

# COURIER

Provoking Thought and Encouraging Dialogue on World Affairs

THE STANLEY FOUNDATION | NUMBER 87 | Summer 2016

Their name is

## The Rohingya

A people disowned by their home government,  
cast away as stateless and homeless.

Who will step up and help?

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# When Unthinkable Becomes the Norm

By Joseph McNamara, Editor

Checking the daily news headlines just doesn't seem the same anymore, especially for seasoned news junkies like myself. It's not that the delivery system has changed—instant online news and alerts are great, better than ever. It's not that the nature of the news has changed—it hasn't. Bad news still travels fast, and good news slow to not at all.

What has changed are the severity and frequency of events that we previously considered "unthinkable." Consider the daily carnage in Syria, beginning with the Assad-led government's atrocities against its own citizens in 2011, continuing with its genocide of more than 1,400 people with chemical weapons in 2014, and the Islamic State's increasing horrific violence and killing of innocent civilians. Unthinkable. But what's worse is that even after those headlines, the atrocities in Syria continued, and today, the death toll has reached 400,000, and over 9.5 million people have been displaced, forced from their homes.

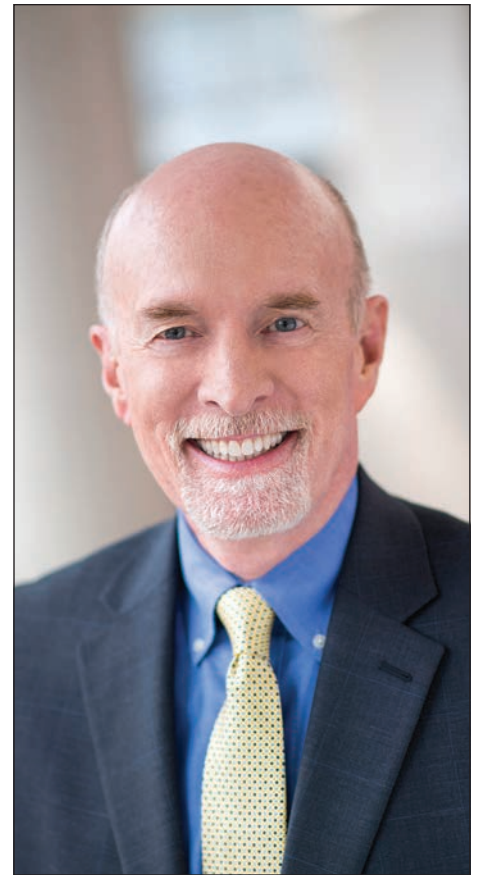
Add to the atrocities in Syria similar events across the world—including steady drumbeats of horror in the Central African Republic, South Sudan, and other places, each unthinkable and each becoming part of the almost normal stream of headlines.

The cover story of this *Courier* issue highlights one such ongoing tragedy: the persecution of the Rohingya in Myanmar. The Rohingya are a people, totaling nearly two million, who are not just homeless but stateless. After their own government disowned them, no other government has claimed them. Even their name, Rohingya, has been prohibited from being spoken in their home country, and they are being systematically pushed from its borders. What's more, after decades of sporadic media coverage of atrocities behind the scenes, recent reports acknowledge strong evidence that genocide may already be happening.

So when is enough *enough*? The world knows the Rohingya are being targeted and pushed from their home. We know they have nowhere to go. We know that each day of their lives is full of unthinkable fear and peril.

This month, the Stanley Foundation adds our *Courier* voice to the slowly increasing chorus of demand that the international community deliver a solution for the Rohingya and for other populations victimized by atrocities. Sadly, for those of us who closely follow world events, the unthinkable is becoming all too common. Tragically, for the Rohingya, the unthinkable is the norm.

Nothing could be more wrong, nor more urgent to stop.



## COURIER

Summer 2016 • ISSN 1044-5900

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*Courier* is published tri-annually and mailed without charge to interested readers within the United States. The views expressed here are not necessarily those of the foundation.

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Cover photo: A Rohingya woman and children, homeless outside a refugee camp north of Sittwe, Myanmar, in 2013. (Scanpix Sweden/Sipa USA)





Driven to escape the atrocities in their homeland of Myanmar, Rohingya refugees drift on a boat in Thai waters off the southern island of Koh Lipe in the Andaman Sea, where they are easy prey for human traffickers from competing transnational criminal syndicates in Thailand. (Christophe Archambault/AFP/Getty)

# We Are Desperate and Without Help

## The Plight of the Rohingya in Myanmar

*By Dan Sullivan*

**T**he Rohingya, a stateless Muslim minority in Myanmar, have been described as the most persecuted people in the world. According to the US Holocaust Memorial Museum’s Early Warning Project, they are at the highest risk of state-led mass killing of any population. In fact, recent news reports acknowledge strong evidence that genocide of the Rohingya may already be happening.

The Stanley Foundation genocide prevention policy team—Carrie Dulaney and Jai-Ayla Sutherland—sat down with Daniel Sullivan, senior advocate at Refugees International, to discuss the plight of the Rohingya. Sullivan has traveled to Myanmar and met with displaced Rohingya a number of times. (This interview does not represent the views of Refugees International.)

**The Stanley Foundation (TSF):** Tell us about the Rohingya.

**Dan Sullivan:** The Rohingya are a Muslim ethnic minority mostly based in western Myanmar in Rakhine state. Over a million [Rohingya] live in Myanmar, and several hundred thousand more have been displaced in the surrounding countries, including Bangladesh, Malaysia, and Thailand. They are stateless people, so they do not have citizenship. That’s a huge part of the challenge they’re facing. Effectively, if you’re stateless, you don’t have citizenship in any country, therefore, you don’t have the protection of laws in any particular country.

The Rohingya are facing a combination of decades of state-sponsored persecution and widespread discrimination among the population in Myanmar, largely driven by a general fear of the Other and Muslims. Myanmar is 90 percent Buddhist. There’s a small contingent of ultranationalist Buddhist monks who have really been stirring up this fear and trying to paint a picture of the Rohingya as an existential threat to Buddhism in Myanmar.

The government of Myanmar has refused to recognize the Rohingya as a people. They are even asking the international community not to use the word *Rohingya*. They consider the Rohingya to be illegal migrants from Bangladesh, even though many Rohingya have lived in Myanmar for generations. There have been members of parliament who have identified as Rohingya, who have served the government. Yet the government continues to refuse to recognize them as a people, even denying them the right to self-identify.

**TSF:** What level of risk do the Rohingya face? Why and how are the Rohingya being targeted?

**Sullivan:** The Early Warning Project, which is affiliated with the US Holocaust Memorial Museum, has continued to list Myanmar as the country most at risk of state-led mass killing, based on the risk faced by the Rohingya. Additionally, the Holocaust museum went on a mission to Rakhine state to monitor the situation and returned with the warning of a very high risk of further atrocities and even genocide against the Rohingya. There have been other groups, including a Yale Law School group with Fortify Rights, that have said there’s strong evidence that genocide may already be happening.

The current situation has been set up by decades of persecution that has been exacerbated by the rise of





Rohingya refugees, considered illegal migrants by their home country, Myanmar, are mired in a large rural slum that has sprung up around the government-run camp Kutupalong in Bangladesh. It has become a lifeline for undocumented Rohingya refugees, but one without food rations or access to school and health services. (Pierre Prakash/EU/ECHO)

ultranationalist rhetoric against the Rohingya painting them as a threat, as the Other, and scapegoating them for the lack of development in Rakhine state. The Rakhine Buddhist population—the majority population where most Rohingya live—has been marginalized through the years and suffered at the hands of the former military dictatorship.

But just since 2012, violence broke out between the local Rakhine Buddhists and the Rohingya, resulting in some 200 Rohingya deaths and 140,000 people being displaced, mostly Rohingya. They continue to be displaced today in camps that have been described as open-air prisons with very squalid conditions. People are not allowed to enter and leave; the government is keeping them there. They're not allowed to move. They have no access to higher education and very limited access to medical care. The conditions are very difficult.

Now, the [United Nations] is reporting that some of the people have been allowed to go back, but that's misleading

because it hasn't always been voluntary. Regardless, there are some 120,000 people who still live in those camps. Even the one million who are not in camps are still facing restrictions on their access to work, education, and medical care, not to mention restrictions on their rights to marry and have children.

**TSF:** What is Buddhist nationalism, and how is it leading to violence against the Rohingya?

**Sullivan:** There has been hate speech in Myanmar that has incited mob violence against Myanmar's Muslim populations, including the Rohingya. One infamous source of this speech is Wirathu, a firebrand Buddhist monk who has traveled the country holding rallies and using vitriolic language comparing Muslims to vermin, and rallying people, riling them up, and appealing to their baser, violent urges. We've seen a lot of violence coming out of his efforts.



He's part of this bigger movement of the Ma Ba Tha, or Organization for the Protection of Race and Religion. They are very well-organized. Wirathu has had his DVDs and different promotional material sent out all over the country. Initially, there were organized boycotts of Muslim shops. We're seeing that this movement has spread and become more sophisticated and dangerous, even though it has gotten a lot of international criticism.

At the urging of Buddhist nationalists, the [Myanmar] government recently passed laws for the protection of race and religion, which target Rohingya by limiting who they can marry and how many children they can have. They also restrict the ability of the Rohingya to convert to a different religion. The troubling thing is that we haven't always seen people speaking out. With the previous government, the president, Thein Sein, described Wirathu as a son of Buddha and supported him. Though there has been recent denunciation of radical Buddhism, it is not always as strong as we might have hoped.



Wirathu (center), a Buddhist monk and leader of the 969 movement, protests in 2015 against the United Nations for urging Myanmar's government to give the Rohingya citizenship. (Soe Zeya Tun/Reuters)

**TSF:** Because conditions are so poor within Myanmar, many Rohingya have fled by boat to surrounding countries. What has happened to them?

**Sullivan:** Over time, the Rohingya have been forced out and have chosen to flee because of the conditions in

Myanmar. Just since 2014, the [United Nations] estimates some 50,000 have fled by sea. The Rohingya have taken to sea to flee their conditions to Thailand or to Malaysia, in rickety boats, some of which have sunk. Over a thousand are estimated to have perished on those journeys. Their plight got international media attention last year.

The Rohingya are often prey to human traffickers because they cannot travel freely. In May 2015, there was a crackdown on human trafficking over land after the discovery of some of the human trafficking camps on the border of Thailand and Malaysia, where there were over 100 bodies found, many of them Rohingya. As a result of the crackdown, many traffickers abandoned boats full of Rohingya in the Andaman Sea.

Many of those who fled are still being detained in different places, in countries like Malaysia and Thailand. Those who were not detained are living in very crowded conditions. They have difficulty finding work, and on a daily basis they

are subject to harassment by authorities or being forced to pay bribes. The Rohingya present a major challenge to the region.

**TSF:** Are there any international laws that would protect populations like the Rohingya that lack citizenship? How does the Responsibility to Protect come into play here?

**Sullivan:** On the international level, there are legal protections for stateless people, including the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons

and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. Human rights and humanitarian law apply to all persons, whether with citizenship or not. But these standards aren't always enforced, especially when they are not supported by national laws.





Malaysian villagers observe the reburial of remains believed to be those of ethnic Rohingya found at human-trafficking camps in the country's north, at Kampung Tualang on June 22, 2015. Malaysian authorities held a somber mass funeral, with fellow Muslims praying for the unidentified victims to find a place in heaven. (Manan Vatsyayana/AFP/Getty Images)

Pillar one of the Responsibility to Protect does technically obligate the state to protect populations within a state's territory, but it gets tricky when a state refuses to recognize a population. The Myanmar government treats the Rohingya as unwelcome and wants to push them out. Therefore, the responsibility has needed to become more global, and there's been a need for sustained international support and pressure to ensure that the Rohingya are protected.

**TSF:** In November 2015, elections brought in a new political party, the National League for Democracy, in Myanmar. Have the elections started to change the landscape for the Rohingya?

**Sullivan:** In November of last year, Aung San Suu Kyi, the Nobel Prize-winning human rights activist, and her National League for Democracy Party, the NLD, won a great victory and gained a majority in Parliament. The problem is that because of the existing constitution that was written by the previous military government,

she is barred from being president, and the military is guaranteed 25 percent of parliamentary assets, which is an effective veto for any changes to the constitution. Despite the rejoicing, the military continues to exert considerable influence.

There has been a great sense of hope among the Rohingya with whom we've spoken during our missions, but the situation hasn't looked great recently. Aung San Suu Kyi and the NLD have made statements saying that addressing the plight of the Rohingya will not be a priority, that it shouldn't be overexaggerated. The government recently gave international embassies the instruction that they should not use the word *Rohingya*—a continuation of the very same policies of the military government.

The one glimmer of hope is that Aung San Suu Kyi has set up a commission to look at peace and development in Rakhine state. While the commission has not explicitly mentioned the Rohingya, its creation shows a tacit willingness to tackle development challenges in Rakhine state,

which realistically cannot be tackled without addressing the plight of the Rohingya.

During the elections, some of the more extremist groups were trying to paint Aung San Suu Kyi as a Muslim lover, as somebody who is going to destroy the country. As a result, she now must continue to walk a very fine line. At the same time, there's great disappointment because Aung San Suu Kyi is a Nobel Peace Prize winner. She was held in house arrest and was a very strong voice for democracy and human rights. But now that she's in government, she's been much more muted.

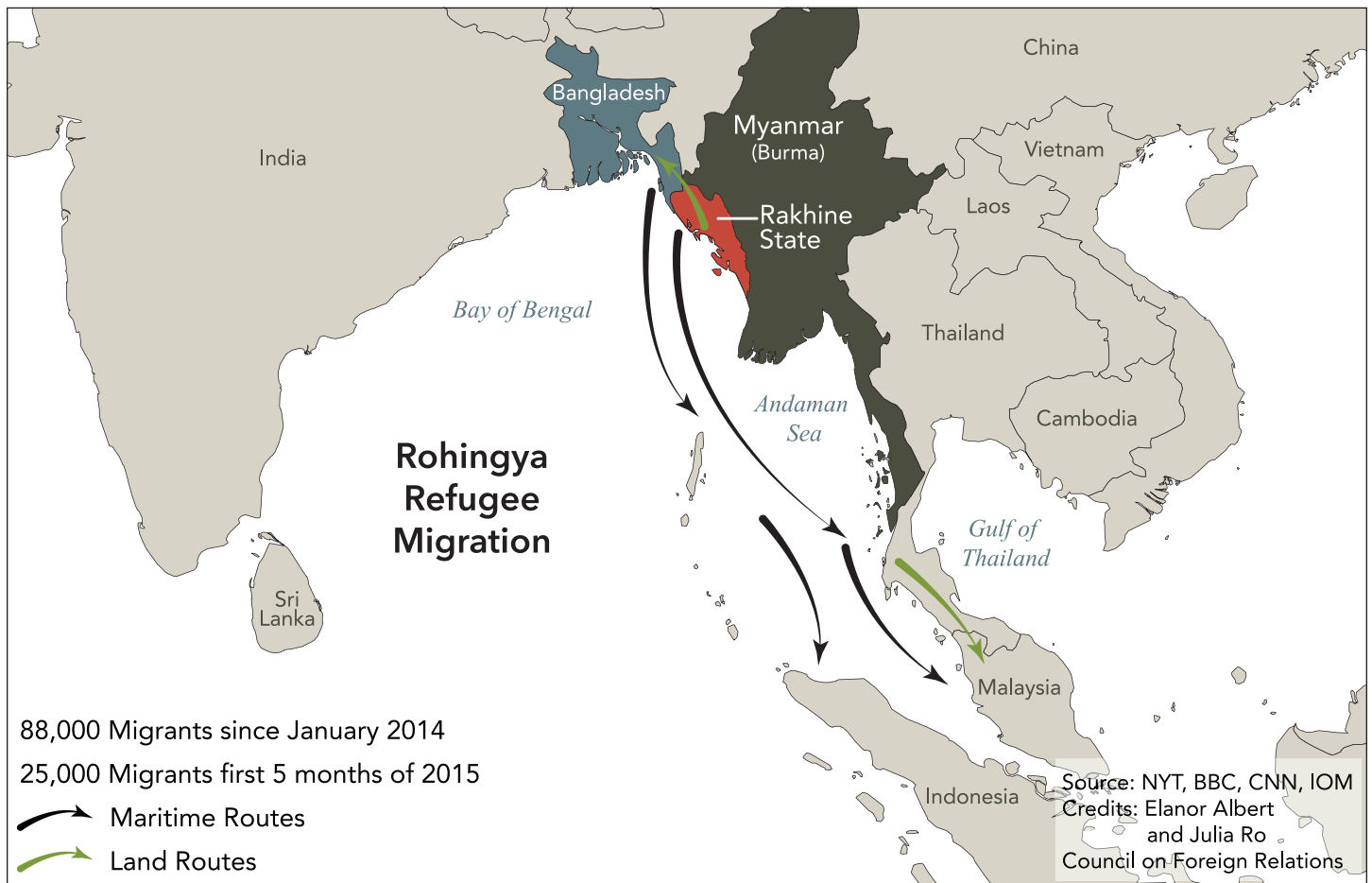
**TSF:** What role have multilateral bodies like the United Nations and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) played in protecting the Rohingya?

**Sullivan:** The record has been mixed. There have been some very strong reports out of the [United Nations]. A couple of UN special rapporteurs for human rights have come out with consistently strong reports about the severity of the situation. There have been some higher-level UN statements about the need to address the plight of the Rohingya, while the support has been weaker at lower levels and within the country.

Within the regional organization, ASEAN, the principle of sovereignty is strong, and there is a reluctance to engage in another country's affairs. For a long time, we never saw any kind of criticism, or pressure, or engagement among ASEAN, Myanmar's neighbors. Before the ASEAN summit last April, the ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights sent a delegation to Myanmar and Rakhine state; they released a report to push for the recognition of the Rohingya as a regional issue. The Malaysian government echoed this assessment. The regional nature of the problem was highlighted the following month in May during the height of the boat crisis. I think there's been increased recognition within ASEAN that it needs to be addressed, but still very limited actual pressure or engagement by ASEAN with Myanmar.

**TSF:** Has it been difficult to get the international community to incentivize protecting the Rohingya, after it has broadly approved of the ongoing reforms in Myanmar since the end of the military junta (1962–2011)?

**Sullivan:** Obviously, there's been a lot of good news coming out of Myanmar over the recent years. The country just emerged from almost 50 years of a military dictatorship. Aung San Suu Kyi was under house arrest, and now she's basically running the government. There's a long struggle for democracy and freedom. And there have been some







Rohingya children gather in the camp near the Rohingya Internal Displacement Camp in Rakhine State in western Myanmar and pause for a photo moment captured by Refugees International.

very significant reforms and political prisoners released. So, when you hear all that news, you think it's a good news story. But lost in that and overshadowed is the plight of the Rohingya and other ethnic groups. Many governments want to cast Myanmar as a success story. The business community also has a vested interest in turning away from continuing human rights abuses, as it wants to invest in Myanmar. There needs to be continued pressure by the United States, by the [United Nations], by ASEAN, to make sure that the Rohingya are not just forgotten in the context of all these other back-and-forth reforms, that it remains a priority for US-Myanmar relations and for multilateral institutions as well.

**TSF:** What is the nongovernmental organization (NGO) community doing to ensure that the plight of the Rohingya remains at the forefront?

**Sullivan:** It has been hard to get information about the on-the-ground situation in Rakhine because of the limited humanitarian access. Key aid groups have been consistently threatened with expulsion. Doctors Without Borders was kicked out actually while I was in Myanmar. They were the top health provider to hundreds of thousands of Rohingya in Rakhine. This led to many preventable deaths, as covered by

*The New York Times*. Eventually, under sustained pressure, they were allowed to return, but at a much reduced level, and there continue to be restrictions on access.

This is important not only because it's leading to otherwise preventable deaths but also because it means a lack of witnesses in a situation at a high risk of atrocities. Which reminds me of another point, that the last president [of Myanmar] had made 11 commitments to President [Barack] Obama. One of those was opening an in-country Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. That would be huge to allow observation of what's going on and address the plight of the Rohingya, and just get a better sense of what's going on there. That still hasn't happened.

Now, what groups in the [United States] and elsewhere are doing—groups that have been very dedicated to the plight of the Rohingya—are helping get it into the spotlight and getting the attention and bringing journalists in to get some big stories out. Nick Kristof of *The New York Times* has been there, as has [the PBS documentary series] *Frontline*. [The international news organization] VICE News recently had a really good short documentary about what's going on. Activists have been helping to get that attention and get media there as well.

There was also a big campaign that was launched by United to End Genocide called “Just Say Their Name,” which went global and really got the ear of the White House, helping to ensure that the Rohingya problem is addressed by name by the US government. On a recent visit, [US] Secretary [of State John] Kerry made some strong statements and used the name Rohingya, despite pressure not to.

Of course, the crisis continues, and we need to do more to call attention to the plight of the Rohingya and to work toward improving their situation.

**TSF:** What’s the way forward for the international community to respond to the plight of the Rohingya?

**Sullivan:** I think the answer is that there is an ability to work with the government of Myanmar, especially with the new reforms. And that would really be the most peaceful and productive way to move things forward. There’s a 1982 citizenship law that’s on the books that recognizes only certain ethnic groups as citizens of Myanmar. So it shows that it’s not written in stone. It would take a huge amount of pressure and time to get the Myanmar government to include the Rohingya, but it should be a long-term goal. The short-term goal should be pressuring and working with the new government and incentivizing them to allow for unrestricted humanitarian access and to launch an investigation into previous human rights violations. There is a lot that can be done with the government.

We can also engage other stakeholders, particularly the business community. There had been a very robust sanctions regime on the military junta in Myanmar, and it can be partially credited for helping to open up the government, to get the military to be open to reforms. For many of us in the human rights community, the sanctions were lifted too quickly. There has been considerable backsliding in recent years, and many political prisoners, including Rohingya, have been detained. For this reason, it is important to review and at least maintain the current sanctions levels.

Myanmar is a country that is rich in natural resources: gems, minerals, and oil. The business community has historically been part of the pressure to open Myanmar, because it wanted to be able to invest in the country. Since 2011, several companies have moved into Myanmar to begin investment. There’s been pressure by human rights advocates and some work within the [Obama] administration to try to balance that by creating reporting requirements for business investment. The business community has an important role to play and

can really help incentivize and make sure that those who commit human rights abuses aren’t being rewarded.

Perhaps the most important thing that international NGOs can do is support the voices of the Rohingya themselves. Activists like Wai Wai Nu, a young Rohingya woman who spent years as a political prisoner, have bravely spoken out on the conditions faced by the Rohingya. Many others are taking risks within the country to promote religious tolerance and peaceful coexistence and need the support of the international community.

**TSF:** Any parting words?

**Sullivan:** I think there’s a lot that can be done by your readers. The first thing is just being aware and educated about what’s going on and sharing that with others to build up attention. Another thing that can be done is writing to your local newspaper, letters to the editor, to make sure that they’re covering this. It really does make a difference, and it all adds up to much needed pressure. I mentioned that within Myanmar, there are a lot of disincentives for anyone to speak out, and it can be dangerous. So there’s all the more reason and need for international pressure and support for the voices of some of the most persecuted people in the world, and all the more reason to make your own voice heard.



*Dan Sullivan is the senior advocate at Refugees International focusing on Myanmar, Central America, and other areas affected by mass displacement. He has over a decade of human rights and foreign policy experience, having worked for United to End Genocide (formerly Save Darfur), the Brookings Institution, Human Rights First, and the Albright Stonebridge Group, where he assisted former US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright in her role as cochair of the Genocide Prevention Task Force. Sullivan can be followed on Twitter at @EndGenocideDan.*





A protester in Bujumbura, Burundi, sets up a barricade during a demonstration May 22, 2015, against President Pierre Nkurunziza and his bid for a third term. (Goran Tomasevic/ Reuters)

# Peace at Risk in Burundi–Again

Beyond the Political Solution

*By Mike Jobbins*

**B**eginning on April 26, 2015, the small central African nation of Burundi was plunged into its most profound political crisis since the end of a civil war in 2005 that left more than 300,000 dead. The turmoil was sparked by a political announcement from President Pierre Nkurunziza that he would run for a third term in office, a bid many civilians and oppositionists understood as unconstitutional.

With approval from Burundi's constitutional court, however, the president's reelection in July 2015 has led to sustained street demonstrations by opposition forces in the capital, an attempted coup d'état, and a cycle of insecurity, fear, human rights abuses, and targeted killings. More than a year later, the political crisis shows few signs of abating. More than 250,000 people remain displaced—stripped of their homes, community, and safety—resulting in an increasingly precarious situation that threatens to undermine a decade of peacebuilding.

Burundi's civil war from 1993 to 2005 was characterized by intercommunal killings. A predominantly Tutsi military battled a constellation of Hutu rebels, and civilians from both groups were targeted solely because of their ethnicity. The civil war was one of the first tests for new approaches to peacebuilding and the Responsibility to Protect following genocide in Rwanda in 1994.

### **Now at Risk: Ten Years of Peacebuilding**

The Arusha Agreements and the constitution, political accords that ended the war and ushered in a peaceful transition, were unique in Africa. They established a set of ethnic quotas for Hutus and Tutsis within the parliament, presidency, security institutions, and the civil service—fostering greater ethnic representation and inclusion within governance structures.

The constitution also represented national consensus, largely forged in the hills by Burundians themselves. During the postwar period, Burundians placed a strong focus on promoting interethnic dialogue and reconciliation, aiming to address the legacy of identity-based violence to prevent future conflict. Through thousands of grassroots dialogues, radio call-in shows, trauma healing, and truth-telling activities, women and men expressed their will to move beyond violence. The peacebuilding process in the decade after the war—up until the present crisis—was all the more remarkable in the context of some of the bleakest poverty on earth.

### **Food, Prosperity, Opportunity, and Peace**

Tragically, the conflict over Nkurunziza's third term has rocked society and threatens to undermine such significant progress in building peace and resilience among the Burundian people. Four key factors underpin the current crisis, raising the stakes of political competition and creating a context of desperation.

First, Burundi is land scarce yet agriculturally dependent. Hunger is rampant. Roughly the size of Maryland, with a population of six million, Burundi is home to more than 10 million people, almost all of whom are farmers. Even with rich volcanic soil, small plot sizes barely yield enough food for many families. In 2010, the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations reported that in some parts of northern Burundi, the average farm fed a family of





Protesters opposed to the president's decision to run for a third term chase, beat, and stone a female Burundi police officer accused of shooting a protestor in the Buterere neighborhood of Bujumbura on May 12, 2015. The woman was later handed back to police. (Reuters/Goran Tomasevic)

five for only two or three months out of the year. Looking forward, even under optimistic scenarios by agricultural and climate scientists, childhood malnutrition is likely to remain around 40 percent.

Second, although Burundi has experienced some growth, there was no “peace dividend” that led to greater economic strength after the cessation of violence. From 2006 to 2014, gross domestic product growth rates hovered between 3.5 and 5.5 percent, lower than most of its neighbors and barely exceeding population growth rates between 3 and 3.5 percent. The lack of significant economic growth means there has not been a fundamental transformation of the political economy.

In Burundi, as in many of the surrounding countries, the legacy of colonialism and authoritarian rule have led many to see political patronage and a career in public service as the only means of securing a stable economic future. This view is widespread throughout society and has led many elites to see state capture as central to the political endeavor and the surest path to personal prosperity and security—generally through official corruption, control of state-run enterprises, and patronage.

Third, food insecurity, urbanization, and economic stagnation have had a particular impact on Burundi's youth. High levels of unemployment, food insecurity, and the lack of skill development form a bleak economic outlook. In March 2015, Search for Common Ground—which focuses on international conflict transformation—documented high levels of concerns among the youth and general public about the relationship between youth unemployment, a perceived increase in criminality, and the risk of manipulation of young people by political actors. A majority of the population—particularly in the capital, Bujumbura—reported not feeling safe to move about their own community.

Fourth, Burundi is landlocked and located in a difficult neighborhood with a long legacy of intermingled armed conflict. It borders the most unstable regions of the Democratic Republic of Congo, where two decades of humanitarian crisis and local-level violence persist. The long history of regional and internal conflict marked by mass violence in the Great Lakes region—including Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi, and the Democratic Republic of Congo—thwarts collective political and security cooperation, fuels mistrust, and has meant that much



A Burundi woman works in a field outside Ngozi on July 20, 2015. Some 90 percent of Burundians rely on agriculture to make a living. Yet, hunger is rampant there. (Phil Moore/AFP/Getty Images)

of the underlying ingredients for violence remain in the forms of recruitment networks, former combatants, illegal trade, and small arms.

### Elements for Peace

At the time of this writing, more than a year into the crisis, the East African Community (EAC) is beginning an inter-Burundian dialogue process aimed at addressing political tensions. Yet there is no agreement on the appropriate participants to this process or an agenda for the talks. Without a consensus on these key elements, it is unlikely there will be a speedy solution, even if or when the dialogue begins in earnest.

While European, African, and US policymakers focus on how best to support the EAC mediation at a political level, the process augurs to be a long one. Such international support for a political end to the crisis is useful, but such actors must also provide support to ordinary Burundians and work within the country to address those key factors underlying the instability. Considering Burundians have largely rejected violence, despite the political crisis and attempts at political manipulation, it is a testament to the will of a people who are eager to move beyond a history of violence.

As international attention drifts either to the political process or toward other world crises, key programs are ending. A lack of funding has forced shut long-running initiatives to support nonviolence among youth, address hate speech, increase access to information, and tackle underlying drivers of instability such as land conflict, the truth and reconciliation process, and poverty. To make good on the Responsibility to Protect that guided the early interventions in Burundi and the Great Lakes, the global community must continue to focus on the political, social, and structural elements of the current crisis.

The search for a political solution to the crisis is necessary but must be accompanied by ongoing conflict mitigation, social programs within Burundi, and a long-term commitment to addressing the critical poverty and structural impediments that will continue to drive vulnerability in Burundi and the wider region if left ignored and unaddressed.



*Mike Jobbins is the director of global affairs at Search for Common Ground.*





# Strengthening Nuclear Security in a Post-Summit World

The decades-long effort  
to minimize the risk of  
nuclear terrorism is at  
a critical crossroads.

*Commentary by  
Martin B. Malin and Nickolas Roth*

**T**his spring, the United States hosted the fourth and final Nuclear Security Summit in Washington, DC. Senior representatives of more than 50 nations convened to mark the end of an unprecedented international initiative over the last six years to strengthen security measures aimed at preventing nuclear terrorism. During that time, many states made significant progress, but more work is needed.

Governments must continue their efforts to ensure that all stocks of highly enriched uranium (HEU) and plutonium—the key ingredients for nuclear weapons—are effectively and sustainably protected, everywhere they exist, against threats that terrorists and thieves could realistically pose.

### **Build Upon National Security Commitments**

National commitments to improve nuclear security, offered as “house gifts” at each of the nuclear security summits, were important devices for making and marking ongoing progress. Now that the summits have ended, states should continue to build on these commitments. The newly formed nuclear security contact group can play a useful role by serving as a place where like-minded states can develop more-stringent security principles and guidelines that they pledge to apply to all stocks of nuclear weapons and nuclear weapons-usable materials, and invite other states to sign on.

### **Consolidated Storage Sites**

But principles and pledges only matter if they result in increased security on the ground. Governments should focus on addressing the dangers that create the highest risks, such as insider threats, facilities that handle fissile materials in bulk, and cyber threats. Reducing the number of sites where HEU and plutonium are stored can help on all of these fronts. All countries should develop national-level plans for accomplishing their military and

civilian nuclear objectives within the smallest practicable number of locations.

### **Strengthen Security Culture**

Within organizations responsible for nuclear weapons or materials, effective and sustainable nuclear security depends on establishing not only strong security rules and policies but also healthy security habits and practices. An organizational culture that prioritizes security will discourage complacency about threats and vulnerabilities. Every country with weapons-usable nuclear materials should have a program to assess and strengthen nuclear security culture, and managers and appropriate staff should receive briefings on existing or emerging threats.

### **Expand International Cooperation**

New international cooperation on nuclear security is essential, particularly now that there are no plans for more high-level summits. The United States should expand its nuclear security cooperation with India, Pakistan, and China, in particular, sharing knowledge about nuclear security arrangements and consulting on regulatory and technical steps that might strengthen security for all concerned.

Despite ongoing tension between the two countries, the United States and Russia must find a way to rebuild the nuclear security cooperation that has been a foundational component of their relationship for more than two





As part of a cooperative international action to increase nuclear security, storage containers of highly enriched uranium are shipped under protected transport from Hungary to Russia in 2013. (NNSA)

decades. If they were able to work together on issues of mutual interest during the Cold War, surely they can do so now to reduce the risk of nuclear terrorism. The United States and Russia should agree to a set of cooperative activities that includes nuclear security, but also related areas that are in both countries' interests, such as scientific exchanges on nuclear energy development.

The Obama-led era of summits has ended, but the need for urgent action has not. States must now recommit themselves to continuous improvement of nuclear security within their borders and find ways to work together effectively toward that end. This work will not be easy, yet it is the only

way to ensure that nuclear weapons and the materials used to make them remain out of the hands of terrorists.



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*Parts of this article draw from the authors' 2016 report with Matthew Bunn and William H. Tobey titled "Preventing Nuclear Terrorism: Continuous Improvement or Dangerous Decline?" published by the Project on Managing the Atom.*



The village of South Tetulbaria in the Bay of Bengal, Bangladesh, relies on fishing, but climate change threatens this way of life. Its destiny will be determined not only by rising sea levels, but by the behavior of its citizens, neighbors, and outside powers as well. (Ami Vitale Photo)



A photograph of a rickshaw partially submerged in floodwater. The rickshaw has a blue canopy with a decorative border and is on a bicycle frame. The water is murky and extends to the horizon under a heavy, grey sky. In the background, there are some trees and a small building.

# No Time to Lose

The 1.5° C Limit  
in the Paris Agreement

*By Bill Hare*

**T**he Paris Agreement's long-term goal of a 1.5° C temperature-increase limit provides key guidance for shaping climate policy globally and nationally. It also serves as a wake-up call for immediate increased climate action if the world is to have a chance to reach the goal. The problem is that effecting real climate change is a long-term process and takes years to see results.

Current goals call for limiting greenhouse gas emissions to their peak by 2020, and then accelerating reductions toward zero. However, current plans and pledges—Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs)—are nowhere near enough to limit warming to 2° C, let alone to the 1.5° C limit in the Paris Agreement. What's more, in terms of climate change time, 2020 is right around the corner.

The Climate Action Tracker, a scientific analysis by Climate Analytics, Ecofys, the NewClimate Institute, and the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, has estimated that INDCs announced by governments ahead of Paris put the world on track to warming of close to 3° C by the end of the century. None of the climate pledges put forward by large emitters amount to a fair contribution to meeting the long-term temperature goal in the Paris Agreement.

### Increased Pledges Are Essential

Without significantly greater global emission reductions by 2025 than currently pledged, the increased economic costs of additional rapid reductions in subsequent periods, required to compensate for the lack of early action, will be unnecessarily high—or even infeasible.

The national and international processes in the next few years must significantly boost climate commitments and action to get the world on track to stay below the 1.5° C limit.

### Why 1.5° C?

Today, the world is already 1° C warmer than it was before the Industrial Revolution, and we're already experiencing significant climate impacts. Just about every day we see reports of climate change-related floods, droughts, record heat waves, forest fires, and coral bleaching events. Even if warming this century is held to 1.5° C, many regions will still experience substantial damage from extreme heat waves, including severe damages to water resources and threats to food security. For example, coral reefs, already hit by the recent massive global bleaching event, will still be at grave risk of severe degradation and/or loss. Even just a further half degree warming, to 2° C above preindustrial levels, entails a stark increase in risks and damages that only become worse for even higher degrees of warming.

The recent *UN Adaptation Gap Reports* showed that the cost of adapting to climate change could hit \$500 billion per year by 2050, corresponding to a warming of below 2° C above preindustrial without substantial emission reductions in the intervening period. Adaptation costs increase rapidly at higher levels of warming in specific sectors and countries, and globally.

For these and other reasons, the world's governments in Paris found the 1.5° C limit to be safer than the 2° C limit and included it in the long-term goal of the agreement.





A rendering of Carbon Engineering's air scrubber. Each slab shown here can remove 100,000 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> from ambient air per year. Accompanying regeneration facilities then produce pure CO<sub>2</sub> for underground injection or use in making carbon-neutral transportation fuels. (Carbon Engineering photo)

## It Is Possible to Limit Warming to 1.5° C

Given the inadequate action to reduce emissions in recent decades, and with the prospect of ongoing emissions growth in the future without urgent action, the former 2° C goal the world adopted in 2010 already looked tough to achieve by the time of the 2015 Paris conference.

However, current scientific scenarios show that it is physically and economically feasible to limit warming to below 1.5° C by 2100. The 1.5° C limit requires similar transformations in the energy system as would be needed to hold warming to the 2° C limit.

## Emission Reductions Crucial

But both the 1.5° C limit and the former 2° C goal demand immediate action and strong emission reductions in the next 10 to 15 years. Globally, greenhouse gas emissions need to peak by around 2020 before beginning a rapid decline toward zero.

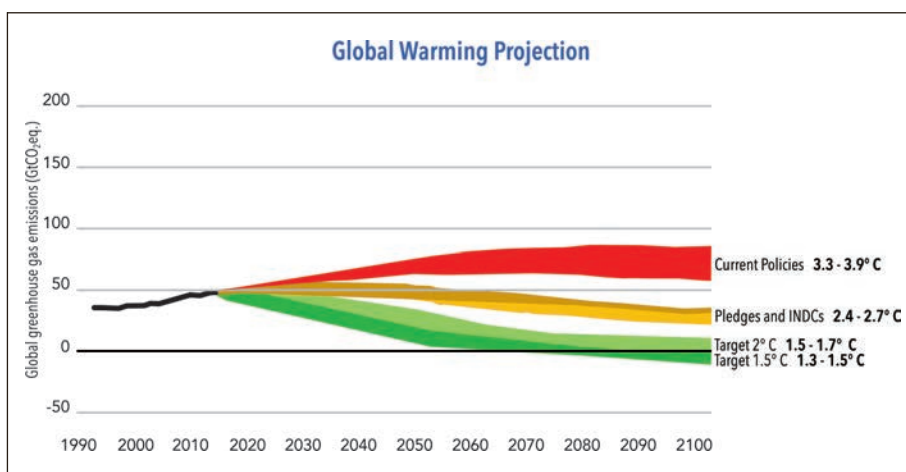
Beyond 2030, decarbonization must progress faster to limit warming to 1.5° C. Carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions from energy and industry must be zero globally around 2050 for a 1.5° C limit—about 10 to 15 years earlier than for the previous 2° C limit.

## Also Key

Current scientific scenarios underscore the importance of CO<sub>2</sub>-removal technologies to compensate for the insufficient emissions reductions to date. Limiting warming to any level below 2° C will require substantial removal in the second half of this century of CO<sub>2</sub> already in the atmosphere.

Unfortunately, this will be needed even after achieving rapid reductions of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions toward zero by 2050.

A technology commonly assumed in energy-model projections is bioenergy with carbon capture and storage, which is not without risks and raises valid sustainability concerns. Comprehensive policies will be needed to safeguard against risks such as threats to food security,







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Partially bleached hard and soft corals on Molasses Reef in the Florida Keys, September 2014. (Matt Kieffer/Flickr)

which could result from bad management of this technology. However, present-day climate extremes also pose large risks to food security in many countries because of crop and livestock losses and spikes in food prices.

While these technologies will pose challenges, and need substantial research, it is important not to get bogged down in this issue, as there are far more urgent things to be done, such as starting rapid emissions reductions.

The sooner and faster we reduce emissions, the less the next generation will need to rely on carbon-removal technologies and deal with their risks and challenges.

### Most Urgent Now: Reduce Global Emissions

The first key step to limiting global emissions to their peak and starting reduction toward zero is rapid replacement of fossil fuel energy sources with renewables. Costs of renewable energy have declined dramatically in recent years and in some instances are even lower than assumed

in energy-economic models used to assess the feasibility of global warming limits. Renewables have major benefits for sustainable development, including eliminating air pollution from power generation and reducing water needs for cooling thermal power stations, which is an increasing problem in places like India.

The second step to zero emissions is significant improvements in energy efficiency in key sectors (transport, industry, and buildings), particularly from 2030 on. This would reduce overall primary energy needs and ultimately improve economic efficiency while lowering the environmental footprint of energy use substantially.

*Bill Hare is a physicist with over 25 years' experience in science, impacts, and policy responses to climate change and CEO of Climate Analytics, a climate science and policy institute.*





# Investigation U. 2016

## The Stanley Foundation's Exploratory Summer Camp

**G**lobal activities and international presentations highlighted the interaction of this summer's group of campers with community representatives from India, South Africa, Italy, and Brazil. Campers also learned a lot about Guinea from a djembe drumming expert. Participants played games like Sounds Around the World, which teaches world geography through music, and pairs of students learned, and then presented, greetings from many countries. Campers practiced teamwork with an Investigation U. version of the Amazing Race and Scavenger Hunt at a local park in Muscatine, Iowa, and through a community service project where they picked up trash on one of the hottest days of the summer.



Photos by Amy Bakke/The Stanley Foundation



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# CONSIDER THIS...



## 2016 International Women Authors Event to Honor Loung Ung

Loung Ung, bestselling author of a trilogy about the 1970s terror and atrocity of Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, will be the featured speaker and honoree of

the 2016 International Women Authors event on October 6 in Davenport, Iowa. The event is sponsored by the Stanley Foundation and its community partner, Women's Connection of the Quad Cities.

Loung Ung has compiled impressive credentials as a best-selling author. Her third book, *Lulu in the Sky*, completes a trilogy about the totalitarian terrors inflicted on her family and her country, Cambodia, in the mid-'70s.

Loung was only five when the Khmer Rouge stormed her native city of Phnom Penh. Four years later, roughly two

million out of seven million Cambodians had died at the hands of the infamous dictator. She lost both her parents, two sisters, and 20 other relatives.

In 1980, ten-year-old Loung, her older brother, and sister-in-law escaped to Thailand. Eventually, they relocated to Vermont through sponsorship by the US Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Holy Family Church parish.

Today, she continues to educate the world through her work with the International Campaign to Ban Landmines. Of the roughly 45,000 Cambodians estimated to be amputees because of landmines, the organization has outfitted more than 18,000 with prosthetics and wheelchairs, if necessary. She also enjoys owning three Cleveland restaurants—Bar Cento, Bier Market, and Market Garden—with her husband and their friend Sam McNulty.