

working notes

*facts and analysis of social
and economic issues*

Migrations in Our Common Home

Forced Displacement
in a Global Context

Insiders and Outsiders

A World of Flows

Working with Families
from Direct Provision
Centres in Cork

Forced Displacement:
Well-Founded Fear of
Home

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Facts and analysis of social and economic issues
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Editorial

Colette Bennett

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Wars, inter-state conflicts and climate breakdown result in the mass movement of peoples. According to the World Economic Forum, wars, violence or persecution forced 11 million people to flee their homes throughout 2019, mostly from low or middle-income countries, nearly double the figure for 2010 and creating a global population of almost 80 million displaced.¹ The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees reported that more than one per cent of humanity, that is one out of every 96 people in the world, was displaced in 2020, with more and more unable to return home.²

This was the topic of the 2021 SMA Summer School. Attendees at 'Migrations in Our Common Home: Causes, Effects, and Responses' heard from Dr. Dug Cubie, School of Law, University College Cork; Dr. Kevin Hargaden, Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice;

¹ Johnny Wood, "This Is How Many People Are Forcibly Displaced Worldwide," *World Economic Forum*, June 18, 2020, <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/06/displacement-numbers-world-refugee-day/>.

² Statistics and Demographics Section, "Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2020" (UNHCR: Geneva, June 2021).

and Professor John Barry, School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy, Politics and International Relations, Queen's University, Belfast.

Quoting Filippo Grandi, UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Dr. Cubie spoke of the “changed reality” of forced displacement as “no longer a short term and temporary phenomenon.” Dr. Cubie attributes this more cyclical form of forced displacement to changes in the *drivers* of displacement. The impact of climate change, natural (or unnatural) disasters and conflict are more prevalent in the world today, creating longer-term displacement of people unable to return home and settling in other areas of the Global South. There is, however, cause for hope. The use of international instruments against worst-offender countries (such as the case the Gambia brought to the International Court of Justice against Myanmar in November 2019 for genocide of the Rohingya people); the collective action of communities fighting against climate change and the increased participation, particularly of younger people, in political discourse.

Discussing Pope Francis' 2020 encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti*, Dr. Hargaden spoke of the dangers in dividing the “insiders” from the “outsiders.” He spoke of how this othering of people may seem to create a community of insiders, but it is only when insiders use their social capital to extend support to those on the outside that we can hope to live up to the concept of social friendship at the heart of *Fratelli Tutti*. This open world, predicated on our collective capacity to open our hearts to it, would simultaneously create space for people to live with dignity in their own country and respect the right of people to seek a better life elsewhere. This would require better politics, that of public service; dialogue and friendship, within the ‘art of encounter’ where kindness is used as a response to cruelty and the value of everyone is recognised; and that everyone play their part on an ongoing basis, for the common good.

A lack of coherent response to what he terms climate breakdown, and the connection between flows of capital and flows of migration, were important themes discussed

by Professor John Barry. Positing a change in framing from “what can we do about climate change” to “what does the climate do for us”, Professor Barry urges us to consider the moral cultural opportunities in terms of changing our views of good life. Of moving from ecocidal capitalism and growth to the concept of sufficiency. Facing the challenge of redistribution of resources with a view to meeting our needs, rather than accumulating more.

These themes were discussed during a roundtable discussion, which I chaired and which included contributions from Sr. Josephine McCarthy on the practical implications of looking beyond the “other” to see the person. In this issue of *Working Notes* those diverse voices are represented by a wonderful photo essay compiled by Martina Madden based on the work being done at Cork Migrant Centre and a report from Eugene Quinn of Jesuit Refugee Services Ireland who draws on testimonies to argue that “more humane framework in response to global forced displacement is required.”

While speaking from unique perspectives, the reference to ‘Our Common Home’ in the title of the 2021 Summer School is where we see the common threads in these presentations. Climate breakdown, and its resultant disasters and displacements, affects all of us. But it affects some more than others. Can the concept of social friendship and ongoing accountability provide the transformational change needed to move from productivity-driven capitalism, which damages the Earth's limited resources, to sufficiency, where *everyone* has enough to live a life with dignity?

An often-used phrase about the pandemic that “we are all in the same sea, but not the same boat” is particularly relevant in this context. Some of us are, quite literally, on rafts.

Forced Displacement in a Global Context

Dr Dug Cubie

School of Law, University College Cork
Ireland. Programme Director, LLM in
International Human Rights Law & Public
Policy, and Co-Director of the Centre for
Criminal Justice & Human Rights (CCJHR).

“

“We are witnessing a changed reality in that forced displacement nowadays is not only vastly more widespread but is simply no longer a short-term and temporary phenomenon.”

*Filippo Grandi, UN High Commissioner
for Refugees (June 2020)¹*

¹ ‘Global forced displacement vastly more widespread in 2019’ UNHCR News (Adrian Edwards) 18 June 2020 <www.unhcr.org/en-ie/news/latest/2020/6/5eea140f4/global-forced-displacement-vastly-widespread-2019.html>

INTRODUCTION

The 1951 UN Refugee Convention has provided the foundations of the global regime to protect persons fleeing persecution and human rights abuse for over 70 years,² and millions of people have benefitted from the right not to be returned to a place where they would face serious risk (the concept of *non-refoulement*).³ However, it has long been recognised that the Refugee Convention only addresses one form of forced displacement – people who have fled across an internationally recognised border, and who have faced individualised persecution based on one of five key characteristics, namely: race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion.⁴ So what happens if someone is displaced within the borders of their own country? What are the responsibilities of a State regarding such internal displacement? Likewise, how do we address more generalised risks, such as systemic violence, sea level rise, or loss of agricultural land due to drought, which can equally lead to displacement of people? The climate emergency creates an urgency in understanding the drivers of mobility, both within countries and across international borders. This is particularly pertinent since, as the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi notes, not only are we seeing a broader range of types of forced displacement, but this displacement is becoming more long-term and cyclical, which raises important questions from both a protection and legal perspective.⁵

While the extent of, and situations which can lead to, forced displacement are increasingly being recognised, these insights are not new. Nearly 30 years ago, the leading human geographer Graeme Hugo set out his understanding of the “continuum” of displacement. Hugo’s model highlighted that it can be hard to identify precise drivers

² UN, *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees* (adopted 28 July 1951, entered into force 22 April 1954), 189 UNTS 137. The 1967 Protocol removed the geographic and temporal limitations set out in the 1951 Convention: UN, *Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees* (adopted 31 January 1967, entered into force 4 October 1967), 606 UNTS 267.

³ Elihu Lauterpacht & Daniel Bethlehem, ‘The Scope and Content of the Principle of *Non-refoulement*: Opinion for UNHCR’ (2001).

⁴ Art 1(2)(A), Refugee Convention (n.3).

⁵ The UN Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), defines ‘protection’ as: “all activities aimed at obtaining full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with the letter and the spirit of the relevant bodies of law (i.e. human rights law, international humanitarian law and refugee law).” See: IASC, *Protection and Accountability to Affected Populations in the Humanitarian Programme Cycle: Preliminary Guidance Note*, Emergency Directors Group (2015) pp.8-11.

“

The Refugee Convention only addresses one form of forced displacement – people who have fled across an internationally recognised border, and who have faced individualised persecution based on one of five key characteristics, namely: race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion.

of displacement, since there can be many factors influencing an individual’s decision to move from one place to another. At one end of the continuum is voluntary migration, in which the will and choice of the migrant is the decisive factor, while at the other end is forced migration where people are faced with serious harm or death if they remain where they currently live.⁶ Between these two extremes are a wide range of situations in which individuals have varying levels of agency in deciding whether or not to move from their current place of residence. Hugo distinguishes between voluntary, involuntary, and forced migration, and this continuum forms the basis for the following analysis in this paper.

The first section of this paper provides an overview of the phenomenon of forced displacement in a global context by outlining some of the trends in forced displacement as reported by organisations such as the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC). The paper will then examine different scenarios which can lead to forced displacements, namely: armed conflict, human rights abuse, climate change, and disasters. Each of these scenarios will be analysed through the lens of a specific country/regional context; however, it should be noted that the complexity of such displacement settings can be hard to capture in only a few pages. The final section will provide some reflections on future challenges and potential areas for hope.

⁶ Graeme Hugo, ‘Environmental Concerns and International Migration’ (Spring 1996) 30(1) *International Migration Review* 105, 107.



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OVERVIEW OF FORCED DISPLACEMENT

The 1990s were a key stage in our understanding of the different forms of forced displacement – from Graeme Hugo’s analysis of environmental migration,⁷ to the development of the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement.⁸ Consequently, there was an increased focus on reporting, monitoring and quantifying the extent of non-refugee forced displacement at a global level, as evidenced by the establishment of the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) within the Norwegian Refugee Council in 1998⁹ and the commencement of IOM’s Migration Research Series in 2000.¹⁰ This in turn led to the identification of more accurate and detailed statistics on the extent of global forced displacement. As the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has recorded, between 1990 and 2010 there

was a fairly consistent level of global forced displacement of between 30-50 million people per annum.¹¹ However, the past 10 years have seen a significant increase in all forms of forced displacement, defined by UNHCR as displacement resulting from “persecution, conflict, violence, human rights violations or events seriously disturbing public order.”¹²

This persistent and global increase in forced displacement is as a result of a range of complex events at the local, regional and global levels. Some of the drivers of displacement are interconnected, for example climate change can exacerbate socio-economic conditions which may in turn lead to armed conflict¹³ – which provides a worrying glimpse into potential future trends of displacement. Meanwhile, the ongoing crises in countries such as Syria, Afghanistan and Venezuela have led to millions of people being displaced from their homes due to violence and hunger. As per UNHCR’s statistics, by the end of June 2021 there were a total of 85.8 million people forcibly displaced around the world. This figure is comprised of 26.6 million refugees, 4.4 million asylum seekers, 3.9 million displaced

⁷ Ibid. See also: Douglas K. Bardsley and Graeme J. Hugo, ‘Migration and Climate Change: Examining Thresholds of Change to Guide Effective Adaptation Decision-Making’ (2010) 32 *Population and Environment* 238-262.

⁸ UN Office of the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement* (1998, revised 2004).

⁹ See for example: Allehone Mulugeta Abebe, ‘Special Rapporteurs as Law Makers: The Developments and Evolution of the Normative Framework for Protecting and Assisting Internally Displaced Persons’ (2011) 15(2) *The International Journal of Human Rights* 286-298. For information on the work of the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), see: www.internal-displacement.org/about-us.

¹⁰ The IOM Migration Research Series has to-date published 77 detailed reports on a wide range of migration issues, and is available online at: www.iom.int/migration-research-series.

¹¹ UN High Commissioner for Refugees, *Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2020* (June 2021), p.2.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), *When Rain Turns to Dust: Understanding and Responding to the Combined Impact of Armed Conflicts and the Climate and Environment Crisis on People’s Lives* (July 2020).

Venezuelans, and 50.9 million internally displaced persons.¹⁴ Indeed, despite wide-spread movement and travel restrictions across the globe arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, UNHCR reported that the total number of internally displaced persons rose by nearly 5% between December 2020 and June 2021.¹⁵

Internally displaced persons are, by definition, still within the borders of their country of nationality or residence, so the primary responsibility for their protection and support rests with that State.¹⁶ Conversely, persons who cross a border in search of protection and safety must rely on either the support of the host State or the international community. Yet in reality this responsibility is not shared equally across all countries in the world, and the majority of people who are forcibly displaced across a border are hosted in a neighbouring country. Consequently, a small number of countries carry a disproportionate burden in hosting people fleeing violence, conflict, and persecution. In mid-2021, five countries were supporting a third of all refugees, asylum seekers and displaced Venezuelans, with Turkey hosting 3.7 million and Colombia, Uganda, Pakistan and Germany each hosting around 1.5 million people.¹⁷ A small number of countries also account for a disproportionate number of the world's displaced persons, with more than two thirds of all internationally displaced persons originating from just five countries (Syria, Venezuela, Afghanistan, South Sudan and Myanmar).¹⁸

Considering the dynamic and challenging contexts in which forced displacement occurs, there can be differences in the methodologies and results of attempts to quantify the total number of people who are displaced at any one time.¹⁹ Alongside, the UNHCR Global

¹⁴ UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), *Mid-Year Trends 2021* (2021), pp.1 & 9.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.9 (from 48.6 million to 50.9 million internally displaced persons).

¹⁶ For a detailed regional law setting out the rights and responsibilities of States and individuals who have been displaced, see: African Union, *Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa* (adopted 22 October 2009, entered into force 6 December 2012) (the 'Kampala Convention'). For analysis, see: Allehone Mulugeta Abebe, 'The African Union Convention on Internally Displaced Persons: Its Codification Background, Scope, and Enforcement Challenges' (2010) 29(3) *Refugee Survey Quarterly* 28.

¹⁷ UNHCR, *Mid-Year Trends* (n.15), p.1.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ See for example: Dominic Kniveton et al, *Climate Change and Migration: Improving Methodologies to Estimate Flows* (2008) IOM Migration Research Series No.33.

“A total of 40.5 million people were newly displaced within the borders of their State or territory over the course of 2020 (see Figure 1). Of these, 9.8 million were displaced by conflict and violence and 30.7 million were displaced by disasters.”

Trends reports, the IDMC annual Global Report on Internal Displacement (called the GRID Report) provides another key source of information and statistics on the trends and drivers of internal displacement.²⁰ The GRID Report 2021, covering the year 2020, noted that a total of 40.5 million people were newly displaced within the borders of their State or territory over the course of 2020 (see Figure 1).²¹ Of these, 9.8 million were displaced by conflict and violence and 30.7 million were displaced by disasters. This reflects the huge impact that disasters such as flooding, storms and earthquakes can have on population movement.

New People Internally Displaced in 2020

Figures in millions.

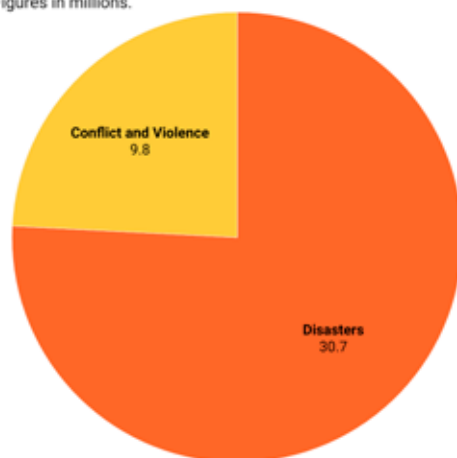


Chart: Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice • Source: International Displacement Monitoring Centre • Created with Datawrapper

Figure 1: New People Internally Displaced in 2020

²⁰ IOM's annual World Migration Report is another source of authoritative statistics and analysis. The World Migration Report 2022 concluded that there was a total of 89.4 million forcibly displaced persons in the world at the end of 2020. IOM, *World Migration Report 2022* (2021), p.4.

²¹ Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), *Global Report on International Displacement 2021: Internal Displacement in a Changing Climate* (2021), p.3. This was the highest figure of new displacements in the past decade.

These statistics also show that at the end of December 2020 there was a total of 55 million people internally displaced around the world, the highest level ever recorded. In other words, a considerable number of people were facing persistent and long-term displacement, in addition to large numbers of newly displaced persons. Of note, while the vast majority of new displacements which occurred during 2020 were as a result of disasters, the converse is true for long-term displacement. Of the 55 million people who remained displaced at the end of 2020, 48 million had been displaced by conflict and violence, and 7 million as a result of disasters (see Figure 2).²² What these statistics tell us is that large numbers of people are displaced by disasters, but generally this occurs for a shorter period of time than those who are displaced by conflict and violence. This is understandable, as people may be able to return to their homes once flood waters have receded, but may not be able to return if an armed conflict is on-going or if their home has been destroyed by fighting.

People Remaining Displaced at End of 2020

Figures in millions.

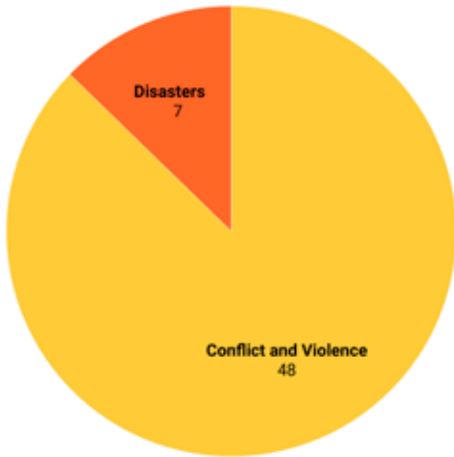


Chart: Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice • Source: International Displacement Monitoring Centre • Created with Datawrapper

Figure 2: People Remaining Displaced at the End of 2020

“
The converse is true for long-term displacement. Of the 55 million people who remained displaced at the end of 2020, 48 million had been displaced by conflict and violence, and 7 million as a result of disasters (see Figure 2).
”

However, in a ground-breaking decision in September 2020, the UN Human Rights Committee examined the case of the Teitoita family, Kiribati nationals who had claimed asylum in New Zealand based on the risk of rising sea levels due to climate change.²³ While finding that the risk to life was not sufficiently imminent in this particular case, the Human Rights Committee accepted Mr Teitoita’s argument that “sea level rise is likely to render Kiribati uninhabitable” and that the effects of climate change “may expose individuals to a violation of their rights ... thereby triggering the *non-refoulement* obligations.”²⁴ If areas, or even entire countries, become uninhabitable due to the effects of climate change in the foreseeable future, this will require a monumental re-evaluation of how we view and respond to forced displacement.

DIFFERENT FORMS OF FORCED DISPLACEMENT

Following this brief overview of global forced displacement, this section will provide a series of case studies to examine the issues raised by different drivers of displacement, namely: armed conflict, human rights abuses, climate change and disasters.

Armed conflict – Syria

Throughout history, war and conflict have been one of the leading drivers of forced displacement and refugees. Unfortunately, little has changed in the 21st Century. Just as the conflicts in Vietnam and the former Yugoslavia defined their eras, the decade-long conflict in Syria has created unimaginable

²² Ibid, pp.7-8.

²³ UN Human Rights Council, Views adopted by the Committee under Article 5(4) of the Optional Protocol, concerning communication No.2728/2016 (23 September 2020) UN Doc: CCPR/C/127/D/2728/2016.

²⁴ Ibid, paras.9.11-9.12.



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suffering and destruction, which has had wide reaching impacts in the Middle East, Europe and beyond. Since the Syrian Government's violent response to demonstrations in the southern city of Deraa in March 2011, it is estimated that over 500,000 people have been killed, or are missing and presumed dead, as a result of the conflict.²⁵ Over 12 million Syrians have fled their homes – more than half the population of the entire country – with 5.6 million Syrians having crossed into neighbouring countries or secured protection further afield, and 6.6 million people who remain internally displaced within Syria.²⁶ Writing as a displaced person, Ammar Azzouz recounted his horror at watching the destruction of his home city of Homs from afar.²⁷ Not only have historic monuments been destroyed, such as in Palmyra or the Old City of Aleppo, but the streets, schools and

bakeries which people used to safely inhabit have disappeared.²⁸ As Azzouz notes “Cities have turned into battlefields.”²⁹

Such violence represents the extreme end of Graeme Hugo's continuum, as people have faced life or death decisions about moving at short notice as a result of the conflict. The length of time which the Syrian conflict has been ongoing can be hard to comprehend, as is the impact on families, livelihoods, health and resultant psychological trauma. As highlighted by research undertaken by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), nearly half of all young people that they surveyed have had a close relative or friend killed in the conflict, and one in six youth reported that at least one of their parents had been killed or seriously injured.³⁰ Likewise, *Médecins sans Frontières* (MSF) has reported on the extensive destruction of public buildings such as schools and hospitals, as well as essential

²⁵ BBC News, ‘Why has the Syrian War Lasted 10 Years?’ (12 March 2021) <www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-35806229>.

²⁶ World Vision International, *Too High a Price to Pay: The Cost of Conflict for Syria's Children* (2021), p.9.

²⁷ Ammar Azzouz, ‘“Every Day is War” – A Decade of Slow Suffering and Destruction in Syria’ (15 March 2021) *The Conversation* <<https://theconversation.com/every-day-is-war-a-decade-of-slow-suffering-and-destruction-in-syria-154595>>.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), ‘Millions of young Syrians paid heavy toll during “decade of loss”’ (10 March 2021) <www.icrc.org/en/document/icrc-millions-young-syrians-paid-heavy-toll-during-decade-savage-loss>.

infrastructure including water and sanitation systems.³¹ Indeed, the length of the conflict has resulted in intergenerational displacement and trauma, with UNICEF reporting in 2018 that over 4 million Syrian children had been born since the conflict commenced.³² As of 2022, the number of children born into the conflict or displacement will be much higher. Consequently, an entire generation is growing up under the shadow of violence and uncertainty. Unfortunately, the duration and on-going nature of the displacement within Syria and the surrounding region causes extensive challenges in finding any form of resolution for all those displaced.

Drawing on UNHCR's assessment of durable solutions for refugees and displaced persons, there are three potential options: i) voluntary return in safety and dignity; ii) local integration in the host community of displacement; and iii) resettlement to a third locality or country.³³ Yet in situations of armed conflict, it can be impossible to identify safe and sustainable durable solutions in areas where the violence is ongoing. Moreover, the option of resettlement to a third country is limited to a very small percentage of all those displaced and so is out of reach for the vast majority.³⁴ Tragic deaths such as the drowning of three-year old Alan Kurdi in September 2015 may have prompted soul searching among many of us living in safer parts of the world,³⁵ but countless other children and adults have been killed in the years since³⁶ and without a realistic political agreement between all warring parties, the prospect of return for many Syrians remains a dream for the future.

Human rights abuses – Myanmar/Rohingya

While the final results may be the same, i.e. forced displacement, there are important differences between a recognised conflict between two or more armed groups, and a campaign of human rights abuse and persecution against a particular group within a society. Such targeted attacks by governmental forces (whether originating from the military, semi-State para-military groups, or police forces) against civilians is exactly the type of scenario envisaged by the drafters of the 1951 Refugee Convention in the aftermath of the Holocaust. Consequently, in international law, widespread and systematic attacks against a civilian population are classified as a crime against humanity, or even genocide.³⁷ Such attacks often first lead to internal displacement, which is then followed by cross-border displacement as the people targeted by such attacks seek safety.

Prior to the most recent campaign of persecution and human rights abuse which commenced in 2016, the Muslim Rohingya population in Myanmar was comprised of approximately 1 million people, out of the total population of 52 million people. However, due to non-recognition by the Myanmar Government, for example when conducting the 2014 official census, the Rohingya were not deemed to be Myanmar citizens.³⁸ The Rohingya, based primarily in Rakine State, have faced recurring periods of persecution since the 1960s. However, a particularly vicious and concerted campaign commenced in August 2017 which resulted in nearly 750,000 people fleeing across the border into southern Bangladesh over a three-month period.³⁹ This was the largest single refugee displacement in Asia since the 1970s. The resultant refugee camps in Cox's Bazaar, which merged with an existing refugee population of over 200,000 Rohingya who had fled

³¹ Médecins sans Frontières (MSF), 'Driven out by war, displaced in desperate conditions' (nd) <www.msf.org/syria-depth>.

³² UN News, 'Four million Syrian children have only known war since birth: UNICEF' (13 December 2018) <<https://news.un.org/en/story/2018/12/1028461>>.

³³ UNHCR, *Framework for Durable Solutions for Refugees and Persons of Concern* (Geneva, May 2003). See also, Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), *Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons* (Brookings Bern Project on Internal Displacement, April 2010), p.5.

³⁴ For example, between 2016 and April 2021, only 28,340 Syrian refugees were resettled across the whole of the EU. See: European Council for Refugees & Exiles (ECRE), *Turkey Country Report: Resettlement and family reunification departures* (last updated: 11 January 2022) <<https://asylumineurope.org/reports/country/turkey/>>.

³⁵ Mukul Devichand, 'Did Alan Kurdi's death change anything?' (2 September 2016) BBC Trending <www.bbc.com/news/blogs-trending-37257869>.

³⁶ See "Forced Displacement: Well-Founded Fear of Home" on Page 44

³⁷ Arts. 6 & 7, *Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court* (adopted 17 July 1998, entered into force 1 July 2002) ISBN No. 92-9227-227-6. See generally: Samantha Power, "A Problem from Hell": America and the Age of Genocide (William Collins, 2003)

³⁸ World Vision International, *Rohingya refugee crisis: Facts, FAQs, and how to help* (Kathryn Reid, last updated: 25 March 2021) <www.worldvision.org/refugees-news-stories/rohingya-refugees-bangladesh-facts#:~:text=The%20Rohingya%20people%20are%20a,which%20borders%20Bangladesh%20and%20India>.

³⁹ UNHCR, *Rohingya emergency* (nd) <www.unhcr.org/en-ie/rohingya-emergency.html>

Myanmar in previous years, have swelled to host over 1 million people, and the central camp of Kutupalong is the most densely populated refugee camp in the world.⁴⁰

Irrespective of any potential for durable solutions, the living conditions in camps such as this are extremely difficult to control, despite the best efforts of local and international humanitarian actors. For example, in March 2021, a major fire swept through large parts of the camp complex destroying over 10,000 shelters and killing at least 15 people, with over 400 others reported as missing.⁴¹ The risks and challenges of living as a displaced person compound the physical and psychological impacts of the original physical, mental or sexual violence that precipitated flight.⁴² There are some welcome signs that the refugee communities themselves are increasingly involved in the decision-making process surrounding their daily living. For example, in late 2020, a team of Rohingya field researchers, supported by IOM staff, undertook research on accountability and inclusiveness in the response by humanitarian organisations and sought to understand the Rohingya community's thoughts, experiences, and preferences. While expressing their gratitude for the support of the local, national and international actors, the refugees highlighted their lack of involvement in decision-making and need for clear feedback and complaints mechanisms.⁴³

Despite such positive moves, the instability of the refugees' situation was forcibly highlighted in early 2021 following the military junta's coup against the democratically-elected Government of Myanmar. Human Rights Watch and others called on international governments, in particular Bangladesh and India, to respect the principle of *non-refoulement* and halt all forced

returns to Myanmar.⁴⁴ Indeed, Syeda Rozana Rashid has argued that the traditional three durable solutions are "almost unachievable" for the Rohingya, and notes that the Rohingya have been caught between the politics of expulsion and repatriation for decades.⁴⁵ In a similar manner to the entrenched positions in the Syrian conflict, Rashid argues that unless the Myanmar Government changes its policy of exclusion of the Rohingyas, there cannot be sustainable durable solutions. The three key actions, as identified by Rashid, are equally applicable in many forced displacement contexts:

- a) Addressing the root causes of Rohingya's forced migration from Myanmar and ensuring voluntary return of the Rohingya;
- b) Sharing of the burden by the international community and prosperous states; and
- c) Making the voices of the refugees heard.⁴⁶

Alongside the work being undertaken in the refugee camps, there are some interesting legal developments taking place which, while not providing any immediate solution to the crisis, may create forums for holding the Myanmar Government to account for the expulsion of the Rohingyas. First of all, in November 2019, The Gambia commenced a case against Myanmar in the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on the basis that genocide was being committed against the Rohingya.⁴⁷ Most notably, in January 2020 the Court ruled on a series of preliminary measures, including placing a legally binding obligation on the Myanmar to:

- i) take all measures within its power to prevent the commission of all acts within the scope of the Genocide Convention;

⁴⁰ World Vision International (n.38).

⁴¹ Alasdair Pal, Ruma Paul and Emma Farge, "'Devastating' fire at Rohingya camp in Bangladesh kills 15, leaves 400 missing – UN' (23 March 2021) Reuters <www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/bangladesh-probes-fire-rohingya-refugee-camp-that-killed-seven-2021-03-23/>

⁴² See, for example, analysis of the sexual and gender-based violence in the Bhutanese refugee camps in Nepal in 2003: Human Rights Watch, *Trapped by Inequality: Bhutanese Refugee Women in Nepal* (September 2003). See also: Birendra Giri, 'Mourning the 15th Anniversary of Crisis: The Plight of Bhutanese Refugee Women and Children' (2005) 40(5) *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 346-369.

⁴³ ACAPS-NPM Analysis Hub & IOM, *Añāra Bāfana – Our Thoughts: Rohingyas share their experiences and recommendations* (April 2021), pp.15-28.

⁴⁴ Human Rights Watch, *India: Halt All Forced Returns to Myanmar – Returned Refugees Face Risks to Life, Liberty Under Oppressive Junta* (10 March 2021) <www.hrw.org/news/2021/03/10/india-halt-all-forced-returns-myanmar>

⁴⁵ Syeda Rozana Rashid, 'Finding a Durable Solution to Bangladesh's Rohingya Refugee Problem: Policies, Prospects and Politics' (2020) 5(2) *Asian Journal of Comparative Politics* 174-189, pp.174, 180.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p.186.

⁴⁷ As a so-called *jus cogens* norm, any state in the world can commence proceedings against another state under the 1948 *UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide* (adopted 9 December 1948, entry into force 12 January 1951), Art. VIII.

- ii) ensure that its military, as well as any irregular armed units which may be directed or supported by it and any organisations and persons which may be subject to its control, direction or influence, do not commit any such acts;
- iii) take effective measures to prevent the destruction and ensure the preservation of evidence related to allegations of such acts; and
- iv) to submit a report to the Court on all measures taken within four months, and thereafter every six months, until a final decision on the case is rendered by the Court.⁴⁸



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As of the time of writing, the case is still ongoing before the ICJ, partly due to a series of delays caused by the COVID-19 pandemic as well as the military coup of March 2021 and subsequent arrest of Ang San Suu Kyi.⁴⁹

Separately, in November 2019, the Pre-Trial Chamber of the International Criminal Court authorised the Office of the Prosecutor to initiate a preliminary investigation into the potential commission of crimes against humanity and genocide in regard to the forced displacement of the Rohingyas.⁵⁰ However, the investigation is limited as a result of Myanmar's refusal to sign the Rome Statute of the ICC. While the investigation's primary focus on the deportation of Rohingya from Bangladesh (which is a signatory to the Rome Statute) is constrained, the ongoing work of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court highlights the seriousness which the systematic attacks against the Rohingya are being taken and provides an additional means of accountability and advocacy for those displaced.

Climate change and disasters – The Horn of Africa & Mozambique

The final two scenarios which can lead to forced displacement are closely connected, so will be examined together. Although it should be remembered, as noted in Section 2 above, key differences exist between the drivers and, more importantly, potential duration of displacement caused by disasters and climate change. Graeme Hugo's original iteration of the continuum of migration focused heavily on environmental drivers of displacement, including pollution and land degradation.⁵¹ While these are still important causes of displacement, in the past 30 years the serious threat posed by global climate change has slowly been recognised. Likewise, our understanding that there is no such thing as a

⁴⁹ Details of the case proceedings can be found at: <www.icj-cij.org/en/case/178>.

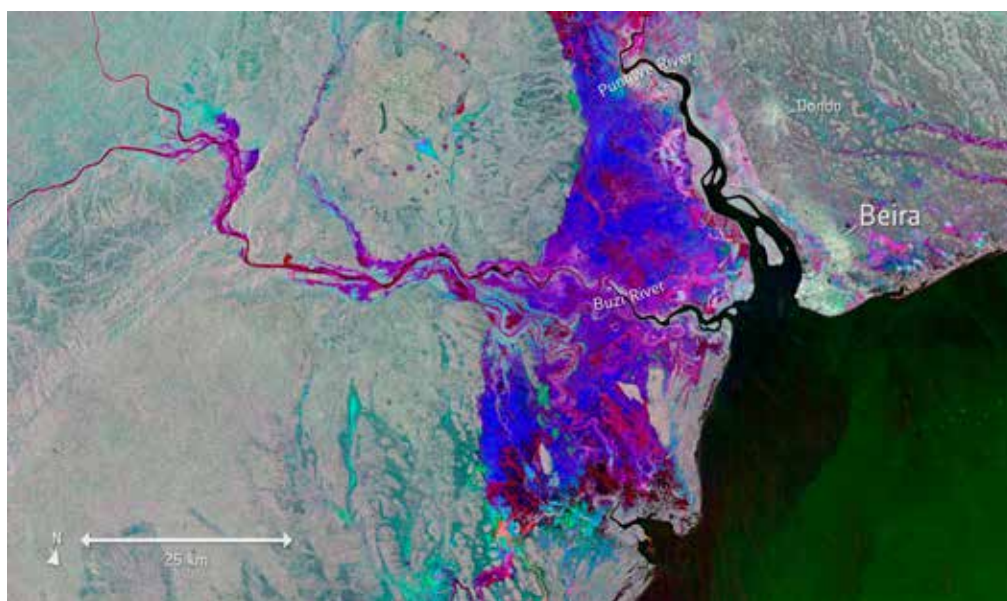
⁵⁰ *Situation in the People's Republic of Bangladesh/Republic of the Union of Myanmar* (ICC-01/19). Details of the investigation proceedings can be found at: <www.icc-cpi.int/bangladesh-myanmar>.

⁵¹ For analysis and a variety of case studies, see: Dimitra Manou et al, *Climate Change, Migration and Human Rights: Law and Policy Perspectives* (Routledge, 2017).

⁴⁸ Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (*The Gambia v. Myanmar*) – Request for the Indication of Provisional Measures, Order of 23 January 2020.

“natural” disaster,⁵² has forced us to reconsider the role of prevention, preparedness, and risk reduction from both a humanitarian response and migration management perspective. As global temperatures rise, this can lead to more frequent, severe, and unpredictable hydrometeorological hazards, such as tropical storms, king tides, and flooding. Therefore, we need to prepare for more people being affected by such disasters on a more regular basis.⁵³ However, in addition to sudden-onset events such as cyclones, climate change will also lead to slow-onset risks, such as salination of previously arable land as a result of sea surges, or conversely drought arising from a change in rainfall patterns. This final section will therefore briefly examine the impacts on Mozambique of a series of tropical cyclones in recent years, as well as the regional impact of drought in the Horn of Africa.

Over a six-week period in March and April 2019, two severe tropical cyclones hit Mozambique, resulting in at least 603 people killed, over 1,600 people injured, and over 500,000 people being displaced within the country.⁵⁴ The unprecedented nature of two such cyclones hitting in quick succession exacerbated the humanitarian challenges, with UNICEF reporting that 2.5 million people were in need of humanitarian assistance, including 1.3 million children.⁵⁵ Cyclone Idai made landfall on 15th March in the port city of Beira in Sofala province in the centre of Mozambique, while on 25th April Cyclone Kenneth hit the northern province Cabo Delgado which was already suffering from the impact of armed conflict. Even before Cyclone Kenneth made landfall, IOM had reported that nearly 130,000 people were sheltering in evacuation centres.⁵⁶



Scale of flooding in Mozambique after Cyclone Idai in March 2019. European Space Agency (CC BY-SA 2.0)

⁵² For more on this issue, see: <www.nonaturaldisasters.com/>. Likewise, the Climate and Migration Coalition has an excellent set of multimedia resources: <<https://climatemigration.org.uk/>>.

⁵³ For more information on some of the ongoing work examining the issue of disasters and displacement, see: The inter-governmental Platform for Disaster Displacement <<https://disasterdisplacement.org/>> and the IFRC, Disaster Law programme <<https://disasterlaw.ifrc.org/>>.

⁵⁴ Meteorological data for the cyclones can be found at: <<https://blogs.nasa.gov/hurricanes/tag/idai-2019/>> and <<https://blogs.nasa.gov/hurricanes/2019/04/26/kenneth-southern-indian-ocean-5/>>. Neighbouring countries were also affected, but not as severely as Mozambique.

⁵⁵ UNICEF, Cyclone Idai and Kenneth (nd) <www.unicef.org/mozambique/en/cyclone-idai-and-kenneth>.

⁵⁶ IOM, Mozambique: Cyclone Idai – Displacement Population and Flood Analysis (25 March 2019).

Since then, Mozambique has suffered a series of further powerful cyclones, including Tropical Storm Chalane in December 2020, Cyclone Eloise in January 2021 and Cyclone Gaumbe in February 2021. While causation linking individual natural hazards to climate change can be hard to determine, the World Meteorological Organisation is closely monitoring the increasing frequency of such tropical storms, and has highlighted the need for early warning and preparedness systems.⁵⁷ As one IOM staff member reported following Cyclone Eloise, people in the evacuation centres kept asking IOM staff, “Why us? What have we done to deserve this?”⁵⁸ This is a question which has been posed in many countries suffering the worst effects of climate change, and it is recognised that the most vulnerable in society are likely to be hit hardest by the increasingly negative impacts of climate change.⁵⁹ It is perhaps not surprising that the potential relocation of at-risk communities has been debated. However, as Alex Arnall noted following a 6-month research period in central Mozambique, any such climate resettlement programmes need to be used as a last resort and in a voluntary manner.⁶⁰ The issue of in-situ climate change adaptation for individuals and communities who are unable or unwilling to move in the face of disasters and climate change must also be considered.⁶¹

The need for locally targeted solutions is particularly evident when one considers the specific needs of pastoralist communities in Africa. Back in 2008, Mohamed Adow was already highlighting the impacts of climate change on pastoralists in Kenya, and the challenges to their traditional ways of life arising from floods and droughts, and difficulties in finding grazing lands for their livestock.⁶² The intersectionality of long-term pre-existing systemic vulnerabilities,

exacerbated by the negative impacts of climate change, can be seen clearly in the Horn of Africa,⁶³ in particular as a result of recent droughts. Of note, the GRID Report 2021 reported that 5 million people were displaced by disasters and conflict across the eight countries found in the Horn of Africa during 2020.⁶⁴

Multiple factors may influence people’s choices and agency when making decisions whether to remain in their homes or flee to somewhere safer, including the risk of conflict, poverty, poor governance and climate change.⁶⁵ As Alex Randall has argued: “Rather than seeing drought as the cause of armed conflict, it is more accurate to see armed conflict as a force that prevents governments coping with drought. And crucially preventing those droughts causing famine.”⁶⁶ Climate change acts as a risk multiplier in such situations, resulting in greater food insecurity, health outcomes and loss of livelihoods, and the potential for cyclical and secondary displacements. However, another aspect of displacement within the Horn of Africa is that most climate displacement is over relatively short distances – so the impacts are primarily felt in the locality and region.⁶⁷ There have also been some positive examples of regional cooperation, such as the agreement adopted by the Horn of Africa Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in 2020 which endorsed the principle of free movement between the member states, thereby allowing communities to pre-emptively move to avoid potential disaster and climate impacts.⁶⁸

⁵⁷ World Meteorological Organisation, *Tropical Cyclone Eloise hits Mozambique* (22 January 2021) <<https://public.wmo.int/en/media/news/tropical-cyclone-eloise-hits-mozambique>>.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ See, for example: Tommaso Natoli, *Addressing Specific Vulnerabilities Through Climate and Disaster Risk Governance: Lessons from the Philippines*, IFRC / UCC (Geneva, 2020).

⁶⁰ Alex Arnall, ‘Resettlement as Climate Change Adaptation: What Can Be Learned from State-led Relocation in Rural Africa and Asia?’ (2019) 11(3) *Climate and Development* 253-263, pp.258-259.

⁶¹ Dug Cubie, ‘In-situ Adaptation: Non-Migration as a Coping Strategy for Vulnerable Persons’ in Manou et al (n.52), pp.99-114.

⁶² Mohamed Adow, ‘Pastoralists in Kenya’ (October 2008) 31 *Forced Migration Review* 34.

⁶³ Encompassing: Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda.

⁶⁴ GRID Report 2021 (n.22) pp.23-42.

⁶⁵ See for example: Vikram Kolmannskog and Tamer Afifi, *Disaster-Related Displacement from the Horn of Africa* (March 2014) Reports No.15, Norwegian Refugee Council.

⁶⁶ Alex Randall, Unpacking climate change and the Horn of Africa crisis (nd, Climate and Migration Coalition) <<https://climatemigration.org.uk/climate-change-horn-africa-crisis/>>.

⁶⁷ Fredu Nega Tegebu, *Climate Change-Induced Migration in the Horn of Africa* (May 2020) Policy Briefing, South African Institute of International Affairs, p.5. See also: Kolmannskog and Afifi (n.65).

⁶⁸ GRID Report 2021 (n.22) p.104.



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CONCLUSIONS

This brief overview of forced displacement from a global perspective can only skim the surface of the challenges faced by, as well as the resilience of, many communities across the world. However, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that drivers of displacement, such as conflict, human rights abuse, climate change and disasters, are going to lead to greater levels of involuntary and forced displacement in the coming years. As a result, we are likely to see even greater levels of cyclical and secondary displacement, and there is unlikely to be any change to the stark fact that the global south will continue to host the largest number of displaced people, despite the fact that all

countries are increasingly going to be affected by climate change and disasters. Likewise, without political will at the national and international levels, protracted displacements and conflicts, such as in Syria and Myanmar, will continue to cause new displacement and lack of options for durable solutions.

Nevertheless, there is cause for hope. The global youth movement which has arisen to tackle the inertia of Governments and industries has provided inspiration to many and is challenging vested interests in the name of climate justice, for example through the recent complaint made by climate youth activists to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.⁶⁹ Likewise, grassroots groups such as the Pacific Island Warriors who face the loss of their homes due to sea level rise have rallied behind the call “We are not drowning, we are fighting.”⁷⁰ So despite the seemingly overwhelming challenges to prevent and respond to both the climate emergency and forced displacement, concerted action by individuals, communities and States is possible to reverse the trend of ever-increasing forced displacement across the globe.

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^{69.} Aoife Daly, ‘Climate crisis: how states may be held responsible for impact on children’ (20 October 2021) *The Conversation* <<https://theconversation.com/climate-crisis-how-states-may-be-held-responsible-for-impact-on-children-170130>>.

^{70.} The Pacific Island Warriors, *The Pacific Warrior Journey* <<https://world.350.org/pacificwarriors/the-pacific-warrior-journey/>>.

Fratelli Tutti: Insiders, Outsiders, and Ireland's Second Century

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INSIDER TO OUTSIDER: SINÉAD O'CONNOR'S ICONOCLASM

For a pop musician, one of the most coveted gigs is headlining the American TV show “Saturday Night Live”. If you get invited to that stage, you know you’ve made it.

This makes it all the more remarkable that when a 26-year-old woman from Glenageary in south Dublin reached that pinnacle, she used the opportunity to enact one of the most potent protests of the modern age. Sinéad O'Connor was meant to sing her newest hit song and receive the acclaim. Instead, she used the rare opportunity afforded by the fact that SNL was broadcast live. She changed the lyrics of the Bob Marley song she was singing, so that it referred to child abuse instead of racism. Then she took out a photograph of the beloved Polish pontiff, John Paul II and tore it to pieces, throwing the fragments at the camera while calmly declaring, “fight the real enemy”.

The studio audience did not applaud. Eye-witnesses report that the air went out of the studio. Executives watching at home remember jumping out of their chairs in dismay. This was 1992.

The reaction was immediate and immense.¹ The *New York Daily News* put it on its front page and compared it to terrorism. The following week’s show was hosted by the actor Joe Pesci. It opened with him holding the same photograph that was torn apart repaired. He then proceeded to tear a photograph of Sinéad, to riotous applause, before finishing with the warning that had he been present, he “would have gave her such a smack”. Frank Sinatra said that he wanted to “kick her ass”. The TV producer Jonathan King declared that she “needed a spanking”. Her next public appearance was at a concert in honour of Bob Dylan. As she took the stage, the crowd began to boo loudly.

¹ I am reliant on a twitter thread by the writer Audra Williams for my reflections on O'Connor's SNL appearance. Audra Williams, “In 1992, Sinéad O'Connor Ripped up a Picture of the Pope on Live Television, in Protest of the Rampant Child Sexual Abuse the Catholic Church Was Actively Covering Up,” Tweet, @audrawilliams (blog). January 20, 2019, <https://twitter.com/audrawilliams/status/1086857070362705921>; O'Connor's own account of the experience is found in: Sinéad O'Connor, *Rememberings* (Dublin: Sandycove, 2021), 191–93.

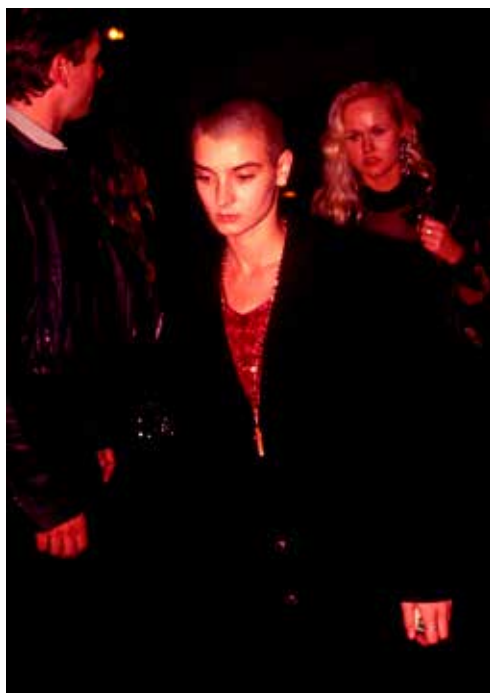
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One moment, Sinéad O'Connor was the ultimate insider – a world-famous pop-star with an adoring public, an iconic place in popular culture, and a future where she could do anything she pleased. The next moment, the very same woman found herself outside.

One moment, Sinéad O'Connor was the ultimate insider – a world-famous pop-star with an adoring public, an iconic place in popular culture, and a future where she could do anything she pleased. The next moment, the very same woman found herself outside. She was never invited on SNL again. She had only one more hit single in the US, associated with the movie *In the Name of the Father*, and it only reached number 24.

It was two years before the UTV documentary “Suffer the Children”, three years before Brendan Smyth would be arrested, and was fully a decade before the Boston Globe revealed the extent of ecclesial abuse in Massachusetts. Almost three decades later, few would deny the power of this piece of political performance art. Of course, the scandal of ecclesial abuse is complex and a full account requires all sorts of nuance and clarification. But a protest is not meant to be a comprehensive analysis. And no one would question the principle and courage involved in her act. In her recent memoir it is clear that this was no hasty blunder. She understood the consequences of her inflammatory gesture. She grasped that it would radically transform the opportunities offered to her. She was not unaware that the scale of the scandal meant that personalising attention solely on a single figure like the Pope was not the optimal path to justice. But when it felt like no one was paying attention, and she had people's attention, she felt morally-bound to do whatever it took to get people to look at what was only half-hidden.²

² Describing her thought-process ahead of the protest, she writes: “I know if I do this there'll be war. But I don't care. I know my Scripture. Nothing can touch me. I reject the world. Nobody can do a thing to me that hasn't been done already. I can sing in the streets like I used to. It's not like anyone will tear my throat out.” O'Connor, *Rememberings*, 178.



Sinéad O'Connor in LA a few months before her protest on SNL (Bart Sherkow: Shutterstock 1397768630)

What I am about to claim is not nearly as controversial as it would have once been, in part because the subsequent revelations have vindicated Sinéad and in part because the church's own self-understanding has shifted as we have been de-centred from the sources of societal power. But Sinéad O'Connor embraced the loss of her insider-status to stand in solidarity with victims who were entirely outside of our collective gaze. To make that protest against the ungodly crime of ecclesial abuse she drew on one of our most significant symbols of religious propriety and shattered it. In the days before social media, Sinéad O'Connor incited a viral mob against herself in the hope that when the dust cleared, someone would pursue her line of reasoning, investigate the rumours that were everywhere whispered, and bring justice and solace to those who had been harmed by people who presented themselves as healers. Sinéad O'Connor confronted us with a truth in a way that shockingly exposed our corruption. It was prophetic. Society despised this message because society could not confront this truth. Understanding all this, she went ahead with it. She embraced the exclusion that came from this act. Given a choice between keeping quiet

and staying on the inside, and standing up for those on the margins but being cast to the outside, Sinéad chose the narrow path.

There is something of Jesus' sense of irony at play in that one of the most powerfully *Christian* acts to ever occur on live television, was when Sinéad O'Connor tore up a picture of the pope.

FRATELLI TUTTI AND SOCIAL FRIENDSHIP

Like all of Francis' letters, his latest encyclical – *Fratelli Tutti* – has many sides. I suggest that a particularly relevant approach from an Irish perspective is to read *Fratelli Tutti* in terms of insiders and outsiders, those who are included and those who get excluded. The heart of this letter lies in Francis' idea of social friendship. In this paper I want to consider how social friendship might apply in Ireland.

I am going to argue that our society has spent the last century busy in the project of constructing an Irish State, but our approach to that has been focused on negative identity building, deciding on who we are and what we are about based on reaction against others. This is most clearly seen in the way that the church enacted the violence of the State – with the almost unanimous approval of the people – in a range of institutions that housed those we did not desire to include. My approach here is an attempt to honour the theological priority towards self-accusation. We consider what is blocking our vision before accusing anyone else of blindness.³

Yet we must recognise that whatever we call the contemporary quasi-secular liberal power nexus that replaced the quasi-devotional conservative power nexus has not evaded this negative inside-outside dynamic. We pride ourselves on our tolerance the way our grandparents prided themselves on their orthodoxy, but the self-congratulation must look very different to the thousands of families who are homeless or stuck in direct provision centres.

In summary, here is my argument: The Irish State, at least since its founding, has been happy to do whatever it takes to keep

³ Matthew 7:5.

business turning over, and that has always involved excluding a large minority of people in institutions, in deprivation, in scorn, since their existence challenges the stories we like to tell about ourselves. And *Fratelli Tutti* offers an alternative account of how to order the shared space of compromise we call politics. Social friendship is a potential repair kit which could play a part – a small part, because I hope the future church will learn from the past church how dangerous it is to be feted as important and central and influential – in seeing Ireland’s second century embrace a more humane way of forging identity.

I will make this argument by briefly summarising *Fratelli Tutti* with a focus on the concept of social friendship, then sketching how we have utilised the power of casting others out to underline who is in, and suggesting in the close that what Francis is alluding to is drawing from the very central well of the Christian faith. If we want to build a society that doesn’t nourish the insiders by feeding on the flesh of outsiders, a religion about a God cast out might have some surprisingly relevant contributions to make.

Fratelli Tutti was published in Assisi on St Francis’ feast day.⁴ I suspect in time it will come to be understood as a sort of “Greatest Hits” for this Pope’s project. It draws heavily on his addresses and it echoes the themes that careful readers of his other encyclicals – *Lumen Fidei* and *Laudato Si’* – will recognise. It spans eight chapters, so it continues Francis’ habit of writing longer encyclicals than his predecessors.

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⁴ *Fratelli Tutti* means “All Brothers”. The British theologian, Theodora Hawksley, pointedly proposed that the English translation should be “All my Bros”. Theodora Hawksley, “Why the Title Matters,” *Theodora Hawksley* (blog), October 5, 2020.

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All humans are brothers and sisters to each other and every tradition or institution or ideology that seeks to obscure that basic fact must be challenged.

It is notable for how it treats events still unfolding. Francis engages the pandemic which was at its nightmarish stage in northern Italy as he was drafting it. Some contemporary issues are just so concrete that to avoid them would be impossible! And in this instance, the encyclical is undoubtedly strengthened by this engagement because the spread of Covid-19 allows us to see clearly – if we dare to look – how we are all in the same boat. As such, focusing on the pandemic strengthens his main point: that all humans are brothers and sisters to each other and every tradition or institution or ideology that seeks to obscure that basic fact must be challenged.

The Encyclical Summarised

The letter begins with chapters of diagnosis, and Francis is clear that we are under dark clouds. Not just the pandemic, but the general trend towards limitless consumption, the instrumentalisation of other human beings, and the exploitation of the natural world constitutes what he calls a throwaway culture where discarding objects becomes so prevalent we end up discarding people.⁵ We wander the world seeking our utility, abandoning anything and everything that we deem useless, rejecting all binding obligations but our own fulfilment.⁶

His treatment involves taking us to one of the world’s best known stories, in the hope that we might see it again with fresh eyes. All of chapter 2 is dedicated to Jesus’s parable of the Good Samaritan, which makes sense because it was the short story he told to answer the question: “Who is my neighbour?” Francis recommends we identify ourselves with the Samaritan, who avoids the indifference of the religiously and socially respectable people who walk by the dying man. The moment of truth

⁵ Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti* (Assisi: Vatican, 2020), §20.

⁶ §27 is particularly acute in its description of how we erect walls to avoid encountering otherness and thus become slaves to our own greed.



Pope Francis greeting pilgrims in Rome. (Giulio Napolitano, Shutterstock 216311500)

for all our approaches to life is not whether or not they represent coherent philosophies or popular politics, but whether when faced with suffering “will we bend down to touch and heal the wounds of others?”⁷

Chapters 3 and 4 work out how this applies. The openness to encountering the other is at the heart of enacting the Good Samaritan ethic. It is important to note how the different pieces fit together. What Francis is proposing is that attentiveness to the suffering of those around us is the way we live out being neighbours. But by engaging in neighbourly openness, those relationships can be transformed into true fraternity, not just neighbours who live without discord in proximity to each other, but an extended family capable of showing love to each other. This is a profound implicit critique of our present political culture, that even at its most noble never dares to suggest we have this kind of obligation to the other.⁸

The second half of the letter represents a series of tangible calls to action. Along the way, Francis makes important elaborations

to Catholic Social teaching. After this letter, while the church has not committed to non-violence, it is practically impossible to imagine a modern war being declared just.⁹ It is categorically impossible to argue for the death penalty.¹⁰ Chapter 5 focuses on a better kind of politics, one not driven by pragmatic concerns about winning the next election but committed to seeking and implementing charity and truth.¹¹ Chapter 6 extends that to the individual and their community, calling on people to cultivate an approach to living together grounded in dialogue, grounded in listening before we speak.¹² Chapter 7 notes that the “otherness” which we must seek to welcome is not always exotic. “Renewal” is the key word here, recognising that the narcissism of small differences mean that we often satisfy ourselves on our magnanimity in abstract, talking about how open we are to the Others we never meet, while furiously despising the much nearer Others we cross paths with every day.¹³ The final chapter may turn out to be the most decisive in the historical frame and it is the section which does most to respond to the obvious criticisms that we may make about

⁷ Pope Francis, §70. It is also worth noting how in §75, Francis spends time considering the people that Luke overlooks – the robbers.

⁸ This is where we find Francis’ discussion about relativized property rights (§120) and nationality (§121). Chapter Four particularly looks at migration, proposing that some form of global governance is required (§129-132).

⁹ Pope Francis, §258.

¹⁰ Pope Francis, §263–70.

¹¹ The marketplace can’t resolve every problem (§168) and our engagement on poverty must be with, not just for, the poor (§169).

¹² Kindness as the antidote to anxiety: §222–224.

¹³ Consider §241, on how social friendship does not pass over oppression.

how the institutional church has hardly role-modelled social friendship in its own actions in recent decades. It proposes that the role of religion in our world is to build this sense of fraternity and draws on the radical project of inter-religious dialogue Francis has begun with the Grand Imam of Al Azhar, Sheik Ahmad el-Tayeb.¹⁴ We are back here at the beginning: since we are all creatures of the one creator, we share in common far more than what divides us and we are only ever being realistic about that fact when we encounter the Other as a sister or a brother.

One of the risks with a rapid summary of the encyclical is that we become baffled by how these threads tie together. But I propose that the core of the argument Francis is making is his concept of social friendship. Social friendship is his way of articulating the synthesis that is required between the personal and the political – so that our interventions on the crises of injustice we face operate both at the level of authentic human friendship and at the level of meaningful political and social transformation, grounded on the “acknowledgement of the worth of every human person, always and everywhere.”¹⁵

Generalising wildly, two approaches are typically available to us politically. People on the Right focus on personal responsibility and the potential of the individual. People on the Left focus on structural responsibility and the potential of the collective. Social friendship is not a naïve both-and-ism that seeks to satisfy each side of the spectrum. We misunderstand if we imagine that the Pope turns first to the right-winger and says, “you are correct” and then to the left-winger to say, “you too are correct”.

His claim is much more audacious. The conservative has one vision for justice where the demands placed upon the individual have limited societal implications. The liberal has another vision of justice where the demands placed on the society have limited individual implications. And Francis is implicitly suggesting both are wrong. Dwelling on the Good Samaritan, he presents a view of political intervention grounded in attentive hospitality.

¹⁴ See §285.

¹⁵ Pope Francis, §106, emphasis original.

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The conservative has one vision for justice where the demands placed upon the individual have limited societal implications. The liberal has another vision of justice where the demands placed on the society have limited individual implications. And Francis is implicitly suggesting both are wrong.

The outcast Samaritan is the hero of the story because unlike the religiously devout and socially acceptable lawyer and priest, he does not just walk by. Social friendship presents this politics of solidarity – that our communities can “be rebuilt by men and women who identify with the vulnerability of others, who reject the creation of a society of exclusion, and act instead as neighbours, lifting up and rehabilitating the fallen for the sake of the common good.”¹⁶ This is a political stance grounded in the respect of the difference embedded in the other, but sees there is not a threat but an opportunity. We do not need to protect ourselves from otherness, rather we must generously seek to truly encounter it.

HOW OUTSIDERS MAKE INSIDERS

How do these concepts of social friendship, insiders, and outsiders play out in Ireland’s second century?

Reading *Fratelli Tutti* when it was first published, I had a notion that its relevance for Ireland was not just in its contemporary engagement with crises like the pandemic. That inchoate sense took form when the Mother and Baby Homes report was published.¹⁷ It was released as I was working on an odd little project, writing an essay about how childbirth is depicted in Irish movies.¹⁸ What I found in that research was that Irish films don’t typically depict labour and birth in the rosy tones that we know so well from

¹⁶ Pope Francis, §67.

¹⁷ Yvonne Murphy, William Duncan, and Mary E. Daly, “Final Report of the Commission of Investigation into Mother and Baby Homes” (Dublin: Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, 2021), <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/d4b3d-final-report-of-the-commission-of-investigation-into-mother-and-baby-homes/>.

¹⁸ Kevin Hargaden, “Birth on Screen: How Childbirth Is Depicted in Irish Film,” in *Birth and the Irish: A Miscellany*, ed. Salvador Ryan (Dublin: Wordwell, 2021), 346–50.



"Stand 4 Truth" rally outside the Garden of Remembrance, held on August 26th 2018, as Pope Francis visited the same part of Dublin. (Dirk Hudson, Shutterstock 1165415371)

Hollywood. Having watched every Irish film from the last fifty years that feature such scenes, I can declare that in practically every single case, the arrival of the new human life is ambivalent. The one superficially stereotypical scene where a family rushes in joyfully to greet the wee baby comes at the end of *The Snapper*, Stephen Frears' 1993 hilarious and harrowing adaptation of Roddy Doyle's acclaimed novel. To avoid *spoilers*, I will simply say that the baby who inspires such delight was not conceived in happy circumstances.

The Mother and Baby Homes Report was noteworthy because of its clarity in describing how this system – from its genesis in the moral imagination right out to its implementation in high walls around the building and doors that locked securely – could only be constructed and maintained with widespread support within the population. And the "church" that is implicated is every church, not just Roman Catholicism. Presbyterians and Methodists and many Anglicans were involved in this quasi-carceral system. My conclusion reading this report was that the only traditions untouched were the Orthodox and the Pentecostals and that was largely because they were tiny populations at the time.¹⁹

Every Christian tradition was eager to play their role by being diligent and dutiful citizens upholding the moral propriety of their society by punishing the outcast.

Reading the forensic assessment of how evangelical Christians like myself – from churches where I regularly preach or visit – founded and operated homes that enclosed pregnant women in captivity was truly depressing. For about a fortnight I had my own mini-crisis of faith. How could it be that a religion established to worship a child born out of wedlock to a mother who stood in disgrace among her society could end up sustaining that same societal disgrace? The Report is strong in how it describes the complexities at play in these women's detention, which was very often not penal. In most cases, they could leave if they wanted. But if they left, no one wanted them. As Cole Porter famously sang, "Birds do it. Bees do it. Even educated fleas do it". But for most of the first century of what we call Ireland's liberation, young women who "fell pregnant" – to use our theologically resonant colloquialisms – became captive to these institutions. This is my explanation for why Irish filmmakers are so ambivalent about labour: the newborn is often the most unwelcome Other.

¹⁹ Kevin Hargaden, "Evangelicals and Church Abuse", *Vox* April 2021 (Issue 50): 24-26.

My crisis lifted when the coin dropped. *Fratelli Tutti*'s focus on the Samaritan – that outcast who stopped and attended and cared for the suffering one when all the diligent and dutiful citizens passed right on by – was the antidote to the kind of violence which we find detailed in this and every other report that the State commissions into its past. Francis' insistence that the Other does not confront us with a threat but an opportunity to enact the Gospel's culture of encounter is the word we need to hear right now. It is the word we needed then, too. That's one of the ways we can test to see it is true.



**Otherness was the threat that provoked
in us the sense of community that
secured us.**

Much more would need to be said to lock this claim down in a fashion that satisfied the academic historians, but I think this is a hypothesis worthy of consideration: for Ireland's first century, we constructed our sense of self, we developed a collective "we", by means of othering groups of people we could call "them". Depending on the situation, the *them* could be the English, could be Protestants, could be unwed mothers, could be delinquent children, in one infamous case of popular protests in Co Leitrim, it was fans of jazz music.²⁰ Otherness was the threat that provoked in us the sense of community that secured us.

McQuaid's Catholicism is long gone, but I further propose that this dynamic is not yet extinct. The same kind of kneejerk and groupthinked collective moral policing is still to be found. My generation and those younger than me take great pride in their self-understanding as being progressively tolerant in a way that is formally parallel to how my grandparents' generation took great pride in their collective self-understanding as devoutly orthodox. Ireland then was an example to the other nations, unique because of our frugal faithfulness. Ireland today is presented as an example to the other nations, unique because

of our efficient inclusivity. We used to cobble our self-esteem together by contrasting ourselves against the secularising English. We now cobble our self-esteem together by contrasting ourselves against the conservative European nations who aren't on board with our progressive agenda. But the point is that we are still defining ourselves against the Other.

Such an argument is dissatisfying in how vague it is; how prone it is to confirmation bias. But we do have grand formal parallels to the Mother and Baby Homes in our midst which signals how we have not progressed beyond the insider/outsider dynamic. After asylum seekers began arriving more commonly in 1997 – well within the era of the secular Celtic Tiger – the government established a system to house candidates as their claims for refuge were assessed. Our secularity can be demonstrated by the fact that the churches were not called upon to provide this service. Instead, in 2000 it was outsourced for profit.²¹

We came to call this system Direct Provision. Like previous forms of institutionalisation, it is not legally a form of captivity. Asylum seekers can leave. But if they do, they are utterly on their own. Just like the previous inhabitants of earlier systems. Many reports can be found which assess the centres in various ways, just like with the old system. But the suspicion persists that these reports, collectively, are replicating the lawyer and priest dynamic of Jesus's famous parable and finding reasons not to look too closely in case they see undeniable human suffering.

After the Global Financial Crash in 2008, Ireland engaged on a decade of austerity. Public housing was defunded. Care for those who could not compete in the housing market was increasingly provided by the market itself through a subsidy to private landlords called Housing Assistance Payment (HAP). Activists close to the issue were alarmed at this development. At the time, Fr Peter McVerry, SJ predicted what he called a tsunami of homelessness. A Labour Minister for Housing took to the press to criticise his claims that

²⁰ Jim Smyth, "Dancing, Depravity and All That Jazz: The Public Dance Halls Act of 1935," *History Ireland* 1, no. 2 (1993): 54.

²¹ Steven Loyal and Stephen Quilley, "Categories of State Control: Asylum Seekers and the Direct Provision and Dispersal System in Ireland," *Social Justice* 43, no. 4 (2016): 70.

homelessness could top 5000. It spent a year above 10,000 before the pandemic.²² The Government has tried every available solution to resolve this crisis except the obvious one – returning to serious and ambitious public housing. Each of these schemes in different ways replicate institutionalisation, except we don't call it that because the institutions are run by charities or corporations. Anyone who has spent any time in these homeless hubs or emergency accommodation facilities – or anyone who has taken the time to listen to those who have – knows that abuse is rampant. But we don't take the time to stop and attend. We are dutiful and diligent citizens after all.

So: the Others are still among us. The asylum seeker and the homeless person present a clear threat to our self-understanding as citizens of a prosperous and cosmopolitan Western Republic. Better out of sight so as to be out of mind. Many of us will have to feign surprise if a Commission is convoked in the future to consider the abuses in the systems erected under our watch. Many of us suspect that those future historians will say, "The records suggest that such systems had widespread support. It was considered impossible to offer hospitality to the refugee or housing to the homeless without threatening the foundations of our moral order, which is our prosperity."

It's different than the 20th century Othering; we are concerned now mostly about profit instead of piety. But it is also the same.

Fratelli Tutti's concept of social friendship intervenes at just this point. If we can cultivate a political culture that sees Otherness as truly distinct – so much of the contemporary liberal project wants to create a homogeneity out of difference – and still as valuable in itself because of that, then we would be moving toward a culture of encounter. Jesus never suggests the Samaritan was a Judean. He insists instead that the Judean can only be Judean by attending to the example of the Other, the different one, the Samaritan. In

²² JCFJ, "1/22 After #GE2020, We Have Been Trawling through Our JCFJ Archives. For 40 Years We Have Been Fighting for Social Justice in Ireland, and through the Lens of Peter McVerry, We've Watched the Housing Crisis Develop up Close. A Thread on Why We Need a Total Change in Direction: <https://t.co/V4YDttcUNt>," Tweet, @JCFJustice (twitter), February 11, 2020, <https://twitter.com/JCFJustice/status/1227284123280080905>.

“
Social friendship is thus a political philosophy that holds that both structural problems remedied at the level of policy and social issues addressed at the level of personal relationship matter. It is not either/or. One is not inside while the other cast out. They go hand-in-hand.

Jesus' telling, the very one they wish to cast out, the enemy that must be vanquished, is no longer just a foil against which to build in-group solidarity. The Other is the difference they must encounter to discover who they are truly called to be.

Social friendship is thus a political philosophy that holds that both structural problems remedied at the level of policy and social issues addressed at the level of personal relationship matter. It is not either/or. One is not inside while the other cast out. They go hand-in-hand. The space between their difference – the structural and the personal – is the space where we encounter the Other and discover they are our neighbour, even more, our sister and brother. The first story in the bible after Eden has Cain respond to God about the missing Abel, "Am I my brother's keeper?"²³ God never corrects him. Some errors are so self-evident, you have to actively avoid the truth.

Throughout Ireland's first century of independence, Otherness was the threat that provoked in us the sense of community that secured us. In our second century, social friendship is a means to transcend those stark and violent dichotomies of insider and outsider, framing our politics more realistically as the process by which different neighbours negotiate the loves they share in common.

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Throughout Ireland's first century of independence, Otherness was the threat that provoked in us the sense of community that secured us.

²³ Genesis 4:9.

As Francis counsels: “Let us seek out others and embrace the world as it is, without fear of pain or a sense of inadequacy, because there we will discover all the goodness that God has planted in human hearts.”²⁴ We are not aliens to each other, but siblings.

THE DEEP THEOLOGY OF SOCIAL FRIENDSHIP

Coming as an outsider to the world of Catholic Social teaching, one of the very surprising things to me is how the theological content of the Papal encyclicals is often passed over. I sometimes get the impression that many in the church see this social tradition as a sort of superficial outer layer that serves some apologetic function but is distinct from the real business of theology and the church. Were we to analyse *Fratelli Tutti* dogmatically, we would quickly find that beneath the provocative claims about populism and property, nuclear armaments and death penalties, lies a profound theology of the cross.

The dynamic that Francis highlights in his discussion of the Good Samaritan is that the outsider is the one – the necessary one – who saves the insider in peril. One is reminded immediately of the theological work associated with Miroslav Volf.²⁵ He wrote his groundbreaking study, *Exclusion and Embrace*, as a Croat in exile during the Yugoslav war. The stakes at play in approaching the Other as a sibling waiting to be encountered can’t really be higher than during ethnic cleansing. But in this book, Volf meticulously describes how Jesus is an insider, conversant in all the treasures of Israel, who willingly and intentionally dedicates himself to a path of identification with the outcasts – the sinners and tax collectors, the prostitutes and the lepers, Roman centurions and even, at times, Samaritans – to the dismay of the status quo and his own followers. We now understand that this is in microcosm what the incarnation means on a cosmic scale, as Paul explains in the famous passage in Philippians 2:5-11. Although being in very nature God, Jesus did not consider equality with God something to

²⁴ Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, §78.

²⁵ Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1996), 75.

“
The ultimate insider – who enjoyed
the heavenly company of his Father –
is cast out

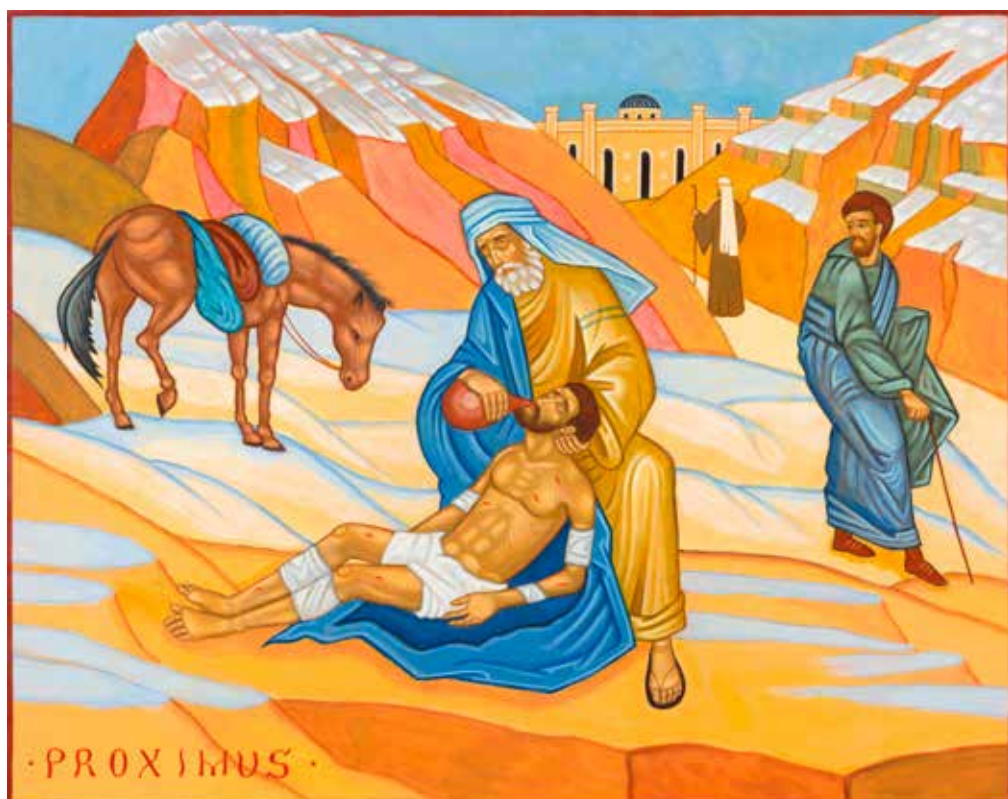
be used to his own advantage. Rather, he made himself nothing. He took on the very nature of a servant, born and raised as a human. And being found as a man, by appearances like any other, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death. Not any death; but death on the cross – a death so disgraceful and disreputable that Romans would never administer it to a citizen regardless of how horrible their crimes.

The ultimate insider – who enjoyed the heavenly company of his Father – is cast out, beyond the walls of Jerusalem, outside of the city, beyond the borders of civilization, rendered like an animal to be sacrificed. On the cross we find God become man, abandoned, discarded, excluded and set apart from all humanity. On the cross we find God become man with his arms outstretched, ready to embrace us. Not in spite of that othering, but through it.

This is deep dogmatic core of social friendship. It is only in our identification with the outcast and our movement towards the margins that we begin to see what is at the centre of God’s Kingdom: the revolutionary reconciliation that makes enemies into neighbours and neighbours into family.

“
On the cross we find God become man,
abandoned, discarded, excluded and set
apart from all humanity.

And what is the specific role of church in all this? Is its role to be the leader of the reconciliation to exemplify the kind of loving social friendship that everyone ought to imitate? By no means! The church ought to be part of the dialogue, but as a function of the fact that everyone needs to be invited to the table.



Icon of the Parable of the Good Samaritan in Chiesa di San Pietro in Bologna. (Renata Sedmakova, Shutterstock 1083278969)

Whether he meant to or not, Francis has given the Irish church a sharp and helpful word to describe the approach they should take to their contribution. At the start of chapter 7 we read that organisations who are at risk of “empty diplomacy, dissimulation, double-speak, hidden agendas and good manners that mask reality” in the aftermath of “their own regrets” must cultivate what he calls “a penitential memory.”²⁶

He intends these words to apply to entire societies that have been marked by conflict but I propose that we prayerfully adopt them as a reparative therapy, a serum to support those of us called to lead organisations which are embroiled in the scandalous crimes of past decades. It is no easy task, but repentance is always liberation.

CONCLUSION

When the crowd began to boo Sinéad O’Connor in Madison Square Garden, she said that she felt she was going to vomit. She could not go on. The acclaimed country singer, Kris Kristofferson, was just off stage. He saw what was happening. The organisers asked him to go and take her off the stage. In that moment, he too, instinctively, knew what to do. Faced with a scapegoat, he identified with her. He stepped out of the shadows, into the spotlights. He walked across the stage and put his arm around the young woman – who he did not know – and hugged her. He said he only had one message: “Don’t let the bastards get you down.” She took courage.

The video footage is remarkable. Instead of singing with her band, she takes the microphone and sings the same Marley song from the previous week – the anti-racism anthem *War* – but this time acapella. Her unadorned voice, insistent with truth, rises above the jeering crowd. Again, she repeats her claim that every institution that sanctions

²⁶ Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, §226.

child abuse must be toppled. The fury of the crowd seems to grow. At the end of the short song, Kristofferson is there again. He throws his arms around her, utterly identifying himself and his ultimate insider-status with this one who is scorned for telling the truth. At one point she pulls out of the hug. She turns away and gags.²⁷ Kristofferson simply hugs her again.

Humans, it seems, cannot inhabit our status of insider without framing it against outsiders. This is one of the reasons why we should be sceptical of easy claims grounded in concepts like inclusion and tolerance – not because those are not virtuous things to achieve – but because if we believe we arrive at them without difficulty we are deluded. In that state, we can't even see the truth of things, the reality of those we leave outside while acclaiming our own largesse. The actions that flow from *Fratelli Tutti* are diverse but we can see some immediate possible steps – spending our resources on aligning with the outsiders, consciously engaging in penitential memory as a spiritual discipline to heal us of our yearning to be insiders, and supporting the policies or cultural trajectories that encourage social friendship.

The insider/outsider dynamic described by Francis is likely to intensify. Elsewhere in this issue, Dug Cubie engages the complexities at play in mass displacement. This dynamic will surely increase as the climate catastrophe accelerates. Transcending our insider/outsider dynamic is essential in this context not simply to create a culture of encounter able to extend hospitality to those who need it, but because the Far Right will seek to exploit this crisis and intensify the culture of fear.

When those extremist insiders seek to gain from the fear of movements of displaced populations, what will we say? If we continue to refine the business as usual politics we have deployed since Independence, we can predict the answer. We will be diligent and dutiful in turning a blind eye to the suffering of brothers and sisters, insisting instead they are aliens, strangers, others. Francis talks in *Fratelli Tutti* of how “new walls” are being erected for

“self-preservation.”²⁸ That temptation will be irresistible if do not cultivate some version of social friendship.

The English novelist John Lanchester published a short novel in 2019 called *The Wall*.²⁹ It imagines a not-too-distant future where a climate crisis event referred to only as “the change” had taken place. A 15 metre wall has been erected around the entire island of Britain, rendering the UK a literal fortress. Consumed by the urge for self-preservation, the British people lose their humanity. Interestingly, Lanchester leaves the reader in the dark about the actual scale of refugees arriving. The facts don't matter so much once the fear-filled discourse passes a certain threshold.

This is a fable. This is not how it is going to be. But like any good fable, it actually tells us exactly how it is going to be. If we resist social friendship and embrace instead isolation or preservation, erecting barriers that divide us from them, violence will follow. We need not be prophets to know these results. We have spent Ireland's first century conducting the experiments. As Francis warns: “Those who raise walls will end up as slaves within the very walls they have built. They are left without horizons, for they lack this interchange with others.”³⁰ Social friendship is not all we need to navigate the coming era of migrations in our common home, but by inculcating a culture of encounter, it is an essential component and certainly one to which the Christian is summonsed.

²⁷ “I almost barf on him as he gives me a hug.” O'Connor, *Rememberings*, 193.

²⁸ Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, §27.

²⁹ John Lanchester, *The Wall* (London: Faber and Faber, 2019).

³⁰ Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, §26.

A World of Flows, Woes and Foes: Growth, Capitalism and Climate Breakdown

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IN SEARCH OF A STORY

Quite a lot of the problems in our society are caused by the lack of a coherent story: for example, climate is often seen as a very scientific issue. It's seen as something that's going to happen in the future or somewhere else in the world, far away. It doesn't connect with our own lived reality. Now by "our", of course, I mean those of us who live in the white, European, privileged over-developed world. (Words matter, so I will use a few provocative terms like 'climate breakdown', and the 'over developed world' to refer to places such as where we live in Europe and North America.) Stories are really important and what I'm going to try and do in this piece is talk about some of the elements of stories that could help us understand the connection between capitalism and flows.¹

Specifically, we will be talking about flows of migration. But capitalism is primarily about the flows of capital – you know the flows

of Google, Apple, or Microsoft around the world – and why is it that it's easier for capital and particularly large capital, such as these large multinationals to move around the world while it's not at all easy for people? Money is happy to move people once they have been converted into the commodity known as "labour", but persons themselves are restricted and stationary while cash is liquid and mobile. The particularly issue that concerns me is climate refugees: people displaced through no fault of their own, but because simply they are unable to inhabit and have a decent life in their place where they live (largely because of the luxuries we described as necessities in the place where we live). What I will argue is that storytelling is really important, but so is seeing that the story of the world we're now entering in the 21st century is a world of flows. Indeed, this piece, as part of a day dedicated to studying such topics, is itself a flow of ideas. I think we're going to need a lot more of such events, as a means of trying to figure out what the best solutions are in terms of dealing with the inevitable increase in people who are going to be displaced by climate breakdown in the years ahead.

¹ Capitalism is a term that many people don't really feel comfortable talking about. To analyse things in terms of "capital" is taken to mean that you are proposing some radical left perspective. In this context, as a political economist, I use the term simply as a description of the type of economy we live in.

FRAMING RIVAL STORIES

The sad reality is that if we were to stop burning carbon today dramatic action is needed. If everybody in the over-developed world, for example, were to all go vegan and stopped eating beef – which is incredibly damaging to the climate in terms of the use of water and carbon energy and the production of methane by cows² – we have nonetheless pumped enough greenhouse gases into the climate that we have to deal with inevitable climate breakdown.³ That means that we are going to have people in the future who are going to be displaced and part of the problem we face is, as they say, “What’s the story here?”. I’m going to give you two versions of that story.

The first is a positive story. In it, we afford people who are displaced by the climate refugee status and protection. This story replaces the status quo that there is no legal protection for those who’ve been displaced by climate reasons. So, as it stands, if you’re displaced because your government doesn’t like your ethnicity or doesn’t like your politics you can rock up to Dublin airport or Belfast or London and say, “Hi, I’m applying for refugee status because I fear persecution as a result of my religious belief, my political beliefs, or so on.” You cannot rock up to Dublin, Belfast or London and say I’m displaced, because climate breakdown has meant that the land that you used to farm is now desert. There is at present no recognition of refugee protection. Changing that is a positive story that we need to talk about.

But we also must consider the negative view: what we might call a xenophobic right wing populist view, which sadly is prevalent around Europe and North America, and against which the island of Ireland is certainly not immune. This view is held by those who are anti-immigrant, regardless of whether people are displaced by climate or displaced by other reasons. The positive partial acceptance of refugees and the negative total rejection – these are the two pathways or storylines around climate refugees.

As we gather, there is a major heat wave happening in Canada and North America, and again, it’s important how we name this. Is it a heat wave or is it evidence of a dying planet? It is interesting and edifying to pay particular attention to the news – be it RTE or the Irish Times or wherever you get your news – to see if a connection is made between climate breakdown and heat waves or other extreme weather? Think of the way when we get a really great spell of weather in Ireland it is often presented extremely positively, despite the fact that it could be an indication of the worsening climate crisis. So, how we present events is really important, because if, for example, as many as 300 people have died as a result of what’s happening in North America, there is a moral compulsion upon us to explore whether this is a climate anomaly. We can no longer be content to interpret every spell of warm weather as “Sure isn’t it great?”,⁴ particularly for us who live in Ireland.

Language and framing matters in how we understand these particular issues and that’s why a good exemplar for reframing how we talk and write and communicate about climate breakdown is George Monbiot. He is probably the leading environmental journalist in the UK, writing regularly for the Guardian. A couple of years ago, he embarked on a campaign, which was successful, to get his paper *The Guardian* to stop writing about ‘climate change’ and to use other terms such as “global heating,” “climate crisis,” “climate breakdown.” And I think he’s quite right. Calling it climate change radically underestimates the urgency and severity of what we’re facing. As he puts it “it’s like calling an invading army unwelcome guests.”⁵ We have to recognise that we’re witnessing a breakdown; an existential crisis of the life supporting systems of the planet.

Our attention can be consumed by the climate crisis, but we must not forget the simultaneous issue of equal seriousness: the biodiversity

² Hannah Ritchie, “The Carbon Footprint of Foods: Are Differences Explained by the Impacts of Methane?,” *Our World in Data*, March 10, 2020, <https://ourworldindata.org/carbon-footprint-food-methane>.

³ John Branch and Brad Plummer, “Climate Disruption Is Now Locked In. The Next Moves Will Be Crucial,” *New York Times*, September 22, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/climate/climate-change-future.html>.

⁴ Damian Carrington, “Why the Guardian Is Changing the Language It Uses about the Environment,” *The Guardian*, May 17, 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/may/17/why-the-guardian-is-changing-the-language-it-uses-about-the-environment>.

⁵ George Monbiot, “Calling This Climate Change Is like Calling an Invading Army ‘Unexpected Visitors’ - It Is an Absurdly Passive Description of an Existential Threat. I Call It #climatebreakdown,” Tweet, @georgemonbiot (blog), July 24, 2018, <https://twitter.com/georgemonbiot/status/1021694510810705920>.

crisis. And here it is salutary to note that what we are witnessing is the planet's sixth major mass extinction. There have been five other mass extinctions that have occurred on the planet in its evolutionary history, where up to 90% of all life has gone extinct. What's different this time is that it's human activity is the major driver of species going extinct and the shutting down of the life-sustaining systems of the planet.⁶



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But some people say that like the boy who cried wolf, it's too extreme to talk about the climate crisis and planetary breakdown and so on. It can be seen as a moot issue as to how we talk about this if many of our communities are often quite new to the whole issue of the planetary crisis. In such a setting, by calling it climate breakdown are we simply going too far too quickly for some people? It may put them off. Maybe you need to frame it in terms of climate change and then we can build up to talk about climate breakdown.

Reflections on how we sequence our conversation can matter. There is a danger that must be flagged here about popular

understandings along the lines of infamous headlines that read "10 years to save the planet" and so on. While I can understand the moral motivation behind such appeals and their communicative simplicity, nevertheless, the planet doesn't need saving! The planet has seen five other great mass extinction events, and there's no reason at all to doubt that if humanity continues on the path that we're going down that our own species could go extinct. Why do we think our species is somehow immune to the basic biophysical rules and laws that govern other parts of life on this planet? There is an issue about how we talk precisely about this topic. I do question this kind of "save the planet" narrative because what we are really aiming for is saving the planet that's habitable for human beings to live decent lives along with their wider-than-human communities and entities. That is a better framing than simply talking about "saving the planet."

IN PRAISE OF THE APOCALYPSE

I do think apocalypse is an appropriate term to use in our current moment, but not in the usual way. Usually it is mistranslated and misunderstood. The word "apocalypse" has come down to us today from the ancient Greek. We imagine the apocalypse as awful. It's "end times." It's death and destruction. But actually, in the ancient Greek, it means the "lifting of a veil", thus expressing a sense of opportunity, revelation and possibly redemption and recovery.⁷ One way of nicely expressing this, pertinent to wider discussions today, is that rather than see the issue of the climate breakdown as what can we do for the climate, but what we can change.

On the one hand, there's all of these arguments that we need to change our behaviour – influential voices will tell us we need to have geo-engineering technology, carbon capture and sequestration, and various other yet-to-be-invented marvels. This often very male solutions-focused approach imagines that we would solve the climate problem, so we're going to do something for

⁶ Sam Turvey, ed., *Holocene Extinctions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

⁷ Mike Hulme, *Exploring Climate Change through Science and in Society: An Anthology of Mike Hulme's Essays, Interviews and Speeches* (London: Earthscan, from Routledge, 2013).



"Apocalypse", from the Greek – ἀποκάλυψις – literally means unveiling, or revelation. It is not primarily about the end of the world, but the beginning of a new vision. (Unsplash <https://unsplash.com/@dyuha>)

the climate. But having an apocalyptic framing instead prompts us to ask: "What can the climate crisis do for us?" What are the moral and cultural opportunities in terms of changing our views of the good life or of changing capitalism to something different that could be transformative? So, it's not what *we can do for the climate*, which is a kind of a dominant economic-technocratic way of looking at the situation. What is required is that we inflect it with its proper moral and cultural opportunities and ask: *What can we change as we respond to the climate crisis?*

That is the way we should be thinking about the planetary crisis, in terms of new opportunities for rethinking the good life, rethinking human relationships with each other, rethinking human relationships with the earth, and so on at this time. Contrast this to the dominant public discussion of this issue in terms of framing it (and therefore delimiting it) to a continuation of business as usual. The effect of this is to maintain capitalism, consumerism, and our lifestyles as they are now, but perhaps drawing on renewable energy to do so. It is unlikely that that is going to be

technically possible; we don't have enough of the Earth's resources to help us to do that, and we are going to have to radically start contemplating ideas of sufficiency, a sense of *enoughness*, and in particular in relation to capitalism as an economic system, to move away from the ecocidal objective of economic growth; of endless economic growth especially within the over-developed world. The challenge in those societies is not that they lack economic growth.⁸ In those societies they are not experiencing a poverty problem, what these societies have is a very serious wealth problem. They have an abundance of wealth but the problem is that it's badly, unevenly, and unjustly distributed. The challenges in societies such as ours in Ireland, for example, are those of redistribution of wealth, income, resources, and opportunities.

Moving away from growth as the main objective of economies in the minority world is necessary if we are to enable citizens in the global South to lift themselves out of poverty in an equitable and ecologically sustainable fashion. Simply put, there is not enough planet to enable us in the minority, over-developed world to continue with our high consumption ways of life *and* also lift people in the majority world out of poverty. And here we need to orient ourselves, to seek an unveiling in the truest apocalyptic sense, by asking disarmingly simple but powerful questions such as: Which is more important, luxuries in the global North or meeting the basic needs of those in the global South?

I think that's fairly obvious and easy. Most of us would intuitively and unproblematically say that we should prioritise needs over luxuries and wants. However, it is wants and luxuries that constitute the endless dynamic of economic growth in the global North; a new brand of iPhone, novelties, the expansion of conveniences etc., so economic growth in our societies is *not* about meeting basic human needs. In fact, what we see in the Republic of Ireland is a serious abdication of meeting very real human needs in two dimensions, health (including mental health) and housing. That's what our economic system should be organised

⁸ Jason Hickel, *Less Is More: How Degrowth Will Save the World* (London: Windmill Books, 2021).

around: meeting those needs rather than the endless proliferation of novelty and consumer goods that are luxuries.

BEYOND GROWTH



Here's a nice visual representation of this kind of post-growth position, which is implicitly a post-capitalist position as well, because capitalism cannot be sustained if you refuse to pursue growth with no purpose beyond growth and no limit beyond what the market constrains. So, compare the two images of the Earth above, one from 1962 and the other from 2022: Can you see any difference? There is none. And the reality is the Earth isn't growing. With the exception of solar radiation from the sun, everything that's ever happened and will happen, at least on a terrestrial understanding of human evolution, happens within that fixed finite system of the Earth and its internal regenerative capacities of the air, the water, the seasons, and the growth and maturation and decay of life, both animal and vegetable. The human economy is a subsystem of that large earth system.

Thinking logically, how can a subsystem, which is within that fixed larger system, continually grow? It's a bit like a balloon in a box. At some point it's going to burst. One might even surmise it has not yet burst only because most of the growth in that balloon, the growing economy has been in the minority world and it hasn't really been spread to the rest of the world. It is simply a reality that not everybody can live at the high levels of resource-use, pollution, water consumption and so on, as your average European or North American. There simply is not enough planet to enable this, and therefore there are strong material/scientific as well as moral arguments in favour of the redistribution of resources and the fruits of the use of those resources more equally, within the biophysical constraints of a non-growing planet.

This is the problem with growth as a permanent feature of the human economy. Nothing living grows forever, and living entities and natural systems reach a certain state, a threshold beyond which they switch to a "steady state", or reach homeostasis, or an equilibrium state. This is true of yourself. When you become an adult, you stop growing. So why do we think that the human economy, a subsystem of the larger fixed earth system, has to or even can, keep growing endlessly and exponentially?

What is the alternative? What I would suggest is that growth should be seen as a temporary development within an economy to create and produce the goods and services, infrastructure and so on, to lift people out of poverty and give people decent lives. But then at some point, it has to move on to a steady state. To achieve this state should be seen as the goal and its achievement as a great civilisational success. In such a state, we will have a type of economy where we're maintaining the flows of resources, restricting pollution, cultivating the communities needed to maintain and indefinitely sustain a decent way of life for everybody. But sadly, for most citizens we have this sense that growth is "normal", it's "natural", and above all else is the story we are telling about how it is "needed." We are trained to instinctively be concerned if we hear in the news that growth in the economy has declined. I think this is because for most people "growth" means "jobs", it means good public services, investment in schools, roads and education. But what if we can have jobs and public services without growth?⁹

In the Republic of Ireland because of the neoliberal and hyper-globalised structure of our economy, it is unique in the developed world in having the strange phenomenon of "jobless growth" in recent years. So, we've had growth in GDP (Gross Domestic Product) because of the large foreign direct investment sector, some of those big companies I mentioned a moment ago, so it looks great on the Irish balance sheet. Growth in 2015 was

⁹ R. Strand, Z. Kovacic, and S. Funtowicz, "Growth Without Economic Growth," Briefing, Narratives for Change (Copenhagen: European Environment Agency, January 2021), <https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/growth-without-economic-growth>.

34.4%.¹⁰ But here's the rub: very few jobs are created as part of that increase in growth.

This prompts another question: If what we seek are sustainable jobs, why don't we manage our economy to achieve full employment rather than creating the conditions for achieving economic growth? It is job creation that we should be focusing on, and if as a result of such job-creation policies, a bit of growth comes out of that, then all well and good. So why do our policy-makers, mainstream economists, media commentators, and most academic researchers all fixate on economic growth when we could be focusing on jobs? Why fixate on growth when we could be focusing on housing? Why fixate on growth when we could be looking at our health service? Too often our politicians and decision makers have perpetuated the myth that we need growth in order to have these good things, and that growth is the *only* way to have these good things. Which would you rather have – jobless growth or job-rich non-growth?

AN ECONOMY SHAPED FOR FLOURISHING

A major flaw in GDP, which is the main measure of economic growth, is that it tells us nothing about the quality of life in our societies, nothing about the distribution of wealth and resources in our society and is completely amoral.¹¹ It is indifferent as to whether or not you have jobless growth or job-rich growth. All that matters from a GDP perspective is growth. The growth metric is amoral at the very time we need to introduce more moral and ethical thinking, both in understanding the climate and ecological crisis, but certainly also in our understanding of the economy. Again, we need to ask some very basic but profound questions here: What is the “economy”? How is it defined? What is the economy for?

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We need to ask some very basic but profound questions here: What is the “economy”? How is it defined? What is the economy for?

We have a lot of evidence, certainly in the over-developed world of Europe and North America, that growth is no longer making us happy. Growth is no longer adding (much) to human flourishing. We have evidence in the social sciences going back to the 1970s that show people today are no happier today as they were 50 years ago.¹² This trend has been steady all that time, but on the GDP growth trend it's been increasing (as has resource use, pollution, ecological and climate damage etc.). So, all this growth has not actually increased human levels of well-being in the overdeveloped world. Once again, we need to ask: Why are we fixating on growth as the main thing our society should be focusing on achieving, and why are we not making as our main objective the increase of human well-being? That's the issue. Growth is a means, not an end in itself. But under capitalism, it is not just distorted to become a goal, but the primary goal. Most people do not benefit from this growth. It benefits a minority not the majority. Growth also does not help us deal with inequality. The growth metric is indifferent: all the growth of the Irish economy could accrue to 0.001% of the population only, and this, from a strict GDP point of view does not matter. Growth tells us nothing about inequality.

And growth is a structural and *ineliminable* – that is constitutive – component of capitalism. In this way, the capitalist economy is like a bicycle: It either “goes and grows”, or it “stalls and falls.” These are its two, and only, possible positions. It does not naturally or functionally gravitate towards a steady state. It's got this inbuilt desire and imperative to continue to grow, so the proposition here is that if you accept that a post-growth economy is what we need to build, that also means that we are aiming at a post-capitalist economy. That does not mean to say it is a Soviet-style command-

¹⁰ Paul Krugman, “Leprechaun Economics Key to Understanding US Corporate Tax Proposal,” *Irish Times*, April 9, 2021, <https://www.irishtimes.com/business/economy/leprechaun-economics-key-to-understanding-us-corporate-tax-proposal-1.4533410>.

¹¹ Kate Raworth, “Want to Know How to Get beyond GDP? Start Here,” *Exploring Doughnut Economics* (blog), July 1, 2012, <https://www.kateraworth.com/2012/07/01/want-to-know-how-to-get-beyond-gdp-start-here/>. See also: Kate Raworth, *Doughnut Economics* (London: Random House Business, 2017).

¹² See, for example: Christopher P Barrington-Leigh, “Trends in Conceptions of Progress and Well-Being” (New York, NY: Sustainable Development Solutions Network, 2022).

and-control economy we are proposing. What is conceived is a new thing, beyond the old stories. A capitalism that does not grow is an oxymoron. A typical capitalist economic system itself requires on average 3% growth a year just to keep stable. That sounds quite modest – just 3% a year – but think about it this way: an economy growing by 3% a year means that every 20 years or so the economy is doubling. What that means is double the pollution, double the resource use, double the production of goods and services, double the consumption of carbon energy etc.¹³ And in this way we can see it is ecologically and biophysically impossible to continue with this growth rate in the long run.

CONCLUSION: AGAINST NAKED EMPERORS

As we draw our discussion to a close, we would be wise to make reference (almost obligatory now) to Greta Thunberg.

I think she is a great moral heroine of our contemporary age in calling out loudly that we are in a climate crisis, and calling out the hypocrisy and cant of current mainstream and dominant media and political discussion of the issue.¹⁴ In many ways, the period we are in now is akin to the 1930s in the run up to the Second World War, where we see a kind of “phony war” as we did then in Europe.¹⁵ We do not yet fully recognise what’s ahead of us, or we are content to weakly acknowledge the dangers but not prepared to do what is necessary to address them.

As a species we are facing an existential threat in the planetary crisis. We are already north of over 1°C warming across the planet. According to the Paris Agreement, the climate change agreement from 2015, the world committed to try and stay below 2°C and ideally 1.5°C. At the recent COP 26 climate conference in Glasgow in November 2021, the best our world leaders could do was “keep 1.5 alive”!



Greta Thunberg joining with teenagers from Bristol to protest for climate action, February 28th, 2020. (1000 Words: Shutterstock 1659421072)

¹³ With efficiencies and refinements, growth may not be matched perfectly by consumption of these resources but growth can never be decoupled entirely from these dynamics (and while there are theoretical possibilities for advances, very often in practice the relationship between growth and consumption is linear).

¹⁴ Greta Thunberg, “The #COP26 Is over. Here’s a Brief Summary: Blah, Blah, Blah. But the Real Work Continues Outside These Halls. And We Will Never Give up, Ever.” Tweet, @gretathunberg, November 13, 2021, <https://twitter.com/gretathunberg/status/1459612735294029834>.

¹⁵ This essay was first given as an address in the summer of 2021, months before the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

It is unlikely we will make 1.5°C and, if we are being realistic and prudent, we should be thinking and planning for the very real possibility of a 2°C or 3°C warmer world.

In other words, the rhetoric from politicians and our political leaders is not being translated into the types of action that is actually needed. This is why Greta Thunberg is doing something remarkable by simply calling it as it is: The science is telling us how bad things are, why are our leaders not acting on the science? An appropriate story for our contemporary age is the boy who called out to the emperor, “you have no clothes”, The time has come to acknowledge economic growth for its own sake, as well as carbon energy and the other socio-economic causes of greenhouse gas emissions, have been stripped of their utility. They have passed the threshold so they are now sub-optimal. They increase increasing risks that far outweigh any benefits they might create.

In lieu of naked emperors, we need leaders who can respond to the story that is true. Our political class seem fixated on desperately trying to paint business-as-usual green, using terms like “green growth” and “smart growth.”¹⁶ They want to continue with business as usual, whereas business as usual is the problem. Similar to those voices, that want to get want us to “get back to normal” after the pandemic. My view is this: Why on Earth do we want to go back to normal? Normal was the problem! Normal was ecocidal! Normal was producing inequalities! It was not adding appreciably to our lives. What is needed is a fundamental paradigm shift. Growth should be dethroned as the major objective of our economy and society. We need to flow as a global community from ‘more’ to ‘better’, and to design an economy so that good lives do not cost the earth and are not based on the exploitation of people and places.

¹⁶ Wolfgang Neef, “Die Stoffliche Seite Des »grünen« Kapitalismus Und Seiner Technischen Wunderwaffen Gegen Die Klimakatastrophe,” *Zeitschrift Luxemburg*, March 21, 2022, <https://zeitschrift-luxemburg.de/artikel/die-stoffliche-seite-des-gruenen-kapitalismus-und-seiner-technischen-wunderwaffen-gegen-die-klimakatastrophe>.

Working with Families from Direct Provision Centres in Cork

Martina Madden

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*While this issue of Working Notes considers
issues of global migration from a theoretical
or practical perspective, in this essay, we turn
to the real, lived experience of arriving in
Ireland seeking refuge.*

Emigrating is often a forced decision caused by poverty, unemployment or oppression. Irish people know this all too well having left these shores in our droves to escape hardships including famine and economic recessions. It means leaving behind your culture, possibly your language, and certainly several people that you love. These days, Irish people emigrate for better financial or creative opportunities, for example to Berlin, London or Dubai. The pain of leaving is tempered by the option to return home permanently some day and the ability to visit regularly until that day arrives. We may think that the era of forced migration – no choice but to leave and no option to return – is a relic of a dark past. While true for “us”, many others still live this reality.

NOT ALL IMMIGRANTS ARE EQUAL

People who immigrate to Ireland from other member countries of the EU, or from the UK, may suffer from some degree of culture shock and take a while to settle into the rhythms of life here. But even within the cohort of people who can live in Ireland without a visa, there are differences. We can assume that a highly-skilled, highly-paid tech worker who moves to Dublin to work at Google, Facebook or LinkedIn is going to have an easier time integrating than a less educated person from Romania whose cultural capital and language skills only allow them to look for work as a manual labourer. At the bottom of this hierarchy of immigrants are the men, women, and children who are forced to flee their native countries and who seek asylum in Ireland. They are the among the most poorly-treated people in our society.

DIRECT PROVISION & CORK MIGRANT CENTRE

The stress of living in Direct Provision cannot be overstated. The stress of finding yourself in an unfamiliar country, in an overcrowded centre filled with strangers and with only one room for your whole family to eat and sleep is unimaginable for most of us. The usual means of settling in to a new place are not available to the people living in Direct Provision, as opportunities to meet and get to know local

people are limited, and in addition to this there is the stigma attached to being an asylum seeker.

Despite all of this, there are reasons for hope. A recent visit to Cork to meet with groups of people living in Direct Provision who are participating in some creative and healing programmes run by Cork Migrant Centre was an uplifting experience where I was left with a sense of admiration for everyone involved, both for their upbeat, positive attitudes and their perseverance despite huge obstacles.

NAOMI MASHETI



Dr Naomi Masheti, Programme Coordinator of Cork Migrant Centre¹ is a psychologist and psychosocial practitioner, who holds a PhD in the Psychosocial Wellbeing of Sub-Saharan African Migrant Children. Naomi is a migrant herself from Kenya, and has been living in Ireland for 20 years; “a lifetime” as she says. This, in addition to her impressive credentials makes her incredibly well-attuned to the needs of people living in Direct Provision.

COFFEE MORNING FOR MOTHERS OF YOUNG CHILDREN

Groups of Direct Provision residents have been meeting at Nano Nagle Place in Cork city centre for more than four years. It is a safe space for people living in Direct Provision

¹ Cork Migrant Centre, accessed 12 April 2022, <https://corkmigrantcentre.ie/>



centres – to meet others, find support and learn new skills. The aim of the facilitators, led by Naomi, is to provide a setting where residents can meet people living in other centres as well as people from the local community, to increase their support network in Ireland.

I visit the centre one morning at Naomi's invitation, to talk to her and to the women taking part in the group. The women have a warm rapport with each other and with Naomi. They greet each other with hugs and smiles and it's clear that the connection between them all is strong. One thing that strikes me about the group is their good humour and optimism, despite all of the challenges they face. Naomi explains that transport is the greatest challenge for Direct Provision residents accessing programmes, as the projects involve bringing people from different centres together, and it is proven to be the case on the day I visit – a bus that is meant to collect residents from a centre in Macroom doesn't show up, leaving several women unable to make the coffee morning.

Of all the people living in Direct Provision centres, Naomi says that it is hardest for mothers with young babies. They are most vulnerable to isolation and stress because it is more difficult to find ways to connect with people when the demands of minding a small baby make it difficult to get out to even meet someone for a coffee. This was the need that

the weekly coffee morning in Nano Nagle Place was responding to – to offer somewhere where mothers could take a break from their babies for an hour or so by handing them over to the volunteers who engage the babies/toddlers in developmentally appropriate activities, giving them time to relax and talk to other mothers about their week.

LINO PRINTING ART CLASS

With their small children safely engaged, the young mothers and other women in the group take an art class where they are taught how to make lino prints. The camaraderie among the group is strong and they chat and laugh throughout the hour or so the class lasts. A couple of the young children are too shy to join the babies/toddlers activities and Naomi takes a walk in the walled garden of Nano Nagle Place with one mother, "to give her a break." After the impersonal nature of living in a Direct Provision centre, the personal care that people receive from the Cork Migrant Centre must be welcome, and healing.

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When you have lived in an institution
for a long period of time, the
constraints can start to feel like safety.



HOUSING CRISIS DELAYS PEOPLE IN MOVING OUT OF DIRECT PROVISION

Several of the women I speak to tell me they were in Direct Provision for more than five years. They have had children in that time, children who still do not know anything other than sharing just one room with their family in an overcrowded centre full of people. When you have lived in an institution for a long period of time, the constraints can start to feel like safety. One woman tells me that she has had her papers for a couple of months and is preparing for the move out of the centre, but her relief at leaving is tinged with trepidation. At least in the centre, she says, there are always others to turn to, but “nobody looks out for you outside.”

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When you have lived in an institution for a long period of time, the constraints can start to feel like safety.

When – if – the day finally arrives that the person has their asylum request granted by the State, what the women refer to as ‘getting their papers’ – there are immediately a whole new set of obstacles to surmount. First, the paperwork to get HAP², and then the (well documented by JCFJ) struggle to find a home that is affordable and adequate for your needs. In this, each individual and family from Direct Provision finds themselves competing with all of the other people who are looking for housing in a market where there is

limited supply and extortionate rental costs. In addition to the lack of finances they also face discrimination for coming out of a Direct Provision centre. They tell me that landlords say “I’ll get back to you... but they never do.” They also report that they’re asked intrusive questions about how they’ll afford to pay rent, having just come out of Direct Provision.

Hard as it is for families to find a home, they say it’s even more difficult for single people. One of the women in the group is looking for accommodation on her own, which means finding a room in a house-share, which is proving almost impossible at the moment. Of course these issues are not unique to people coming out of Direct Provision, they are endemic in Ireland and more severe for people on low incomes or in receipt of unemployment assistance. But while discrimination is something that is hard to prove, and therefore quantify, it is plausible that when choosing a flatmate to rent the spare room, people might default to opting for someone who is feels less ‘other’ to them than a woman from another continent who currently lives in a Direct Provision centre. This is an additional hurdle these people have to face.

SUPPORTS IN HOUSING, EDUCATION, PARENTING SKILLS, & MENTAL HEALTH

The team at the Cork Migrant Centre are led by what the women tell them they want. At the coffee morning, some women expressed that they were feeling stressed and so the mental health workshop was born. The women come from many different countries in Africa, Eastern Europe and others. This diversity of backgrounds means that they sometimes have

² Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) is a subsidy paid by local authorities to households, who are eligible for social housing, to source their own accommodation in the private rental sector.

difficulty interpreting the cultural norms for parenting in Ireland. The team has responded to this frustration by setting up parenting courses, which help these women – who already know how to be mothers – what it is to be a mother in this particular cultural context. Naomi’s background as a psychologist is particularly helpful here. She is concerned with the psychosocial aspect of living in Direct Provision and the stress that moving to a new social and cultural world has on the individual. Direct Provision is hugely stressful for a person and a great cause of anxiety, which is hardly a surprise given the conditions that people live in. What Naomi and her team try to do is prevent or reduce that stress to mitigate the harm it does.

The help they offer is often very pragmatic. If children are not doing well in school, they can access grinds or go to a homework club. The centre has links with UCC+ and other access programmes, and can also give second-level students information about scholarship opportunities. If residents are in need of housing, they can write them a reference to show a potential landlord. She describes a lot of what they do as “signposting” [pointing people towards the information they need] and facilitating and stresses the importance of “meeting people where they are.” The centre works in partnership with several organisations including UCC, Tusla and the HSE.

SAOIRSE – ETHNIC HANDS ON DECK

The centre runs many creative workshops including one in collaboration with Cork Printmakers – Healing Through Crafts. Before Covid the women would meet up and take part in the craft sessions, learning sewing skills among other things. Then once the pandemic restrictions began, the sessions stopped. To fill the gap left by their absence the women who attended the classes decided to use their skills to make facemasks. The team at the centre raised money for the initiative with a GoFundMe appeal and funding from UCC. In four weeks the women had made 9,000 cotton masks – so many that they could donate three to each child living in a Direct Provision centre and give the excess to 14 community groups.

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The impact of the mask-making was not just visible in the effect they had on slowing the spread of Covid-19 but was also visible in the sewing group itself. The women were buoyant after the initiative’s success and had increased self-esteem and a sense of agency from being able to contribute to the local community instead of feeling like they were always receiving. “The genie was out of the bottle” says Naomi, who began to seek out ways in which the group could use their experience to make some income from their work. The team formed and registered a social enterprise, *Saoirse – Ethnic Hands on Deck*, so that the women could sell their wares. Since then, they have produced not just masks but brooches, Christmas cards, and hair ties.³

THE MOTHER TONGUES PROJECT

The Mother Tongues project has also emerged from the new initiative. It was an idea that fomented at the mother and babies’ coffee mornings when the women would chat and laugh about the sayings and wisdom that their mothers had passed on to them. Despite their diverse backgrounds, they discovered that mothers around the world from Lagos to Longford often say exactly the same things! The project was born when someone had the idea to get these words of wisdom printed on tote bags. The bags are now being sold in Nano Nagle Place and in Cork Flower Shop in Glandore and will be on sale at the Mother Tongues Festival at the end of February.⁴

³ Find out more about this project on social media: Twitter @ethnichands, Instagram @saorisehd, Facebook facebook.com/SaoirseEHD.

⁴ Mother Tongues, “Mother Tongues Festival”, accessed 12 April 2022, <https://mothertonguesfestival.com/>

A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND ADULTS



Fionnuala O'Connell is the Youth Coordinator at the centre. She was a volunteer in youth programmes before taking up this post and has lived in Cork since 2016. Fionnuala was born in South Africa, to a Liberian mum and an Irish dad and has lived in Ireland since 2010, so she is able to relate to the feeling of arriving in Ireland as a newcomer.

When Naomi holds the mother and baby coffee mornings, Fionnuala takes the older children and teenagers for workshops in different subjects including creative writing, hip-hop and dance. Fionnuala also facilitates a young print-making class for teenagers. The centre has collaborations with the Crawford Gallery in Cork and during lockdown ran Zoom art classes for young people.

She takes a holistic approach to wellbeing for the young people she works with and explains that a lot of the children and young adults speak different languages, so the creative workshops allow them to share a universal language through artistic outputs. In creativity, they find the medium to express themselves in a way that everyone can understand.

The workshops are run by poets, painters, singers and dance teachers who can guide the young people in a structured way, including a dance teacher from Cape Verde, and a rapper and spoken word artist. Fionnuala tells me that the young girls in particular love the dance classes and she can see how it empowers them by giving them confidence and building their self-esteem.

A lot of the children and teens in the groups Fionnuala facilitates have been born in Ireland to non-Irish parents. This, coupled with knowing only the unstable and uncertain environment of Direct Provision, makes their search for a sense of identity difficult. Direct Provision affects the confidence of children badly. They don't get invited to sleepovers in other children's homes. Children from some of the Direct Provision centres are given the same packed lunch for school every day, which adds to the stigma they feel and makes them a target to be picked on. They "can't help but compare their freedoms", she says. The workshops create a safe space where these things can be discussed.

Fionnuala explains that this exploration of feelings among older children and teens helps the work that Naomi does with parents – saying "it's holistic, so you can't just do one part and shut yourself off from another part." This approach is more sustainable and it's better for assessing the impact of the workshops and youth programmes because parents will report back on how their child is doing.

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Direct Provision affects the confidence of children badly. They don't get invited to sleepovers in other children's homes.

Children from some of the Direct Provision centres are given the same packed lunch for school every day, which adds to the stigma they feel and makes them a target to be picked on.

INTERNATIONAL GARDEN PROJECT, BALLINTEMPLE

The International Garden Project (IGP) is an innovative and inclusive new programme which is run by the centre. It's based on a plot of land in the Cork city suburb of Ballintemple, situated in a peaceful convent garden which was donated by the Our Lady of Apostles (OLA) sisters there.



The IGP is a pilot programme that currently involves five families from Direct Provision centres who come to the OLA grounds each Saturday to begin the work of preparing the ground and planting seeds for harvest. If this is a success – and early signs indicate that it will be – it will expand to include more families.



The land is being prepared to plant seeds, with huge support from the students of a horticulture school on sight and Nelson Abbey of Johnson Controls, Cork so that the families can grow food from their homelands. IGP is all about growing food 'in solidarity' and in this respect, there is a whole range of groups that are involved, from Green Spaces for Health, Social and Health Education Project Cork, Cork Food Policy Council, Cork City Council, Social Inclusion, Parks & Recreation Dept., and Cork City Council; to Cork Community Gardaí. Naomi tells me that there are already several ethnic shops in Cork selling food native to the countries the families come from, so they thought it would be a good idea to do it themselves.

The garden grounds are easily accessible from Direct Provision centres in Cork, and also in Kinsale, making it an ideal location for the programme. Because of the nature of the work, it is a suitable activity for people of all ages, so mums, dads and babies can all come along to enjoy the fresh air and get involved.

The garden seems like a metaphor for the work being done by Naomi, Fionnuala and others in Cork Migrant Centre in connecting people with home, while helping them to grow and flourish in new soil.

** For reasons of privacy and security the names and identifying details of the women who attend programmes at Cork Migrant Centre have been omitted from this article.*

Forced Displacement: Well-Founded Fear of Home

Reality of Forced Migration: Dying to Live¹

Eugene Quinn

Eugene Quinn is Director of the Jesuit
Refugee Service, Ireland (JRS Ireland).

¹ Danielle Vella, *Dying to Live* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2020).

INTRODUCTION

Christmas is a time we associate with home, of celebration and good cheer with family and friends. The reality could not be more different for persons forcibly displaced because of a 'well-founded fear' of home. On the 25 December this year, UK authorities rescued 67 migrants attempting to cross the English Channel. A poignant accompanying image showed a group of refugees huddled together in white blankets and with blue surgical masks disembarking at 1.30am on Christmas morning.² Yet they would count themselves lucky as no lives were lost. One month earlier, 31 migrants perished after their boat sank in the Channel. It is a stark reminder of the life-threatening risks forced migrants face in search of refuge and a place of safety to call home.

GROWING DISPLACEMENT AND PUSHBACKS

In the second half of 2021, the shocking and bleak reality of forced migration was almost daily in the news. The world looked on in horror at the unfolding humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan, which led to the forced displacement of millions, internally and externally, as the Taliban swept back into power. The escalation of the conflict in Tigray (Ethiopia) forced vast swathes of people to flee their homes in fear of their lives.³ Closer to home the standoff at the Poland/Belarus border threatened the integrity of the European Union.

In October 2021, Poland's nationalist government passed legislation authorising the 'pushback' of asylum seekers, in contravention of the Geneva Convention to which it is a signatory. On Poland's eastern border with Belarus, thousands of migrants from the Middle East were repelled with water cannons and batons: "Forced to stay on a small strip of wooded no man's land, in the freezing conditions at least 21 people died. Hundreds of others have been secretly sheltered by courageous Polish families, risking prosecution

for assisting illegal immigration."⁴ One newspaper headline, 'Trapped at Europe's borders', captures the plight of hundreds of thousands of forced migrants in transit countries to the east or detained in inhumane conditions in North African countries at Europe's southern border.

The Mediterranean Sea is one of the deadliest in the world, a cemetery to more than twenty thousand forced migrants who have perished en-route to Europe in search of safety and protection over the last two decades. An estimated 12 people a day died or disappeared while trying to reach Spain in 2021. 4,404 refugees perished, included 205 children, according to Caminando Fronteras (Walking Borders). The number of deaths in 2021 was more than twice the 2,170 deaths and disappearances recorded in 2020.⁵ All across Europe's southern frontier, thousands of forced migrants have perished trying to cross the Mediterranean Sea from Libya to Italy and from Turkey to Greece.

Reaching Lampedusa: Amadou's Story

It was significant that Pope Francis chose the island of Lampedusa for his first papal visit in 2013. Pointedly, he sought to draw the world's attention to the thousands of migrants and refugees who died trying to cross the Mediterranean in overcrowded and unsafe boats. Throughout his papacy he has condemned the "globalisation of indifference" to the fate of people fleeing violence and poverty.⁶ At an event marking the fifth anniversary of the death of 800 migrants drowned at sea, the Pope urged: "This symbol of so many tragedies of the Mediterranean Sea will continue to challenge the conscience of all and encourage the growth of a more united humanity."⁷

² Press Association, "Border Force Picks up 67 People after Christmas Day Attempt to Cross Channel," *The Guardian*, December 25, 2021, <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/dec/25/67-people-cross-english-channel-on-christmas-day>.

³ Irish Jesuits International, "What Led to the Conflict in Tigray?," *Irish Jesuits International* (blog), February 11, 2021, <https://www.iji.ie/2021/02/11/what-led-to-the-conflict-in-tigray/>.

⁴ Guardian Editorial, "The Guardian View on Compassion for the Stranger: Not Found in Fortress Europe," *The Guardian*, December 26, 2021, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/dec/26/the-guardian-view-on-compassion-for-the-stranger-not-found-in-fortress-europe>.

⁵ Ashifa Kassam, "Death Toll of Refugees Attempting to Reach Spain Doubles in 2021," *The Guardian*, January 3, 2022, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jan/03/death-toll-of-refugees-attempting-to-reach-spain-doubles-in-2021>.

⁶ Pope Francis, "Holy Mass in the 'Arenas' Sports Camp of Lampedusa" (Lampedusa, July 8, 2013), https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2013/documents/papa-francesco_20130708_omelia-lampedusa.html.

⁷ RTE News, "Pope Says Mediterranean Is 'Europe's Biggest Cemetery,'" *RTE.ie*, June 13, 2021, <https://www.rte.ie/news/2021/0613/1227864-europe-mediterranean-migrants-pope/>.

REACHING LAMPEDUSA: Amadou's Story

Amadou left Libya in a boat crammed with 150 people in seek of refuge in Europe

He dreaded the journey and before the journey he cried at the thought of leaving his country.

36 of his fellow passengers died on the way because they were too weak to survive the three-day journey. Their bodies were thrown overboard.

Amadou finally reached Europe when the boat touched the shores of Lampedusa.



“

I am not afraid. I know that when I leave this town, I'll do something better. I trust myself. I know all is not lost

Jospin

GLOBAL FORCED DISPLACEMENT

Record Global Displacement

At the end of 2020, 82.4 million people worldwide found themselves displaced by a combination of oppression, war, generalised violence and human rights abuses (see Table 1). In the course of the past ten years the levels of forced displacement have increased dramatically, now more than double the level of a decade ago (41 million in 2010).

UNHCR Global Forcibly Displaced Figures, 2015-2020

Figures are in millions.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Displaced persons worldwide	65.3	65.6	68.5	70.8	79.5	82.4
Refugees worldwide	21.3	22.5	25.4	25.9	26.0	26.4
Refugees in Europe	4.3	5.1	6.1	6.5	6.5	6.7
% of refugees in Europe	20.2%	22.7%	24.0%	25.1%	25.0%	25.4%

Table: Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice • Source: UN High Commissioner for Refugees • Created with Datawrapper

Table 1: Global Forced Displacement, 2015-2020

Excluded from these figures are potentially millions of forcibly displaced people who have not registered claims for protection or who have travelled through irregular channels, as well as ‘de-facto’ refugees fleeing life-threatening economic conditions and those displaced by natural disasters and environmental degradation who fall outside existing protection instruments.

More than one per cent – or one in 95 – of the world’s population is forcibly displaced. A high concentration of refugees live in poor and fragile contexts, and many are forced into very vulnerable situations as they flee violence and persecution, chronic poverty and hunger, and the impacts of the climate crisis. Ninety-five percent of displacement occurs in the Global South. In 2020, 86% of the world’s refugees were hosted in developing countries; with only 14% hosted in wealthier nations in the Global North.⁸ By contrast, the world’s wealthiest nations, including Ireland, welcome only one in seven of refugees globally.

On the 70th anniversary of the 1951 Refugee Convention, former UN Secretary General, Ban Ki Moon, himself a former child refugee, urged wealthy states including the UK, Denmark, and Australia to rethink what he called their “punitive approach” when it comes to offering refugee protection. He rightly compared the “regressive asylum policies” of the Global North with the generosity of developing nations.⁹ A gulf remains between the rights-based rhetoric of wealthier states in responding to forced migration and the restrictive practices of border control and management. Global forced displacement is at record levels and represents “the new 1%” of the world’s population, many of whom are very vulnerable and at-risk of exploitation and violence.

Refugee Producing and Hosting Regions

More than two-thirds of refugees worldwide (68%) come from five countries: The Syrian Arab Republic (6.6 million), Venezuela (4 million), Afghanistan (2.7 million), South Sudan (2.2 million) and Myanmar (1.1 million).¹⁰ Several crises – some new, some resurfacing after years – forced people to flee within or beyond the borders of their country. Afghanistan, Somalia, and Yemen continued to be hotspots, while conflict in Syria is stretching into its tenth year.

In Ethiopia, more than one million people were displaced within the country during the year, while more than 54,000 fled the Tigray region into eastern Sudan. In northern Mozambique, hundreds of thousands escaped deadly violence, with civilians witnessing massacres by non-state armed groups in several villages, including beheadings and abductions of women and children. The outbreak of hostilities between Armenia and Azerbaijan left a devastating impact on civilians in both countries and displaced tens of thousands of people.

Global Impact of Covid-19

While the full impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on wider cross-border migration and displacement globally is not yet fully recorded, UNHCR data shows that in 2020, arrivals of new refugees and asylum-seekers were sharply down in most regions – about 1.5 million lower year on year. This meant people forcibly displaced either did not cross borders or if they could it was mainly to neighbouring countries.

Refugee resettlement programmes were particularly affected by the pandemic, border closures, and travel restrictions. Many States, including Ireland, had to cancel refugee resettlement selection missions. In 2020 only 22,270 refugees were resettled globally from a Projected Global Resettlement Need of 1.45 million places.

⁸ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, “Figures at a Glance,” UNHCR, 2021, <https://www.unhcr.org/figures-at-a-glance.html>.

⁹ Ban Ki-moon, “70 Years Ago, the World Made a Pact to Protect Refugees. Too Many of Our Leaders Are Failing to Uphold That Promise,” *Time*, July 26, 2021, <https://time.com/6083151/1951-refugee-convention-anniversary/>.

¹⁰ UNHCR, “Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2020” (Geneva, Switzerland: UN Refugee Agency, 2021), 3.

Global Forced Displacement

Key Facts and Figures*



More than 1% of the world's population is forcibly displaced: that's 1 in 95 people.

42% of the world's refugees are children.

More than one million children were born as refugees in 2020.



86% of refugees are hosted in developing countries.

The five countries who host the most refugees are: Turkey, Colombia, Germany, Pakistan, & Uganda.

During the Covid-19 restrictions in 2020, just 22,770 refugees were resettled globally.



This year, it is estimated that more than 1.47 million people will need resettlement



68% of refugees are from just five countries: Syria, Venezuela, Afghanistan, South Sudan, & Myanmar



*Facts and figures courtesy of the UNHCR

Figure 1: Key Facts and Figures on Global Forced Displacement

GLOBAL RESPONSES TO FORCED MIGRATION

International Legal Protection Framework

In the face of rising global displacement, seventy years after it signed the 1951 Refugee Convention (and the 1967 Protocol) remain the cornerstone of refugee protection. The fact there are 149 States Parties to the 1951 Convention and/or its 1967 Protocol at the present time is evidence of its enduring relevance.

After World War II, the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees established the international legal basis for people seeking protection: “To be recognised legally as a refugee, an individual must be fleeing persecution on the basis of religion, race, political opinion, nationality, or membership in a particular social group, and must be outside the country of nationality.”¹¹ The 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees extended the scope of 1951 Refugee Convention, eliminating geographical restrictions to make the Convention truly global.

One of the major criticisms of the 1951 Convention is in relation to the definition of who is and is not a refugee; this definition reflected the experience of the preceding thirty years and especially the Second World War. Despite improvements in the 1967 Protocol, the definition remains relatively narrow, covering only people fleeing individual persecution by their governments.

Emerging drivers of global forced migration have moved beyond traditionally defined persecution, including poor governance and political instability, intra-state conflict, and environmental change and resource scarcity. A more complex and expansive interpretation of who qualifies as a refugee may be required in the face of new realities: “Lack of resources drives global forced migration by means of water shortages, unreliable food supplies, pollution, famine and climate change. These factors may not directly displace populations, but when combined with other elements, including generalised poverty, they do.”¹²

Global Protection Gap: Climate Refugees

There remains a major protection gap for people displaced across international borders by environmental factors, the so called climate refugees. Environmentally displaced persons are not covered by the 1951 Refugee Convention or the 1967 Protocol. This urgently needs to be addressed.

Climate change is the defining crisis of our time and displacement one of its most devastating consequences. On 9 August 2021, UN Secretary-General António Guterres said the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Report is a “code red for humanity”. The UN Secretary General warned “The alarm bells are deafening, and the evidence is irrefutable: greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuel burning and deforestation are choking our planet and putting billions of people at immediate risk.”¹³

The impact of climate change may both trigger displacement and worsen living conditions or hamper return for those who have already been displaced. Limited natural resources, such as drinking water, are becoming even scarcer in many parts of the world that host refugees. Crops and livestock struggle to survive where conditions become too hot and dry, or too cold and wet, threatening livelihoods. In such conditions, climate change can exacerbate existing tensions, adding to the potential for conflicts.

UNHCR has highlighted “hazards resulting from the increasing intensity and frequency of extreme weather events, such as abnormally heavy rainfall, prolonged droughts, desertification, environmental degradation, or sea-level rise and cyclones are already causing an average of more than 20 million people to leave their homes and move to other areas in their countries each year.”¹⁴ The World Bank estimates 200 million people could be displaced globally by 2050 because of climate change. A 2019 Resolution by the

¹¹ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, “Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees” (United Nations, July 28, 1951), <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3be01b964.html>.

¹² George Palattiyil et al., “Global Trends in Forced Migration: Policy, Practice and Research Imperatives for Social Work,” *International Social Work*, July 28, 2021, p. 5.

¹³ Office of the Secretary General of the United Nations, “Secretary-General Calls Latest IPCC Climate Report ‘Code Red for Humanity’, Stressing ‘Irrefutable’ Evidence of Human Influence,” Statements and Messages, August 9, 2021, <https://www.un.org/press/en/2021/sgsm20847.doc.htm>.

¹⁴ UNHCR, Climate Change and Disaster Displacement, <https://www.unhcr.org/climate-change-and-disasters.html>

Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, entitled 'A Legal Status for Climate Refugees', calls on Member States to take "a more proactive approach to the protection of victims of natural and man-made disasters" and improve disaster preparedness mechanisms, both in Europe and in other regions.¹⁵

Global Compact on Refugees

Global threats to human security and safety require a global response. On 17 December 2018, the UN General Assembly affirmed the *Global Compact on Refugees* (GCR).¹⁶ The main objectives of the GCR are to: ease pressures on countries that welcome and host refugees; build self-reliance of refugees; expand access to resettlement in third countries; and support conditions in countries of origin for safe return. Undoubtedly, the GCR has admirable goals and a vision to effect positive change for refugees and forcibly displaced persons worldwide. However, the challenge is to ensure the high-level commitments translate into actions that address the needs on the ground and impact positively on the lives of forced migrants and their families.

The introduction of a Global Refugee Forum every four years was welcomed as a unique opportunity to bring together different actors (States, NGOs, donors and private sector) to make pledges, share good practices, and report back on progress in implementation. The inaugural Global Refugee Forum was held in December 2019 and was seen as an opportunity for participating states to demonstrate their commitment to implementation of the GCR.¹⁷ Significant pledges were made (including by Ireland), with 48% of pledges reported to be progressing.¹⁸

Potential limitations of the Global Compact include: its non-legally binding status and the absence of new or additional standards. It is a compromise text, negotiated in the knowledge

some nation states were disinclined to actively increase their share of responsibility for refugees.¹⁹ The GCR creates no new legal obligations, nor does it alter the mandate of UNHCR.²⁰ As was noted by the delegation of the European Union to the United Nations, the GCR is not about imposing additional burdens but rather is a reaffirmation²¹ of the standards and principles contained within the UN Refugee Convention.²²

A laudable aim of the GCR is seeking to provide a basis for predictable and equitable burden- and responsibility-sharing of refugees between states.²³ The GCR had envisaged development of a Three-Year Strategy 2019–21 on resettlement and complementary pathways in order to increase the actual number of global resettlement places and the availability of safe and legal pathways to protection.²⁴ Clearly though, given the inequitable distribution of refugees and forcibly displaced persons that exists today, ambitions must extend beyond mere financial support for States.²⁵ Otherwise, the world will remain one "in which responsibility-sharing means some states keep all the refugees and some states pay all the money."²⁶



They don't care about you. They don't care if you die. They don't know you. Why should they care about you? They just want their money

Tigiste

¹⁵ Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, "PACE - Resolution 2307 (12019) - A Legal Status for 'Climate Refugees'" (Council of Europe, October 3, 2019), <http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-XML2HTML-en.asp?fileid=28239&lang=en>.

¹⁶ United Nations, "Global Compact on Refugees", A/73/12 (Part II).

¹⁷ European Council on Refugees and Exiles, "Time to Commit: Using the Global Refugee Forum," Policy Note (Brussels: ECRE, 2019), <https://www.ecre.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Policy-Note-23.pdf>.

¹⁸ UNHCR, "Pledges & Contributions," The Global Compact on Refugees: Digital Dashboard, 2022, <https://globalcompactrefugees.org/channel/pledges-contributions>.

¹⁹ European Council on Refugees and Exiles, "Global Means Global: Europe and the Global Compact on Refugees," Policy Note (Brussels: ECRE, 2018), <https://ecre.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Policy-Note-15.pdf>.

²⁰ Volker Türk, "The Promise and Potential of the Global Compact on Refugees," *International Journal of Refugee Law* 30, no. 4 (May 18, 2019): 575–83.

²¹ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, "Factsheet: Global Compact on Refugees" (UNHCR, December 5, 2018), <https://www.unhcr.org/news/editorial/2018/12/5c10c1604/media-fact-sheet-global-compact-refugees.html>.

²² United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, "Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees."

²³ See above: United Nations, "Global Compact on Refugees", A/73/12 (Part II).

²⁴ UNHCR, "The Three-Year Strategy (2019–2021) on Resettlement and Complementary Pathways" (Geneva: UNHCR, 2019), <https://www.unhcr.org/5d15db254.pdf>.

²⁵ His Excellency Archbishop Ivan Jurković, "Past and Current Burden- and Responsibility-Sharing Arrangements" (UNHCR, July 10, 2017), <https://www.unhcr.org/5968c2567.pdf>.

²⁶ Stephanie Nebehay, "States Pledge More than \$3 Billion for Refugees, Asylum Rights 'under Threat': U.N.," *Reuters*, December 18, 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-un-refugees-idUSKBN1YM2GT>.

Refugee Arrivals by Sea to Europe, 2015-2021

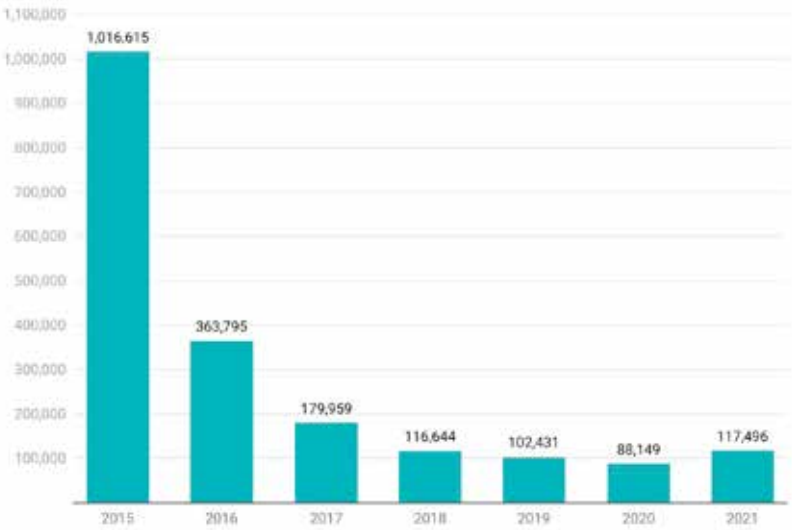


Chart: Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice • Source: UN High Commissioner for Refugees • Created with Datawrapper

Figure 2: Refugee Arrivals by Sea to Europe, 2015-2021

REGIONAL RESPONSE TO FORCED DISPLACEMENT: FORTRESS EUROPE RETURNS

Regional Forced Migration Trends

In the course of the EU Refugee Crisis there was a huge surge in the number of refugees and forced migrants accessing European territory via the Mediterranean Sea, which resulted in asylum applications reaching record levels during 2015 (1,255,640). As can be seen in Figure 2, trends in sea arrivals to Europe have dramatically changed in the intervening period, resulting in a 50% reduction since 2017.

Similarly, there has been a shift in the demographics of those seeking refuge. During 2015-2017, the East Mediterranean (encompassing the Western Balkan route) route facilitated greatest access to the European territory, largely driven by the conflict in Syria. As a result, Syria consistently featured as the top country of origin in terms of arrivals by sea. Following the effective closure of the Western Balkan route as a result of the EU-Turkey deal,²⁷ the demographics of refugees and forced migrants arriving has significantly changed.

Refugee Deaths Entering Europe, 2015-2021

Year	Arrival by Sea	Dead or Missing	Rate of Deaths
2015	1,016,615	3,771	1 in 270
2016	363,795	5,096	1 in 71
2017	179,959	3,139	1 in 57
2018	116,644	2,270	1 in 51
2019	102,431	1,335	1 in 77
2020	88,149	1,401	1 in 63
2021	117,496	1,977	1 in 59

Figures for the dead and missing include sea arrivals to Italy, Cyprus, and Malta, and both sea and land arrivals to Greece and Spain (including the Canary Islands).

Table: Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice • Source: UN High Commissioner for Refugees • Created with Datawrapper

Table 2: Refugee Deaths Entering Europe, 2015-2021

²⁷ European Council, “EU-Turkey Statement,” Council of the European Union, March 18, 2016, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/03/18/eu-turkey-statement/>.



(A family from Afghanistan assemble a rudimentary shelter under an olive tree on the site of the Moria Camp on Lesbos on August 21st, 2015. Credit: Stephen Ryan for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent. (CC BY-NC-ND 2.0 <https://www.flickr.com/photos/ifrc/20819707981/>))

A distinguishable feature of the EU Refugee Crisis was the huge loss of life. In the period 2015-17 there was just under 12,000 deaths among 1,550,000 sea arrivals (see Table 2). Three years later the level of deaths among forced migrants entering Europe remained unacceptably high with just over 5,000 people lost at sea between 2018-20.

Although the number of deaths more than halved in the period 2018-20, the rate of deaths has more than doubled since the EU Refugee Crisis. The continued loss of life is preventable, and this reality of people dying entering Europe in search of safety and refuge is unacceptable. In the period 2015-18 EU sanctioned search and rescue operations saved 445,044 people at sea. Since then, the approach has dramatically shifted towards prioritising enforcement against migrants; engaging third countries to intercept ships; and the criminalisation of NGOs that launched their own search and rescue operations.

Forced migrants who survive the sea crossings face further barriers and challenges on arrival in the form of overcrowded, undignified, and unsafe living conditions. Until its destruction by fire in September 2020, the Moria camp on the island of Lesbos was a symbol of this European policy of deterrence and unwelcome.

EU Pact on Migration and Asylum

In September 2020, the European Commission launched its new *Pact on Migration and Asylum*.²⁸ Labelled a “fresh start on migration,” the package of nine instruments was presented as the Commission’s new approach to migration and border management, ensuring coherence across internal and external migration policy.²⁹

With this document, there was public recognition that the current asylum and migration system was not fit for purpose and that the EU and its institutions had failed to resolve the issues throughout the duration of the EU Refugee Crisis and beyond.³⁰ Previous reforms of the Common European Asylum System had been criticised for continuing a trend of externalisation and restriction

²⁸ European Commission, “Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on a New Pact on Migration and Asylum,” COM(2020) 609 final (Brussels: European Commission, September 23, 2020), https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:85ff8b4f-f13-11ea-b44f-01aa75ed71a1.0002.02/DOC_3&format=PDF.

²⁹ European Commission, “A Fresh Start on Migration: Building Confidence and Striking a New Balance between Responsibility and Solidarity,” Text, European Commission, 09 2020, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_20_1706.

³⁰ See above: European Commission, “A fresh start on migration: Building confidence and striking a new balance between responsibility and solidarity”, IP/20/1706.

in the European Union's asylum policy.³¹ Developments such as the EU-Turkey deal – a clear departure from Europe's values and founding principles – further embedded the sense that protection in Europe was under threat, with the primary purpose to deny protection seekers access to Europe.

In contrast, the new EU Pact was presented as a long-term migration policy that could translate European values into practice and fundamentally protect the right to seek asylum.³² Positively, the Pact demonstrates the European Commission's efforts to engage in meaningful consultation with Member States.³³ Furthermore, it is welcome that it adopts a holistic approach³⁴ and shifts the narrative towards a positive framing of migration.³⁵

Unfortunately, the negative aspects of the EU Pact identified by NGOs, academics and asylum seeker advocates far outweigh the positive elements contained within the proposals.

Critics contend the new Pact will replicate the deficient and much maligned policies of the past,³⁶ exacerbate the focus on externalisation of asylum, and undermine efforts to increase solidarity and responsibility sharing.³⁷

There are significant concerns in relation to the heightened focus on border procedures

within the new Pact. While border controls are recognised as a legitimate right of sovereign States, the strict border and return procedures outlined are criticised for undermining the right to seek asylum, offering fewer procedural rights, and creating the potential for widespread use of detention.³⁸

With the ongoing application of Dublin System³⁹ rules and regulations, there is an increased need for a generous and binding solidarity mechanism. However, concerns have already been flagged that the relevant proposals within the new Pact will maintain the status quo whereby Member States with an external border disproportionately assume the greater responsibility for hosting new arrivals.⁴⁰

An example of the clauses that cause such concern is the proposed flexible solidarity mechanism, which effectively will allow Member States decide how they wish to show solidarity, essentially between relocation or financial assistance.⁴¹ This encompasses the option of "return sponsorships" – whereby a sponsoring country would facilitate the return of a rejected asylum seeker from another Member State or assume responsibility for the return from their own territory after a defined period. In this regard, *Caritas Europa*, in their analysis of the new Pact, highlighted the perverse scenario that facilitating return could be considered as a "solidarity" mechanism on an equal status as relocation.⁴²

One of the principle aims of the new Pact is to enhance cooperation with third countries across various facets of European migration policy. However, such cooperation

³¹ JRS Europe, "The CEAS Reform Package: The Death of Asylum by a Thousand Cuts?," Working Paper #6 (Brussels: JRS Europe, January 2017), [\https://www.jrsportugal.pt/wp-content/uploads/pdf/documentos/noticias-JRS-EuropeCEASreformWorkingPaper6.pdf](https://www.jrsportugal.pt/wp-content/uploads/pdf/documentos/noticias-JRS-EuropeCEASreformWorkingPaper6.pdf), \uc0\lu8221{} Working Paper #6 (Brussels: JRS Europe, January 2017)

³² Ylva Johansson, "Launching the New Pact on Migration" (Speech, Brussels, September 23, 2020), [\https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/SPEECH_20_1733](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/SPEECH_20_1733).

³³ The Catholic Church in the European Union, "Statement by the COMECE Working Group on Migration and Asylum on the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum Proposed by the European Commission" (COMECE, December 15, 2020), [\https://www.cbcew.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2020/12/COMECE-Strmt-EU-Pact-on-Migration.pdf](https://www.cbcew.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2020/12/COMECE-Strmt-EU-Pact-on-Migration.pdf).

³⁴ Christian Group, "Comments on the EU New Pact on Migration and Asylum" (Christian Group, April 13, 2021), [\https://cme.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/2021-04-13_-ChristianGroup_EU_Pact_General-Comments.pdf](https://cme.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/2021-04-13_-ChristianGroup_EU_Pact_General-Comments.pdf).

³⁵ Catherine Woollard, "Editorial: The Pact on Migration and Asylum: It's Never Enough, Never, Never," *ECRE.org* (blog), September 25, 2020, [\https://ecre.org/the-pact-on-migration-and-asylum-its-never-enough-never-never/](https://ecre.org/the-pact-on-migration-and-asylum-its-never-enough-never-never/).

³⁶ See above: Christian Group, "Comments on the EU new Pact on Migration and Asylum".

³⁷ European Council on Refugees and Exiles, "Joint Statement: The Pact on Migration and Asylum: To Provide a Fresh Start and Avoid Past Mistakes, Risky Elements Need to Be Addressed and Positive Aspects Need to Be Expanded" (ECRE.org, June 10, 2020), [\https://ecre.org/the-pact-on-migration-and-asylum-to-provide-a-fresh-start-and-avoid-past-mistakes-risky-elements-need-to-be-addressed-and-positive-aspects-need-to-be-expanded/](https://ecre.org/the-pact-on-migration-and-asylum-to-provide-a-fresh-start-and-avoid-past-mistakes-risky-elements-need-to-be-addressed-and-positive-aspects-need-to-be-expanded/).

³⁸ See above: The Catholic Church in the European Union, "Statement by the COMECE Working Group on Migration and Asylum on the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum Proposed by the European Commission".

³⁹ The Dublin Regulation is a European Union law that determines which EU Member State is responsible for the examination of an application for asylum, submitted by persons seeking international protection under the Geneva Convention and the EU Qualification Directive, within the European Union.

⁴⁰ See above: The Catholic Church in the European Union, "Statement by the COMECE Working Group on Migration and Asylum on the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum Proposed by the European Commission".

⁴¹ Donatienne Ruy and Erol Yayboke, "Deciphering the European Union's New Pact on Migration and Asylum" (Center for Strategic and International Studies, September 29, 2020), [\https://www.csis.org/analysis/deciphering-european-unions-new-pact-migration-and-asylum](https://www.csis.org/analysis/deciphering-european-unions-new-pact-migration-and-asylum), September 29, 2020

⁴² Caritas Europe, "Caritas Europa First Take on the New EU Pact on Migration and Asylum" (Caritas Europe, September 2020), [\https://www.caritas.eu/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Caritas-Europa-statement-on-EU-Pact-for-Asylum-and-Migration.pdf](https://www.caritas.eu/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Caritas-Europa-statement-on-EU-Pact-for-Asylum-and-Migration.pdf).

is controversial and contentious with the recent experiences of the EU-Turkey deal and partnership with Libya⁴³ casting a dark shadow.

The *comprehensive, balanced and tailor-made partnerships* envisaged in the new Pact are likely to be undermined by the overall focus on return and readmission within the proposals.⁴⁴ As such, concerns remain that the new Pact will continue a trend of instrumentalising overseas development aid to meet EU migration policy interests⁴⁵ and ultimately maintain a policy of externalising cost and responsibility.⁴⁶

“

I have no dream. I don't see anything, just I see that the guys who came with me on this journey...some are succeeding. They have gone and I am under the bridge. It's hopeless

Qammar

CHURCH RESPONSE: WELCOMING THE STRANGER

Church Social Teaching: Forced Migration

People like Amadou should have the opportunity to remain in their homeland, support themselves and their families, and lead fulfilling lives. Their decision to emigrate should be voluntary – not one forced by fear, violence, persecution or deprivation. Creating conditions for peace requires authentic and sustainable development. Pope Francis warns “some economic rules have proved effective for growth, but not for integral human

development.”⁴⁷ Global inequality in wealth, power and resources and unjust economic rules fuel conflict and forced displacement.

In his 2021 Message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees, Francis makes an appeal “to journey together towards an ever wider ‘we’ to all men and women, for the sake of renewing the human family, building together a future of justice and peace, and ensuring that no one is left behind.” Pope Francis calls for a more inclusive response to refugees, asylum seekers, and forced migrants among us. We are offered the opportunity “to break down the walls that separate us” and “to build bridges that encourage a culture of encounter” and welcome.⁴⁸

Populorum Progressio proposed “peace was the new name for development.”⁴⁹ The absence of peace – conflict – leads to forced displacement. But Pope Francis warns at the present time that situations of violence across the world “have become so common as to constitute a real ‘third world war’ fought piecemeal.”⁵⁰

Rights without Border

The recent papal encyclical *Fratelli Tutti* calls each of us to open our hearts and to welcome the stranger in our midst. Pope Francis speaks of rights without borders. Rights are derived by virtue of our shared humanity and not our place of birth. He argues it is “unacceptable that the mere place of one’s birth or residence should result in his or her possessing fewer opportunities for a developed and dignified life.”⁵¹

Pope Francis refers to the nexus between development and forced migration: “Ideally, unnecessary migration ought to be avoided; this entails creating in countries of origin the conditions needed for a dignified life and integral development.”⁵² He urges all to respond with openness and generosity to situations of forced migration.

43. NGO Joint Statement, “EU: Time to Review and Remedy Cooperation Policies Facilitating Abuse of Refugees and Migrants in Libya” (HRW, April 28, 2020), <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/04/28/eu-time-review-and-remedy-cooperation-policies-facilitating-abuse-refugees-and-migrants-libya>.

44. Christian Group, “Comments on Return Policies, Readmissions and Cooperation with Third Countries within the Framework of the New Pact on Migration and Asylum” (Christian Group, April 13, 2021), https://ccme.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/2021-04-13_-ChristianGroup_EUPact_Returns_Readmission.pdf.

45. See above: Caritas Europa, “Caritas Europa first take on the new EU Pact on Migration and Asylum”. See above: NGO Joint Statement, “Time to Review and Remedy...”.

46. Kemal Kirişçi Eminoglu M. Murat Erdoğan, and Nihal, “The EU’s ‘New Pact on Migration and Asylum’ Is Missing a True Foundation,” *Order from Chaos* (blog), November 6, 2020, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2020/11/06/the-eus-new-pact-on-migration-and-asylum-is-missing-a-true-foundation/>.

47. Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti* (Assisi: Vatican, 2020), §21.

48. Pope Francis, “Message for the 107th World Day of Migrants and Refugees, 2021” (Papal Message, World Day of Migrants and Refugees, Rome, September 26, 2021), https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/migration/documents/papa-francesco_20210503_world-migrants-day-2021.html.

49. Pope Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio* (Vatican: 1967), §76-77.

50. Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, §25.

51. Pope Francis, §121.

52. Pope Francis, §129.

The encyclical identifies concrete steps required in response to those who are fleeing grave humanitarian crises. Many of the steps are consistent with calls for positive policy change from refugee and migrant support NGOs advocating for more just and humane asylum and immigration systems in Ireland and across the world.

But the Pope warns “in some host countries, migration causes fear and alarm, often fomented and exploited for political purposes. This can lead to a xenophobic mentality, as people close in on themselves, and it needs to be addressed decisively.”⁵³ These attitudes leading to the ‘virus of racism’ need to be challenged through intercultural dialogue and encounter.

Integration is a two-way process. “For the communities and societies to which they come, migrants bring an opportunity for enrichment and the integral human development of all.”⁵⁴ Newly arrived migrants also need to be open to and respectful of the communities and cultures to which they have arrived. Pope Francis concludes that is why “we need to communicate with each other, to discover the gifts of each person, to promote that which unites us, and to regard our differences as an opportunity to grow in mutual respect.”⁵⁵

Global and Local Action

The Vatican has sought to inform the development of a global response to forced migration through the publication of a 20-point action plan for governments entitled: *Responding to Refugees and Migrants: Twenty Action Points*.⁵⁶

This action plan incorporates the key papal calls:

- *To Welcome*: Enhancing safe and legal channels for migrants and refugees. Migration should be safe, legal and orderly, and the decision to migrate voluntary.

- *To Protect*: Ensuring migrant and refugee rights and dignity.
- *To Promote*: Advancing integral human development of migrants and refugees.
- *To Integrate*: Enriching communities through wider participation of migrants and refugees.

The Gospel call to welcome the stranger, is directed towards local and global action in response to growing forced displacement needs across the world. In the Irish Bishop’s Conference Statement on 17 August 2021, Bishop Alan McGuckian SJ, in a statement on the Afghanistan crisis, urged the speedier processing of asylum claims for Afghan applicants and the acceptance of additional refugees in Ireland as a policy priority.

Furthermore, Bishop McGuckian SJ encouraged ongoing and proactive interventions, stating “Ireland, as one of the wealthier nations of the world, must do more for forcibly displaced people in terms of welcome and integration through State and community supports. Yes, our hearts are deeply moved by the panicked scenes of people fleeing, but it should not take such scenes and circumstances to force governments to act.”⁵⁷

“

I wouldn’t leave my country if I were not desperate. I had my life and I had everything.

But I didn’t feel safe anymore. I was about to lose my life.

You need to hear that; you need to listen to that voice

Waleed

⁵³ Pope Francis, §39.

⁵⁴ Pope Francis, §133.

⁵⁵ Pope Francis, §134.

⁵⁶ The Migrants & Refugees Section, “20 Action Points for the Global Compacts - Migrants & Refugees” (Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human, 2017), <https://migrants-refugees.va/20-action-points-migrants/>.

⁵⁷ Bishop Alan McGuckian, SJ, “Ireland Must Do More for Forcibly Displaced People,” *Irish Catholic Bishops’ Conference* (blog), August 18, 2021, <https://www.catholicbishops.ie/2021/08/18/bishop-mcguckian-pray-for-afghanistan-ireland-must-do-more-for-forcibly-displaced-people/>.

CONCLUSION

Pope Francis challenges us to welcome the stranger in our midst: “Migrants are not seen as entitled like others to participate in the life of society, and it is forgotten that they possess the same intrinsic dignity as any person...No one will ever openly deny that they are human beings, yet in practice, by our decisions and the way we treat them, we can show that we consider them less worthy, less important, less human.”⁵⁸ One concrete way that we can welcome the stranger has now been made available. The rollout of Community Sponsorship⁵⁹ in Ireland is a welcome opportunity for communities to more actively engage in the open-hearted enactment of the human fraternity that crosses all borders. This programme offers communities and parishes the opportunity to host and support a refugee family. It is a practical response on the ground that will positively impact both beneficiaries and receiving communities.

The UNHCR reported record levels of forced displacement – 82.4 million people – in 2020, double the numbers of a decade earlier. High profile crises in Afghanistan and Tigray and less visible conflicts in Yemen and Venezuela have led to ever greater numbers of men, women, and children fleeing their homes in search of safety and protection. The impact of climate change is clear and devastating for the planet and one of the consequences will be the increasing number of persons displaced from their homes due to rising sea-levels, natural disasters, and environmental degradation. By 2050 the World Bank estimates there will be up to 200 million climate refugees.

Global threats to safety require global responses. Rhetoric needs to be translated into action at global, regional and local levels. A more humane framework in response to global forced displacement is required that places the dignity of displaced persons at its centre. The personal testimony and words of Amadou, Jospin, Tigiste, Qammar, and Waleed, attest to the lived experience of forced migration and call each of us to action.

⁵⁸ Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, §39.

⁵⁹ David Stanton TD, “Community Sponsorship Ireland,” The Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration (The Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration, September 29, 2020), Ireland, <http://www.integration.ie/en/isec/pages/community-sponsorship-ireland>.



SMA Summer School 2022

*In collaboration with
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