatively and in extreme cases professional support is vital to treat the problem.

## Types of Anxiety

Anxiety consists many subtypes such as:

### 1. *Generalized Anxiety Disorder*

GAD refers to the feeling of intense and constant anxiety about anything.

### 2. *Panic Disorder*

Panic Disorder refers to the experiencing of unexpected and repeated intense panic attacks.

### 3. *Acute Stress Disorder*

Acute Stress Disorder refers to the experiencing of intense fear, anxiety, hopelessness and terror after traumatic events in which it usually disappears within 30 days.

### 4. *Specific Phobias*

Specific Phobias refers to the fear and avoidance from certain objects, people, situations and places.

### 5. *Social Anxiety Disorder (Social Phobia)*

Social Phobia refers to the intense fear of people, thinking that other people

will judge, discriminate or humiliate them and their performance.

### 6. *Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD)*

OCD refers to the uncontrollable recurring thoughts called obsessions and behaviors called compulsions. OCD effects people negatively. People who suffer from OCD appear to make certain actions to relax but they actually feed the problem by repeating these actions.

### 7. *Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)*

PTSD refers to the disease, which occurs after traumatic events and people might show signs such as hyper-arousal, avoidance and flashbacks as symptoms of PTSD. It is a serious disorder and should be treated professionally.

### 8. *Substance-Induced Anxiety Disorder*

Substance-Induced Anxiety Disorder refers to a disorder that occurs following the usage of alcohol, drugs and other substances.

### 9. *Other Specified Anxiety Disorders and Unspecified Anxiety Disorders*

Other Specified Anxiety Disorders and Unspecified Anxiety Disorders refer to a situation when a person may not fully meet the diagnostic criteria of any particular types of anxiety disorder.

### 10. *Separation Anxiety Disorder*

Separation Anxiety Disorder refers to the intense fear and stress when a person is separated from a caregiver.

### 11. *Illness Anxiety Disorder*

Illness Anxiety Disorder refers to the extreme worry about a person's health and illness. Even when they are healthy,

they would think they are ill or they can exaggerate minor symptoms as a severe illness.

### 12. *Selective Mutism in Children*

Selective Mutism refers to children experiencing the inability to speak in certain social places such as school.

### 13. *Agoraphobia*

Agoraphobia refers to the fear of a repetition of panic attacks when a person is alone; due to this fear they cannot go outside alone, or tend to avoid situations and places which can cause fear and panic.

## What are the Symptoms of Anxiety

Feeling stress and anxiety is normal while facing stressful situations but if these symptoms continue and progress then it can be problematic. People might show different symptoms of anxiety but when they feel anxious they generally show the following general symptoms:

- Nervousness, restlessness, or being tense
- Feeling of being in danger, under threat, panicking
- Rapid heart rate, rapid breathing, or hyperventilation
- Shaking, heavy sweating
- Digestive or gastrointestinal problems, such as bloating, constipation, or diarrhea
- Sleeping problems such as insomnia
- Eating problem
- Attention and concentration difficulties





- The need to stay away from anxious and stressful situations
- Problems with social relationships
- Showing specific behaviors over and over again

## Causes of Anxiety

Many researches show that;

- Type of characteristics
- Genetic factors
- Childhood traumas
- Stress and
- Learning styles

play a role in the development of anxiety.

As it is seen, anxiety effects people's emotions, thoughts and actions negatively and if it is not treated, all of the social, occupational and interpersonal relations will be effected negatively too. Therefore, seeking treatment and professional support is important in order to achieve healthy and quality life.

## Treatment of Anxiety Disorders

Clinical psychologist and psychiatrist are professionals who are trained to treat psychological disorders.

- Psychotherapy
- Medical treatment
- Cooperation of client

are necessary to treat anxiety disorders. Psychotherapy in particular helps to turn patient's negative thoughts into positive and correct cognitive distortion. In addition;

- Breathing exercises
- Progressive muscle relaxation techniques
- Emotion regulation
- Exposure
- Systematic desensitization and
- Psycho-training

are very effective treatment methods to do in reducing stress level and coping with anxiety.

In this process, training patient's family members and the society in general about the problems to get them to participate in the treatment in order to give social support to the patient are very important and supportive techniques to provide permanent changes and welfare for the patient. Furthermore,

- Sport
- Balanced nutrition
- Stress management
- Art
- Quality sleep and
- Belief system

are other useful techniques to treat anxiety.

## INFOGRAPHICS

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# Orphans in the World

CANSU NAR





The number of orphans in the world is increasing due to problems such as wars and conflicts, natural disasters, epidemics, poverty and mass migration. Children, who make up 2.2 billion of the estimated 7.7 billion of the world's population, remain at risk and exposed every day for various reasons. If a child between 0 and 18 years of age who has lost one or both parents is considered an orphan, the number of orphans in the world today is estimated at over 140 million.<sup>1</sup> It is estimated that a total of approximately 15.1 million out of 61 million who live in Asia, 52 million in Africa, 10 million in Latin America and 7.3 million in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, have lost both parents.<sup>2</sup>

In addition to all these official data, it is known that many children around the world are not registered as "orphans" for various reasons. There are many orphans, i.e. "invisible children", who have never been registered, or those who have not been identified as orphans because their relatives took care of them after their parents died, or those who have not been registered due to technical difficulties and negligence. Considering all these cases, the actual number of orphans around the world is estimated at 400 million.<sup>3</sup>

Today, it is clear that wars and internal conflicts are the main causes for an ever increasing number of orphans. With regard to countries such as Syria, Iraq, East Turkestan, Somalia, Mali, Sudan, Palestine, Afghanistan, Central African Republic, Egypt, Kenya, Nigeria, Yemen, Myanmar and Algeria has a large number of orphans, these are either regions of conflict or are ruled by oppressive regimes with most of them scenes of large conflicts in recent history. The number of orphans in these countries corresponds to almost one third of all orphans worldwide.

Humanitarian crises resulting from natural disasters are foremost among the reasons for children losing their parents. About 500,000 people lose their lives and millions of people suffer great financial losses every year due to disasters. One of the most devastating consequences of these disasters is without doubt the thousands of vulnerable children left behind. Natural disasters vary in size and severity, causing different amounts of damage. For example, earthquakes cause children to become orphans in countries like Indonesia, Iran and Nepal while in African countries it is usually drought and famine. Whereas social orphans are more common in relatively developed and western countries.

Since the risks and threats that children without parents face apply to all children who are unprotected for some reason, it is important to provide protection for all these children. Heavy labor, being recruited as child soldiers, being trapped by the organ and prostitution mafia and various other criminal organizations are the most common dangers to which these children are exposed. For example, it is reported that there are about 300,000 child soldiers in more than 30 countries,<sup>4</sup> there are at least 218 million child workers aged between 5 and 17, and that at least 73 million of them are employed in hazardous occupations.<sup>5</sup> A major part of these children are either orphans or abandoned children. The number of missing children that went into the records in the 20 years from 1987 to 2007 is 1 million. It is estimated that most of these children are abducted by criminal organizations.<sup>6</sup>

One of the most serious problems faced by orphans are social exclusion and isolation, which is not easy to notice at first sight. Psychological destruction through the loss of one or both parents can lead to a withdrawal, while discriminatory treatment by relatives, peers or the society can lead to self-isolation.

A study by the World Health Organization shows that suicide-related deaths for children between the ages of 10 and 19 have increased since 2002.<sup>7</sup> These figures clearly show that the traumas of childhood and adolescence, words which are not supposed to be used side by side with the word suicide, are not temporary, contrary to assumptions.

Becoming a refugee or being placed in the care of foster parents in other countries is one of the most serious problems faced by orphans. In particular, orphans or abandoned children who are also refugees may face threats such as abuse, ill-treatment or discrimination based on religion or race. Even if the above-cited threats to children in this category are tackled, assimilation policies in destination countries for migrants represent another lifelong risk for these children.

Education is one of the most problematic areas for orphans and abandoned children. Many studies today clearly show that there is a direct link between parental absence and academic performance. Studies have shown that the academic success of abandoned children or children raised by a single parent is lower than that of children who grow up with both of their parents. When orphanhood in warzones are brought into the equation, the schooling rate of these children and their academic success are significantly reduced. Today there are 263 million children with no access to school or regular education.<sup>8</sup>

An analysis of the common characteristics of countries with the lowest levels of education reveals that these are poverty and war zones. Since these countries are

the least developed in the world, lack of resources/means to provide basic services like education creates severe consequences that linger for generations. In Syria that has 11 million inhabitants, 3 million out of 8 million school-age children do not attend school.<sup>9</sup> Although the war in Afghanistan that has gone on for years has ended, 42% of the country's school-age children are still unable to go to school. And most of these children are female. In Somalia, 49% of school-age children cannot go to school.<sup>10</sup> In Yemen, there are 2 million children with no access to school.<sup>11</sup>

According to the report of the United Nations Development Programme, the percentage of those who receive only basic education or learn to read and write in a non-educational setting are as follows: Southern Sudan and Mali 27%, Afghanistan 28%, Ethiopia 49%, Haiti 52%, Pakistan 55%, Bangladesh 57%.<sup>12</sup> The figures and percentages given here refer to literacy rates rather than continuous education, which could mean that the quality of education in these countries is actually much worse. It is also estimated that the majority of children deprived of education are either orphans or abandoned by their parents.<sup>13</sup>

The protection of children, especially orphans, is one of the most fundamental tasks of societies. In this context, it is very important for governments to develop effective social policies to protect the legal rights of children and enable them to grow in a healthy and safe environment. Yet, most countries are way off achieving that. 61 million orphans on the Asian continent that has the worst track record of protecting children's rights,

*The academic success of abandoned children or children raised by a single parent is lower than that of children who grow up with both of their parents.*





are at risk of leading a totally vulnerable life. India, particularly, needs to take urgent action in this regard as the official figures put the number of orphans at 31 million. In India, only 41% of births are registered, with diseases and outbreaks caused by social inequality, poverty and other social problems that arise due to the strict caste system being considered the primary reason for the high population of orphans in the country. It is estimated that there are 4.9 million orphans in Bangladesh<sup>14</sup> and 4.4 million orphans in Pakistan,<sup>15</sup> which are also countries on the Asian continent. As these countries have no policy of birth registration, it is estimated that the actual number of orphans that are referred to as “invisible children” is much higher than the projected figures.

On the African continent, Nigeria is one of the worst affected countries with 17.5 million orphans.<sup>16</sup> It is reported that 2.5 million children in this country became orphans due to HIV.<sup>17</sup> In Ethiopia, another country on the continent, there are 6 million orphans.<sup>18</sup> In the country, more than 44% of children under the age of 14 are orphans due to HIV.<sup>19</sup> It is also reported that 2.9 million children in Uganda and 310,000 in Sierra Leone were orphaned by the same disease.<sup>20</sup> It was found that 74% of orphans in Zimbabwe and 63% of orphans in South Africa were also orphaned by the HIV disease.<sup>21</sup> One third of the children in Kenya, where there are almost 3 million orphans, were orphaned because of this disease.<sup>22</sup> Many children throughout Africa also died from this virus, transmitted by their parents. For instance, in Ethiopia that has 6 million orphans, it is estimated that at least 85,000 of these are HIV carriers.<sup>23</sup> It is estimated that more than 13 million children worldwide were orphaned by this virus.<sup>24</sup>

What countries with a high number of orphans have in common is that they belong to the category of the most underdeveloped countries. At least half the

population of these countries lives below the poverty line. It is children that are most severely affected by the chronic poverty in these countries. The current circumstances threaten children’s rights to life.

## Orphans as Victims of War

Wartime conditions are challenging for everyone, especially more so for orphans and abandoned children. While orphans are exposed to the dangers of the war environment, they have serious problems in accessing basic needs, especially food, shelter, health, security and education; while at the same time facing various social, economic and psychological challenges. Children struggling with problems such as illness, hunger, disability or abduction are exposed to all kinds of abuse under wartime conditions.

One of the most serious problems faced by orphans trying to survive alone in warzones is their inability to access adequate and necessary health care. The lack or absence of medical facilities further exacerbates the grievances of children in such vulnerable situations. Thousands of children who lose their lives are registered as civilian victims, while hundreds of thousands try to stay alive, one way or another. In the past year, 764 children in Yemen, 438 in Iraq, 361 in Syria, 178 in the Democratic Republic of Congo and 75 in Sudan were disabled due to conflict.

Orphans who survive on hot conflict zones face even greater challenges afterwards; much riskier prospects come into question for these children, exposed to new threats on refugee camps or migration routes. It is estimated that at least one tenth of the refugee children in the world are orphans.

One of the most devastating consequences of war for children is the issue of child soldiers. It is reported that the number of

child soldiers involved in global conflicts has increased by 159%<sup>25</sup> in five years and that since 2012 at least 300,000<sup>26</sup> children have been actively fighting in more than 30 countries.

Children are used as warriors and suicide bombers on the fields in conflicts and wars and also as couriers, spies, human shields and etc. at checkpoints.

The destruction of educational facilities in warzones has a long-term effect on the lives of the children, taking away their chances for a good future. Targeting schools in wars and conflicts costs the lives of thousands of children and educational staff. According to a United Nations report on 2016–2018, 657 schools in Mali, 396 in the Democratic Republic of Congo, 161 in Iraq, 68 in Afghanistan, 67 in Syria, 64 in Somalia, 52 in Southern Sudan, and 28 schools in the African Republic were attacked.<sup>27</sup>

Educational activities are mostly carried out in houses and tents in warzones, and these are not enough for children to build a good future. These children have their chance of a decent life taken away from them, either ending up in armed groups or having to work as child laborers under extremely difficult conditions.

Cases of child abuse are even more common in warzones. Research has shown that 40 million children under the age of 15 are victims of abuse and neglect in war zones and that these children need regular health and social care.<sup>28</sup> For example, it is reported that 1,500 children are sexually abused every year in Afghanistan, a country ravaged by civil war and foreign occupation, with those responsible being protected for various reasons.<sup>29</sup>

Moreover, children and orphans who are victims of war are targeted by human traffickers, organ mafias and other malicious

organizations operating on border lines with a huge flow of refugees. Research shows that about 1.2 million children are trafficked every year.<sup>30</sup> A majority of these children are orphans. Orphans and abandoned children, targeted by many criminal organizations such as organ traffickers, human traffickers, etc. are also sent to different countries for adoption or forced into prostitution or begging. No one knows yet what happened to the 10,000 children that migrated to Europe in the last 5 years, most of whom were orphans, raising serious questions about the fortunes of these orphans.<sup>31</sup>

As girls are mostly deployed away from the front lines, it is generally assumed that they do not take part in conflicts. However, this is not an accurate observation. For example, 30–40% of child soldiers in Africa are girls. Girls are also heavily exposed to sexual violence. Studies show that such abuses increase by 40% in wartime environments.<sup>32</sup>

This shows that humanitarian aid organizations working in crisis regions should focus not only on orphans’ shelter and nutritional needs, but they should also provided these orphans with protection, psychological support, treatment and rehabilitation. Developing personalized care approaches that take into account the orphans’ conditions is of great importance for the return to normal life of children who have experienced wars.

It is a grave violation of humanitarian values by the states that disregard the sanctity of human life to further their imperialist ambitions causing children who need love and compassion to be abused, to be forced to fight in wars, work in harsh conditions and commit acts of tyranny due to natural disasters, war, migration and poverty etc. This will produce ruthless and hostile generations in the future, causing so many new problems for societies.





## End Notes

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# INFOGRAPHICS

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## TORTURE IS A ROUTINE PRACTICE IN ISRAELI PRISONS!

Palestinian detainees are subject to **ill treatment** and often **torture, solitary confinement, deliberate medical neglect** and excessive restrictions on family visits by the **Zionist Israeli regime**.

NUMBER OF PALESTINIANS IMPRISONED IN THE LAST 10 YEARS



ISRAEL HAS DETAINED **1 MILLION** PALESTINIANS SINCE 1967, **16,000** OF THEM WOMEN

NUMBER OF PRISONERS PER REGION (2020)



541 prisoners have been SENTENCED FOR LIFE  
180 CHILD PRISONERS (26 of them under 14)

461 prisoners are in ADMINISTRATIVE DETENTION\*  
41 WOMEN prisoners

\*Administrative detention is a procedure that allows the Israeli military to detain a person from 6 months to 8 years under the order of security provisions specifically in the West Bank on the grounds that he or she plans to break the law in the future.

### TORTURE

95% of Palestinians are subject to torture under detention. Israel uses 200 different methods of torture according to the UN. At least 200 Palestinians died under torture in Israeli prisons.

66% of prisoners are subject to sleep deprivation, 31% to physical violence, 61% to threats, and 40% to prolonged shackling and stressed positions, 27% to sexual violence and humiliation.

## THERE ARE ABOUT 7 MILLION PALESTINIAN REFUGEES WORLDWIDE!



AND THE REST OF MORE THAN 1 MILLION PALESTINIAN REFUGEES ARE CATTERED AROUND THE WORLD!



- In 1948 and 1967, Israel had forcibly displaced more than 1 million Palestinians from their homes.
- Despite the fact that refugees' right to return is recognized by UN resolution 194, Israel is violently suppressing Palestinians' requests for return.
- Today, almost half of Palestinians are registered refugees.







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## IHH Humanitarian and Social Research Center

Humanitarian and Social Research Center (INSAMER) is a hub conducting and promoting critical and relevant research on key humanitarian, social and political issues. Our mission is to ease human suffering by conducting practice-based research and producing knowledge that provides guidance to researchers and policy-makers. Our research is dedicated to extending humanitarian relief, enhancing humanitarian diplomacy and advancing the human rights. We are part of the IHH Humanitarian Relief Foundation.

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