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# THE PENDULUM

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**PALM OIL:**  
THE PERNICIOUS  
INGREDIENT YOU  
DON'T KNOW YOU'RE  
BUYING  
**PG 12**

**CURRENCY AFTER  
QUEEN ELIZABETH  
PG 04**

**HEALTH LITERACY:  
A DEVESTATING  
EPIDEMIC IN LATIN  
AMERICA  
PG 16**

**FLEEING FREEDOM:  
NORTH KOREAN  
DEFECTORS AND  
WHY THEY RETURN  
PG 22**

**CURRENCY AFTER  
QUEEN ELIZABETH  
PG 04**

**TRADITIONAL  
INDIVIDUALISM AND THE  
GLOBAL MENTAL HEALTH  
CRISIS  
PG 08**

**PALM OIL:  
THE PERNICIOUS  
INGREDIENT YOU DON'T  
KNOW YOU'RE BUYING  
PG 12**

**HEALTH LITERACY:  
A DEVESTATING EPIDEMIC  
IN LATIN AMERICA  
PG 16**

**FLEEING FREEDOM:  
NORTH KOREAN DEFECTORS  
AND WHY THEY RETURN  
PG 22**

**ROAD RAGE: THE FIGHT  
FOR RECOGNITION IN  
KOSOVO  
PG 26**

**PUTIN THROUGH A  
MACHIAVELLIAN LENS  
PG 30**

**FLOODING PAKISTAN:  
A CASE STUDY FOR THE  
FUTURE OF THE MIDDLE  
EAST AND NORTH AFRICA  
PG 36**



# Currency After Queen Elizabeth

**TEJAS NIDIGATTU**

The portrait of the Former Queen of the United Kingdom, Queen Elizabeth II, is imprinted on all of England's currency, stamps, and even condiments. As a result of her death on September 8th, 2022, England will soon undergo the massive task of removing the former Queen's name, image, and iconography from public life. One of the major economic changes occurring for the first time is the replacement of her image on banknotes with that of the new head of state, King Charles III.

Queen Elizabeth II was the first monarch to ever appear on British currency; her image has graced the five, ten, twenty, and fifty pound note since 1960 (the one pound note was discontinued and replaced by a coin in 1988). The Bank of England has announced that they will reveal updated banknotes featuring a portrait of His Majesty King Charles III by the end of 2022, and they will be produced and enter into circulation about two years later. Meanwhile, the notes featuring the Queen will slowly be taken out of circulation but will remain valid currency. This logistical process is estimated to cost over \$50 million, as there are currently

an estimated 4.5 billion banknotes of Queen Elizabeth in circulation in the UK alone.

The Queen's image does not only appear on British currency. Due to the history of colonialism in the British Empire, the introduction of the Queen's image to British banknotes in 1960 also led to subsequent introduction in formerly British-held territories and colonies. During the prime of the British reign, their controlled territories included countries spanning from Caribbean islands to Hong Kong. Though many of these nations have obtained their independence from British rule, the nations still honor the Queen as a historic symbol. Since 1887, 54 of these former territories of the British Empire refer to themselves as the Commonwealth of Nations (Commonwealth): a voluntary grouping symbolically headed by the British monarch. 33 countries and territories around the world have used Queen Elizabeth's image on currency. Their plans for the future of their currencies may be as varied as the nations themselves.

Some countries and territories whose currency features Queen Elizabeth - Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, and The Grenadines - have provided some indication they do not have any immediate plans to change. The Reserve Bank of Australia has announced that it will trade out for Charles "in due course," and there is "no timeline for the changeover." Both the Royal Australian Mint and Perth Mint have temporarily stopped producing coins with the Queen's portrait. In

New Zealand, a spokesperson for the Reserve Bank has said that they plan on utilizing the current supply of "Queen currency" before introducing King Charles III currency. For both Oceanic countries, the process of phasing out currency is expected to take several years. Additionally, \$20 notes will likely be in circulation longer as the Reserve bank has stated that they "manufacture these notes infrequently and do not plan to destroy stock or shorten the life of existing banknotes just because they show the Queen," adding "this would be wasteful and poor environmental practice." Meanwhile, Canada does not have any legislation to alter their notes, as prime minister Justin Trudeau stated that Queen Elizabeth was "one of [his] favorite people." Additionally, the Bank of Canada has expressed they do not have any legislation to change the design within a prescribed period after the Monarch changes.

Prior to the Queen's passing, there was deliberation for some of the participating nations to leave the Commonwealth or no longer recognize the British monarch as their head of state, but after Queen Elizabeth II's passing this could gain more momentum; King Charles III is generally not as beloved a figure as his mother was. Some nations may decide to remove the Queen's image and honor a national figure rather than one from a former colonizer.

Would owning a vintage currency with the Queen's image eventually hold any relevant collectors' value? One recent comparison is offered by the paper £20 and £50 banknotes, which were removed from circulation on September 30th and replaced with notes printed on

"HER IMAGE, THOUGH IT WILL CIRCULATE OUT OF BRITISH CURRENCY, WILL CERTAINLY LIVE ON."

polymer. On eBay, a paper £50 banknote is listed for £79.99. The Queen's legacy and lasting public sentiment towards her may cause people to collect them.

The former Queen of the United Kingdom was beloved in the hearts of many throughout Britain, the Commonwealth, and the world at large. She reigned for over 70 years; she was the only British monarch whose reign for which most people have been alive, let alone remember. Due to the current line of succession, she could be the last Queen for decades. For many, Queen Elizabeth was a calm guide who accompanied them through major world events. Her image, though it will circulate out of British currency, will certainly live on.

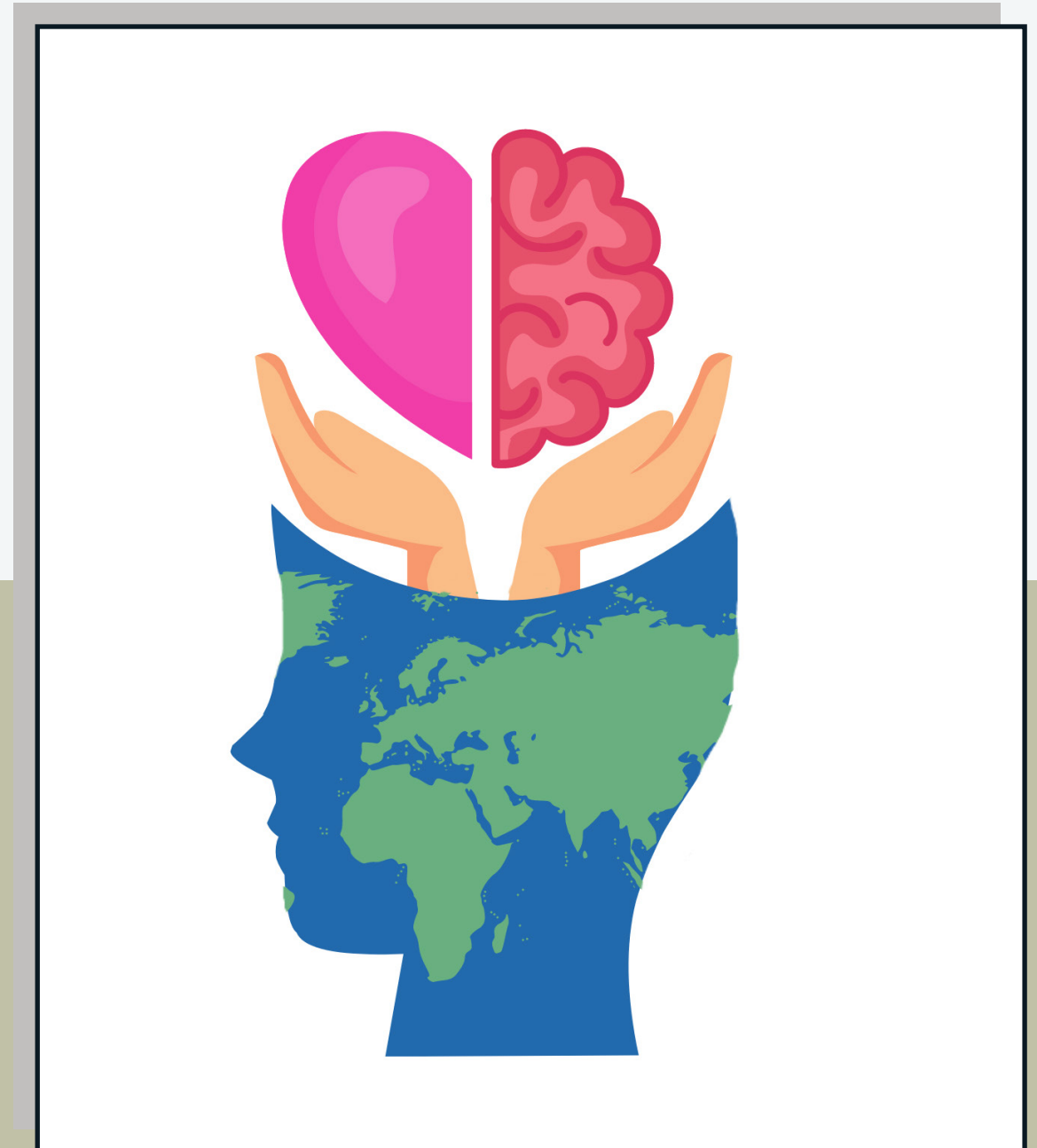
# Traditional Individualism and the Global Mental Health Crisis

**MATTHEW PLOYHART**

Mental health has borne increasing importance and acceptance in the past several decades. Once widely stigmatized in many parts of the world, the desire to seek therapy, counseling, or medication for mental illnesses is a much more accepted part of life today. Still, there exists a global mental health crisis, driven by increasingly prevalent disasters such as COVID-19 and climate change but commonly addressed through patchwork individual solutions.

A 2021 study in *Nature* asked 10,000 people between the ages of 18 and 25 about their conceptions of the future. Shockingly, 75% of young people believe that the “future is frightening,” and 56% of youth worldwide believe that “humanity is doomed.” What factor is the cause of these grim perspectives? Climate change. These feelings were not helped by the fact that, “among those who

said they have talked to others about climate change (81%), nearly half reported being ignored or dismissed.” But climate change is far from the only threat. According to a 2022 analysis by the World Health Organization, “in the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, global prevalence of anxiety and depression increased by a massive 25%.” Additionally, they also noted that women and young people were more adversely affected. According to Project Hope, “doctors are...twice as likely as the general population to die by suicide, and women are the most vulnerable” due to the pandemic. The mental health crisis is made all the more unfortunate by the fact that roughly two-thirds of people worldwide do not receive proper mental healthcare, with those in lower-income nations even less likely to receive the necessary treatment or counseling.



The forces of globalization have further ensured that problems in today's society are not isolated to one corner of the world, but rather are often universally shared - a gust of wind blew the Ever Given into the side of the Suez Canal in 2021 and nearly crippled the global trade system. Though these problems are shared globally, solutions often focus on the individual, rather than global, level.

The crisis has been met with a massive amount of self-help literature. According to Tagari, "some estimates put the number of self-help books sold each year at around 10 million" (in North America alone). Brett McKay's popular podcast *The Art of Manliness*, which itself "aims to deepen and improve every area of a man's life, from fitness and philosophy, to relationships and productivity," notes that the realm of self-help is "a multi-billion dollar industry." This notion of self-help is inherently individualistic: a person experiencing some form of mental disturbance seeks treatment or therapy to help them remedy or cope with their own afflictions. However, this is not always the correct framing of the problem, particularly as the "self" is not the same across cultures. The guest of McKay's podcast, author and cultural historian, Anna K. Schaffner, states that "our dominant narrative nowadays is the individualist narrative of the self... but other conceptions of self are more fluid and place an emphasis on context [and] interrelatedness..." Specifically, she claims that many Asian conceptions

of the self, ancient and modern, are much more relative. They place more of an emphasis on a changing, interacting, and "relational self that is very different in different contexts." In other words, in more collectivist cultures, self-help is not an individualistic enterprise: the ability to improve one's situation is extremely dependent on forces beyond their control and often involves support from the community.

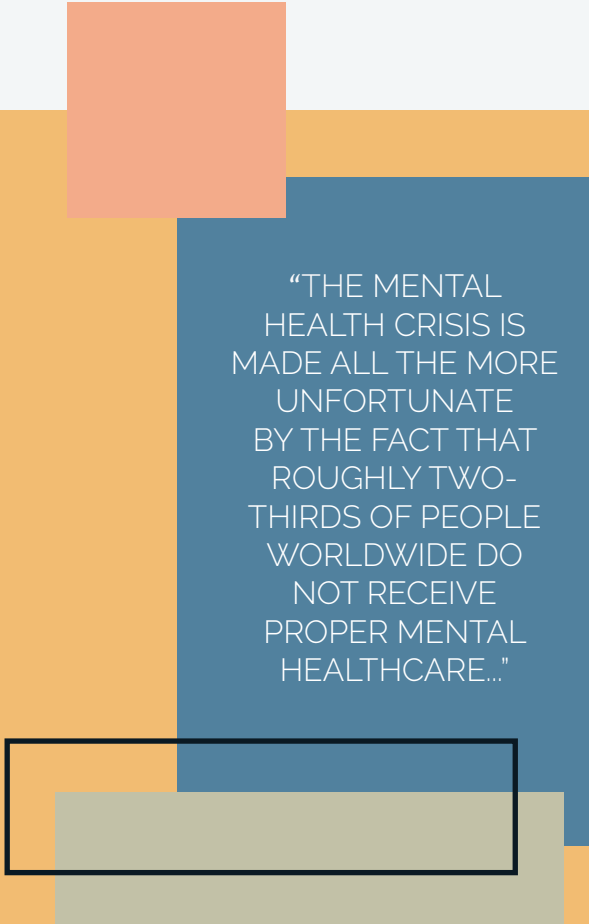
The collectivist narrative is especially relevant in the context of the current mental health crisis, as the issues affecting today's citizens, especially today's youth, are largely universal. *Intelligencer* journalist Malcom Harris picks up on this very well. In a recent article, he grimly states that "there's the pandemic that has trapped kids inside with their families, a recipe for unhappiness all around if ever there was one; the rise of right-wing political extremism and rapid advance of various hate groups; and global warming, the imminent end of the world as we know it." These problems are of a general nature—their effects are not merely isolated to an individual and so cannot be solved individually. "When it's framed as a 'youth mental health crisis, the solutions are individual, one malfunctioning brain at a time, even as the issue is obviously social."

Malcom arrives quite well upon the essence of the matter at hand; however, his reasoning strays with the assertion that the problems of today cause youth

to have a damaging view of their lives as mostly controlled by external factors. It certainly is the case that those with an external locus of control believe that outside factors affect them to a greater degree than their own individual actions, and Malcom does correctly state that an external locus of control is often correlated with "hopelessness, depression, and suicidality," especially in youth. However, the view that external influences matter more than individual actions is not in itself philosophically negative; only if one believes that perceived autonomy is truly necessary for their well-being is that the case. While it does make sense that this view would lead to depression and anxiety in a negative situation that one does not believe they have the power to change, its complications can be somewhat positive in its other implications. A collective view on the mental health crisis leads to the acknowledgment that its underlying problems and causes are widespread and have political and social causes, and therefore a real-world solution is required. Alternatively, through the individualist framework, the presence of negative emotions or a poor mental state is merely seen as an individual issue, and thus, solutions are offered on a per-person basis, rather than tackling the greater issue at large and at its source.

A more collectivist framework, in other words, would recognize that many of today's problems are affecting individuals on a global scale. The global

mental health crisis becomes not a large collection of individual cases but instead is accepted to be what it is: a dramatic series of global situations with political solutions. The key to solving the current mental health crisis, particularly among youth, is the implication of such real-world solutions, rather than merely treating its effects in separate individuals.



"THE MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS IS MADE ALL THE MORE UNFORTUNATE BY THE FACT THAT ROUGHLY TWO-THIRDS OF PEOPLE WORLDWIDE DO NOT RECEIVE PROPER MENTAL HEALTHCARE..."

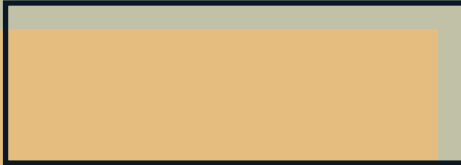


# **Palm Oil: The Pernicious Ingredient You Don't Know You're Buying**

**KYLIE HARRISON**

“Palm oil is the dirtiest ingredient on our shelves,” says British investigative food journalist and author Joanna Blythman: it’s a “driver of rainforest destruction” with a history of “allegations of human rights abuses.” She calls on consumers to boycott palm oil products like lipstick, shampoo, and even ice cream. With palm oil present in 50% of all supermarket items, it is an incredibly commonly used good and can be hard to give up. However, palm oil production poses a dual threat to our global climate; not only are palm oil plantations detrimental to local ecosystems and the environment at large, but they are also often home to human rights abuses and unfair labor practices. With around 90% of production located in the tropical climates of Indonesia and Malaysia, palm oil constitutes a large part of the Southeast Asian economy but lacks significant regulations and oversight.

Palm oil is produced by the African Oil Palm plant (*Elaeis guineensis* Jacq.) and is the world’s least expensive, highest-yielding vegetable oil. The palm oil industry is supported by the demand for cheap cooking oil, processed foods, hygiene and beauty products, cleaning supplies, and biofuel, all of which contain palm oil. As demand for



these goods increases, so too does the size and number of plantations around the world. The Oil Palm grows best in tropical climates, meaning that the expansion of palm oil plantations results in deforesting rainforests that are crucial to these regions' ecological health as well as that of the global environment.

Indonesia and Malaysia are home to expansive tropical peat forests, a unique kind of rainforest characterized by waterlogged, partially decayed organic matter. These forests can store huge amounts of carbon, making them a potentially viable ecosystem for capturing carbon emissions out of the atmosphere. However, when disturbed, these dense peat forests release large amounts of carbon dioxide back into the atmosphere. Burning is a common method of deforestation used throughout the industry. By burning forests, carbon dioxide and smoke are released into the atmosphere, contributing to poor local air quality and higher greenhouse gas emissions. The burning method also takes away richly diverse ecosystems and native flora, which naturally sequester carbon. As acres of native rainforests are cleared for oil palm plantations, native plant and animal species are killed and displaced. Many of these rainforests are home to critically endangered species like orangutans, tigers, elephants, and rhinos, and are key to protecting these animals' dwindling numbers.

Not only does the palm oil industry

contribute to climate change, but it also often employs expansion policies and labor practices that are harmful to surrounding communities and workers. Palm oil's role in deforestation hugely impacts indigenous forest people and rainforest communities. According to Human Rights Watch research, "oil palm plantations in Indonesia have adversely affected Indigenous people's rights to their forests, livelihood, food, water, and culture" (HRW). As natural resources are stripped away to expand oil palm plantations, forest-dependent people lose their ability to gather food, create shelter, and live prosperously. Many communities are uprooted by plantation encroachment into villages and local farmland as a direct result of the palm oil industry.

According to Amnesty International researchers, plantations in Indonesia are guilty of child labor, forced labor, gender discrimination, hazardous working conditions, low wages, and exposure to toxic chemicals. Workers often must meet a minimum quota to be paid for a day spent collecting fruit and transporting heavy sacks. Not only is this labor physically exhausting, but the quotas are often challenging to reach, and workers must get the help of their children just to be paid. Many of these children drop out of school at a young age to help their families, with one ten-year-old boy saying that "the hardest thing is to gather all the loose fruit which are scattered everywhere, I don't wear gloves, and it hurts to pick

them up". Women too, are victims of workplace injustice. Many are refused guaranteed permanent employment and the benefits that come with it, such as health insurance and pensions, by their employers, making it increasingly difficult to support themselves and their families.

In addition to these violations, everyday palm oil workers are subject to toxic air pollution from forest fires and banned pesticides, weedkillers, and fertilizers. Workers have been blinded, fallen ill, and suffered other injuries due to faulty equipment and the use of poisonous chemicals like Gramaxone, a herbicide. By sharing their stories with reporters and investigators, these workers put their jobs and their lives at risk to inform the world about the dark realities they face in their workplace.

With this knowledge, participating in palm oil consumption can be disheartening. However, there are people and organizations working to make the future of the palm oil industry more sustainable and ethical. The Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) seeks to "transform markets to make sustainable palm oil the norm" by developing a list of criteria that companies must meet to be RSPO certified, a label that consumers are growing increasingly concerned about. RSPO's mission includes "advancing the production...and use of sustainable palm oil products," developing global supply chain standards, and monitoring

the economic impacts of sustainable palm oil. Despite these claims, environmentalists frequently criticize the RSPO for not going far enough in auditing and penalizing certified members and blame the RSPO for its role in greenwashing products. Luckily, other conservation NGOs, like the World Wildlife Fund, are working on numerous fronts to redesign the infrastructure of the palm oil industry, minimize its harmful ecological footprint, and educate the public on its impacts.

As consumers, avoiding palm oil altogether can be difficult. Still, by at least limiting our consumption, we can take an active role in decreasing the demand and, thus consequences of palm oil. Palm oil goes by many names, but may be referred to as sodium lauryl sulfate, stearic acid, ethyl palmitate, or glyceryl on ingredient labels. Researching your ingredient list is a great way to learn more about what you are putting into both your body and the world.

Palm oil is a sneaky ingredient found in many products we use daily. Though it makes up a large part of international economies and our daily lives, it also constitutes a global problem that will affect our world for generations to come. By uprooting indigenous groups, employing dangerous unethical labor practices, and destroying the environment, the palm oil industry hurts surrounding communities, workers, consumers, and even stakeholders, whether they realize it or not.



## Health Literacy: A Devastating Epidemic in Latin America

**SIBLEY POWELL**

Millions of people worldwide are robbed of the ability to take care of their own bodies due to a lack of health knowledge. Health literacy may be a new topic of discussion, but it is far from a new problem in the world. The World Health Organization didn't officially define the term "Health Literacy" until 1998; however, like a lot of issues throughout history, a lack of official recognition doesn't mean it didn't already exist. Literacy is defined as the basic ability to read and write, but what if you read a word and it holds no meaning to you? Think back to how you learned which foods are healthy and which are unhealthy. For most people in the U.S., this is something taught early in elementary school. Remember the food pyramid? Now think how different that learning process would have been if you could read the food pyramid posters but didn't know what "carbohydrate" or "fiber" meant. It seems simple, but so many people around the world are not provided with the knowledge to understand even basic health topics such as these. Here's a more recent example: Until 2010, items in stores weren't labeled as "Gluten Free" because if you weren't a dietitian or didn't have a gluten allergy, there was no need to understand what gluten was. In all parts of the world, people

lack the understanding of what health truly means and what determines the different aspects of health. Expanding resources so that everyone can take care of themselves should be at the top of the priority list for the world.

Health literacy is the degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process, and understand health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions for themselves and their environment. It has been well established that low literacy rates are directly linked to worse health outcomes, including increased mortality rates. In the limited areas of Latin America that are equipped with modern medical systems, it is still extremely difficult for people with basic literacy skills to navigate more complex information like medical history forms, over-the-counter drug dosage charts, informed consent paperwork, and blood lab results. It can be difficult for patients to grasp the severity of a diagnosis if their interpretation of information is incomplete or inaccurate. Furthermore, many people are too shy or embarrassed to ask for clarification on the information being given to them by medical professionals, which results in a patient taking their medications or treatments improperly or incompletely. For example, it is very common for patients to stop taking a prescription once they feel better, but this can be detrimental with antibiotic prescriptions. When a patient fails to take an antibiotic prescription in

full, the bacteria causing the infection can become drug resistant and much harder to treat. This happens frequently because medical systems often do not educate their patients about the medications they are being given. Many of these antibiotic prescription bottles say to take all doses of the medication, but the importance of those instructions are often not clarified to patients. Simply giving a resource like a medication to someone is not enough; a care provider must go a step further to ensure the patient is taking proper steps to take care of themselves. This is an obvious demonstration of how limited health literacy and understanding can lead to horrifying consequential health outcomes. Doctors must tailor their language in a way that patients can accurately comprehend without a medical degree of their own. This example also illustrates how medical systems must focus on setting their patients up for success by meeting their comprehension needs and equipping them with the knowledge they need to be healthy.

Outside of the regions in Latin America with developed healthcare systems, more than a third of the total population has zero access to healthcare. It is estimated that 121 million Latin Americans lack access to healthcare because they cannot afford it, and another 107 million lack access because they live in remote areas. Health literacy doesn't just apply to doctor visits and prescription medications; it applies to

all areas of lifestyle. When examining their health, patients need to understand the influence of dietary decisions, personal hygiene, substance use, and occupational hazards, especially when an individual works in a field that requires the use and operation of heavy machinery.

Being able to read information regarding health, while it is a critical skill, does not ensure a complete understanding of that information. There are three important criteria to be met in order to reach quality health literacy. The step of most importance is that an individual must have access to proper information. While this isn't always within the individual's control, it falls to the community around them and larger systems at play to help facilitate access to that necessary health information. Once someone is provided with the information, they must be able to assess the validity of that information. This step is much harder than it may seem, as many people don't have the privilege of quickly picking up their phone to google sources. If a foreign doctor were to tell people in rural Latin America that smoking is actually good for your lungs, how would someone with limited resources know if the information is trustworthy? Some may be doubtful of the information because they actually knew someone who suffered from asthma due to smoking, but the reception of this information would be inconsistent and subjective to each individual. The final criteria of quality

health literacy requires the capability to actually apply health information in one's life. Without any one of these three criteria, fully comprehending the multidimensional aspects of health will be impossible.

In the United States, it is common knowledge that drinking contaminated water will lead to a domino effect of illnesses. This knowledge, and the ability to act on it, is a luxury. In Latin America, approximately 45% of solid waste is disposed of in dumps or waterways, and 70% of sewage is dumped there. These are the same waterways that provide their drinking water. This use of contaminated water is not their fault. Waking up with a painful stomach ache, bloating and diarrhea is just a normal day for so many people in rural Latin America; they have never known anything different. Think of all the negative health outcomes that could be avoided by teaching the world to boil their water before consuming it or by providing water filters to families. In Ecuador, the mercury that causes kidney disease and nervous system failure could be removed. Typhoid infections from water in Peru could be avoided. A portion of the 21,000 cases of Hepatitis A in northern Brazil reported in 2005 could have been prevented. These issues are far from insignificant and the smallest effort to share information about the dangers of contaminated water could dramatically improve the lives of millions.

Another limitation on health literacy in Latin America is the fact that many countries do not require nutrition labels on food products. Uruguay only just implemented nutrition label laws in 2020. Peru and Mexico didn't have nutrition labeling laws until 2019. Even with the recent spread of these policies across Latin America, there are not nearly as many regulations on the labeling system as there are in the United States and other developed nations. In Mexico, while certain information is required to be on the label, there are no layout design regulations. In the U.S., certain information, such as the inclusion of common allergens, must be bolded or in a larger font to increase awareness of what consumers are putting into their bodies. In the U.S., although many people do not partake in healthy dietary behaviors, it is fairly common knowledge that exercise and a healthy diet is essential to preventing cardiovascular disease, hypertension, diabetes, and more. Picture a Salvadorian in the rural outskirts of El Salvador, a country where 33% of adults are obese. Walking down the street, hungry, there is a store with an apple and a bag of chips listed for the same price. Which do they choose? The bag of salty potato chips, right? They would eat it without hesitation and be happy with the tasty and filling snack. The majority of people in these rural areas, if their nation provides nutrition labels, have never been taught about the meaning behind those tiny words on their food packaging. There is a vast gap in knowledge when it comes to

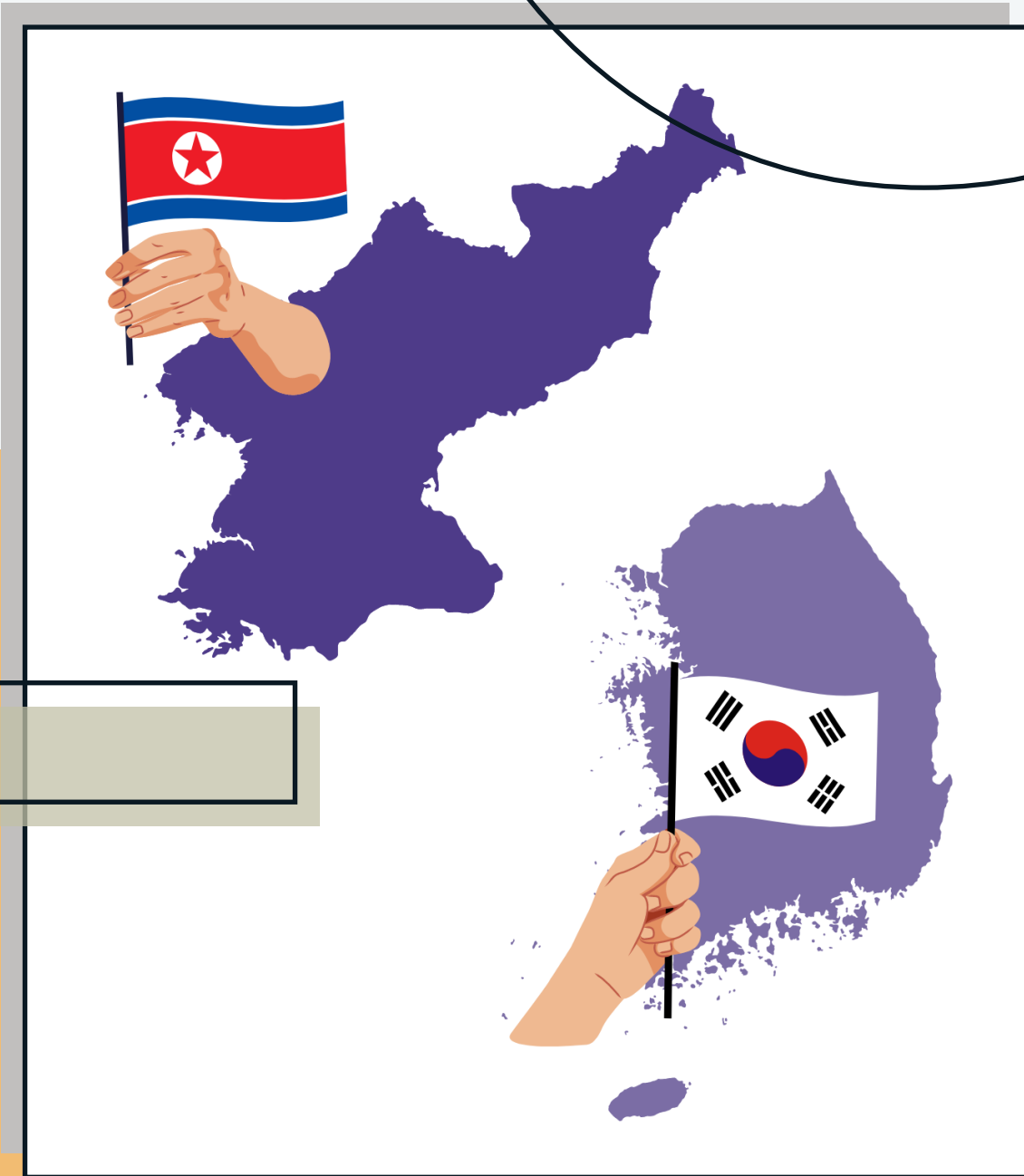
understanding the consequences that can come from exceeding the daily recommended sodium intake or from not meeting the daily recommendations for protein consumption. If the country requires nutrition labels, there is a huge gap between the technical information on products and the realities of what those warnings tell the consumers. The world must do better in equipping people with the skills to understand how their lifestyle choices will affect the rest of their lives, their children's lives, and the success of their communities.

The responsibility to make quality health information available for the rural parts of Latin America does not fall entirely on one system in particular. This is a call on the medical systems, education systems, government systems, and global organizations to take action. Latin America is in desperate need of mass dissemination of quality health information. Literacy rates directly link the education and medical systems; when the education system fails the community, the victims of that failure will suffer lifelong consequences in regard to their health, which subsequently impacts all areas of an individual's life. Medical professionals must take the time to ensure their patients and communities at large understand the basic premises of their treatments and lifestyle decisions. Governments need to prioritize the prevention of undesirable health outcomes and not solely focus on curing conditions after they arise. Spreading health literacy, and literacy in

general, is a job that cannot be done by a single entity; it is going to take a coalition of groups to save the health of the world.

The dissemination of information throughout Latin America is the first step to improving the health of each Latin American nation. The information provided needs to be designed in the context of the culture in each area so that the citizens will be receptive to what they are reading or being told. You don't have to redesign every education and healthcare system to make people healthier; you just have to help them understand how to take care of themselves and their loved ones before a health complication arises. Unlike money, information is an unlimited resource. The same piece of information can be shared an infinite number of times in infinite variations. It is time for individuals, governments, and higher organizations to distribute this unlimited resource to the people in Latin America who desperately need, and deserve it.

“LATIN AMERICA  
IS IN DESPERATE  
NEED OF MASS  
DISSEMINATION  
OF QUALITY  
HEALTH  
INFORMATION.”



## Fleeing Freedom: North Korean Defectors and Why They Return

AVA BARROS

Despite the armistice that brought an end to the Korean War in 1953, the relationship between North and South Korea is still tense, fluctuating between non-aggression and aggression. North Korea is a dictatorship classified as a single-party communist nation, notorious for producing nuclear weapons and human rights abuses. It is one of the most repressive and politically isolated countries, and its citizens fear death from poverty or persecution. Because of the harsh living conditions and extreme measures taken by the North Korean government to monitor and control their citizens, some North Koreans decide to flee their country and seek asylum in the South. Although escaping North Korea has become increasingly difficult, approximately 1,000 North Koreans defect each year, according to the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). Many who make it to South Korea find adjusting to life in the South challenging. Some even choose to

“double defect,” accepting the risks of the journey back to North Korea.

Before 1962, there were no official laws or policies in South Korea that addressed defectors. At this time, most defectors came from the elite upper class and could offer information or North Korean technology to the South Korean government in exchange for a monetary reward and freedom from the North. In April 1962, South Korea enacted the Special Protection for Patriots and North Korean Defectors policy. Subsequently, defectors were treated as “patriots” and were offered the same advantages as those who made significant contributions to their country. In choosing to live in South Korea instead of North Korea, they were considered heroes by their new nation. After a year-long military investigation, these “patriots” received settlement money; residential, educational, and employment support; as well as medical assistance.

In the 1990s, the demographic makeup of defectors changed. North Korea suffered from an economic downfall and a famine that took the lives of millions. Previously, most defectors came from the privileged class, but after the ongoing devastation in North Korea, defectors mainly consisted of people from the poor and lower class. This put the South Korean government further into an economic and political dilemma. Conservative administrations in the South saw the defector issue as a way to highlight the North's human rights abuses. But some southern politicians sought to improve relations with the North, which cannot be done while rewarding and aiding its escapees. Despite efforts to support defectors, many refugees quickly realized that life in South Korea is not what they expected or hoped for.

Escaping North Korea is a traumatic, risky ordeal. The most common and successful way to flee is in cooperation with a relative who has already escaped and made it to the South, in a process known as chain defection. Relatives in the South are responsible for raising the \$10,000 required for their Northern relative to defect. This process often involves former defectors in the South who act as brokers or traders on the border between North Korea and China, and North Korean soldiers who take bribes to show defectors where to cross the border safely. Leaving the North has become nearly impossible since the adoption of stricter border

restrictions due to COVID-19. A survey released this year by the North Korean Refugees Foundation found that the most common reason for defecting is due to living under the constant control of the North Korean government. 22% of defectors said they left the North due to food shortages. The book *Leaving North Korea: My story*, written by an anonymous defector, explains this further, stating, "Most of my childhood was spent during what was called the March of the Suffering, or the Great Famine... And if you walked around the streets, you could easily find dead bodies- those who died of hunger." She also explains that in North Korea, women's rights are nonexistent. During her year-long journey to the South, she and many other women were physically and sexually assaulted simply because they were women and North Korean.

Although returning to North Korea after defecting (or "double defecting") is rare, it does happen. Many factors play a role in choosing to return to one of the most isolated countries in the world over living under South Korean modernization and democracy. Discrimination, unemployment, culture shock, and guilt from leaving behind relatives are a few of the challenges that defectors face when arriving in South Korea. Lee Nakung, an activist for defectors, says that by the time most defectors arrive in the South, they are in debt to the brokers that aided them in crossing the border. To make matters worse, in March 2018 the South Korean government significantly

decreased funding to help defectors. Further adding to this struggle, many defectors find it challenging to find work. Statistics for 2020 released by South Korea's Unification Ministry showed that defector unemployment was twice as high as the general population. In a 2021 study released by the Korea Hana Foundation (KHF), 44% of North Korean defectors said they were treated differently because they were from the North, and 23% said they were criticized for not having the same level of education or work experience as those from the South. Yeong-nam Eom, who defected in 2010, states, "At first, I sent out my resumé more than 100 times with all my background including my education and work experience in North Korea. But not one company invited me to an interview, so then I only put my experiences in South Korea on my resume, and I quickly started getting calls from companies." In July of this year, one 42-year-old North Korean defector Han Sung-ok and her six-year-old son were found dead in their apartment. Before her death, Han was unemployed and failing to pay her bills. No food was found in their apartment, leading investigators to believe they had starved to death. The publicity of this case led thousands of South Koreans to protest their government, demanding policy changes to prevent similar tragedies.

A KHF study found that the majority of discrimination towards northerners was rooted in cultural differences such

as accent, manners, and lifestyles. Many defectors report that employers in the South are wary of those with North Korean accents. Refugees also experience hostility and suspicion from southerners, especially when North Korean leaders order missile strikes on the South. And assimilation is even more difficult for the approximately 80% of defectors who are women. Most have difficulty accessing social services and are often forced into prostitution. Child defectors are more susceptible to being bullied or rejected by their southern peers. Poverty in old age is widespread in South Korea, especially among defectors.

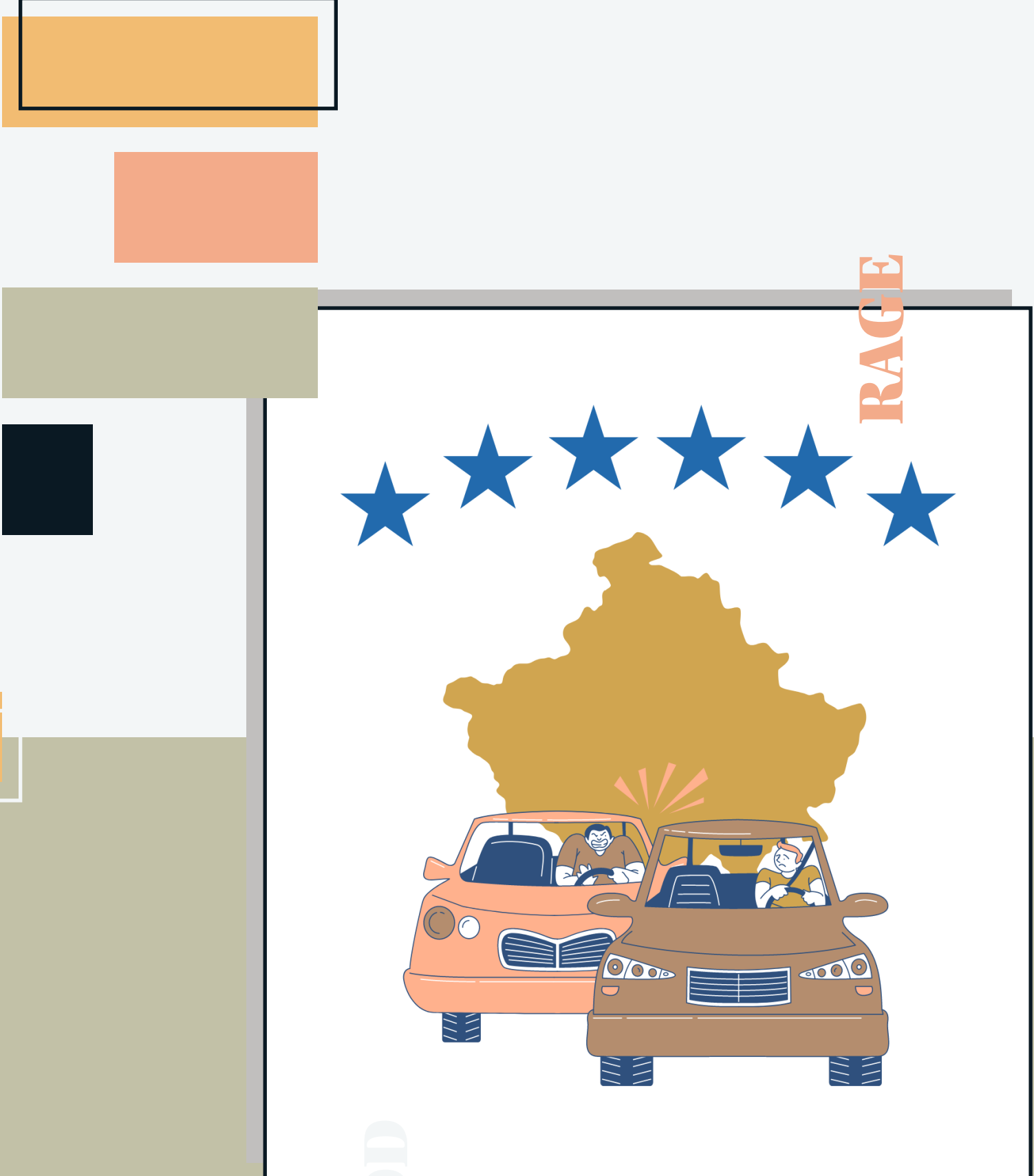
Along with the risks of destitution and discrimination, many defectors are shocked when they experience the South Korean way of life. Defector Joo Il-yong tells *The Guardian* that "in North Korea, we didn't have to plan our lives- the state did that for us. But in the South, we have to take responsibility for our own lives." Escaping an extreme dictatorship with complete control over its citizens to live in a free, capitalist society is, more often than not, a difficult transition. Two years after defecting, 25-year-old Kang Na-ra told her mother she wanted to return to North Korea. Kang struggles to keep a stable income and says, "still today, I wonder if I made the right decision, life here is tough."

# Road Rage: The Fight for Recognition in Kosovo

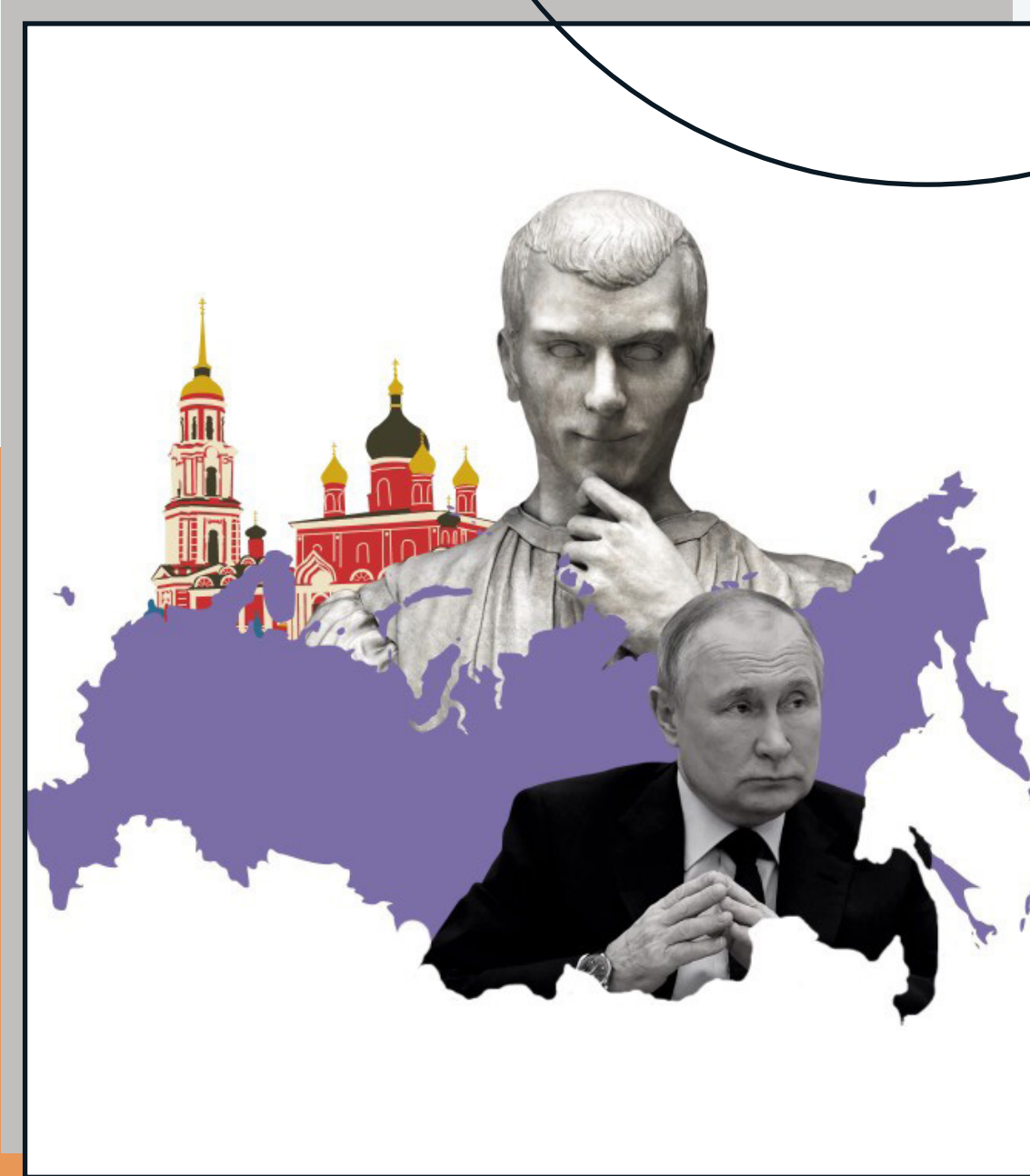
JENNA MAUNSELL

The Balkan region—the area of lands situated between the Black and Mediterranean seas—is filled with a rich and complicated history that is often misunderstood. When Yugoslavia broke up, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Slovenia were faced with arguably one of the hardest challenges: how to move forward and heal. The conflict between Serbia and Kosovo in particular presented a very difficult and complex set of circumstances. America and the international community were very involved in the peace-making process. In the end, a peace agreement was negotiated, but the issue has been left largely unresolved. The West considers the Kosovo-Serbia conflict to be a settled matter but, in reality, a very fragile peace exists, which threatens to erupt over seemingly trivial matters.

The tensions between Kosovo and Serbia date back to the 14th century and the Battle of Kosovo. The Ottoman Sultan was killed by the Serbian army, making the location and day of this conflict particularly important to Serbian national identity. Besides being the location of this important battle, Kosovo is also home to many Serbian Orthodox churches and monasteries built during the same period. Since a nation's identity is often closely intertwined with religion and holy sites, Serbia feels very closely connected to areas of Kosovo. Today, 92.9 percent of Kosovo's population is Albanian, but Serbs make up a small minority. Serbs and Albanians make up two entirely different groups with different languages, religions, and opposing views about the land they live on. While Serbs in Kosovo are considered to be a minority, in Serbia, Kosovo is commonly called the







## Putin through A Machiavellian Lens

RALEIGH ADAMS

American news and politics often passively and derogatorily characterize Russian president Vladimir Putin. But to truly comprehend Putin's rise to power, the current state of Russian politics, and his future plans, Americans need to adjust their view of Putin to align with the shifty, often harsh, character that Italian author and philosopher Niccolò Machiavelli believed was associated with successful leaders. Applying Machiavellian theory to the Russian president may lend a clearer understanding of the man's leadership and the trajectory of the Russian nation. This analysis will show a new element and understanding of how Putin has acquired and maintained power, his outward-facing future plans, and current Russian politics and culture.

The United States is, in so many words, a nation of idealists. American citizens, perhaps with good reason, value freedom above all else and believe that all people are equal and have the same potential and possibilities set before them. The beliefs of egalitarianism, Aristotelian virtue, and freedom for all inform the images we construct of the leaders we choose. When one steps outside of this lens, however, into the realm of realism and the effectual truth, one may find that an effective and successful leader is not what Americans may imagine. Through the vision of politics set forth by Machiavelli, maybe not an appreciation, but an understanding of Russia's Vladimir Putin may be reached, and a glimpse into his inner machinations can be discovered.

Machiavelli takes the vision of Aristotelian virtue and flips it completely inside out. He constructs the vision of virtù to refer to the characteristics that a leader, such as a prince, will be needed to embody in order to “maintain his state” and to “achieve great things,” the two standard markers of power for Machiavelli. The best ruler is like a light switch, able to appear a saint in one moment and commit whatever acts must be done to maintain power in the next “as fortune and circumstances dictate.” One may be able to draw parallels to Putin’s own behavior in this constantly shifting nature needed for a Machiavellian prince.

Following the fall of the Soviet Union in the 1990s, the Russian nation came closer to being a democracy than it ever had before. Born from the crumbling structure of the USSR, the Russian Federation was formed under the leadership of Boris Yeltsin, and the nation began the turbulent shift to a market economy and democracy. However, Yeltsin’s initial popularity and strength fell due to the president’s frequent personnel and policy changes, as well as the economic inflation and unrest created by the sudden privatization of the market. The dissatisfaction and anxiety of the people led the country to move away from its burgeoning embrace of western culture and politics to embrace the quickly rising Vladimir Putin, who offered a chance to create a strong and powerful national image. While in the 90s newly released archives shed new

and negative light on the totalitarianism of Soviet Russia, Putin’s rise to power would see a backslide into this form of regime. Putin’s former strategist Gleb Pavlosky played a key role in shaping the president’s public persona, stating “we intensified Putin’s mystery on purpose.” This is in line with Machiavelli’s vision for a successful prince. He must appear virtuous without actually being so:

*“A prince, and especially a prince recently installed, cannot observe all those qualities which make men good, and it is often necessary in order to preserve the state to act contrary to faith, contrary to mercy, contrary to humaneness, and contrary to religion. And therefore, he needs a spirit disposed to follow wherever the winds of fortune and the variability of affairs leads him” (Machiavelli, The Prince, Chapter XVIII).*

These “winds of fortune” had left the former Soviet Union in a state of unrest, unsure whether the nation would embrace economic reform and democracy. Russian strategists sprung at the chance to create a new future for the nation in young Putin, and Putin himself has sprung upon fortune to consolidate and maintain his own power.

One key example of this is Putin’s stifling of any political or media dissidence. Alexei Navalny is a prominent Russian blogger and anti-corruption figure.

His platform has attracted millions of young Russians and became a threat to Putin and the power of the Kremlin. One might see Putin prosecuting and imprisoning Navalny on false charges as making an example out of the journalist, much as Machiavelli praised the Italian ruler Cesare Borgia for killing his advisor to cement his own power above the people. If a leader is to be untouchable and remain in control, there can be no possible threats or doubts about his rule. Navalny serves as an example to fellow journalists and political figures of what dissent against Putin’s presidency will bring.

Along with his show of power as a Machiavellian “prince,” Putin’s practice of “realpolitik” is nearly identical to Machiavelli’s effectual truth. Both systems are based upon acting in response to current affairs and the reality of issues rather than nebulous and lofty morals. As Machiavelli described, the effectual truth is for those who want real actions and results, rather than imagination. Putin exemplified this in the 2014 annexation of Crimea. Even then, the Russian president was planting the seeds for the invasion of Ukraine by supporting separatist groups within the east of the country. All of this was done, of course, in the Machiavellian fashion of appearing calm and collected to the West and convincing the Russian public that this was a worthy goal. The peak of this facade may be the invasion of Ukraine and Putin’s convincing of the Russian public that the act of war

was a “special military operation” with the aim of “demilitarization” and “denazification” of Ukraine. In this way, Putin made himself appear to be the ultimate paragon of virtue, all while hiding truer motives for his own power.

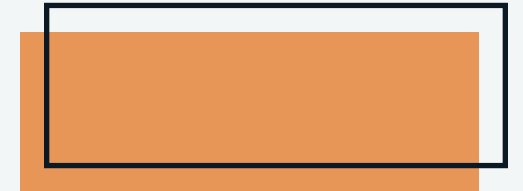
In the war in Ukraine, if Putin were to follow a Machiavellian approach, there is only one option: complete destruction. No ruler may take over a free nation and let it survive; rebellion will always flourish, “for in truth there is no secure mode to possess them other than to ruin them. And whoever becomes patron of a city accustomed to living free and does not destroy it, should expect to be destroyed by it; for it always has a refuge in rebellion the name of liberty.” Ukrainians have proved Machiavelli true thus far, believing that there is greater life and desire for revenge in a republic; their taste for liberty “does not and cannot let them rest.” The only options Putin has been to “eliminate them or live in them.” Recent reports show Putin has begun a shift to the more drastic of these options, choosing to attack Ukrainian infrastructure over the initial targets of military bases and consolidating power in the occupied regions of the country. As recently as late October 2022, Putin stated that Russian airstrikes on Ukrainian infrastructure were in response to attacks on the Black Sea fleet. Not only this but more action could follow from here. The president told a news conference “that’s not all we could have done,” indicating that the size and number of Russian attacks

will only grow from here. This points to the possibility that Putin is aware of his options and will pay whatever price is needed to ensure his own success as “the prince.” It is the global community’s responsibility to shift our own thinking to respond to this outlook, so we might better be able to contend with the Russian leader in the international arena.

Machiavelli’s Prince consistently has two fears to address: “one within, on account of his subjects; the other outside, on account of external powers.” If only two true possibilities exist for the future of Russia’s international presence, then the ramifications posed for other countries are immense. As aforementioned, Ukraine has tasted what it is to be a republic. If one is to take Machiavelli’s philosophy into account, then it is unlikely for the country to back down against Russia now. This poses the second type of threat to Putin’s power: an external one. However, the growing agitation within Russia itself simultaneously poses the first type of fear for Putin. This places the leader in a precarious situation, one in which he is likely only to buckle down harder on the Ukrainian invasion. Machiavelli offers two possible defenses for princes in situations such as Putin is in now: “from the latter one is defended with good arms and good friends; and if one has good arms, one will always have good friends. And things inside will always remain steady, if things outside are steady unless indeed they are disturbed by conspiracy.”

Putin is without these good arms and good friends, the Russian military is running thin, and other global powers have either backed Ukraine or remained neutral. There is no out in the face of this fear. Conversely, because of this external agitation, there is no resolution for the internal disturbance as well until the outside conflict comes to some possible conclusion. This leaves the other possible fear of the prince unresolved as well. In total, there seems to be a house of cards falling from all directions around the Russian leader, leaving the nation once more in political and cultural unrest, the state of wild fortune he came to power in. It is from here that if Putin is to remain in power, he must return to his Machiavellian roots, utilizing harsh virtù through large power plays to centralize his power again, even if it means withdrawing from Ukraine to keep Russia. It is up to the US and other Western powers to understand the theory behind Putin’s regime and power and how to approach the Machiavellian prince for the utmost success.

“IN THE WAR IN UKRAINE, IF PUTIN WERE TO FOLLOW A MACHIAVELLIAN APPROACH, THERE IS ONLY ONE OPTION: COMPLETE DESTRUCTION. NO RULER MAY TAKE OVER A FREE NATION AND LET IT SURVIVE; REBELLION WILL ALWAYS FLOURISH, “FOR IN TRUTH THERE IS NO SECURE MODE TO POSSESS THEM OTHER THAN TO RUIN THEM.”



## **Flooding in Pakistan: A Case Study for the Future of the Middle East and North Africa**

**NICK NEILY**

Until June of this year, Pakistan was beginning to recover from an economic crisis. The crisis was fueled by an internal political crisis of leadership and external resource challenges caused by the ongoing effects of the war in Ukraine. With a new Prime Minister in power ready to rebuild bridges torn down by his predecessor and a new budget plan to lower the nation's deficit, Pakistan secured just over \$1 billion from the IMF, saving the nation from defaulting on their payments. By the start of the summer, it seemed that Pakistan could start turning its dire situation back around after a tense and strenuous start to the year.

Then, in June, a third of the country was underwater.

Nearly 8 million people were displaced from their homes, and around 1500 were killed. Critical transportation and medical infrastructure were devastated throughout the affected regions, and estimates place the damages in the tens of billions of dollars. Through it all, Pakistan faced the worst of its economic troubles: inflation peaked at just above 27%, the highest mark since 1975, and the Pakistani

Rupee reached the lowest value in its history. The flooding even sabotaged their deficit plan; the nation now must import goods like rice and wheat to offset severe agriculture losses, which costs more than its reserves are capable of paying. Estimates from Pakistan's central bank prior to flooding placed the nation's financial support needs for the then-upcoming financial year at \$33.5 billion; now, as the flood waters slowly recede, that number may have doubled. The international community has shifted its focus to emergency relief efforts and the UN has appealed to member states for \$800 million in support, as Pakistan attempts to rebuild during one of the most calamitous moments in its history. Current Prime Minister Shabaz Sharif described it as "the worst [flooding] in the history of Pakistan."

Sharif is correct, but it's a short history. Just 12 years ago, Pakistan faced flooding that was, at the time, the worst in its history. It's faced a number of severe floods in the years between, floods that are growing more frequent and severe over time. While flooding may be a disaster unique to Pakistan, climate emergencies and related disasters are becoming a far more imminent problem across the Middle East, North Africa and South Asia. Across these regions, climate change is acting as a catalyst to inflame ongoing issues and stifle development. This has created a cycle of countries being devastated and consequently needing relief that has become necessary just to

try and keep these nations afloat. The unprecedented flooding across Pakistan this summer, and the amplifying effects of such a catastrophe on the nation's spiraling economy, foreshadows the arrival of a long-dreaded future for the international community: as climate-related disasters grow more frequent and severe every year, at-risk nations, like those in the Middle East and North Africa, face the potential of collapse and the displacement of millions of people, creating an exponentially-growing burden upon a world that already struggles just to keep up.

Pakistan falls within a region of the world that now finds itself more susceptible to the effects of climate change than almost every other corner of the globe. In this region, stretching from North Africa to the Middle East and South Asia (MENASA), the rate of climate disasters is rising faster than anywhere else in the world. Average temperatures there have increased by 1.5°C over the past three decades, a rate twice as high as the global average. On top of this, extreme temperature events, droughts, and flash flooding have grown more common in the past 20 years and have begun destroying infrastructure and pushing populations out of affected areas at an alarming rate. The most concerning problem created by these climate disasters is water scarcity, which could have even more consequential outcomes than displacement. It is likely that nations across MENASA will be the first in the world to run out of water.

Natural, reusable water sources in the region are used up more quickly than they can be replenished by consistent precipitation, and rainfall has become anything but consistent. The effects of water scarcity have already become visible; during the Syrian Civil War, militant groups on all sides utilized control over water infrastructure, like dams and sewage systems, to cut water supply to their opposition and facilitate the spread of waterborne diseases.

Water is widely recognized as the great aggravator of concurrent societal issues in MENASA, but adapting to water scarcity and related climate disasters is not feasible for these nations without external assistance. Aside from most of the region falling within an arid, desert-ridden climate, nearly every nation struggles with weak infrastructure, widespread poverty, corruption, and governmental reliance on short-term economic goals over long-term climate mitigation. For the millions of people within MENASA, adaptation simply can't come only from within their own borders if they are ever to develop their economies and overcome challenges of governance.

Thus, for the people of MENASA, their livelihood relies upon the aid of developed, wealthy nations that provide the most in financing climate change relief and adaptation worldwide. However, developed nations, which are responsible for the majority of historic and ongoing carbon emissions, are

already struggling to meet monetary aid goals they set to provide for developing countries suffering most from climate change, and nations like Pakistan are feeling ignored. "We are bearing a full-on humanitarian payload for other people's carbon consumption," exclaimed Pakistani Climate Minister Sherry Rehman, whose remarks on the burden taken on by Pakistan garnered widespread media coverage throughout the flooding. Her words are influenced by the ongoing crisis, but climate change adaptation assistance has a poor track record in the international community. Member states present for the UN Climate Summit in Copenhagen 2009 pledged \$100 billion by 2020 to help less developed countries (LDCs) adapt to and mitigate climate change. These negotiations established no robust measures to track pledged funding when the agreement was made, and reports from different sources vary wildly. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) assessed the pledges based on the amounts each nation claims to have distributed. The resulting sum misses the \$100 billion target by around \$20 billion, while many NGOs and LDCs claim the gap is upwards of \$60-\$70 billion. Most of this money goes toward reducing emissions and mitigating their effects. Reducing emissions is valuable even for a region that does not rank among the most emissive regions in the world, yet most states there still rely on oil and natural gas for their economies, which places a limit on their ability to

reduce emissions. The Paris Agreement set a goal “to achieve a balance between adaptation and mitigation” – a balance that has not been achieved. Adaptation finance, which goes towards projects like climate-resistant infrastructure and agriculture resilience, has reached about \$23 billion worldwide. This sum not only fails to measure up to the funding put into mitigation projects, but it falls far below the UN Environment Programme’s estimated \$140-\$300 billion required to provide adequate adaptation measures for at-risk nations. This pledge only constitutes one avenue by which at-risk nations receive monetary assistance, but even with organizations like the World Bank shattering their climate finance record in 2022, adaptation to climate disasters across the world is simply not there.

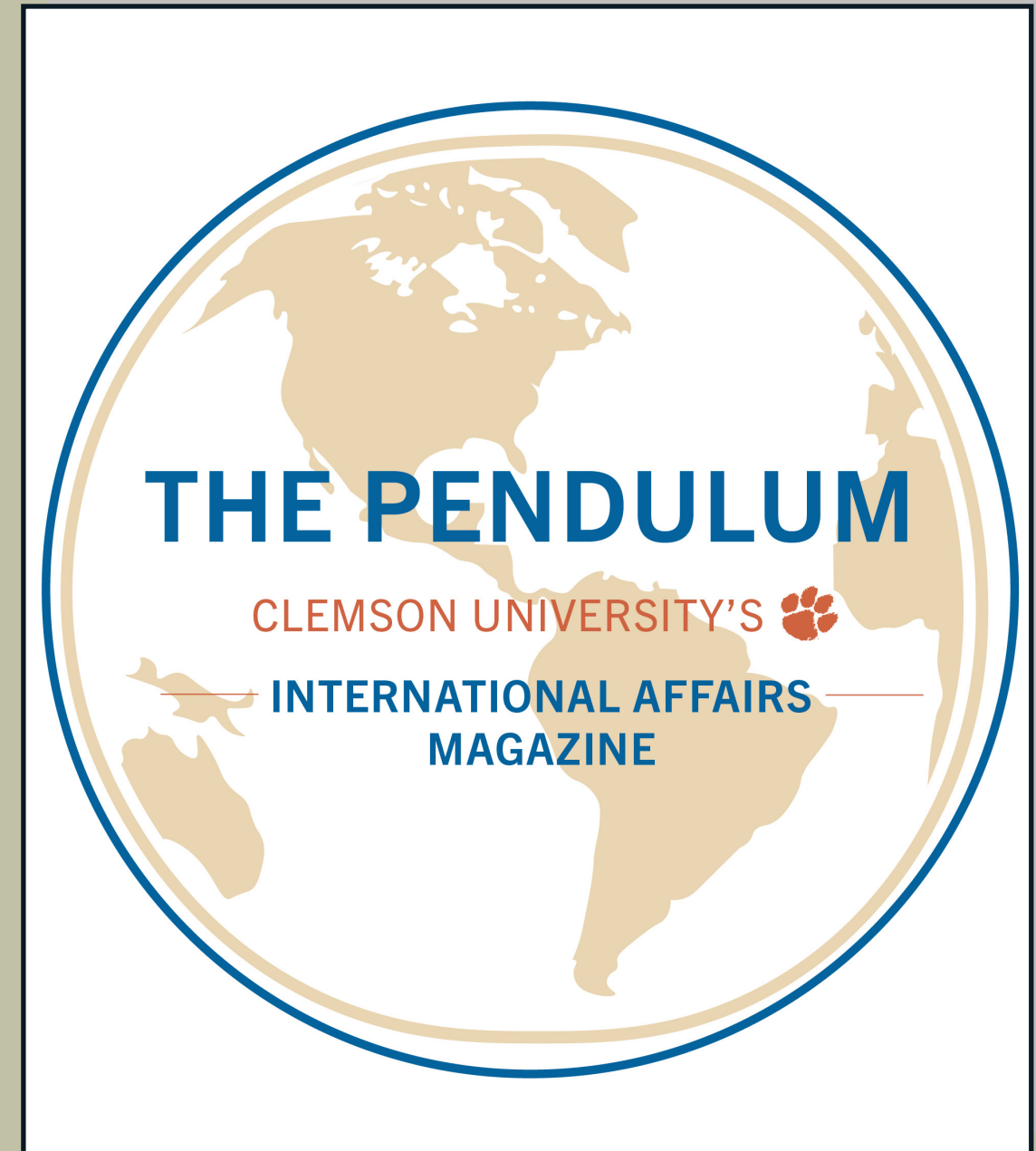
The standard set by Copenhagen, Paris, and the United Nations is one of reducing emissions and funding climate protections worldwide for nations at-risk, yet no amount of money given to Pakistan now can offset the human cost of what has already occurred. 8 million people were displaced by the flooding this summer, over 2 million are without a home, the current trend of relief funding cannot simply return these lives to normalcy. 1.3 million Afghan

refugees live in Pakistan, and the UNHCR estimates that 800,000 of these refugees were in “more than 45 ‘calamity hit’ districts” and that “four of the worst-hit districts in Balochistan, Khyber, Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh provinces host the highest number of refugees.” Climate change has already moved millions, and the displacement statistics are growing more severe. Cities face increasing pressure on social services and security with mass migration into their streets.

At the current rate of financial damage and forced migration, if the international community wants to prevent disasters at such a mass scale from occurring, funding may never be enough to keep up. This summer’s flooding pushed Pakistan to the brink of crisis, and with flooding becoming a more common threat to the country, will they make it through the next monsoon? For Rehman, and for the millions across Pakistan looking at the grave challenges ahead of them, “this dystopia is on our doorstep; it’s going to be next in their country... If you’re not understanding that it’s right here, right now, or that actions need to be taken post-haste, then you’re really sleepwalking into annihilation.”

“PAKISTAN FALLS WITHIN A REGION OF THE WORLD THAT NOW FINDS ITSELF MORE SUSCEPTIBLE TO THE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE THAN ALMOST EVERY OTHER CORNER OF THE GLOBE.”

THANK YOU TO OUR READERS!



# FALL 2022

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