



SDGs Conference 2022

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Wednesday • September 21, 2022

John Jay College of Criminal Justice
New York

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JOURNALISTS AND
WRITERS FOUNDATION

**JOHN
JAY** COLLEGE
OF
CRIMINAL
JUSTICE

CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS



JOURNALISTS AND WRITERS FOUNDATION

in partnership with



The Journalists and Writers Foundation (JWF) is an international civil society organization dedicated to culture of peace, human rights, and sustainable development. The JWF promotes diversity and inclusion by creating forums for intellectual and social engagement, generates and shares knowledge with stakeholders, builds partnerships worldwide and develops policy recommendations for positive social change.

* JWF is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization registered in New York state.

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Mehmet Kilic, President of the Journalists and Writers Foundation

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INTRODUCTION

JWF UNGA HIGH LEVEL RECEPTION 2022

19 September 2022 | EDI International, New York

On 19 September 2022, the Journalists and Writers Foundation (JWF) hosted a UNGA High-Level Reception in New York on the occasion of the UN General Assembly's 77th Session. The event served as the opening ceremony for the JWF's series of side-events for the Roundtable Discussion on Journalism and the SDGs Conference 2022 as its Global Partners of civil society organizations from Australia, Greece, South Africa, India, Kenya and the Philippines were convened in New York for the UNGA77 High-Level Week.

Delegations of Global Partners led by Affinity Intercultural Foundation, Gerifa Foundation, Turquoise Harmony Institute, Indialogue Foundation, Harmony Institute and Pacific Dialogue included notable journalists, human rights experts, and civil society leaders. JWF UNGA High-Level Reception created a platform for the guests from overseas to meet with the diplomats from the UN



Member States and initiate further collaborations with New York's human rights community. Dignitaries and distinguished diplomats from the Permanent Mission of Israel, Ireland, Columbia, Principality of Liechtenstein, Slovakia, Sri Lanka, France, Chile, Burkina Faso and representatives from the UN Department of Global Communication Youth Steering Committee were present at the event.

In the stunning Manhattan view following the open buffet Mediterranean cuisine, the following speakers addressed the global audience at the High-Level Reception: PLTGEN General Rhodel O Sermonia from the Philippines,

Journalist Philippa McDonald from Australia, Executive Director of Refugees Unknown Stories Untold Vonya Womack from the USA, Journalist Marianna Kakaounaki from Greece, Journalist Ranjeni Munusamy from South Africa, FBI-New York Community Specialist Evelyn Vera, and Dr. Reginald Nalugala from Kenya.



JWF UNGA77 ROUNDTABLE ON JOURNALISM

20 September 2022 | John Jay College of Criminal Justice, New York

The Journalists and Writers Foundation organized an in-person Roundtable Discussion on “Global Perspectives on Journalism and Trust in News” and “Protecting Journalists from Assaults, Arrests, and Press Freedom Violations” on the occasion of the 77th Session of the United Nations General Assembly on 20 September 2022, Tuesday at John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York.



Round 1 on “Global Perspectives” was moderated by Ian Williams, President of the Foreign Press Association (USA). The discussion revolved around journalism and the challenges of increasing forms of different media outlets. Journalists are public opinion builders who play a critical role in informing people about what is happening in the world. Despite numerous challenges, news media is still considered the most reliable independent source for accessible, timely, and relevant information about public

and global affairs. However, there is growing skepticism about news and trust in an increasingly pluralistic media environment. Declining trust in news prevents citizens from making informed decisions and holding leaders accountable. In many countries, people are experiencing a dilemma about what is real from what is fake. While some media companies and politicians are responsible for these problems, some journalists also contribute to mistrust in news with false or misleading information.



Round 2 on “Protecting Journalists from Assaults, Arrests, and Press Freedom Violations” was moderated by Philippa McDonald GAICD, an Award-Winning Journalist (Australia). Journalists have become targets being observers in recent years. Many reporters face assaults and arrests or even being injured by police while covering news or protests in public spaces. Attacks on the press played a key role in a new chapter for press freedom as a horrible example for the population to incite against the press and blame reporters for unfavorable coverage of political tactics. Mass arrests and assaults on the rights of journalists covering these protests lead to violent disregard and trust for the practice of journalism. There is a shift in the treatment of journalists and press freedom globally. Journalists across the globe have faced record numbers of physical attacks, arrests, and cases of equipment damage, as well as many other press freedom violations. There is a shocking increase in the number of journalists arrested not only in authoritarian regimes but also in democratic countries.

There is a shift in the treatment of journalists and press freedom globally. Journalists have faced record numbers of physical attacks, arrests, and cases of equipment damage, as well as many other press freedom violations.

The parallel event hosted notable journalists from Australia (Philippa McDonald GAICD, Journalist, Anchorwoman) and the delegation of Greece (Katerina Markou, General Manager of Papazisis Publication, Marianna Kakaounaki, Journalist, eKathimerini, Sotirios Livas, Attorney at Law, General Manager of Gefira Foundation), delegation of South Africa (Mondli Makhanya, Editor-In-Chief, City Press, Branislav Brkic, Editor-in-Chief, Daily Maverick, Ranjeni Munusamy, Head of Media Relations, Government and Public Policy, Pule Molebeledi, Managing Director, Arena Holdings, Turkmen Terzi, Journalist) delegation of India (Behzad Fatmi, Journalist, Ovais Sultan Khan, Independent Human Rights Activist), the delegation of USA (Abdulhamit Bilici, Journalist, Ian Williams, President of the Foreign Press Association), the delegation of Kenya (Dr. Reginald Nalugala, Professor, Tangaza University College, Dr. Macharia Munene, Professor, United States International University).



SDG CONFERENCE 2022

SDGs CONFERENCE 2022: In the Margins of the UNGA77
21 September 2022 | John Jay College of Criminal Justice, New York

SDGs Conference 2022: In the Margins of the UNGA77 was organized on 21 September 2022 at John Jay College in partnership with 36 Global Partners from 24 countries. This global platform convened 21 speakers from 15 countries, and hosted notable speakers including Ministers, UN Ambassadors, journalists, civil society leaders and academicians.

Throughout the day, in three panel sessions, high-level keynotes and expert speakers unfolded the contemporary challenges that the world leaders are also addressing at the United Nations Headquarters in New York and suggested innovative, inclusive and sustainable policy suggestions for the full, effective and

timely implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

As the SDGs Conference is back to hybrid mode, the Journalists and Writers Foundation welcomed delegations of participants from Australia, Greece, South Africa, India, Philippines, and Kenya to attend a series of side events in-person including the JWF High-Level Reception, Roundtable on Journalism and SDGs Conference. The conference live streamed was accessible both on Zoom and JWF's YouTube channel, which received over 19,000 views from 76 countries. The diversity of the SDGs Conference's audience and the regional representation of the panelists addressed one of the utmost important missions of this global event contributing to SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals.



PIONEERS in SDGs 2022 - AWARDS CEREMONY

The 4th Annual Pioneers in SDGs Awards Ceremony 2022 was held virtually on Wednesday, September 28, 2022. The Journalists and Writers Foundation and its 36 Global Partners celebrated the contributions of civil society organizations to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals during the 4th Annual Pioneers in SDGs Awards Ceremony. In 2022, we received 34 outstanding projects from 24 different countries. The international jury members evaluated these projects and their outcomes based on four criteria: innovation, stakeholders, scope, and impact. The winners were announced during the virtual Pioneers in SDGs Awards Ceremony on September 28, 2022.

The host of the Pioneers in SDGs Awards Ceremony 2022 was Dr. Rajendran Govender, a renowned social cohesion advocate, newspaper columnist, and Advisory Board Member to the JWF from South Africa. Dr. Govender underlined the role of civil society organizations in building sustainable peace and development. Nancy Falcon, an expert in interfaith and intercultural dialogue from Argentina, congratulated the project participants and award recipients for building peaceful and inclusive societies. Thomas Sideris, an investigative journalist, and award-winning documentary director from Greece, sent his special thanks to all project representatives and their organizations for their contributions to making this world a better place for all.



1ST PLACE WINNER 2022 – NONVIOLENCE NEWS
(USA)

2ND PLACE WINNER 2022 – SOCIAL TV PALESTINE – ISRAEL, Yafa TONGUE
(PALESTINE – ISRAEL)

3RD PLACE WINNER 2022 – MAKING THE WORLD BEAUTIFUL THROUGH FILM
(SOUTH KOREA)







OTHER AWARDS WINNERS IN DIFFERENT CATEGORIES:

INNOVATION AWARD WINNER 2022

Liberian Youth Foundation
Impact Youth
(Liberia)

STAKEHOLDERS AWARD WINNER 2022

The Smile of the Child
YouSmile European Student Volunteer Network of
the Smile of the Child
(Greece)

SCOPE AWARD WINNER 2022

Mtree Inc.
Fashion Meets Global Citizenship Education
(Kenya)

SCOPE AWARD WINNER 2022

IYC for Youth Ambassador
Peace and Stability in Schools
(Guinea)

IMPACT AWARD WINNER 2022

Ashkar Foundation
(India)

CHANGEMAKERS AWARD WINNER 2022

Summit Green Company
Waste to Wealth Enterprise
(Uganda)

CHANGEMAKERS AWARD WINNER 2022

Omaid Unique Supportive Organization
A Peaceful Mindset Leads a Peaceful Afghanistan
(Afghanistan)

CHANGEMAKERS AWARD WINNER 2022

The Institution of Green Engineers
I-Gen Energy99 Challenge
(India)



AFGHANISTAN



GREECE



GUINEA



INDIA



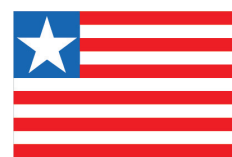
ISRAEL



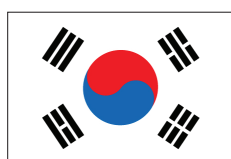
PALESTINE



KENYA



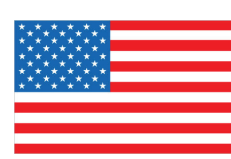
LIBERIA



SOUTH KOREA



UGANDA



UNITED STATES



SDGs CONFERENCE 2022

IN THE MARGINS OF THE UNGA77

SPEAKERS

OPENING SESSION

Opening Remarks

Mehmet Kilic, President, Journalists and Writers Foundation | USA

Welcome Remarks

Brian Kerr, Vice President for Enrollment Management and Student Affairs,
John Jay College of Criminal Justice | USA

Keynote Speakers

Mark Dalton, Senior Director, Digital Program Management Office, Digital Informatics
& Technology, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center | USA

Charlotta Schlyter, Ambassador, Head of Section for Sustainable Development,
Permanent Mission of Sweden to the UN | SWEDEN

PANEL SESSION 1: THE GLOBAL STATE OF PEACE AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Keynote Speaker

Saša Jurecko, Deputy Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Slovenia
to the UN | SLOVENIA

Moderator

Mondli Makhanya, Editor-In-Chief, City Press | SOUTH AFRICA

Panelists

Ovais Sultan Khan, Independent Human Rights Activist | INDIA

Diana de la Rua Eugenio, Answer for Peace, President | ARGENTINA

Henelito A. Sevilla, Jr., PhD, Dean and Professor, Asian Center, University of the
Philippines Diliman | PHILIPPINES

Vonya Womack, Executive Director, Refugees Unknown Stories Untold | USA

PANEL SESSION 2: GENDER BASED CRIMES IN CONFLICT ZONES

Keynote Speaker

H.E. Ms. Sophia Tesfamariam Yohannes, Ambassador, Permanent Mission of Eritrea
to the UN | ERITREA

H.E. Helen Clark, Former Prime Minister of New Zealand | NEW ZEALAND

Moderator

Michael Busch, Director of Public Programs, The Polis Project | USA



Panelists

Khalida Popal, Founder, Director, Girl Power Org | DENMARK

Carlos Pedro Mondlane, Mozambican Judges Association, Judge and President | MOZAMBIQUE

Ranjeni Munusamy, Head of Media Relations, GAPP: Government and Public Policy, | SOUTH AFRICA

Jelena Pia-Comella, Senior International Consultant | USA

PANEL SESSION 3: MIGRATION AND REFUGEE POLICIES - INTERGOVERNMENTAL RESPONSES TO RECENT DISPLACEMENTS

Keynote Speaker

H.E. Ms. Sofia Voultepsi, Member of the Greek Parliament, New Democracy, Deputy Minister of Migration and Asylum in charge of Integration (GREECE)

Moderator

Yuksel Durgut, Spokesperson, International Journalists Association (GERMANY)

Panelists

Marianna Kakaounaki, Documentary Producer, Journalist, eKathimerini (GREECE)

Dr. Graham Thom, Refugee Coordinator, Amnesty International Australia (AUSTRALIA)

Nicole Melaku, National Partnership for New Americans, Executive Director (USA)



CONCEPT NOTE

PANEL SESSION 1: THE GLOBAL STATE OF PEACE AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

While the world is transitioning into a post-COVID19 era, new uprisings of crimes against humanity, the takeover of undemocratic regimes, and regional armed conflicts are occurring. Our global community is experiencing an increasing degree of militarization, while the state of peace and harmony continues to decrease due to the ongoing humanitarian crisis across the world. In this setting of unprecedented events, the Institute for Economics and Peace's Global Peace Index recorded the ninth deterioration in peacefulness. In response to the current global state of peace and conflict, progressive policy actions must be embraced with a dedicated political will to end devastating tensions and resolve persecutions of all forms.

The cross-cutting relation between all the trends of sustainable development requires the existence of peace not only with the absence of armed conflicts. Positive Peace is associated with the institutions, structures, and social development trends in which all fundamental human rights are respected and promoted with a comprehensive approach regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, religion, and culture. To sustain this constructive social, political, and environmental momentum, and achieve sustainable peace, transformational civil society organizations continue to be important stakeholders. Due to their multidimensional structure, civil leaders, non-governmental organizations, and academic institutions endorse advanced levels of conflict resolution strategies, facilitate constructive dialogues among the Member States as well as local and regional communities to uphold universal human rights and sustainable development.

Establishing transitional justice is another international human rights mechanism which fosters peace and conflict resolution. It refers to the range of processes and mechanisms to facilitate society's response to the grave and systemic human rights violations to ensure accountability, serve justice, and achieve reconciliation. UN's approach to transitional justice "engages effective coordination and partnerships, addresses the root causes of the conflict and repressive rule, ensures to implement gender-sensitive actions, and encourages compliance with international norms and standards". Armed conflicts and regional tensions do not only destroy the peace and social harmony; but it has many other costs such as increasing hunger, restraining individuals' right to access high-quality nutrition and interrupting the development of resilient food systems across the world.

Panel Session 1: The Global State of Peace and Conflict Resolution will discuss:

- The role of civil society in establishing sustainable peace and security
- Wars and conflicts as a threat to sustainable development
- The transitional justice as a key component of conflict resolution
- The Responsibility to Protect norms for the sustainable peace and security



PANEL SESSION 2: GENDER BASED CRIMES IN CONFLICT ZONES

Conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) against women is accepted as a weapon of war by the international human rights community since the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court has addressed different forms of sexual violence as war crimes. Gender-based crimes are often used to humiliate individuals and tear apart communities. Under the widespread authoritarian regimes and armed conflicts, women and girls continue to be the main subjects of this grave atrocity. Impunity against the perpetrators of CRSV, ineffective preventative mechanisms, fear of stigma, and social exclusion remain among the most challenging barriers in combatting this systemic human rights violation.

The role of women journalists and human rights defenders becomes even more fundamental in documenting CRSV. They continue to be at the forefront to monitor, report and raise awareness of the grave women's rights violations under armed conflicts and undemocratic regimes. Revealing the truth and keeping the Member States accountable, women journalists, civil society leaders and peacebuilders are subjected to the increasing violence of all forms, including cyber-attacks, violence against women journalists, human rights defenders, and peacebuilders. Impunity against such crimes and the arrogance of undemocratic state powers further escalates the violence against women human rights defenders. Regardless of the censorship, arbitrary detentions, systemic defamation campaigns, legal harassment, and killings, women human rights advocates continue their dedicated efforts to promote peace and security.

System-wide advocacy planning, mobilization of resources, and disseminating guidelines on providing medical and mental assistance to the survivors are persistent critical working areas. There are several influential policy actions taken at different intergovernmental levels to end sexual violence and gender-based crimes during and in the wake of conflicts. Led by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Under-Secretary-General Pramila Patten, Stop Rape Now, the UN Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict, continues to mobilize a network of 21 UN entities with the mission to implement its Strategic Framework, which embraces a survivors-centered approach and provides different levels of supporting mechanisms to develop partnerships.

Panel Session 2: Gender-Based Crimes in Conflict Zones will discuss:

- Violations faced by women human rights defenders under authoritarian regimes
- Violence against women journalists in armed conflicts
- Progress of SDG 5.2: Elimination of all Forms of Violence Against Women and Girls
- Challenges of Reporting for Women Journalists: A Case from South Africa
- CRSV as a weapon of war under the International Criminal Court and Rome Statute



PANEL SESSION 3: MIGRATION AND REFUGEE POLICIES, INTERGOVERNMENTAL RESPONSES TO RECENT DISPLACEMENTS

Effective inclusive and gender-responsive inter-governmental responses to the challenges faced by migrants and refugees throughout the world are critical in realizing the promising motto of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: Leaving No One Behind. Internal Displacement Monitoring Center has recorded 59.1 million internally displaced people: 53.2 million affected by conflict and violence while 5.9 million were impacted by climate-related disasters. On the other hand, UNHCR documented the historically high levels of refugees in the first quarter of 2002: 26.6 million refugees who were enforced to leave their homeland due to persecution, war, or systemic human rights violations. Unfortunately, women, youth, and children continue to be hidden in the shadows and unfortunately invisible in the datasets.

The unprecedented increase of refugees enforced migrants and internally displaced individuals poses unique challenges to the full implementation of all the Sustainable Development Goals. Successful resettlement of millions of individuals and protecting their right to exercise fundamental human rights is a prerequisite for sustainable peace and security. New migration trends must be analyzed thoroughly to produce comprehensive policy actions as this cross-cutting development issue requires building partnerships at the national, regional, and global levels. Refugees face many obstacles to accessing quality health services not only in their resettlements but also during their risky journey to a safe country, which usually includes crossing borders by walking. With the increasing violence and excessive

state violations occurring on several frequently taken routes for refugees on European and Americas borders, women and children suffer disproportionately due to lacking health services.

The New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants which paved the way for the adoption of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration both calls for people-centered guiding principles and “respects the rule of law, due process and access to justice as fundamentals of migration governance.” Apart from the global tensions and armed conflicts, climate change continues to pose its unique challenges creating a humanitarian crisis and new waves of migration. 2022 marked the deadliest drought of decades in Africa as there are an estimated 15 million impacted by this environmental crisis in Kenya, Somalia, and Ethiopia. The interdependent factors of climate change and migration remain among the foremost priorities of the intergovernmental development agencies.

Panel Session 3: Migration and Refugee Policies will discuss:

- The cross-cutting issue of migration, refugees, and the SDGs
- Climate crisis inducing and waves of migration
- Conflict-related enforced migration
- International Organization for Migration's Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM)



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IN THE MARGINS OF THE UNGA77

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OPENING SESSION

OPENING REMARKS: Mehmet Kilic, President, Journalists and Writers Foundation | USA



Mehmet Kilic is the President of the Journalists and Writers Foundation, an international civil society organization dedicated to the culture of peace, human rights, and sustainable development. To raise awareness on the UN Sustainable Development Goals, he has mobilized civil society organizations across the globe by organizing international conferences, panel discussions, international trips, and youth projects. Mr. Kilic organized Ambassadors Series discussions hosting ambassadors and diplomats and he initiated the Young Peace Ambassadors Academy that offers free global studies programs for high school students to inspire young leaders and responsible global citizens. Mr. Kilic has a master's degree in Education from Mercy College and is a doctoral candidate at Walden University, pursuing his PhD in Global and Comparative Education.

As the President of the Journalists and Writers Foundation, I would like to welcome you all to the 7th Annual SDGs Conference 2022: In the Margins of the 77th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, by the Journalists and Writers Foundation, in collaboration with 36 Global partners from 24 countries. World Leaders and delegations from UN Member States are convening at the UN General Assembly to debate pressing issues to maintain peace and security worldwide through diplomatic channels at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

A Message for Unity and Global Partnerships

As the People of Our Planet, we have witnessed the widespread COVID-19 Pandemic; unfortunately, we lost hundreds of thousands of loved ones. We have gone through really hard times with economic, social, and environmental challenges. However, we managed to come out of these problems together as one united world.

We surely combat various challenges. However, we can make the best of it through working together! After all, no one can achieve anything alone! We must come together, we must meet one another, and we must act together! We should be grateful for what we have: the United Nations where world leaders, the private sector, academic institutions, experts, and civil society leaders get together to find solutions to global challenges. The partnership is key to solving global challenges and that's why we are gathered here in-person and online.

With the recent global crisis and humanitarian affairs, from conflicts to climate change, the 77th Session of the UN General Assembly where the world leaders are addressing so many critical agenda items in their remarks during the UNGA Debate. The UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres indicated that resolving these common challenges will require continued solidarity, which brings us all together at this platform, as diverse stakeholders of UN Member States, civil society leaders from different parts of the world, journalists, academicians, youth representatives, human rights experts to create a momentum for the better and full implementation of the SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals.



This is our 7th annual SDGs Conference with the motto of Transforming Our World, by taking advantage of coming back together in person with our Global Partners from 6 different countries. We have organized a series of side events in the margins of the UN General Assembly.

SDGs Conference is the signature event of the JWF, and we are honored to host all of our Global Partners from Australia, Greece, South Africa, Kenya, Philippines, and India for them to get together with the UN Diplomats, human rights community of New York for an exchange of networks, best practices, meeting the change makers, and connecting with high-level delegates.

Roundtable on Journalism

On September 20th, we had a Roundtable on Journalism and Press Freedom Violations, in partnership with John Jay College of Criminal Justice. Our distinguished journalists talked about Global Perspectives on Journalism, Trust in News, and Protecting Journalists from Press Freedom Violations. As you well know, access to information is critical for sustaining peace and development globally. Free, credible, independent media outlets play a crucial role in promoting and protecting fundamental human rights, freedom of expression, the rule of law, and democratic principles. Unfortunately, journalists face numerous threats, killings, arrests, and assaults worldwide. Sometimes they are called fake news, the enemy of the state, or demonized for their journalism activities. The journalists from Australia, Greece, India, South Africa, Turkey, and the USA spoke about press freedom violations against journalists at the local, national, and global levels. They also proposed some good policy recommendations to protect and empower journalists and media organizations.

Pioneers in SDGs Awards Ceremony

Finally, on Wednesday, September 28th, we will have the Pioneers in SDGs Award Ceremony, which pays tribute to outstanding organizations and individuals who contribute to sustainable peace and development at the local, national, and global levels. This year, we received 34 amazing projects implemented by outstanding CSOs from 20 countries and contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Our international jury is evaluating these projects based on three important criteria: innovation, stakeholders, scope, and impact. I want to invite you to join us at the Pioneers in SDGs Awards Ceremony, which will be held virtually on Wednesday, September 28, 2022.

John Jay College

I would like to give our Special Thanks to the Leadership at John Jay College of Criminal Justice for hosting the SDGs Conference 2022. John Jay College is an amazing university that provides university students with opportunities to meet with 35-40 international guests coming from Australia, Greece, India, South Africa, and Turkey. This is a great opportunity for students to meet, engage, and share their innovative ideas with renowned diplomats, journalists, academics, human rights experts, and civil society leaders who make a positive social change worldwide.

I would like to extend the JWF's special gratitude to Dr. Karol V. Mason, President of John Jay College of Criminal Justice, Dr. Brian A. Kerr, Vice President for Enrollment Management & Student Affairs, Dr. Diego R. Redondo, Director of Public Safety and Risk Management, and the amazing team who supported us with technical assistance and made everything accessible and easy for our guests and the students at John Jay College.

Global Partners

I would also like to thank our Global Partners for their support. We would not be able to organize the SDGs Conference for the last 7 years without their support.

- Affinity Intercultural Foundation – Australia
- Turquoise Harmony Foundation – South Africa
- Gefira Foundation – Greece
- Time to Help Relief Foundation – Greece
- Pacific Dialogue – Philippines
- Indialogue Foundation – India
- Light Group of Schools – Kenya



WELCOME REMARKS

Brian Kerr, Vice-President for Enrollment Management and Student Affairs, John Jay College | USA



Brian Kerr, Ed.D. is Vice President for Enrollment Management and Student Affairs at John Jay College of Criminal Justice. Dr. Kerr brings over 24 years of progressive administrative and leadership experience in higher education within both academic and student affairs/enrollment management. Prior to his current position, over the course of his 17-year career at Queensborough Community College, Dr. Kerr has achieved significant accomplishments/outcomes in his roles as Dean for Student Development. His educational credentials include a Doctorate in Educational Administration from St. John's University, a master's degree in Human Resource Management from the State University of New York at Stony Brook, and a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology from the State University of New York at Albany.

On behalf of the President of the John Jay College, Karol V. Mason, and the senior administrative team at the college, I would like to address the global audience of the SDGs Conference 2022. It is my distinguished pleasure to welcome you to the SDGs Conference 2022: Transforming our World. I would like to thank our distinguished guests, panelists, sponsors, and all our online viewers for participating at this global event.

I would like to thank the Journalists and Writers Foundation for coordinating this important event and I would like to give special thanks to the President of the JWF, Mehmet Kilic, and US Director, Cemre Ulker. In April, my colleague Diego Redondo and I attended a Ramadan event sponsored by the JWF at an exceptionally good Turkish restaurant on the upper east side. The evening started with a great conversation with a diverse group of individuals, followed by an educational video and discussion on the significance of breaking the fast and what it means to be Muslim. I was intrigued by the JWF leadership and immediately thought of my students at the college. Perhaps there could be an opportunity to have Mehmet Kilic come to the college to speak with some of our students. Fortunately, in months later a fortuitous gift of Mehmet Kilic reaching out to discuss the possibility of hosting a conference at the John Jay College. We were honored.

At John Jay, we are fierce advocates for justice. There is a justice lens in everything we do. When you look at the 17 SDGs, you can equate many comparisons to the work we do at John Jay. We strive to make the world a better place by providing our students with a world-class education and the tools to think compassionately, practice global citizenry, celebrate diversity and difference, and stand up for injustice. I would like to thank you all for attending the SDGs Conference 2022, and I hope you engage in productive dialogues throughout the conference.



Keynote: The Importance of Right to Access Information and Communication Technologies for Sustainable Development



Mark Dalton, Senior Director, Digital Program Management Office, Digital Informatics & Technology, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center (MSKCC) | USA

Mark Dalton's experience combines international development, technology, and healthcare on a global scale. He joins MSK from the United Nations, where he served in numerous roles dating back to 1998, primarily with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), and more recently with the UN's main technology team and the UN's Department of Peacekeeping Operations, where he led on the implementation of its new digital transformation strategy. Prior to joining the UN, Mark was the co-founder and operations director of an international medical relief organization, MERLIN, that became a household name in the United Kingdom before merging with SAVE-UK in 2013.

Your excellencies, colleagues, and friends; it is my honor to address the SDGs Conference 2022 on behalf of Ms. Atefeh Riazi, Chief Information Officer of MSKCC. The conference has an important agenda to discuss and deliberate on timely issues as global peace, crimes in conflict zones, the role of women, and migration, which are challenging issues that have yet to be addressed and resolved. We have come a long way with the Sustainable Development Goals, achieved many commitments and progress made to those goals by various Member States, NGOs, private sector entities, and the United Nations. Still, we have more work to do and there are so many critical social issues to tackle.

I am a true believer that technology can be a facilitator to implement all the Sustainable Development Goals. We witnessed very clearly how the world mobilized after COVID-19 to benefit from technology and partnership and make leapfrogs in the space of offering remote education, healthcare, commerce, modernizing government policies and creating a new workplace of the future. We realized that if we come together as the civil society, public and private sector, we can address complex social issues and we can achieve them faster overcoming various obstacles.

Technology does not come without risk and unintended consequences. Innovating responsibly requires a sophistication of not only technology but political, social, and economic issues and an understanding long term impact and causality. As innovators, we have great sophistication in technology but less engaging in understanding its long-term impact. For that reason, forums, and conferences such as SDGs Conference, are critical to help deliberate and discuss programs and innovations, whilst thinking through policies, impacts, and consequences.

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There is no need to stress that we are in the middle of an unprecedented digital revolution, which impacts all aspects of our lives, society, and global economy. The world we live is becoming more connected and interconnected through mobile devices, cloud technologies, artificial intelligence, and IoTs. We are now able to redesign processes, systems, and services at unprecedented scale and speed, and at a greatly reduced cost.

Digital technologies enable us to reimagine entirely new business models, and this is transforming all aspects of our lives already; how we shop, how we use social media, how we use mobile devices to access public or consumer services, how we inform ourselves and access know-how. These technologies will play a defining role in our collective ability to achieve Sustainable Development Goals.

As the world becomes increasingly connected, Information Communications and Technology (ICT) solutions present us with the opportunity to leap forward. There are many examples to choose from, but I would like to underline two main working areas:

Health Care

The COVID-19 pandemic threatens decades of progress in advancing global health. It has infected over 600 million people, led to over 6 million deaths according to the World Health Organization. It continues to disrupt health services for people across the globe, impacting essential care and our collective ability to deliver on a range of other health care outcomes. The pandemic is a sobering reminder of how frail and interconnected our lives are across the planet.

At the same time, the pandemic spurred unprecedented vaccine development and delivery in record time. It also accelerated the adoption of new innovative digital approaches, such as telemedicine, to provide reliable and effective remote care and access to expert advice. This is one of the positive effects of the pandemic. Almost overnight, doctors and nurses were consulting with their patients over video. Many healthcare organizations, including my own, designed and introduced new telehealth services out of necessity during the pandemic.

Delivering telehealth services is about the transfer of know-how to improve patient outcomes and help to address the global inequality in access to health care, including more specialized care.

Delivering telehealth services is about the transfer of expertise and know-how to improve patient outcomes and help to address the global inequality in access to health care, including more specialized care, such as cancer prevention and treatment. There is a clear potential to scale these digital services (diagnostic, advisory secondary referrals, treatment coordination) to new communities. In the coming years, I expect we will see telehealth services expand across nations and globally, disrupting many of the current health systems in place, and potentially some humanitarian and development aid.

Education

As we know, the pandemic also enforced students to learn remotely. While we would likely agree that the



sudden, unplanned move to online education was not ideal, to say the least for many students, it provided our global community an insight into what can be done, if well-designed and well-prepared.

We have the ability now to deliver formal education and less formal insights and learning at a scale and velocity that is unprecedented. Imagine you are a teacher or lecturer at a university in New York or anywhere else across the globe. In the past, one may have taught up to 400 students each year. In the future, through remote and recorded sessions, one might reach 400,000 a year, or perhaps more. It is important to note that language differences will not be an obstacle very soon too. Due to advances in artificial intelligence, high-quality simultaneous translation for many of the world's languages will be commonplace. It can be assumed that we will easily transcend the language barriers. Whether that helps our global community to better understand one another remains to be seen.

Telehealth and Tele-education are among the various examples of how it is seen that access to health and education expand globally and disrupt our current systems. It is perhaps no surprise that healthcare institutions and universities are rapidly innovating in this space, or at least they should be if they want to remain relevant in the future. The main takeaway is that ICT enables delivery at an exponential scale and a greatly reduced cost, with powerful positive impacts globally in support of the SDGs.

Risks

However, technology is a double-edged sword. There are many risks varying from cybercrime, identity theft, rampant mis/disinformation in social media to challenges of data privacy and protection. Stakeholders in peace and conflict resolution are aware of the risks of using mobile phones in active conflict zones. They provide essential communication, but mobile devices can also be targeted by belligerents.

Conflicts are also fought on social media and in cyberspace. Social media can misinform and incite violence. We have seen social media posts inform targeting by belligerents and mobile devices may provide solutions, access to vital information and services but they can also carry risks of trafficking, and exploitation for refugees and migrants. What is the way forward? How do we navigate this shifting landscape? How do we harness the benefits of digital technologies and limit the downsides?

From my perspective, we should keep 3 points uppermost in our minds today:

- Expect dramatic change in current models and systems to be disrupted by new ICT capabilities and solutions.
- Seek out opportunities to accelerate progress on the SDGs, consider where ICT solutions can help most.
- Question which are the actors that need to collaborate to achieve these advancements. ICT solutions alone cannot solve the world's challenges. They need to be harnessed for the common good. And no single organization can do this alone.

The future is about collaboration; so, we must continue to initiate partnerships with the actors that need to come together to provide the social objectives and collaborate with the experts to design and deliver digital solutions at scale, safely, and securely. We must ensure to establish innovative partnerships across sectors and industries that may have not historically worked together.



Keynote: Progress of SDG17: Partnerships for the Goals in the Light of “Our Common Agenda”

Charlotta Schlyter, Ambassador and Head of Section for Sustainable Development, Permanent Mission of Sweden to the UN | SWEDEN



Charlotta Schlyter is Ambassador for Sustainable Development at the Mission of Sweden to the United Nations in New York since 1 September 2020. From 2017 to 2020, she was Ambassador of Sweden to Bangladesh. Ambassador Schlyter joined the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs in 1997. Her earlier postings abroad include the Embassy in New Delhi, India, the Permanent Mission of Sweden to the United Nations in New York and the Embassy in Bangkok, Thailand. In addition, Ambassador Schlyter has worked for the European Union Delegation to the United Nations in New York, for the UNHCR in Ankara, Turkey, and for the ILO in Geneva, Switzerland and in New Delhi, India. Charlotta Schlyter holds Master of Laws (LL.M) degrees from Uppsala University, Sweden and from the University of Toronto, Canada.

It is a pleasure to address the SDGs Conference 2022: In the Margins of the UNGA77 about the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development and share the best practices of Sweden in the context of our implementation of the sustainable development goals. The sustainable development goals must be seen as a whole. There can be no cherry-picking of the goals if we want to reach them since SDGs relate to fighting, poverty, hunger, climate and environment, biodiversity energy, gender equality, peace, and human rights. None of this framework can be addressed in isolation. However, Goal 17 has a particular role as it addresses the question of how we do all this, and the answer relies upon various forms of partnership.

It can be a partnership between the Member States of the UN through development corporations and the transfer of technology or be partnerships within the Member States through all stakeholders such as civil society, the private sector, trade unions, indigenous people, and young people. Collaborations can be between all these sectors across borders as well. As we are halfway through the deadline of 2030, we should ask ourselves how we are doing when it comes to Agenda 2030. If we are working in partnerships, as we are all committed to fostering mobilization, this question is urgent. There is no shortage of challenges and we have been losing ground when it comes to Agenda 2030 in some countries more than others.

We are at the tail end of a worldwide pandemic. We are not out of it but starting to see the end of this health crisis or at least a stage where we will have to find ways of coexisting with the COVID-19-related challenges. We are also facing additional obstacles; a climate crisis, a planetary problem, which is showing its face more than before through fire, floods, and drought. We are running out of time and no country is doing enough at the moment. We are also at the point in time where a European country, Ukraine, has been invaded by a much larger nation, Russia, and is fighting for its existence. Apart from the horrors of this aggression, it has made worse an already difficult situation when it comes to food insufficiency in several parts of the world. Many countries have had setbacks when it comes to rising costs, inflation, and national debt. When it comes to the SDG indicators, we need multilateralism more than ever, which means we need the United Nations more than ever.

At this turning point, the partnership is the key because what we need is a more inclusive United Nations, where voices from young people and civil society are heard more than ever. We need to hear the critical voices, the voices that demand more of us, and see through our excuses for not doing more important decisions to be taken not with shortsightedness, but with the perspective of the future generations in mind. Last year, the UN's Secretary-General issued a critical report,



our common agenda. It is not targeted to be a replacement for Agenda 2030; instead, it is to be seen as an accelerator for the implementation of the SDGs by focusing on a more inclusive approach. We should not that there has been promising progress. Last week, the UN General Assembly decided to establish a youth office of the UN. Negotiations are underway on a declaration for future generations, and preparations have also started for a summit of the “Future”, and such a summit must be inclusive of different stakeholders. We must take the opportunity of this summit to make the UN more inclusive.

This does not mean that Member States will engage less with each other; instead, countries from all over the world will always be at the center of the UN. However, this is not enough, and it does not even reflect how we do things back in our respective countries. At the country level, development works most efficiently when a myriad of stakeholders works together. No one can make a green transition without the private sector. No one can strengthen gender equality or protect human rights without a strong collaboration with civil society. Indigenous people need a voice in the countries where they live. Facilitating such mutually beneficial partnerships best at the country level should be a priority for the UN.

Sweden presented its Voluntary National Report in 2021 and it was the second time we reported the process we achieved was partnership driven. There were stakeholder platforms within the private sector, civil society, research communities, and municipalities among others. We also took an advantage of the peer review process working with Columbia and with Finland, comparing different best practices. There were also some VNRs for individual cities in Sweden, also working with cities elsewhere. Human rights and gender equality were at the center of the process and climate and environment, also cross the front and center of this agenda. Some challenges identified come from income disparities, persons with disabilities, the status of newly arrived immigrants, young persons, and gender quality disparities. It is all about not leaving anybody behind. Still, there are certainly many actions

There are many actions to take. One conclusion was that SDGs cannot come from above, but they must be present in all local, regional and national government processes. Therefore, training and information are the keys.

to take. One conclusion was that SDGs cannot come from above, but they must be present in all local, regional and national government processes. Therefore, training and information are the keys.

When it comes to our work internationally, our primary focus is on development corporations and humanitarian aid, for which Sweden is a major donor since 2016. Sweden devotes 1% of our GNI to International Development Corporation and Humanitarian Aid. The Swedish International Development Agency SEED is a key factor in working

worldwide with these issues. SEED also supports and coordinates some work with Swedish government agencies where they can work on advisory functions. For example, the Swedish taxation authorities support the know-how agencies corresponding in other countries in the South. The same applies to the Statistics agency, the patent agency, etc. Sweden is also an active member of the European Union. We have taken many initiatives in the arena of the UN. We are great believers in the UN and the collaboration we can have there.

We initiated, together with Fiji, the first Oceans Conference a few years back. This year, we hosted with Kenya an international human meeting in Stockholm on the environment. This conference marked 50 years since the first Human Environment Conference in 1972. It had strong youth and civil society participation which proved to be very important for inclusion. Youth participants, in fact, greatly pushed member states to make stronger pledges than they might have otherwise made. We need to stick with our common agenda to make it the UN we want and need a more inclusive one.

I would like to end my address by quoting the UN Secretary-General's report: he said, “We must now come together to save succeeding generations from war, climate change, pandemics, hunger, poverty, injustice, and a host of risks that we may not yet foresee entirely. This is our common agenda”.



PANEL SESSION 1: THE GLOBAL STATE OF PEACE AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Keynote Remarks: The Responsibility to Protect for the Sustainable Peace and Security

Saša Jurečko, Deputy Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Slovenia to the UN | SLOVENIA



Saša Jurečko joined the Permanent Mission of Slovenia to the United Nations as Deputy Permanent Representative on 14 September 2020. Before her current post, she was an advisor to the Director-General for Multilateral Affairs and Development Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs. She also served at the UN General Assembly Second Committee and was head of advisors to the Chair of the Second Committee during the 70th Session of the UN General Assembly. Saša Jurečko joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia in 2007 after obtaining a University Degree in Political Science at the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Social Sciences.

The 77th Session of the UN General Assembly is particularly important since it takes place after two years of pandemic restrictions as in-person meetings. I am addressing today's audience from the point of view of a small and peaceful country. In fact, according to the Global Peace Index, Slovenia is the 7th most peaceful country in the world. Slovenia also ranks 15th on the SDG index, which indicates our progress in the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals.

This goes hand in hand with our strong commitment to multilateralism and international law, which for small states like Slovenia, are the key guarantors of peace and security. I would like to highlight the main aspects that enable and strengthen conflict prevention and resolution from the point of view of Slovenia. First, respect for human rights to maintain peace and security as it is necessary that the human rights of all, including the most vulnerable groups, are respected, protected, and enforced. Human rights apply to everyone, everywhere. When they are grossly violated, this can lead to the emergence of conflicts and also serve as a possible first indicator of potential atrocities taking place. While the protection of civilians is the primary responsibility of every State. The principle of the responsibility to protect relies on the systems of alerts and early warnings when mass violations of human rights occur, which serves as an important tool for conflict prevention.

Slovenia has been a strong supporter of the Responsibility to Protect (RTP) principle since its inception in 2005. Especially due to our historical experience with the conflicts and atrocities committed in our neighborhood, we should strive for finding effective avenues for the application of the RTP principles. Since its goal is to protect societies from atrocity crimes, when it comes to conflict resolution, prevention of conflicts, and building sustainable peace inclusivity of the processes is essential. Women and representatives of all affected groups, including minorities, and the human rights of youth are often violated, most severely in situations leading up to and during conflict absolutely should be included in these processes. Women constitute about half of the global population and are a strong driving force for peace. As the agents of change their equal, meaningful, and effective participation enables addressing the root causes of conflict and ensuring sustainable peace and accountability for crimes committed. Slovenia, therefore, integrates the support for and promotion of the Women, Peace and Security, and Youth, Peace of Security Agendas in all its activities.

The protection of civilians and vulnerable populations is also closely linked to the issue of the protection of the environment. We all need a viable environment that allows us to survive and enables us a certain quality of life. Slovenia has therefore been a part of the core group leading the process for universal recognition of the right to a



clean, healthy, and sustainable environment as a human right. The triple planetary crisis of climate change, nature and biodiversity loss, and pollution and waste are threatening the environment and thereby human future. The resolution on the right to a healthy environment adopted by the General Assembly in July of this year is an important step in encountering the trend. Degradation of the environment, and especially access to water is one of the threats that can lead to conflict. Working on this issue now is a preventative step for peace and security in the future. This element is also very closely connected to the second aspect of conflict prevention.

I would also like to address sustainable development along with the respect for human rights just mentioned. Eradication of poverty and sustainable development serve as building blocks for peaceful and resilient societies. The world is currently facing crisis after crisis that is deeply impacting and even erasing progress made on the implementation of the agenda 2030 for sustainable development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that were negotiated and adopted by all the UN Member States as a blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet. The COVID-19 Pandemic has exposed many vulnerabilities in all states even more severely in developing countries and slowed or reversed many of the gains made in the last 10 years toward implementing the SDGs.

Furthermore, the challenges of global food insecurity and rising energy prices have been made even worse by the effects of the Russian aggression against Ukraine, demonstrating and exposing the interdependence of the world. The consequences of this conflict are felt all over the world, but most severely in developing countries that have been counting on food exports from both Russia and Ukraine to mitigate the rising food insecurity due to other crises. Most prominently, the effects and impacts of climate change and environmental degradation are clearer and more widespread than ever. They act as a risk multiplier. The consequence is an increase in climate-related risks to human security, development,

violent conflicts, and peace-building efforts. The third element is an essential tool to address this crisis, which is multilateralism. In a world that is as diverse as ours, dialogue is one of the most important tools we must, foster, understanding, acceptance, and cooperation and is the only path to effectively addressing challenges that require collective actions.

Contemporary challenges dictate the need for a strong rule-based and inclusive multilateral system with the United Nations at its core. The UN is the only universal forum where States can have meaningful exchanges and address global challenges varying from pandemics, climate change, water scarcity, biodiversity loss, and food insecurity to conflict-armed aggression and other serious breaches of international law, including the UN charter. The UN has its successes, but also some challenges. The organization arose from the ashes of the Second World War to prevent further wars, and the fact is that there has not been a worldwide armed conflict during the lifetime of the UN. However, the sheer number of more limited-scale conflicts in crisis is rising at an alarming rate. I believe that multilateralism is and will remain indispensable despite requiring reform, which also includes United Nations Security Council.

In the meantime, the UN system does continue to deliver on its important tasks, which crucially include providing urgent humanitarian assistance to populations in need, whether it is due to natural or manmade disasters, including conflict. While speaking about global conflict resolution, we need to mention the UN Security Council, the body holding the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, regardless of its challenges, remains the key pillar of international peace and security. It provides a standing forum where Member States can address pressing issues of peace and security and it is a forum to which Slovenia was proud to contribute during our membership in 1998 - 1999, and we aspire to take on this important and responsible role again in 2024 and 2025.



Moderator: Opening Remarks

Mondli Makhanya, Editor-In-Chief, City Press | SOUTH AFRICA

Mondli Makhanya is the Editor-in-Chief of City Press. He has been in the media industry for more than 26 years. He is one of South Africa's most respected editors and an influential columnist. Mr. Makhanya began his career at the Weekly Mail where he covered the transition to democracy and reported on business and economic debates. During this time, he also served a stint at Newsweek magazine in New York. After the Weekly Mail, he worked for The Star as political writer and later as Deputy News Editor and Executive Editor. Makhanya has served as Editor of the Mail and Guardian, Editor-in-Chief of the Sunday Times, and Editor-in-Chief of the Times Media Group. Makhanya has also served as Chairperson of the South African National Editors Forum and as Treasurer of The African Editors' Forum.

What unites us is that we all want a better world. The reason why we have Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is because of the long struggle for justice and peace and the improvement of the lives of humanity across the world. We usually think of conflict as people with guns harming each other. What is important is that we should think about conflict and peace in different ways.

There are various people who lived tirelessly work towards and civilized the concept of peace and justice. One of them would be Martin Luther King who defined peace as not just an absence of conflict, but it is the presence of justice. The other person who comes from the same country that I come from, South Africa is Mandela, who said that peace is the presence of opportunities for people to flourish and the creation of an environment for people to advance. One another person who stood up, and symbolized peace is Gandhi, who emphasized that peace does not only occur out of ending conflicts but indeed by the creating of justice by unarmed people.

We need to see peace in a much broader way. SDGs provide us with a framework to measure what peace and justice are. They give humanity the ability to measure progress toward real justice. As you know, SDGs were signed and committed by most nations which was the beginning of progress, but it did not move at the planned speed. We are aiming for a transformed world by 2030 but today we see ourselves behind the schedule.

Considering the latest updates on the implementation phase by the United Nations, we actually see our world going backward. United Nations indicated that one of the primary reasons for this setback was the Pandemic and conflicts going on in Ukraine, which indeed diverted attention and investment from human development. However, there is a chance now in 2022 for all of us to recommence and facilitate the upcoming years to achieve progress toward the full implementation.

When we talk about the actual conflict and displacements, it is sad to say that today in 2022, there are 27 different armed conflicts taking place around the world. These range from small conflicts to a major crisis. Out of those major



conflicts, 6 of them have taken up to 10,000 lives, and the rest cost people to lose their beloved ones and their right to live. This year, we have the war in Ukraine in the focus, all our attention is on that particular conflict, which is taking away all the attention from the rest of the crisis. But nonetheless, conflicts are affecting millions and millions of people. Today there are 100 million people around the world who are living in displaced settings, who are living lives which is not acceptable.

All these grave situations are telling us that we are moving in backward. We should be focusing as much on those conflicts as we should be on the rest of the humanities issues. In the context of displacement, we have seen the growth of migrants being ill-treated, which is a part of the conflict in the absence of peace and justice. We have seen a reversal of democracy around the world. We have seen people deprived of their fundamental human rights and most countries in oppressed government settings. We should mobilize and initiate partnerships to end these crises. We must all keep in mind the important question of how we facilitate and benefit from partnerships to achieve justice and achieve an environment where there is an establishment of opportunities for all of us.

Panelist 1: The Role of Civil Society in Establishing Sustainable Peace and Security

Ovais Sultan Khan, Independent Human Rights Activist | INDIA

Ovais Sultan Khan is an independent human rights activist. He is also a consultant in policy and research. Mr. Khan has worked independently and with several national and international institutions, think-tanks, government-bodies and civil society on politics, knowledge, wisdom, alternatives, democratic governance, religious minorities, gender, religion, tradition, and culture for more than a decade. In 2017, Mr. Khan was appointed as an advisor of the Delhi Minorities Commission, quasi-judicial body under the Government of Delhi. Previously, he was on the board of Act Now for Harmony and Democracy, a socio-cultural organization from 2016-2018. Ovais Sultan Khan also had the privilege of working with the South Asian Dialogues on Ecological Democracy at the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies as its Programme Secretary. Currently, he is the trustee with the Future Council, which is a Delhi-based think tank, advocating human rights, justice, democracy, non-violence and well-being. He is also advisor on human rights and Islamophobia at Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind, which is the oldest and largest organization of Indian Muslims.



We all know that civil society plays a crucial role in contributing to peace and security. Depending on the situation in different parts of the world civil society functions according to its capacities and stage of enlightenment. This has been happening in the past, is happening now, and will continue to do so in the future. This is engraved in the nature of any society. Civil society's contribution has many aspects, directions, and dimensions. So much is being done by it. However, there is a need to positively acknowledge that despite all these efforts a lot more needs to be done.

We need to admit that the world has never been as closely networked and connected as it is today. There has never been so much information (perhaps even disinformation) about each other as we have today. It is a fact that no one will deny that the amount of talk and effort that is being done for peace and security in every sense today has not happened before. But this new awakening and enlightenment have not helped us fast enough on the path toward peace. These days, there is so much noise about peace everywhere, that we fail to listen to the saner voices. More efforts are being made for peace,



unfortunately, the faster we are falling into a deep well of violence, unrest, and injustice. There is a deepening conflict and tension in every kind and magnitude of relationship today. Violence, fear, hatred, bigotry, and insecurity are increasing rapidly everywhere between individuals, groups, communities, and nation-states.

All this is giving rise to many other challenges, out of which some of the major problems are emerging in the form of the refugee issue and food shortage. Climate change, rising authoritarian political populism, and other issues have also increased the problems manifold. We all are caught in different conflict nets. We, humans, are in conflict with each other in our personal lives. We are in conflict with nature. Every family and neighborhood in some way or another faces some conflict. We can find conflicts at most of our workplaces, and educational institutions. States and nations level conflicts are crossing all existing thresholds. Nobody is untouched.

The peace we desired to achieve in this world has gone further far away. We might have to stop for a while to take into account, think, analyze and understand. I think this is very much needed. We will know that there are many ways to find solutions to all these complex questions and challenges of peace and security. Civil society has many important roles to play. Among all these works, one work has been pending for a long time, and it is needed the most today. That is the search for a vocabulary of sustainable peace. The vocabulary, signs, and symbols used in our peace discourses and efforts are

A vocabulary that is absolutely non-violent.

A vocabulary that is free from fear, bigotry, and hatred.

A vocabulary that is free from jingoism, divisions, and dehumanization.

A vocabulary that is free from racism.

A vocabulary that is free from discrimination and exclusion.

A vocabulary that is free from patriarchy and misogyny.

A vocabulary that is free from humiliation.

A vocabulary that is free from exploitation.

A vocabulary that is free from injustice.

A vocabulary that is free from the idea of revenge.

A vocabulary that teaches us how to rise above greed.

A vocabulary of compassion and solidarity.

A vocabulary of respect, acceptance, and mutual understanding.

A vocabulary of equality and equity.

A vocabulary of harmony and transformation.

A vocabulary of diversity and plurality.

A vocabulary of inclusion and enabling.

Yes, enabling!

Such a vocabulary will effectively bring us on the path of everyone's happiness and universal upliftment.

mostly borrowed. They are not related to the concept of peace wholeheartedly, so they are not even helpful in establishing peace most of the time.

Even all of us must have experienced that sometimes the actions and words of the peace advocates, diplomats, intellectuals, and activists who oppose the war are very jingoist. Sometimes it also happens that when activists raise their voices against any injustice and oppression, they talk of taking revenge instead of justice. There are many such examples, which if we start remembering, then a long list will become. Unfortunately, we see peace only in the context of conflict. Our responses, reflections, and reactions to conflicts are mostly

considered efforts for peace. As if peace is a non-entity without a conflict. Peace is not the absence of conflict. It is much deeper and beyond.

We have to accept that there can be no place for enmity, division, violence, revenge, and dehumanization in our peace. There have been many attempts. Some efforts are still going on. However, much remains to be done. Still, peace does not have a vocabulary of its own.

We don't have to do anything new. Rather, we have to find vocabulary, signs, and symbols of these human values and concerns buried somewhere in our civilizations, cultures, beliefs, and practices. And they have to be tied together like different pearls in a garland for world peace and security.



Panelist 2: Negotiation and Mediation as a Key Component of Conflict Resolution

Diana de la Rúa Eugenio, President, Answer for Peace | ARGENTINA



Diana de la Rúa Eugenio is the President of Answer for Peace and the former Secretary General of the Latin American Peace Research Association. She is full professor of Negotiation at a Postgraduate at the Universidad Nacional Tres de Febrero. Diana de la Rúa Eugenio is also a part-time, multi-party community mediator at the Buenos Aires Ombudsman's Office. She has been a Board Member of the International Peace Research Association Foundation since 2006. Diana co-founded the Commissions "First Nation" and "Peace and Citizenship" for the Civil Society Advisory Council within the National Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Argentina. She has

studied negotiation, mediation and conflict resolution at the University of Buenos Aires, Harvard Law School, FLASCO, Transcend (Galtung) and various other Argentinean institutions.

The world is constantly facing new challenges and we need to address them in the best possible way. We think that because we communicate, we could easily resolve our conflicts. That is far from true. The communication that allows us to resolve our conflicts implies a commitment to understanding others, their needs, and expectations, which requires efficient mechanisms of interaction between persons and at the same time, that they can be replicable in all scenarios.

There are many people who know several languages but there is only one fundamental language to resolve conflicts and that language is "coherence": the consistency of thinking, speaking, and acting in an aligned way to be reliable and responsible, to be credible. Within this logic of coherence, all efforts to resolve conflict situations of different levels of complexity will be more productive.

We focus on Negotiation and Mediation as fundamental tools and skills to achieve the desired objectives, in a harmonious and proactive way where the responsibility for reaching agreements remains on the people who have the conflict, and that requires a communication dynamic that empowers people, helps clarify ideas and promotes direct participation of those affected, who can transfer these dynamics to other aspects of their lives projecting them to generate new community behaviors and to strengthen social structures.

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Communication that allows us to resolve our conflicts implies a commitment to understanding others, their needs, and expectations

Negotiation

Negotiation seeks an agreement with others. It has been practiced since ancient times, and although it is usually associated with trade, it is used in all kinds of exchange situations: projects, ideas, end of partnerships, and desires; although they may seem very divergent, the most important issue is the will to reach an agreement.



Mediation

Mediation is a voluntary and peaceful process of conflict resolution in which a neutral third party without decision-making power, the mediator, collaborates with those involved in a dispute so that they seek and reach an agreement that satisfies them, through positive communication. It occurs when for different reasons, people could not reach an agreement through negotiation.

Conflict Resolution

The peaceful resolution of conflicts has allowed the survival of humankind, legitimized claims, brought the parties closer together, generated, and restored dialogue channels. The third parties, mediators, acted as advisers in the management of the conflict and, eventually, in the conflict itself, showing a better way of resolving conflicts non-violently. Over time, other more complex and bureaucratic modalities emerged, such as judicial systems, but mediation, in any field, never ceased to be important.

Conflictand Violence

Both terms are often mixed up, but they must be differentiated because conflict is an inherent part of life itself and violence is not, it is learned. The problem is not the conflict itself but the violence that can be related to it. Given this, is it pertinent to ask: why does the conflict arise? what are the main aspects? What effects does it generate? What is the previous relationship between the litigants without forgetting the context in which the conflict takes place? Violence (according to the World Health Organization) is the intentional use of physical force or power or threat against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that causes or has a high probability of causing injury, death, psychological damage, or deprivation.

It is important to analyze and understand the concept of violence in order to prevent it. The specialist Johan Galtung introduced the concept of the triangle of violence that represents its dynamics and functioning: 1) direct violence is the most visible due to the behavior of people, 2) structural violence focuses on the set of social and bureaucratic structures that prevent the satisfaction of basic needs and 3) the cultural violence

which legitimizes and naturalizes the structural violence and if it is not recognized, will be retransmitted from generation to generation. Lester Kurtz focuses on environmental violence and Jean Charles Bouchoux on invisible violence, which is very difficult to detect and therefore increasingly widespread: for example, subtle contempt, passivity in situations that would require our action (in cases of bullying), emotional blackmail, manipulation, permanent criticism, immediate loss of patience, constant complaints, etc. The goal of violence is control and power. It has a social component; it is learned and becomes visible when someone dominates, and someone is dominated.

Communication

Communication comes from the Latin word “communicare” (sharing information, imparting, disseminating), and this from “communis” (common, mutual, participated among several). Therefore, communication is the conscious action of exchanging information between two or more participants in order to transmit or receive different information or opinions. The key point is that we need to listen carefully to what the other is saying and understand the context. When someone communicates negatively with us, we tend to 1) blame ourselves, 2) blame the other person, 3) become aware of our own feelings and needs, and 4) realize the feelings and needs to be hidden in the negative message of others.

Non-Violent Communication

Marshall Rosenberg asks if, in the world we live in, we listen to each other and express ourselves correctly. To respond to these concerns, he proposes four axes that we need in order to have non-violent communications: 1) being able to observe and describe a situation without judging it, 2) being able to identify and express our feelings, 3) being able to recognize our needs and 4) being able to express what we want to achieve with clarity and assertiveness. This format promotes harmony and the development of productive dialogues on any subject: both on issues of national and international security or on human rights, from climate change to HIV/AIDS, from economic development to water resource management, etc., and stakeholders that may include governments, political parties, traditional leaders, and ordinary citizens.



Conflict Resolution and Community Building

According to Johan Galtung: “We have peace when a community has its basic needs satisfied and resolves its conflicts peacefully”, which encourages us to work on building and strengthening the social ties that are needed to grow productively, proactively, and in solidarity, generating an inclusive society with which we all benefit.

Communities are built step by step, they are based on mutual trust where a culture of encounter, dialogue, and agreement is generated. They are not achieved by technical decree, nor are they configured immediately, nor do they grow if there are inequities. In healthy communities, the generation of trust between neighbors is promoted, self-esteem and empowerment are stimulated with the use of assertive and non-violent communication, different opinions and multi-ideologies are valued and respected to manage their conflicts peacefully, address the authorities efficiently, generate community development projects, decide by consensus, and take responsibility for the decisions that are made.

When we talk about negotiation and mediation as key components for conflict resolution, it is because we have seen how people have developed the skills to express themselves about their conflicts, their feelings, and hope for their future. Therefore, they become independent citizens, moving away from the patriarchy, and making their own destinies. Freedom is linked to responsibility and commitment, which leads to a new governance system, dignifying empowered citizens to face the situations that life throws at them. To know how to resolve their conflicts through negotiation or with a mediator, societies are strengthened, show solidarity with each other, and become more democratic and trustworthy, which leads to sustained and equitable social development, which ultimately is the desire of the vast majority of people around the world.

Panelist 3: Wars and Conflicts as a Threat to Sustainable Development

Henelito A. Sevilla, Jr., PhD, Dean and Professor, Asian Center, University of the Philippines Diliman | PHILIPPINES

Henelito A. Sevilla, Jr. is the Dean of the University of the Philippines Asian Center and Professor of Asian and Philippine Studies where he also serves as its West Asia Studies Coordinator since 2008. Dr. Sevilla, Jr. earned his PhD in International Relations at the Faculty of Law and Political Science, University of Tehran, Iran where he specialized foreign policy, political economy, resource competition, Filipino migration, and Muslim concerns in the global south. He has researched and published numerous articles in International Relations, Philippine Foreign Policy, and the Middle East both in local and international peer reviewed journals. Dr. Sevilla, Jr. also represented the Philippines in various academic fora and conferences abroad and has been consulted regularly by media and think tanks. He served as the founding president of the Philippine-Middle East Studies Association as well as one of the board of advisors for the Philippines International Studies Organization among others. .

THE INDISPENSABILITY OF MULTILATERAL COOPERATION The New Challenges to Sustainable Development: Perspectives and Global Security Issues

While fortunate few nations live in relative peace and security and have achieved some level of development, too many others are unfortunately reeling from conflict and instability. Moreover, a great source of the challenge is often the immense diversity among and within nations, from domestic laws and traditions to rituals and identities, which often reinforce social tensions and contribute to disharmony. Yet, diversity alone should not be a cause for conflict. If anything, despite diversities and unique historical experiences



among nations, it is human nature to seek cooperation, transcend social divides, create a common space, and built mechanisms, which would nurture peace and harmony. Unfortunately, human nature may also have the tendency to act on the basis of self-interest and greed. Hence, while we all speak about peace, security, and development, many leaders, groups, and nations simply act and even speak, otherwise.

Today, we have witnessed wars and conflicts across the globe; we have seen children and women in Yemen, Afghanistan, Syria, Palestine, Myanmar, Ukraine, and a large part of the African continent being the first victims of wars and conflicts; we have heard countries and nations, occupying other nations, fighting and killing each other in the name of national pride, history, and leader's wrong judgment; and we have seen the proliferation of predatory non-state actors, including terrorist groups trying to destroy peace and wage war in the name of false ideology and self-serving misinterpretation of great religions.

All of these must require the global community to rethink and possibly find cohesively solutions to address these issues. Given the sheer depth and frequency of social conflicts all around the world, I would like to focus on two related case studies, which are close to my heart, as a Southeast Asian. These two case studies are about The Rohingya Muslims in Rakhine, Myanmar, and Muslim Mindanao, in the Southern Philippines. There is a clear connection between sociocultural, historical, and economic justice, resource allocation, education, gender equality and participation, environmental protection, and sustainable development, hence UN SDGs.

Rohingya, Myanmar (Burma)

Myanmar or Burma is a country located on the border of Laos and Bangladesh. Over the past decade, the Muslim minority group living in the Rakhine region, Rohingya Muslims have become stateless following the 1948 independence of that country and the Burmese government is refusing to give citizenship to these people. This condition was further exacerbated in 2014 when the government excluded Rohingya from the national census which eventually resulted in the humanitarian and refugee crisis in 2017.

This massive displacement of the Rohingya population due to military atrocities was described by the UN as the "textbook case of ethnic cleansing". The United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres commented that "Rohingya people have always been one of, if not the, most discriminated people in the world, without any recognition of the right to citizenship by their own country-Myanmar".

Mindanao, Southern Philippines

Mindanao is in the Southern part of the Philippine archipelago. Although rich in natural and human resources, the region has been a sight of secessionist insurgencies and struggles for self-determination by Filipino Muslims over the past half-century. With about 26 million population as of 2020, Mindanao has long had the highest poverty rates in the Philippines. In addition to conflict, displacement of people, poverty, a shadow criminal economy, clan politics, and a private army, family feuds (Rido) have also disrupted the economic activity and livelihood of the people. Clashes between the Muslim groups and the government forces resulted in the deaths not only of thousands of soldiers and civilians but also the destruction of facilities and infrastructures needed for socio-economic activities. The fragile security condition in Muslim Mindanao was further exacerbated by foreign and homegrown terrorist organizations that threatened to create chaos and insecurity.

Global Security Mechanisms: Multilateralism and Minilateralism

From the two cases cited above, let us examine what mechanisms are in place to address the issues.

Multilateralism

The nature of conflict and war have multidimensional features when the host government is uncooperative, unsympathetic, and incapable of safeguarding its own people and is inefficient in delivering the basic public goods; when the people it governs suffered, died, and are displaced; when human and natural resources are exhausted and affected, thus triggering a spiral of resource-competition; and when the outcome of policy towards the targeted population is causing a humanitarian crisis, the role of international organizations such as the United Nations is of paramount importance.



Approaching the multifaceted features of the war and conflict requires several concerned state actors, civil society organizations, and multi-specialized professional organizations to form a coalition to provide necessary services to the affected areas and save more lives. Thus, multilateralism is indispensable to addressing conflicts and ensuring a positive and sustainable approach to lasting peace and inclusive development.

1.a. Rohingya Case

In the Rohingya case, leading member countries in the International Community namely the United States, United Kingdom, and European Union have imposed targeted sanctions on the police commanders and army units. In the same manner, a UNGA Resolution on “The Situation of Human Rights of Rohingya Muslims and Other Minorities in Myanmar” was adopted on November 17, 2022. The Resolution asked the government in Myanmar to address the root causes of the Rohingya crisis, maintain focus on the Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, as well as to address the current atrocities, torture, arbitrary arrest, and violation of human rights in Myanmar since the takeover of its Military in February of 2021.

1.b. Mindanao Case

In the case of Mindanao, multilateralism was already at work to facilitate the dialogue and negotiation between the Philippine government and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) since the second half of the 1970s. Facilitated by the Organization of Islamic Conference, the Tripoli Agreement and succeeding agreements have been concluded. In October of 2004, the International Monitoring Team (IMT) was created “to monitor the implementation of peace between the Government of the Philippines (GPH) and one of the largest rebels in the region, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).” The IMT as a third-party monitoring team becomes a reliable partner of the government and the rebel group in ensuing peace initiatives and minimizing various ceasefire-related issues in Muslim Mindanao.

Minilateralism

Fitted against the Rohingya and Muslim Mindanao cases, is the idea of minilateralism. It supplemented the multilateralist approach to “strengthening global governance and international cooperation” by “breaking

down complex issues into smaller ones” and by “providing a platform for diplomacy, confidence-building, and cooperation,” in a more focused and simplistic way.

Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Response: A Minilateral Approach

Two OIC member countries, Indonesia and Malaysia who are also ASEAN founding members are instrumental in providing good offices to the past negotiations between the Philippine government and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). However, from the context of minilateralism under ASEAN, one should understand that even though ASEAN is often hailed as the most successful regional organization in East Asia, ASEAN member countries are however strict in observing the principles of sovereignty and non-intervention. This means that ASEAN countries are careful about intervening in the internal affairs of other ASEAN countries.

Although “consultation” is the driving force behind ASEAN unity and success, it, however, limits member countries to come up with a unified agreement especially when the given issue involves the interests of other member states. The principle of non-interference and sovereign equality practiced by ASEAN member states is the main reason why at the height of the Rohingya humanitarian crisis, ASEAN is unable to unite itself against perpetrators in Myanmar who targeted the Rohingya civilian population.

The cases of Rohingya and Mindanao demonstrate the critical role of the international community in the preservation of peace and in the initiation of activities that will bring all stakeholders to various initiatives to achieve sustainable development in the affected communities. It shows that in cases where the government is unable to perform alone, other nations and countries and civil societies can come to help, to ensure that rights are protected, and basic services are delivered to the affected population. It requires a concerted effort to forge a strong institution to address issues of peace, equality, and justice. It demonstrates the critical role of multilateralism as well as minilateralism that advances the idea of global social cohesiveness, understanding and dialogue, and sustainable development for all.



Panelist 4: The Transitional Justice as a Key Component of Conflict Resolution

Vonya Womack, Executive Director, Refugees Unknown, Stories Untold | USA

Vonya Womack is the Executive Director of Refugees Unknown-Stories Untold, (RUSU) which serves to advocate for human rights and to create trauma support for exiles. Based in the United States, RUSU serves international locations. She is an active board member, published author, leader, and contributor to public service messaging with presentations conducted in North America, North Africa, Africa, Eastern Europe, and Europe. She is currently presenting virtually for universities, governments, NGOs, and international entities to include business industries. Vonya is a thought leader who has utilized her international and business experience to create an organization that serves the vastly growing political refugee population. University adjunct instructor in Global Leadership and Business encouraging students to see the world through an international lens.



The pleas for global peace are growing louder as the world has witnessed the most significant number of violent conflicts since 1946. A quarter of the global population lives in conflict-affected countries. And a record 100 million people are forcibly displaced worldwide. Many of us today are well aware of these statistics, and some of you joining us might be learning about them for the first time. But they all have one fact in common: widespread human rights violations.

We know that prevention is the first imperative of justice, and transitional justice can contribute to preventing violence and abuse, mainly if it addresses commonalities like exclusion and associated grievances. Recently, the UN Secretary-General's report on Our Common Agenda articulated a new framework for multilateral governance and the implementation of SDG goals calling for a revitalized, comprehensive, and overarching prevention agenda. Transitional justice can play a preventative role by facilitating the inclusion of social groups that have suffered targeted violations and structural marginalization and can promote the reform of long-term solutions for institutions, laws, and ideologies that have previously perpetuated discrimination and violence.

One of the ways to combat widespread or systemic human rights violations is to respond with “transitional justice”; seeking recognition for victims and promoting possibilities for peace, reconciliation, and democracy. Transitional justice is not a unique form of justice. Still, it is justice adapted to societies that are transforming themselves after a period of pervasive human rights abuse. In some cases, these transformations occur suddenly; in others, they may take place over many decades.

People frequently question: what is the difference between transformative, restorative, and transitional justice? It is important to note that transitional justice practitioners point out that transformative justice cannot occur within the system and must happen outside the state. This can differ from restorative justice practices that sometimes become institutionalized, such as using restorative justice circles within schools or where courts allow individuals to participate in these programs. This is not to say that healthy justice practices are bad or a step in the wrong direction. However, in line with the prison abolition movement, transformative justice theory holds that these systems are so flawed that true transformation can only occur directly within communities.



In an overview of transformative justice, I thought Peace and Conflict scholar Anthony Nocella describes the difference and overview of transformative justice well: He says, “Restorative justice stresses that the system is flawed, overworked, and retributive, but does not address why it exists, how it is racist, sexist, ableist, and classist, whom it benefits, and how it was developed. Transformative justice is about looking for the good within others while being aware of complex systems of domination. If the world is to transform, we need everyone to transform and everyone to be voluntarily involved in critical dialogue together.”

Restorative justice has deep roots in Aboriginal and Native American practices in North America and New Zealand. It is built on bringing together victims and perpetrators of harm to take accountability, forgive, and heal. It’s a collective and joint process involving goal setting and taking action to repair the damage one has caused over the past two decades. Restorative Justice and Transitional Justice have become two distinct, though closely overlapping, concepts that have been catapulted to the forefront of legal and criminological discourse over the past two decades. Their growth has been nothing short of prolific: in both theoretical and practical terms. The transitional approach came to life in the late 1980s and early 1990s, mainly in response to political changes in Latin America and Eastern Europe—and to demands in these regions for justice. At the time, human rights activists and others wanted to address systematic abuses by former regimes without endangering the current political transformations. Since these changes were popularly called “transitions to democracy,” people began calling this new multidisciplinary field “transitional justice.”

In the 2016 resolutions, the Security Council and the General Assembly advanced a comprehensive approach to sustaining peace that encompasses interventions along the peace-conflict continuum. Transitional justice

was considered critical to the consolidation of peace and stability –promoting poverty reduction, the rule of law, access to justice and good governance, further extending legitimate state authority, and preventing countries from lapsing or relapsing into conflict.

The Human Rights Council (HRC) also affirmed in its resolution 42/17 of September 2019 that combatting impunity and implementing transitional justice processes can prevent the recurrence of human rights violations and abuses and contribute to sustainable peace and development. Since 2019, it has been further examined how addressing a legacy of gross violations and abuses of human rights and serious violations of international humanitarian law through the lens of transitional justice measures can contribute to sustaining peace and the

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realization of sustainable development goal 16, which “Aims to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.”

Let’s look at the state of global peace and conflict resolution, how transitional justice plays a crucial role in international peace, and how we initiate conflict resolution. Looking at the UN’s approach to transitional justice, we must first remember how transitional justice entered the picture. In 2016 resolutions (S-2282 and A-70/262), the Security Council and the General Assembly put forth a comprehensive plan and approach to how we can encompass interventions along a continuum of peace and conflict. Transitional Justice was chosen as critical to the consolidation of peace and stability, as were others like promoting



poverty reduction, the rule of law, access to justice and good governance, extending legitimate state authority, and preventing countries from lapsing or relapsing into conflict. In September 2019, the Human Rights Council also affirmed in resolution 42/17 that implementing transitional justice processes could prevent the recurrence of human rights violations and abuses and contribute to sustainable peace and development.

Sustainable Development Goal 16 addresses a legacy of gross violations and abuses of human rights and serious violations of international humanitarian law. The lens of transitional justice allows us to contribute to the solutions to sustaining peace. When we look at transitional justice more closely, we look at human rights mechanisms that foster peace and conflict resolution. In looking at those processes and tools, we want to concentrate on how we help facilitate a society's response to human rights violations. Not only does this help with accountability and serve justice, but it also helps achieve reconciliation.

The United Nations has taken the approach that "transitional justice" refers to creating effective coordination and partnerships, addressing the root causes of the conflict and repressive rules. They also indicate that by implementing gender-sensitive actions and international norms and standards. The absence of war does not mean that a society is at peace. Scholars have identified a continuum of violence that many organizations are known to go through. It does not matter if it is inner-city violence in slum areas, inter-ethnic violence, or war; the broad spectrum is evident. When we look at transitional justice, we are talking about the setting of legal procedures, the cultural precursors specific to stability, and how those can take the lead to conflict mitigation and amelioration. Those who experience grave human rights violations contend with physical, psychological, and emotional trauma. Those

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in societies that are transitioning have also faced physical abuse and are traumatized. What issues does that create that must be addressed? When human rights are violated, PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) and many other psychological outcomes are presented. When creating a justice system that works for people, you must help them move through phases of trauma.

The legal aspects of justice have to transpire for society to move through what would follow like the international criminal court and other international programs that play a role in distinct communities in some cases even national security courts where national war crimes chambers show a part but so do mediation mechanisms and confrontation mechanisms

where truth and reconciliation can be an instrument of action. We can also think about how commemoration, art and music, and education programs play a part in transitional justice systems because they help bring a more steady and helpful environment creating peace for people dealing with violence.

I would like to share an example of an experience in Libya in 2012, where I was part of a delegation tasked with training leadership to transitional council members and prominent leaders in civil society. One year after the revolution, some were still elated at the thought of fighting for a democratic structure, and others were still at a loss after the bitter eight-month battle between NATO-supported rebels and pro-Qadhafi forces. Libya's death toll far surpassed any other nation in the Arab Spring. Before the NATO mission to protect rebels began in mid-March, some reports suggested that Qadhafi's forces had already killed over a thousand people. But even with Qadhafi out of the picture and the National Transitional Council in charge, reports from Libya suggest that violence against Qadhafi loyalists and other minorities continued. Though the interim government in Libya puts the death toll at around 30,000,



After a bitter eight-month battle between NATO-supported rebels and pro-Qadhafi forces, Libya's death toll far surpassed that of any other nation in the Arab Spring. Before the NATO mission to protect rebels began in mid-March, reports suggested that Qadhafi's forces had already killed over a thousand people. But even with Qadhafi out of the picture and the National Transitional Council in charge, reports from Libya suggest that violence against Qadhafi loyalists and other minorities continues. The interim government in Libya put the death toll at around 30,000. The reality for most modern transitions is that nobody wins the war.

The question is always asked: "What shall we do with the perpetrators of these horrific crimes, and better yet, will it even matter if we do anything?" Lawyers, for example, in South Africa, expected Nuremberg-style trials. and in a sense, felt betrayed when at the end of the negotiations, they found out that the liberation movements had negotiated that there would be some form of amnesty for those who had been the perpetrators of apartheid crimes.

In the context of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission in America, when the discussion started, it was called a truth and justice commission. But somewhere along the road, the word reconciliation crept in. Since then, the word reconciliation is in the field of transitional justice, and for many countries around the world, that is a problem. If you speak to Latin Americans, for instance, reconciliation is tantamount to amnesia. However, reconciliation is a significant issue if you talk to countries in Asia and Africa. In a modern context in this decade, we have been exploring what reconciliation means if it is not to tell, forgive and forget. So, I think you have seen in the last 20 years that you also have Truth and Reconciliation Commissions besides the notion of criminal prosecution. Those are defined as, in many ways, being the other complementary element to building accountability in the modern world because it can go into spaces the trials usually do not go, and that is to look at the question of what the context of a conflict is; what are the questions of how you got to the systemic issue; how you address the root causes of conflict.

In addition to that, in the last five years, we have seen the introduction of these social-economic rights dimensions. For example, the mandate of the commission in Tunisia,

which is called the Dignity Commission, is an equal focus on both these civil and political violations; torture, extrajudicial killings, and disappearances, but in addition to that, there are also issues of exclusion and economic crimes. It was discouraging when the South African Commission ended, and the focus became intently narrow on the mandate, which caused us to not focus directly or sufficiently on the root causes of the conflict. That accountability goes beyond the notion of truth-seeking or the notion of criminal accountability. In a sense, you need a real conversation in society and the element of memorialization. Memory is such an essential component for the next generation, and memory is also what drives difference, so that is an essential element. The other form of the course is this question of systemic institutional reform.

South Africa was fortunate to have the constitutional making program because, in a sense, what that did was the most extraordinary institutional reform program, and what they laid was the foundation for the basis of what can be called the "never again" policy. Lay was the basis for the never, never again principle. When we define what we mean by the guarantee of non-recurrence, one element is this institutional reform question. But the other is called the vital element, and that is the restoration of civic trust, and that is mainly for people who have been excluded either because they belong to a different faith group or because they're a diverse ethnic group because they come from another place, or because their belief system is something different. And so, the question for the new government is this question of trust, which is something we talked about yesterday with prominent journalists here at the JWF conference.

How do you restore citizens' trust in the institutions of the state? How will they believe that the institutions will work for them, irrespective of who, what, or where they come from? I think that's the pivotal question that we will be asking of both the governments of Colombia and the governments of Sri Lanka; we will be asking in the Ukrainian situation, Turkey, and Syria, how do you get ordinary citizens to believe that if they go to sleep one night. They get up the following day, so people won't die simply because they differ.



For example, without truth-telling or reparation efforts, punishing a small number of perpetrators can be viewed as a form of political revenge. Truth-telling, in isolation from efforts to punish abusers and to make institutional reforms, can be considered as nothing more than words. Reparations not linked to prosecutions or truth-telling may be perceived as “blood money”—an attempt to buy the silence or acquiescence of victims. Similarly, reforming institutions without any attempt to satisfy victims’ legitimate expectations of justice, truth, and reparation is ineffective from the accountability standpoint and unlikely to succeed on their terms. New practical challenges have forced the field to innovate as a set of things have shifted from Argentina and Chile, where authoritarianism ended, to societies such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, Liberia, and the Democratic Republic of Congo, where the critical issue is shoring up peace. Ethnic cleansing and displacement, the reintegration of ex-combatants, reconciliation among communities, and the role of justice in peacebuilding have become important new issues.

Transitional justice practitioners have also engaged with local or “traditional” justice measures. In some countries, such as Sierra Leone and Uganda, communities may wish to use traditional rituals to foster reconciliation of warring parties or to reintegrate ex-combatants. In such cases, the role of transitional justice is to ensure that a holistic approach is taken—one that may include the ritual but does not exclude the possibility of using other transitional justice measures. Ultimately, there is no single formula for dealing with a past marked by large-scale human rights abuse. All transitional justice approaches are based on a fundamental belief in universal human rights. But in the end, each society should—indeed must—choose its path.

PANEL SESSION 2: GENDER-BASED CRIMES IN CONFLICT ZONES

Keynote Remarks: Gender-Based Crimes in Conflict Zones

H.E. Helen Clark, Former Prime Minister of New Zealand | NEW ZEALAND



Helen Clark served three successive terms as Prime Minister of New Zealand between 1999 and 2008. While in government, she led policy debate on a wide range of economic, social, environmental and cultural issues, including sustainability and climate change. Ms. Clark then became the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Administrator for two terms from 2009 to 2017, the first woman to lead the organization. She was also the Chair of the United Nations Development Group, a committee consisting of the Heads of all UN funds, programs and departments working on development issues. She is an active member of various international organizations.

I am speaking to you as Chair of the Board of PMNCH, the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn, and Child Health, which is the world’s largest network focused on advocacy for the health and wellbeing of women, children, and adolescents. Wherever violent conflict occurs, women and girls are in peril. The number of people impacted by such violent conflicts has grown rapidly over the past decade, and the incidents of sexual and gender-based violence have grown with that. The war in Ukraine is the latest of many deadly complexes where rape and other sexual and gender-based violence are used as weapons of war. Unfortunately, still, under 1% of humanitarian aid addresses sexual and gender-based violence. Such violence is often underreported, so the data which is available is unreliable and attackers tend to go unpunished.

Access to healthcare facilities by those who have suffered such attacks may be very difficult, and where facilities do exist, they may lack awareness of how to respond to the suffering of victims. In Mali, for example, a country experiencing significant armed conflict, half of all healthcare centers are said to have no post-rape kits available, which could support



victims. Inadequate facilities make recovery from the trauma and impacts of rape more difficult.

The scourge of sexual and gender-based violence is widespread, even in places not racked by armed conflict. It is estimated, worldwide, 1 in every 3 women between the ages of 15 and 49 has experienced sexual and gender-based violence. This is a truly shocking statistic, but violent conflict makes women and girls even more vulnerable. In Liberia, in a survey done after the country's civil war had ended, of 1600 women interviewed, 92% reported having experienced sexual violence, including rape during the war. The outbreak of war and conflict contributes to a breakdown of the social economic justice infrastructure, not least of policing and court systems. The search for basic supplies like food, water, and medicine can be extremely dangerous for women and girls. The routine protection for women and girls from being in neighborhoods they are familiar with, with people around who know them, is lost.

Where there is displacement and conflict, women, journalists, parliamentarians, and human rights defenders are at particular risk of facing even greater danger than other women, as well as facing greater risks than men engaged in the same activities. All such threats are a constraint on women's participation and leadership, and that is an incredible loss. For example, when women participate in the peace agreement processes, research evidence suggests that it is 35% more likely to last at least 15 years. We need the voices of women and girls in these decision-making processes. Above all, we need action globally and nationally to see that women and girls are not exposed to sexual and gender-based violence, and to ensure that those who are its victims get access to all the services they need to recover from their ordeal.

It is vital to work in partnership with those who best understand these issues, and they are first and foremost women who have experienced such attacks. PMNCH has the prevention of sexual and gender-based violence high on its advocacy agenda. Too often this violence is a hidden or largely ignored consequence of conflict and has not been openly addressed in many societies. The challenges of overcoming it need much more visibility and political attention. PMNCH believes there must be a survivor-centered multi-agency and cross-border approach to

tackling sexual and gender-based violence. We say that forging partnerships for action and having highly visible champions matters a lot. When we come together, we can do great things, and it was so encouraging to see this year's G7 leaders communicate condemning sexual and gender-based violence. While we are on the subject of partnership, PMNCH is so thrilled that President Cyril Ramaphosa of South Africa has announced that he will lead a global leaders' network supported by PMNCH to advocate for women, children, and adolescents. On the issues of sexual and gender-based violence, PMNCH highlights three priorities for action now.

First, every country must condemn all sexual and gender-based violence, including violence against women, journalists, parliamentarians, and human rights defenders. There have been two UN Security Council resolutions, which urged States to condemn and prevent violence and intimidation against women leaders and peace builders and against civil society generally. Second, States must integrate addressing sexual and gender-based violence and comprehensive sexual and reproductive health and rights more broadly into health services and humanitarian responses. This must be a standard part of humanitarian response plans rather than depending on the number of reported sexual and gender-based violence cases. The World Health Organization has a very good toolkit on how this can be done in humanitarian settings. Third, States must ensure that healthcare workers have the training and support they need to respond to the health needs, physical and mental of women, children, and adolescents who have suffered sexual and gender-based violence.

This work is often both distressing and grueling. To conclude, so much more priority must be given both through addressing sexual and gender-based violence across the board and addressing the needs of those who survive it. As we strive for universal health coverage, let us ensure that the services needed to support survivors are regarded as essential services and always available. Let us strive harder to support the world's peacebuilders and mediators to prevent the outbreak of violent conflicts and thereby support a rollback of the scourge of sexual and gender-based violence that women and girls are experiencing in our troubled world.



Moderator: Opening Remarks

Michael Busch, Director of Public Programs, The Polis Project | USA



Michael Busch teaches in the graduate program in Human Rights at John Jay College, CUNY. He also serves as Senior Editor of Warscapes magazine, and Director of Public Programs at The Polis Project. Mr. Busch previously taught political science, sociology and international studies at The City College of New York, where he was also the Associate Director of the Office of Student Success. Michael Busch was also previously Research Associate at the Ralph Bunche Institute for International Studies where he worked on human rights, political economy and global governance, and co-authored Sustainable Global Governance for the 21st Century: The United Nations Confronts Economic and Environmental Crises amidst Changing Geopolitics with Thomas

G. Weiss and Tapio Kanninen. Michael's other writing has appeared in dozens of journals, magazines and newspapers, as well as in several edited volumes. His most recent publication appears in Public Purpose: Industrial Policy's Comeback and Government's Role in Shared Prosperity.

Conflict as a concept has a great degree of elasticity. We should move beyond thinking about conflict strictly in terms of armed conflicts, although those are of critical importance; but thinking about the notion of conflict in a variety of different senses. Some conflicts remain invisible in the day-to-day lives of people that live around the world.

Notions of violence can be most egregiously understood within the traditional armed conflict, but I should make sure that we are keeping in mind other forms of violence, specifically structural violence that characterizes the lives of many people, especially women around the world. We find ourselves in a particularly difficult moment following the recent crisis across the globe. However, the issue of gender-based human rights violations remains firmly on our sites; Ukraine, which will be at the top of many people for many this week. There is an increasing adherence that rape has been deployed as a weapon of war and that women are bearing the brunt of violence on the ground; not to mention the consequences of social dislocation that has sort of spiraled out from the conflict there.

But this is hardly the only instance of endemic gender-based violence as, for example, the ongoing conflict in Ethiopia demonstrates as well as the recent social upheavals in Iran as these examples make clear that these problems remain persistent. The threat of gender-based violence violations is ever present here in the United States, as we celebrate the 77th Session of the UN General Assembly gathering in New York.

We should not lose sight of the fact that its official opening day, last week on Tuesday, September 13th, also marks the 28th anniversary of the Violence Against Women Act in the United States, a celebration that was rather muted and passed in the growing shadow of institutional assaults on women's rights across the country, increasing political polarization and the constant of violence that characterizes life for many in the United States of America. These realities form a rather dispiriting backdrop to our deliberations at Panel Session 2: Gender-Based Crimes in Conflict Zones offering clear-eyed assessments of the continued threats based by women, the intersections between gender and journalism and conflict zones, the tools that our disposal to combat gender-based violence at every level, and the progress that's being made at eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls.



Panelist 1: Violations Faced by Women Human Rights Defenders Under Authoritarian Regimes

Khalida Popal, Founder and Director, Girl Power Org | DENMARK



Khalida began breaking down barriers and empowering women in Afghanistan in 2007 when she helped found the Afghan National Women's Soccer Team. She served as the team captain, and she later became the first woman ever hired by the Afghanistan Football Federation. When it became clear that she was no longer safe in the country, she went into exile and continued her advocacy for the rights of women and girls by establishing the Denmark-based Girl Power Organization. A former defender on the soccer field, she is now a defender and champion of human rights around the globe. Amid the recent fall of Afghanistan to the Taliban, she worked tirelessly to help dozens of female senior and youth soccer players from the senior

& junior national teams escape and relocate. She has continued to support these girls and their families as they transition to their new countries of residence.

As the world witnessed in August 2021, Afghanistan collapsed once again at the hands of a terrorist group by the name of the Taliban. My role as a former captain, but also a human right defender was to make pledges and ask for support to evacuate our players, to save the Afghan women or female footballers who use football as a tool for empowerment and for inclusion of women in Afghanistan.

We played less football, stood up, and defended human rights more. We managed to save many lives of female footballers and their families. After the Taliban took over, Afghan women lost many of their fundamental rights despite the reassurance from the Taliban that women's rights would be respected. The limited progress made in the previous two decades was quickly reversed. Women lost the right to have access to education and work.

As 365 or 367 days since the Taliban ban girls from schools, women are not allowed to work or actively contribute to society. Women cannot even go outside their homes without being accompanied by their brother, husband, or any man. Women and girls are forced into early, unwanted marriages. Women cannot live single in an apartment without being accompanied by a man. If they do not get married, they are forced to marriage with Taliban allies. It is a firsthand story, and it is based on the experience and people that I know, they are forced to get married.

Young girls and especially schoolgirls are abused and violated on their way to school. Female police, human rights defenders, and activists were forced to hide in and forced to leave the country, some of the journalists and human rights defenders are found by the Taliban and disappeared. No one knows what happened to them. Some of the activists, their dead bodies were found they were taken by the Taliban at midnight from their houses. Taliban started searching houses going after the human rights defenders, activists, and police. Many women are stuck in Afghanistan because they do not have access to their passports to leave Afghanistan. They are hiding and their lives are in great danger.

Women lawyers, judges, and journalists have effectively dismissed their jobs and been forced into hiding. Murderers in prisons are now freed by the Taliban and they are going after women who they abused and who made the case in court against them.



Afghan women are feeling betrayed by the former leaders of Afghanistan. They feel betrayed by the international community that entered Afghanistan, came with the hopes, with the promises of standing for women's rights. All those empty speeches are gone. What is left, and the speeches that took over was that many international communities and the government's side. We do not see a national interest in Afghanistan. There was nothing in those speeches about the women and girls of Afghanistan; but the women of Afghanistan, inside the country and abroad, they are standing for their rights. They are fighting. They are standing against the Taliban.

The only picture you receive from Afghanistan is the women in the streets standing and demonstrating. They are seeking their fundamental human rights, the right to access education, go to school, practice their human right in society and contribute to society. They don't want anybody to fight for them. The women of Afghanistan want the international community to stand with them, support and help them to strengthen their voices. They feel

they are forgotten. They feel that they have vanished from society. They feel alone. Their voices are alone. What we want from the international community, from governing bodies is to stand with the women of Afghanistan to have access to their basic human rights.

Our footballers who used their platforms today are refugees. They are still standing with all the trauma that they have been through. They are all still standing and using our platform to be the voice for our voiceless sisters. We will do our part and will not let the go world forget the women of Afghanistan. Where we want everybody to remember the two decades of development and work, we have done is all vanished. We do not want the girls of Afghanistan to be the young child brides in the houses of the Taliban. We want the light of hope back in Afghanistan. For the women, we are standing. We are strong. We just need support. We need our voices to be heard. We need the governing bodies outside of Afghanistan to stand and support us to put pressure on the Taliban, to enable women to have their fundamental rights.

Panelist 3: Challenges of Reporting for Women Journalists: A Case from South Africa

Ranjeni Munusamy, Head of Media Relations, GAPP: Government and Public Policy | SOUTH AFRICA



Ranjeni Munusamy is a communications strategist at South Africa's Government and Public Policy think tank (GAPP). Previously Ms. Munusamy served as political secretary to South Africa's former Minister of Finance Tito Mboweni. She also worked as Associate Editor at the Sunday Times in South Africa and Associate Editor of Daily Maverick, South Africa's premier online news site. Ms. Munusamy is a prominent analyst and commentator on South African politics, across local and international media platforms. She has over 20 years of experience in journalism and communications. She has reported extensively on all South Africa's Presidents since 1994. Ms. Munusamy has also covered international events such as the 2016 presidential elections in the United States and the German Bundestag elections in 2017.

Violence against women journalists is a difficult topic and the most painful part of it is that journalists who receive the most support and societal understanding of the conditions under which we operate are those who are already dead. Their deaths make news and provoke action, whereas occupational hazards do not. We saw this in the case of Palestinian



journalist Shireen Abu Akleh. Attacks against women in the media take many forms, all of which are meant to dehumanize, escalate fear, and erode our ability to tell the story of our time.

Attacks on media freedoms and journalists are a global phenomenon and not limited to women. However, women face a distinct set of risks of being silenced, stigmatized, and intimidated. In patriarchal societies, particularly those with discriminatory cultures and authoritarian regimes, there are heightened risks of sexual harassment and sexual violence. We have seen and heard from many experts on the erosion of the freedoms of women in Afghanistan. Just eighteen months ago women were functional members of that society, but all our colleagues there now have had to hide.

While women are particularly susceptible in territories at war and during migration of refugees, the truth of the matter however is that attacks on the media and particularly women journalists have become normalized in other parts of the globe, including those built on liberal values and constitutional freedoms. We saw how former US President Donald Trump got away with objectifying and demeaning women journalists. The truth, however, is that politicians have been getting away from harassing, objectifying, and attacking women long before Trump became a role model for eschewing the function and power of the media.

In South Africa, I reported on political violence during our democratic transition. Tolerating sexual harassment, unfortunately, became a means of survival. In other words, you put up or ship out. Racial and sexual objectification was commonplace in our society then, particularly in areas where warlords were a law unto themselves. The story of South Africa's democratic transition was one that was celebrated across the globe and our founding father, Nelson Mandela, was and remains a global icon. Unfortunately, those who came after him do not carry his values and respect for other human beings.

The political battles and machinations in South Africa are always high stakes. I must admit that confronting

misogyny, sexual harassment, and abuse is not something we have been able to confront or adequately expose. My country is now contending with what we have come to refer to as the "second pandemic", the onslaught of gender-based violence. Sadly, South Africa is not a safe space for women, with horrific levels of abuse and rape. It has come to the extent that these horrors no longer shock our society. The remedies are not easy, and we are still grappling with what to do about a society that hates its women.

So, the question is how long more should we put up or ship out? The difficulties women journalists face are plain to see, being constantly threatened, groped during protests, and having to put up with threats of sexual violence. Just overnight, a young women journalist in the Eastern Cape province in South Africa had to go into hiding because of threats by a pseudo militia group targeting foreign nationals as part of their xenophobic campaign spreading across my country. She is under attack for not going along with their xenophobic narrative.

I think it is important for us to make it known that conflict zones do not only refer to countries and territories at war. We heard in the earlier panel that almost a quarter of the globe is engaged in conflict. The reality however is that we are all on the battlefield as the biggest warzone in the world right now is the internet through social media platforms. Hundreds of millions of dollars are being spent on disinformation and fake news campaigns, while traditional media platforms are in financial distress and losing audiences.

I and several women colleagues in South Africa were the subjects of a massively resourced social media disinformation campaign as part of a political power struggle. Our images were photoshopped in sexually compromising positions and these were then spread widely on Twitter. South African society eventually pushed back and broke the back of the orchestrators. But the danger lingers. The images still exist and appear on our timelines. Legal remedies are often not real remedies as those who perpetrate such deeds do so under the cover of anonymity.



The South African National Editors Forum attempted to interdict an opposition party in my country from inciting violence and harassment against a group of journalists, including myself. The argument in court was that journalists should be made of sterner stuff and roll with the punches. The political organization also argued that they could not be held responsible for what their supporters post online, including threats of rape. When the leader of the party called at a political rally for our heads to be chopped off, he didn't mean it literally, he said. I still do not know if his supporters understand the distinction.

The result of so many of us adopting the attitude of having to put up or ship out means that across the world, many are opting to shut up or ship out of the profession. This is dangerous for the media fraternity and for society at large.

Reporting of and consequences for gender-based attacks need to become commonplace. There needs to be global appreciation and action against physical attacks and disinformation campaigns. There need to be support mechanisms to help cope and ensure our safety and mental health.

Panelist 4: Conflict Related Sexual Violence as a weapon of war under the International Criminal Court and Rome Statute

Jelena Pia-Comella, Senior International Consultant | USA



Jelena Pia-Comella is consulting with the Global Action Against Mass Atrocity Crimes; she is an adjunct lecturer at John Jay College of Criminal Justice and Hofstra University, as well as a faculty member of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR). Ms. Pia-Comella started her career in 1996 as a diplomat representing Andorra at the UN, Canada, and the United States. Ms. Pia-Comella was appointed Deputy Permanent Representative of Andorra to the United Nations in 2002 and served as chargé d'affaires to Canada and the United States. Ms. Pia-Comella is the President of the Board of Directors of SOS-Torture/Burundi and

board member and treasurer of Global Justice Center. She is a member of the African Coordination of Human Rights for the Armed Forces and the Women Network on the Responsibility to Protect, Peace and Security of the British Academy for the humanities and social sciences of Leeds University. Ms. Pia-Comella holds a master's degree in International Political Economy and Development from Fordham University, New York and a bachelor's degree in Economics from Fribourg University, Switzerland.

I would like to provide an overview of the normative and legal framework combatting sexual and gender-based violence and crimes, more specifically I will focus on the Rome Statute System. Allow me to give some background on the scope and definitions. Sexual and gender-based violence against women is rooted in systematic and systemic discrimination of women's rights. In armed conflict settings, this systematic and systemic discrimination is being weaponized. Sexual and gender-based violence has been and continues to be used as a tactic of war.

Sexual and gender-based violence has been widely present in times of armed conflict and yet, due to patriarchal norms and the unequipped national and international criminal laws and systems, these acts of violence have been underreported and under-prosecuted as crimes. There has been a tendency on the one hand to underestimate the seriousness of sexual and gender-based violence in times of armed conflict, and on the other hand to overestimate



the challenges of investigating it. The result has been an under prosecution of conflict-related sexual and gender-based crimes pre-1990s.

However, the scope of the scourge of sexual and gender-based violence during the genocides of Rwanda, the former Yugoslavia as well as during the armed conflicts in Africa was unprecedented and could no longer be ignored or considered as an act “collateral” of war. Conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence as I said before was used as a weapon of war: in Rwanda, between 100,000 and 250,000 women were raped during the three months of genocide in 1994. United Nations agencies estimate that more than 60,000 women were raped during the civil war in Sierra Leone (1991-2002), more than 40,000 in Liberia (1989-2003), up to 60,000 in the former Yugoslavia (1992-1995), and at least 200,000 in the Democratic Republic of the Congo since 1998.

As you can see these numbers were too high to be ignored and this led amongst others to the creation in 1993 of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and in 1994 of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR). Both Courts addressed sexual and gender-based crimes and set new case laws and best practices for national courts as well as for the International Criminal Court.

The Statute of the ICTY included rape as a crime against humanity (Article 5 (g)). The Statute of the ICTR stipulated that rape constituted both a war crime and a crime against humanity (Articles 3(g) and 4(e)). Both Tribunals have delivered a wealth of jurisprudence with regard to sexual and gender-based violence constituting crimes against humanity, genocide, and serious breaches of the Geneva Conventions.

While the two ad hoc tribunals have indeed set a new path for gender justice, their jurisdiction had a limited scope in terms of time and territory. It was not until 1998 that international criminal law was equipped with universal and permanent jurisdiction to investigate and try conflict-related sexual and gender-based crimes.

Indeed, the Rome Statute (RS) is the first and, so far, the only international treaty that criminalizes and explicitly defines sexual and gender-based violence as a crime against humanity beyond the act of rape (Article 7(1) g); war crimes (Article 8 (2) b (xxii) and Article 8 (2) e (vi)) and, to a certain extent, as genocide (Article (6) d).

The following acts of sexual and gender-based violence are recognized as war crimes and crimes against humanity: Rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization, or any other form of sexual violence also constituting a grave breach of the Geneva Conventions.

Furthermore, the Rome Statute, through its provisions relating to victims, ensures the protection of victims and their right to participate (Article 68), provides for reparations where appropriate, and establishes a Trust Fund for Victims (Article 79). In this sense, the Rome Statute offers three main improvements in the fight against impunity for conflict-related sexual and gender-based crimes specifically, and therefore promotes women’s rights overall by providing a new standard internationally and domestically as States have the primary responsibility to investigate and prosecute Rome Statute crimes:

- Firstly, by explicitly defining and criminalizing sexual and gender-based crimes allowing for these crimes to be prosecuted.
- Secondly by ensuring the victims’/survivors’ protection, participation, and reparations. There are examples of protection of victims at the national level that have been inspired by the provisions of the Rome Statute (for example in the Democratic Republic of Congo where conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence has been and continues to be very widespread).
- Thirdly by recognizing sexual and gender-based violence as war crimes, crimes against humanity, and crimes constituting genocide and not as collateral acts of war, or armed conflict.

Therefore, the Rome Statute not only provides access to justice for victims of the most serious crimes condemned by international law but also sets a new standard for national legal systems to implement. These efforts have been supported by the “Women, Peace and Security” agenda with the adoption by the United Nations (UN) Security Council in 2008 of resolution 1820. Adopting resolution 1820 (2008) was a forward-looking decision as the resolution offers a new and very strategic understanding of the peace-justice nexus. Resolution 1820 (2008) not only recognizes sexual and gender-based violence as a tactic of war but also clarifies that conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence can constitute a war crime, a crime against humanity, or an act of genocide. It further recognizes the Rome Statute as the landmark instrument in the fight against impunity for mass atrocity crimes.

What is important here is that these definitions and the elements of these crimes used by the International Criminal Court can support States to define and therefore criminalize better sexual and gender-based violence not only as atrocity crimes but also as violations of women’s rights.

Now very briefly, I would like to provide you with an overview of a couple of ICC’s cases that include sexual and gender-based crimes in their charges

- For the situation in Uganda, on 4 February last year, Mr. Dominic Ongwen was found guilty of 61 crimes comprising crimes against humanity including rape, sexual slavery, and rape as constituting war crimes committed in Northern Uganda between 1 July 2002 and 31 December 2005.
- For the situation of Mali, Al-Hassan’s charges include alleged crimes of rape, sexual slavery as war crimes and crimes against humanity, and forced marriage as a crime against humanity allegedly committed in Timbuktu between April 2012 and January 2013.

While not a State party, Ukraine, in conformity with Article 12 paragraph 3 has accepted the jurisdiction

of the ICC by issuing 2 declarations, one on April 9, 2014, recognizing the jurisdiction of the Court for the purpose of identifying, prosecuting, and judging authors and accomplices of acts committed on the territory of Ukraine within the period 21 November 2013 – 22 February 2014. The second declaration of 8 September 2015 extends this time period on an open-ended basis to encompass ongoing alleged crimes committed throughout the territory of Ukraine from 20 February 2014 onwards.

On March 2 this year, the Prosecutor announced he had proceeded to open an investigation into the situation in Ukraine. The Office of the Prosecutor has established a dedicated portal through which any person that may hold information relevant to the situation can contact ICC investigators. According to an interview in April on the Guardian, British Foreign Secretary (Liz Truss) said that a British team would head to Ukraine in May with special emphasis on investigating rape as a possible war crime. Other media outlets also mentioned that the ICC investigators are looking into rape and other forms of sexual violence constituting war crimes. But there are no cases yet of this situation.

In the case of Afghanistan, as you know is a State Party since 2003 this may allow for the ICC to exercise its jurisdiction over crimes listed in the Rome Statute committed on the territory of Afghanistan or by its nationals from 1 May 2003 onwards.

The state of affairs is as follows On 5 March 2020, the Appeals Chamber of the International Criminal Court decided unanimously to authorize the Prosecutor to open an investigation into alleged crimes under the jurisdiction of the Court in relation to the situation in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

The Appeals Chamber found that the Prosecutor is authorized to investigate the crimes alleged to have been committed on the territory of Afghanistan since 1 May 2003, as well as other alleged crimes that have a nexus to the armed conflict in Afghanistan and are sufficiently linked to the situation in Afghanistan and that was



committed on the territory of other States Parties to the Rome Statute since 1 July 2002.

Now with the change of regime last summer, this prompted the ICC in October 2021 to request the Secretary-General of the UN and the bureau of the Assembly of States Parties of the Court to submit information on the identification of the authorities currently representing Afghanistan.

This is important for the ICC to continue its investigations. As you know the ICC is a Court of last resort governed by the principle of complementarity (art 1 and specially 17) meaning that it can only activate its jurisdiction when a State is unable or unwilling to carry out genuine proceedings.

Let me quote from the press release of the ICC on this last October 2021:

The Chamber was seized of a request submitted on 27 September 2021 by the Prosecutor, in which he sought the authorization of the Chamber for the resumption of the investigation in the Situation in Afghanistan pursuant to Article 18(2) of the Rome Statute (the 'Statute'), notwithstanding the Government of Afghanistan's request of 26 March 2020 seeking a deferral of the Prosecutor's investigation.

The Chamber noted that article 18 of the Statute is at the heart of the complementarity regime which underpins the Statute and encapsulates the idea of a process of dialogue of a legal nature, between the Court and the Prosecutor on the one hand, and the relevant State, on the other. It stressed that statements or assumptions

These definitions and the elements of these crimes used by the International Criminal Court can support States to define and therefore criminalize better sexual and gender-based violence not only as atrocity crimes but also as violations of women's rights.

of political nature have no place in a Court of law and that it is not within the Chamber's or any organ of the Court's purview to determine issues relating to a State's representation, or to the transition of power within a given State; accordingly, it considered that it needed to receive reliable and updated information as to the identification of the authorities currently representing Afghanistan. Because of their respective institutional mandates, the entities deemed suitable to provide this type of information at this stage where the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Bureau of the Assembly of States Party.

Noting the need to promptly and urgently take all steps necessary and appropriate to preserve potential evidence of crimes within the jurisdiction of the Court, the Chamber finally reminded the Prosecutor of the provisions contained in article 18(6) of the Statute, according to which 'the Prosecutor may, on an exceptional

basis, seek authority from the Pre-Trial Chamber to pursue necessary investigative steps for the purpose of preserving evidence where there is a unique opportunity to obtain important evidence or there is a significant risk that such evidence may not be subsequently available.

In conclusion, the Rome Statute constitutes a robust legal framework that defines and criminalizes conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence. However, this framework is not always fully implemented, and advocacy efforts to support it remain siloed. Therefore, it is so important to have the Rome Statute universally ratified and implemented.

PANEL SESSION 3: MIGRATION AND REFUGEE POLICIES INTERGOVERNMENTAL RESPONSES TO RECENT DISPLACEMENTS

Keynote Remarks: Migration and Refugee Policies of Greece

H.E. Ms. Sofia Voultepsi, Deputy Minister of Migration and Asylum in charge of Integration, Member of the Greek Parliament, New Democracy | USA



H.E. Ms. Sophia Voultepsi is the Deputy Minister of Migration and Asylum of Greece. Since 2004, Ms. Voultepsi is the elected Member of the Hellenic Parliament and served as Parliamentary Spokeswoman of the New Democracy Party from 2012 until June 2014. Deputy Minister Voultepsi was the Secretary of the Parliamentary Committees for National Defense, Foreign Affairs, Macedonia-Thrace and Aegean regions. H.E. Ms. Voultepsi was a Delegate of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe – OSCE. Ms. Voultepsi was a participant in many international press delegations to all European countries, USA, Russia, Asia, Africa. She covered conflicts in areas of the Middle East,

Kuwait, Bosnia, Sahara, the fall of the Ceausescu regime in Romania and the fall of the Berlin Wall. Ms. Voultepsi received her Public Law and Political Science degree from the Athens University Law School.

Greece, as the first reception country has gone through many stages during the seven-year refugee crisis. We have become sort of subject experts who have learned from our mistakes, but who have been victims of imported mistakes as well as victims of the instrumentalization of refugees and migrants by Turkey, which attempted two years ago to breach our northern border in Evros. Because of our geographical position and because of the behavior of Turkey, which is constantly instrumentalizing refugees and migrants, taking people sometimes to the Aegean Islands and later to the Islands of Evros on our northern border, where in a very difficult position. The policy we have chosen is a combination of border protection and people protection.

These two are not, in our opinion, incompatible, they are compatible. During these years, the experience we gained in the field led us to devise a series of good practices. The main international problem is that global migration and good practices are fragmented and have not yet achieved a common migration strategy for asylum. Moreover, we have not yet achieved a common integration strategy. One of the biggest challenges we had to face in Greece was the rapid transition from the status of an asylum seeker to the status of an asylum recipient. This quick transition becomes a barrier to integration. As a result, while people are in camps, they receive benefits from the European Union, and when they receive asylum and leave, they receive benefits from the Greek state as Greece abides by the Geneva Convention and all international treaties. The International Organization of Migration manages our country's flagship integration program, and various others, which have been in operation since the summer of 2019. The program provides Greek knowledge and aids in the transition to professional life.



In Greece, we now have a new national integration strategy consisting of three main pillars. For the first time, a pre-integration stage is included to ensure a smooth transition to full integration. The strategy focuses on real integration and not the creation of parallel social systems that lead to the creation of ghettos and increase social marginalization, poverty, radicalization, and of course criminality. The strategy also includes two other major pillars, integration and protection of refugees and immigrants in all aspects of their lives, avoidance of all forms of violence, and trafficking, familiarization with the European way of life, and gender equality. Greece is the only European country that included integration in the recovery and resilience fund.

It includes a vocational training program for refugees, specifically in sectors of the Greek economy where there is a labor shortage. The key sectors are agriculture, tourism, construction, and manufacturing. Special emphasis will be given to women who will be trained mainly in tourism and manufacturing. In 2021-2022, we collaborated with UNICEF on an innovative educational program called “All Children in Education”. This is a non-formal education project, a bridge that leads children safely to formal education and national state schools. The school year 2021-2022 is expected to be the best for migrant children. It should serve as a model for Europe as a whole according to UNICEF.

A special chapter of which Greece is proud is the protection of unaccompanied minors and the juvenile protection system is constantly being improved. Of course, it is not easy to enforce the global integration policy, although we must try because we need it. There are common chapters on which we can agree. For example, migration policy must be holistic in order to be effective with integration as a key pillar. All actions carried out within the framework of a common migration policy must be at the integration mark.

The strategic objective and philosophy of the common integration strategy is the protection of human rights, the protection, and security of refugees and immigrants, access to health and education, the safeguarding of children’s rights, and the prevention of all forms of violence, including human trafficking.

Our world is going through a multi-layered crisis and needs skilled workers to restart its economy. A basic human right of refugees is their autonomous and dignified living so that they can earn a living by working without depending on state benefits. All countries should develop education and training programs for the employment of refugees in crucial sectors of the economies. True integration is based on familiarity with basic values, such as the rule of law and gender equality in order to ensure peaceful coexistence. Unaccompanied minors are a particularly vulnerable population, highly exposed to danger, violence, and exploitation.

Every country should establish a special service for unaccompanied minors that will protect and monitor children from the time they arrive until they reach adulthood. After they reach adulthood, all countries should continue to care for unaccompanied minors until they enter the labor market to accomplish these programs aimed at easing the transition of unaccompanied minors into adulthood must be developed through studies, professional rehabilitation, and continued support. In their legislative initiatives, all countries should include an integration mark. Refugees and migrants should seek integration, education, and employment.

Concluding my intervention, I would like to drive your attention to the message. According to my opinion, we should start with the basic ideas, the ideas that unite us and pave the way to a common migration and integration strategy.



Moderator: Opening Remarks

Yuksel Durgut, Spokesperson, International Journalists Association | GERMANY



Yuksel Durgut is the Spokesperson of the International Journalists Association. Mr. Durgut started his journalism career in 1994 in Cihan News Agency. He worked as a war reporter in many countries. He was a bureau chief of Cihan in Pakistan and Afghanistan for almost 10 years. After 2004, he held various positions at Cihan News until the 15 July 2016 coup attempt. Mr. Durgut, a Political Science graduate, has been living in exile in Germany since 2018. He is also the Editor in chief of Journalist Post Magazine. Mr. Durgut is an author in TR7/24 and writes about foreign politics. He published several books “I’m listening to Istanbul”, “My Blue World”, “Istanbul

from the Consuls’ window”, “Sanctuaries of Istanbul from the Sky” and finally in Germany “The Hope of Children”. He produced several documentaries for International Tv channels.

As a journalist living in Germany now, I would like to explain why I came here in 2018 being a recent displacement person. When the Turkish ruling party Justice and Development Party (AKP) came to power in 2002, it was a party that represented the common interest. Its supporters varied from hard-core Islamists, traditional religious groups, Islamist modernizers, and socially conservative businessmen, to liberal intellectuals, secular reformists, and the Kurds. There were relatively few influential political actors among the party members.

AKP was analyzed under two periods. The period from its first term of coming to power to the 2011 elections, was defined as AKP appearing as a reformist party that stimulated democratization and expanded freedoms. The AKP’s second term, after 2011, was defined as “the Period of the Erdoğan regime.” After winning his first and second elections, Erdoğan strengthened his power and started eliminating both the social and political groups he allied with as well as the different voices within the party. The government’s authoritarian tendencies became more visible with the 2013 Gezi protests. After the corruption investigations targeting his close circles and the AKP’s cabinet ministers, Erdoğan increased his strength and authoritarian rule by blaming the opposition groups for plotting to remove him from power. After the failed coup attempt in July 2016, Erdoğan finally managed to establish his one-man regime.

The mysterious July 15 Coup Attempt in 2016, called a “gift from God” by Erdoğan, gave the government an excuse and unlimited power to carry out a widespread purge and establish a fully authoritarian regime. Through the state of emergency declared right after the coup attempt, Erdoğan held the power to preside over the cabinet, issuing decrees that bypassed the Parliament and the Constitutional Court.

In the first 2 months of the State of Emergency, dozens of renowned journalists, including leading reporters and editors of newspapers and magazines, were placed in detention or arrested and a total of 620 press credentials were canceled. The scale of the roundups of jailed journalists was astonishing. For instance, 42 arrest warrants were issued on journalists on July 25, and another 47 were issued 2 days later. Reporters Without Borders (RSF) analyzed the



attained interrogation records and stated that “many journalists are being targeted above all for working for media sympathetic to the Gülen Movement. Their work as journalists is equated to membership of the movement, which in turn, is equated to complicity in the coup attempt”

Following the coup attempt, 160 media outlets were shut down by government decrees. In the mid of November 2016, the number of journalists in pretrial detention since their writing and journalistic activities raised to 144, making Turkey the worldwide leader in jailing journalists. I was one of them. I was arrested in September 2016, I had a heart condition and had an open-heart bypass surgery in prison, and the Turkish regime did not even allow my family to stay with me in the hospital as a companion. They sent me back to jail. After 13 months, I was able to get out of Silivri Prison.

According to Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), the number of imprisoned journalists in Turkey, made it the world's worst jailer of journalists after 2016. The July 15 Coup Attempt turned into an unprecedented twist for the Turkish media. After the coup attempt, the State of Emergency was declared and lasted for 2 years. During this period, the Turkish government implemented an immense purge against the critics of Erdoğan. Hundreds of critical journalists were arrested, making Turkey the world's biggest jailer of journalists in a short period (Freedom House 2017). With the emergency degrees issued during this time, hundreds of newspapers, news agencies, radio stations, television networks, and magazines were shut down which caused thousands of journalists to lose their jobs. About 889 press cards were canceled by the government.

When I could not find any chance to work in Turkey, I decided to leave the country. I was alone when I was

crossing the border between Greece and Turkey. The first thing I did when I was sitting on the Greek side of River Maritsa (Turkish people call it Meric and Greek language it is called Evros), was I turned on my mobile and I removed the VPN application from my mobile. That was the only thing I could get connected to the world with one application. I removed it from my mobile after that I felt free.

I left my country with one bag. I left my hopes, my family, my friends, my education, my earnings, my news agency where I worked since 1994, and my house all in behind.

I am only a name. You can replace the names and call another name. It is not that important. The important thing is why this brain drain happens in autocratic

I am only a name. You can replace the names and call another name. It is not that important. The important thing is why this brain drain happens in autocratic countries. Do you know that unbelievably autocratic regimes around the world are starting to increase?

countries. Do you know that unbelievably autocratic regimes around the world are starting to increase? When these regimes are in power, we will keep talking about Recent Displacements of Migration and Refugee Policies.

We must find ways to stop these regimes. I say brain drain because dictatorial regimes always see educated people as their enemies. The reports and the numbers I have just presented to you are an example of this hostility. Now I'm in my new home. The biggest problem of refugees over a certain age like me is integration. I believe I got over this in a very short time. For me, having a new homeland is not just about the air and water of that country. The people of that country are also important. That is why I am Greek and a German too, I am a citizen of the world.

Panelist 1: The Cross-cutting Issue of Migration, Refugees, and the SDGs

Marianna Kakaounaki, Journalist, eKathimerini, Documentary Producer | GREECE



Marianna Kakaounaki is an award-winning journalist for Greek print and TV outlets. Ms. Kakaounaki has reported for the Wall Street Journal, and she is regularly serving as a field producer for CBS News and has been a part-time employee of the Olympic Broadcasting Services working as their features reporter for the last 9 years. In 2019, Ms. Kakaounaki was nominated and selected by the US State Department to be an IVLP “Edward R. Murrow Program” participant. During her time off from work, she has participated in documentary workshops, film-making courses, and investigative seminars in Greece and abroad. She just released her first

feature film “INVISIBLE”, which is about the persecuted Turkish community. Marianna Kakaounaki has her degree in Psychology.

Six years ago, a photograph of a dead boy washed up on the shores of Turkey struck a chord around the world. You probably remember that boy. If you see that photograph you will remember. He was three years old, lying dead and alone, face down in the sand. He was wearing blue shorts and a red T-shirt. His name was Alan Kurdi, and he was a Syrian refugee. The five-meter-long inflatable rubber boat he had been bundled into, together with 15 others, capsized five minutes after leaving the shores of Bodrum in Turkey. The photograph of the lifeless child stated Francois Holland, France’s President at the time, “...must be a reminder of the world’s responsibility regarding refugees.” His European counterparts were also “deeply moved,” by the image.

Pieces of art based on Alan’s death were created. Songs were dedicated to the drowned child. Charities helping refugees at sea saw their donations quadruple in the days and weeks following. This was six years ago. Since then, over 700 more children have been killed while trying to reach European shores via dangerous journeys by sea.

One of these children was five-year-old Yahya Ayoubi. He was a Turkish-born Afghan refugee who had lived out his short life in poverty. His father’s asylum requests in Turkey had been denied twice, meaning Yahya was not allowed to enroll in school there. In early November, then, instead of starting first grade, father and son set out for Greece. They joined 22 others on yet another overloaded rubber boat, once again, without enough life jackets. The boat capsized and Yahya’s body was found early the next morning between the rocks on the shore of the Greek Island of Samos.

This time there were no statements about Yahya made in any European capital. But this death is another, different kind of, a moment in the refugee crisis. In this case, the Greek authorities decided to act by charging the boy’s 25-year-old father, with his son’s death. Last year I traveled to Samos to report on that story. I met the father, Nadir who stood accused of endangering the life of his child and abandoning him after the boat capsized. He faced up to ten years in prison.

A few months ago, he was finally acquitted. This is the first time such charges have been brought against a bereaved parent asylum seeker. It might be an isolated case, but it does create a precedent. It does come at a time when there



is a dangerous trend of criminalizing humanitarian aid and a growing apathy to the issue across Europe. This is the context in which refugees are coming to Europe.

However today, I want to talk to you about another refugee's journey. A journey that I have been following closely as a journalist and as a filmmaker. A journey that can give us great insight into the biggest issues and challenges surrounding the refugee crisis. It all started on 26th September, three years ago, when 4 families of 9 adults and as many children scrambled over a belt of rocks in a remote spot on the Turkish coast to board a small speedboat. The parents were Turkish nationals. Academics, judges, businessmen, and teachers. A few years ago, they would never have thought that they would have to be smuggled out of their own country, but the trip across the Aegean was now their only option.

After the night of the attempted coup against President Erdogan in July 2016, over 1 million Turkish citizens have been investigated for terrorism charges related to the coup. Most of them were fired from their jobs, their assets were frozen, and they faced prison time, so they decided to leave. In the crossing, the family I have been following suffered an unbearable loss, but they eventually managed to come to Greece where UNHCR provided them with a house, I was there when they moved into that flat and I was shocked by its state. Dirty and full of cockroaches.

Many months later staff from UNHCR saw the footage and could not believe the state of the flat either. They promised they will investigate and talk to their partners in their housing program. Someone, not them, was making a profit at the expense of refugees. The family found some comfort in that in Athens there was a growing community of Turkish refugees.

One of the priorities of these refugees was to find jobs in Greece, for a country that went through a prolonged financial crisis this was not an easy task. They had to be flexible and accept the fact that they would have to do jobs that had nothing to do with their profession back home, high school teachers would be builders or doctors would work in call centers.

This community was intentionally getting minimum support from the Greek government, and for years they did not want to attract any attention. You have to understand that the politics between Greece and Turkey are complicated, so they felt it was better to live under the radar. To be invisible. When they first started arriving, that was back in 2016 and early 2017, they realized that they had to learn the language. Without this knowledge, there could never be a real integration.

So, they looked for a space where they could do language lessons together. They found and rented a small space and hired a Greek teacher. As the community grew, the space eventually got bigger and it also turned out to be something really important for everyone, it was a safe space they could meet, eat, pray, and ultimately give them a sense of normalcy that they so much needed.

One of the priorities of these refugees was to try and find jobs, in Greece a country that went through a prolonged financial crisis this was not an easy task. They had to be flexible and accept the fact that they would have to do jobs that had nothing to do with their profession back home, high school teachers would be builders or doctors would work in call centers. For many, this was difficult to accept, but for others, it was the beginning of a new chapter. And the decision to try and put down roots in a new country. Indeed, many families chose to stay in Greece but most of the families' wish was to continue the trip to northern Europe where there are better social benefits. But to do that, they have to take another risk. Because there is no legal way of doing it.

What I witnessed firsthand is an incredibly sophisticated illegal network, that would take advantage of refugees. Sell them expensive fake passports, sometimes of really



bad quality, putting them at risk of being arrested. The family I was following spent almost a year in Greece, but they were determined to leave. They tried six times and only the sixth time was successful. They reached a European country but once they settled that is when grief took over. They realized that all this time they were simply in survival mode. Because on their trip to freedom, they suffered the biggest loss. From Turkey to Greece, their two children, Mustafa who was 8, and Gulsum who was 10 drowned in the Aegean Sea.

For people like them who are recovering from trauma, to be able to adapt to a new reality, to make any learning possible. We have to make sure to provide support for their mental health. I am not only talking about the family I followed who lost their children. All the people I met were grieving, mourning the loss of life, their home, and family, while also facing the daunting task of starting over from scratch in a new world.

All should start with making that trip to freedom safe. This should be the priority. Because people are crossing over every day, only last month the relative of a Turkish family who was trying to cross the borders sent me a message in the middle of the night. The man was very stressed about the well-being of his loved ones as he could no longer contact them. He was afraid they were pushed back. In their case, that meant they would go straight to the state that they were breaking free from. Straight to prison. I forwarded his messages to an activist and gave him the number of the police station in the area. He thanked me but 20 minutes later he informed me that his fear was not unfounded. He wrote to me that everyone in that group was pushed back that night.

This is dangerous and it must stop. Everyone should be able to understand this. And then once we have a better understanding of their lives, we will realize how their goals are completely relatable: all they want is to find a job, pay the bills, and make a better life for their families. To live in peace. The same way we all do.

Panelist 2: Climate Crisis Inducing New Waves of Migration

Dr. Graham Thom, Refugee Coordinator, Amnesty International Australia | AUSTRALIA



Dr. Graham Thom has been Amnesty International Australia's Refugee Coordinator since May 2000, working on behalf of individual asylum seekers as well as on broader human rights issues relating to refugees. He has visited detention centers in Australia, including those on Christmas Island and refugee camps and detention centers in the Netherlands, India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Syria, Iraq, Jordan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Kenya, Nauru and Thailand. Since 2007 Dr. Thom has represented Amnesty International at the UNHCR Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement in Geneva. Dr. Thom continues to give lectures and publish articles on refugee issues, both globally and domestically. In 2000, Dr Thom completed his PhD at the University of Sydney's Department of Government.



Climate Change and Forced Displacement

SDG 13 Take Urgent Action to Combat Climate Change and its Impacts

What does climate displacement look like and how are governments responding?

When we look at the impacts of climate change, specifically on displacement, it is important to remember that climate change alone does not lead to displacement. It is here I would like to pay respects to the late Professor Stephen Castles (1944-2022) one of the foremost scholars in research on migration and its causes. It was at his memorial that Professor Jane McAdam noted that as far back as 2002:

*Stephen was spot on when he said that climate and environmental factors 'are part of complex patterns of multiple casualties, in which natural and environmental factors are closely linked to economic, social, and political ones. This is where we need much more research and better understanding if we are to address the root causes of forced migration.'*¹

People's reasons to move are always multifaceted. Sadly though, as we have seen recently, other significant drivers, including conflict, poverty, and human rights violations (not to mention natural disasters) are often closely linked with the impacts of climate change.

Further, when discussing climate displacement, it is also important to remember, again as noted by Prof Jane McAdam that, "Climate change amplifies the frequency and severity of extreme weather events, meaning that disasters will worsen, and displacement will likely grow."² In short, without action, things are only going to get worse.

Climate change and human rights

People being forced to move due to the impacts of climate change is certainly a serious humanitarian issue but when does it also become a human rights issue?

When states fail to act, to ensure the health, safety, and dignity of those impacted, climate change becomes a human rights issue. In 2021, the Human Rights Council (HRC) recognized the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment in its resolution 48/13.

Last year close to 24 million internal displacements were linked to disasters. What was done to support them, and what are their prospects now they have been displaced? And what happens when they are left with no choice but to cross a border? Where are they?

In order to answer these questions, it is important to examine where they are situated. UNHCR has noted countries highly vulnerable to climate change host 40% of the world's refugees and are home to 70% of people internally displaced by conflict and violence. The vast majority of the over 100 million displaced are Internally Displaced People (IDPs).

While it is possible to include numerous recent examples of climate-induced disasters, not only leading to displacement but impacting those already displaced, the recent floods in Pakistan are particularly telling. Since mid-June 2022, 80 million people in Pakistan have been affected by unprecedented rains and devastating floods, leaving 6.4 million in need of urgent humanitarian assistance. This has included approximately 800,000 refugees currently residing in Pakistan.

Intergovernmental response to climate displacement

Over the last 15 years the international community has increasingly stepped up to address climate displacement, for example:

- There have been cases brought before UN treaty bodies³
- UN resolutions⁴
- Even at the recent UNGA there has been lobbying for an ICJ advisory opinion on climate change, brought by Pacific states⁵

¹ <https://www.unhcr.org/en-au/research/working/3de344fd9/environmental-change-forced-migration-making-sense-debate-stephen-castles.html>

² McAdam, J. "Moving Beyond Refugee Law: Putting Principles on Climate Mobility into Practice", 30 June 2022, p2

³ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2020/01/historic-un-human-rights-case-opens-door-climate-change-asylum-claims>

⁴ <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G17/184/52/PDF/G1718452.pdf?OpenElement>

⁵ <https://time.com/6197027/pacific-island-nations-vanuatu-climate-change/>



- A recent UN Secretary-General Action Agenda on Internal Displacement⁶
- As well as a new working group established within the International Law Commission to examine the legal implications of sea-level rise, including displacement, migration, and planned relocations⁷

International instruments

It is difficult to argue that the international community has not identified the need to address the impacts of climate change, specifically forced displacement. As noted by Prof McAdam: One of the most significant achievements has been the inclusion of language and action lines on climate mobility in multiple instruments, including the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration. All this has been aided by the creation in 2012 of the Nansen Initiative on Disaster-Induced Cross-Border Displacement, and its successor the Platform on Disaster Displacement.⁸

Despite this, however, as highlighted below, it is at the individual state level that protections for individuals forced to move across borders, continue to be found wanting.

Challenges remain, both short-term and long-term

When examining how climate change leads to forced displacement it is important to note that with climate change, we have both extreme events and slow onset processes. According to Dr. Koko Warner⁹, there are four emerging patterns of human mobility, ranging from short term displacement and return (for example following bushfires, or flooding, etc.); through longer term displacement where climate stressors interact with conflict; to the long-term deterioration of habitat¹⁰, e.g., sea level rise issues currently facing the Pacific Islands.

While short term disaster displacement often sees people able to return home relatively quickly, increasingly though, when combined with other issues such as impacts on livelihoods, through social unrest, people are forced to move longer term. Initially this can be internally

(often to cities) but ultimately it can also include people forced across borders.

This is where the key challenges remain, with: “A resurgence of nationalistic political parties and anti-migration sentiments around the world.”¹¹ The impact of this will be discussed below.

UNHCR Recommendations

In response to the need for guidance, to ensure those displaced in the context of climate and in need of protection, are recognized by states, UNHCR issued in October 2020 “Legal Considerations regarding claims for international protection made in the context of the adverse effects of climate change and disasters.”¹² Further, in March 2022 UNHCR made 10 recommendations relating to climate change, displacement, and human rights. Two of these included: 1) applying existing refugee and human rights instruments, when cross-border displacement due to climate change occurs; 2) facilitating regular pathways to contribute to climate change adaptation and prevent displacement.¹³

A significant decision in providing a legal basis for those seeking asylum based on climate displacement was the 2020 UN Human Rights Committee’s Decision in the case of *Teitiotia v NZ*¹⁴. In this decision, the UN Human Rights Committee stated that countries may not deport individuals seeking protection who face climate change-induced conditions that violate the right to live in their country of origin.

Government responses - when the rubber hits the road

So, considering these decisions have states changed their practices in any way when it comes to individuals attempting to cross their border to seek protection? The short answer is no, rather what we are seeing around the world is the increasing use of externalization policies, both to stop and to deter others from trying to cross their border. For instance:

- Australia, with Operation Sovereign borders, is warehousing refugee and asylum seekers attempting



to enter Australia by boat, in countries such as Nauru and previously PNG.

- Frontex, the EU Border Agency, handing those attempting to cross the Mediterranean by boat, back to the Libyan Coast Guard, where they are then often detained in appalling conditions¹⁵, not to mention refusing to rescue boats, leading to the recent tragic deaths of young Syrian girls, in the arms of their parents, while the authorities looked on and did nothing¹⁶.
- The UK and Denmark, looking to remove asylum seekers to countries such as Rwanda.¹⁷

Building barriers to stop people from entering, turn backs, detention, and externalization practices, are all part of an increasing deterrent agenda being put in place globally to stop those seeking protection from accessing a state's territory.

When it comes to resettlement, next year (2023) UNHCR has identified more than 2 million refugees will need resettlement. During the height of the pandemic in 2020, refugee resettlement plummeted to record lows,

with only 22,800 departures that year. Historically we have only seen about 30 countries engaging in refugee resettlement and even in a good year resettlement has rarely provided a solution for more than 100,000 people.¹⁸ We are not seeing a significant uptake in countries offering alternative pathways for those in need of safety, ensuring they do not need to make dangerous journeys.

Despite increasing international recognition of the need for a global response to climate displacement, the recognition of the right to seek safety due to the impact of climate change, and guidance on how those who have been displaced can be recognized and protected, individual states continue to make it increasingly difficult for individuals to cross their border.

Until governments, particularly those in the global North move to a system that both allows those in need of safety to cross their borders, as well as stepping up to provide safe and durable pathways, the impacts of climate change and climate displacement are going to lead to further human tragedy.

6 https://www.un.org/en/content/action-agenda-on-internal-displacement/assets/pdf/Action-Agenda-on-Internal-Displacement_EN.pdf

7 McAdam, J. "Moving Beyond Refugee Law: Putting Principles on Climate Mobility into Practice", 30 June 2022, p2

8 *IBID*, pg 2

9 Dr. Koko Warner manages UNFCCC's Vulnerability Subdivision

10 <http://sdg.iisd.org/commentary/guest-articles/human-mobility-in-the-context-of-sids-and-climate-change-pre-empting-planning-and-contingency-arrangements-for-adverse-climate-change-impacts/>

11 McAdam, J. *OpCit* p2

12 <https://www.refworld.org/docid/5f75f2734.html>

13 <https://www.unhcr.org/6242ea7c4.pdf>

14 <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2020/01/historic-un-human-rights-case-opens-door-climate-change-asylum-claims#:~:text=He%20filed%20a%20complaint%20to,uninhabitable%20for%20all%20its%20residents.>

15 <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/frontex-europes-border-agency-fire-aiding-libyas-brutal-migrant-detent-rcna6778>

16 <https://www.infomigrants.net/en/post/43282/six-syrian-refugees-die-of-dehydration-at-sea>

17 <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/10/4/uk-still-backs-rwanda-deportations-despite-legal-challenge>

18 <https://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/global-resettlement-statistics/2/>

Panelist 3: Conflict-related Enforced Migration

Nicole Melaku, Executive Director, National Partnership for New Americans | USA



Nicole Melaku is the Executive Director of the National Partnerships for New Americans bringing over a decade of experience working on immigrant and refugee issues at the local, state, and national level. She is the former Executive Director of the Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition and its C4 sister organization CIRC Action Fund. Nicole is a first generation New American whose mother and grandparents hail from Chihuahua, Mexico and who naturalized as a result of the Immigration Reform and Naturalization Act of 1986. Nicole's career trajectory draws on the strength and perseverance of her family's own immigration story-she is

an advocate, organizer, and movement leader who is dedicated to building a more inclusive and fair democracy. She is a Welcoming America White House Champion of Change, a Hispanic in Philanthropy Fellow, a Transformative Leadership for Change Fellow, a New American Leaders alumnus, and a former co-chair of NPNA's sister coalition the Fair Immigration Reform Movement.

National Partnership for New Americans (NPNA) is the nation's largest coalition of immigrant and refugee-led organizations which is working to promote inclusion strategy at the state, national and federal levels. The way we do our work is through advocacy, driving federal policy, and leveraging powerful campaigns to elevate the voice of directly impacted people into the policy conversations. At the end of the day, the people that are closest to this issue, and are themselves, immigrants, refugees, and children of immigrants are drivers of change. We do not want to be seen as clients or people that are channeled around from country to country, but that we have agency. And in the conversation of climate change, in particular, we see migration as an adaptation strategy period.

4 million people in Ukraine in a matter of four months or less were rehomed to different parts of Europe and welcome to the United States as well. Since August 2020, we have welcomed over 700,000 Afghan new arrivals and allies to the United States. In the last six months, almost 50,000 Ukrainians have petitioned for safety here in the United States. Additionally, another 200,000 people are in the process of being sponsored by a new program of community sponsorship. Over the last 12 weeks, we have seen some desperate political moves by certain elected officials to send migrants from the southern hemisphere that are arriving along the US border to the interior of the country in an effort to stoke anti-immigrant sentiment. We are living this situation in every way here in the United States and we instead want to build a proactive strategy around inclusion.

I think the main message here for us is that inclusion involves a variety of actors from the very moment that we have a new arrival. Those are your international NGOs that safely resettle people in their new countries. We have a robust resettlement system here in the United States that many of you know were nearly decimated under the previous administration. So, we continue to advocate that the refugee admission cap in the United States is held at a base minimum of 200,000 people per year. To preview a sense of where that resettlement system is now, there are close to 11,000 people that have been settled



over the last year even under the current administration. This system has been nearly decimated. It is not back up to capacity. At the same time, we have a new wave of asylum seekers who are coming to our country and across the globe seeking safety, from a severely outdated system that has not caught up with 21st-century needs and realities around the impending threats to democracy worldwide, as well as drivers of migration such as climate change.

What we find is that when we have welcomed newcomers into our community, there is a wrap-around infrastructure and inclusion, a comprehensive strategy as what we call it at NPNA, sort of indicators of immigrant wellbeing, which are access to healthcare, education, and civic engagement. Protection from deportation and from detention are core pillars of our work. What we have found is that it takes a variety of stakeholders from NGOs and directly impacted people themselves to propose and drive policy, but also a role for state and local governments. The way we can ensure the safety of migrants in our nation here is around providing access to legal services. We have long advocated for greater federal investment so that people can make that transition from refugee to former refugee to lawful permanent resident, and eventually to citizenship.

In the case of asylum seekers, from asylum seekers to asylum grantees; from undocumented immigrant to a person that has legal status to work and live free of deportation and eventually be voting member of our society. So, there is a role for state and local actors for greater federal investment and promoting all of those strategies, and we do so through our policy work. I would indicate that the lessons of Afghanistan and the Ukrainian arrivals are to uncover these moments in history and uncover deep inequities in our communities and in our nations. So one of the crucial problems we think is that housing continues to be a major issue here in the United States. The only way that we can address some of those major barriers to integration is to have people on the ground uncovering what those inefficiencies and gaps are so that we can build a collective response as an advocacy community and therefore propose policy to address those concerns.

We feel that this moment around climate change and democracy, the rise of authoritarianism, calls for us to note the fragile nature of our democracy worldwide. The remedy for that is to encourage civic participation in leadership development. There is a role for the media to promote stories of inclusive lived experiences. I think that the biggest need for people to be unafraid is to share those stories and to highlight the achievements of people persevering in the stories of welcome that are happening across the world, the stories where we hear communities stepping up. For the migrant bus arrivals in New York City, our partners, and members, the New York Immigrant Coalition has stepped up to a lot of coordination with local government stakeholders and safely bring people out of harm's way and keep them out of situations where they would be suspect to human trafficking and other kinds of dangerous situations.

We are looking forward to continuing and building the expansion of state and local policy. Not every state in the United States has a uniform political environment. So some areas of the country are leading the way in immigrant inclusion strategy, on emergency response to forced displacement. Our colleagues in California who live along the southern border have been proactively moving and advancing additional wrap-around resettlement services that are funded by their state government for an additional nine months of resettlement for asylum grantees. So that means a family who is recently arrived in California can qualify for as much as 18 months of wraparound services. In the meantime, that contributes to aiding and establishing their lives in their new state. I think when we are talking about climate change, one of our observations for NPNA and for our network was that the immigrant communities that we engage and organize in the United States are often those most impacted by climate disasters domestically, and abroad.

These are people who most often are not reasons for the creation of the climate emergencies, but of course, will be most impacted. Over the last year, we have taken the steps to establish what we call the Climate Justice Collaborative at NPNA, where we can really move proactive state and



local policies for heat resist resilience, state, and local policies so that there is workforce integration as we are working toward just transition in the United States that immigrant, refugee, migrant populations will be a part of that workforce. Therefore, in the moments when there is an impending driver of migration, our communities will be prepared to respond both in a narrative sense as well as in policy. We have developed a toolkit, which is sort of preemptively educating the larger community about harmful narratives around climate force migration; it is an adaptation strategy.

We have proactively gathered our field of advocates, and leaders of community voices to be able to build in that response and share that with our elected officials, and the Biden administration so that we are in fact not perpetuating these narratives that are driving sort of the separatist approach and this sort of othering of communities who are simply seeking safety and who are adapting to drivers of migration. I think the framework around the narrative of inclusion, equity, and belonging is incredibly valuable to us in the United States as we are trying to reset our democracy. When we think about how our nation was founded by immigrants, nearly 70 million foreign people who are children of immigrants, and descendants of immigrants live in this country, it is our obligation to interrupt those narratives and offer new frames that are welcoming and that can really bridge communities.

The idea of inclusion and belonging is central to the way that we need to advance this conversation around displacement. There are good people in the world who will welcome and find the resources they need to embrace newcomers in a way that honors their human dignity.

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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

1 NO
POVERTY



2 ZERO
HUNGER



3 GOOD HEALTH
AND WELL-BEING



4 QUALITY
EDUCATION



5 GENDER
EQUALITY



6 CLEAN WATER
AND SANITATION



7 AFFORDABLE AND
CLEAN ENERGY



8 DECENT WORK AND
ECONOMIC GROWTH



9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION
AND INFRASTRUCTURE



10 REDUCED
INEQUALITIES



11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES
AND COMMUNITIES



12 RESPONSIBLE
CONSUMPTION
AND PRODUCTION



13 CLIMATE
ACTION



14 LIFE
BELOW WATER



15 LIFE
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