

PROJECT SYNDICATE

Ending the torture trade

JORGE FAURIE, CECILIA MALMSTRÖM, and TSEND MUNKH-ORGIL

SHOCK belts, spiked batons, and electrified thumbscrews can serve no other purpose than to inflict pain on people. But despite the fact that torture is prohibited by international law, goods such as these are still produced and sold, finding their way to buyers around the globe.

Likewise, at a time when more countries are abolishing capital punishment, the products used to carry out death sentences—such as lethal-injection systems, poison cocktails, electric chairs, and gas chambers—remain on the market. According to Amnesty International, nearly 19,000 people worldwide are awaiting execution, even though capital punishment has no proven effect as a deterrent and makes judicial errors irreversible.

If we in the international community are serious about ending torture and abolishing capital punishment, we must do more than make lofty promises. It is time for concrete action to

make acquiring the means of execution and torture far more difficult.

On September 18, when delegates from around the world gather for the United Nations General Assembly in New York, a large group of countries will commit to creating a new global framework to end this despicable trade. By joining a new Alliance for Torture-Free Trade, governments will agree to establish national export bans on products used for torture or executions, while further empowering their customs authorities to enforce the prohibitions.

The Alliance is being led by Argentina, the European Union, and Mongolia, but all countries that are committed to abolishing capital punishment under the UN Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights have been invited to participate.

Argentina's commitment to ending the death penalty is unwavering. It is an active participant in multilateral institutions such as the International Commission and World Congress

Against the Death Penalty, and it has been mobilising support within the UN for a global moratorium on executions.

The EU, meanwhile, tightened legislation last year to ban all trade in goods used for torture or capital punishment. The law, originally enacted in 2005, now bars all such goods from passing through EU territory and ports, and from being promoted at fairs and in industry publications. And to stay ahead of the curve, the EU has established a fast-track mechanism to ban new tools for torture or capital punishment as they emerge.

Mongolia, for its part, banned the death penalty in 2015, and is setting a positive example in a region where most countries systematically torture and execute prisoners.

Tougher controls have already delivered results. For example, the drugs used in forced lethal injections and devices for administering electrical shocks have become much harder to obtain and more expensive.

Still, there is a clear limit to what

individual countries can achieve on their own. Those who produce and trade these goods are changing their practices and routes to circumvent domestic laws. Ultimately, to make policing efforts truly effective, more countries need to get on board.

When the Alliance launches this month, participating countries will sign a joint political declaration based on four commitments. First, they will implement measures to restrict the export of goods intended for torture or executions. Second, they will help to create a platform for exchanging information across borders, so that customs officials can monitor international trade flows and identify new products that should be interdicted.

Third, signatory countries will share their best practices, so that enforcement systems that have proven efficient and effective in one country can be adopted in others.

And, fourth, those with national legislation already in place will provide technical assistance to other

countries still working toward that end.

To be sure, rooting out torture and abolishing the death penalty will require broad, sustained efforts beyond the area of trade. But by focusing on the exchange of goods used for torture and executions, we are bringing like-minded countries together to effect real change. We are confident that the Alliance will be successful, and that it could serve as a basis for broader UN cooperation down the road.

Trade policies are not just about dollars and cents. They are also powerful tools for safeguarding human rights and supporting sustainable development around the world. We should never permit the tools of suffering and death to be traded like any other commodity.

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Stories that dictate the Rohingya genocide



ZOHEB MASHUR

FORMER poster child for the cause of peace and democracy, Aung San Suu Kyi, has staunchly refused to halt or even criticise the violence being visited on the Muslim Rohingya minority, to the despair and puzzlement of

many. One of the top results of googling "Rohingya" is a measured attempt to explain her position, a position that calls into question her worth as a Peace laureate. She maintains that it is an internal matter (uncomfortably familiar words to any Bangladeshi) and a battle against terrorism.

Whatever one thought of Bush and his War on Terror, he didn't include rape and active infanticide as core elements of his strategy.

However her version of events—a battle against the threat of Islamist terror—is one that for some people is an attractive counter-narrative to the mainstream global media's stance: to whit, that genocide is always a bad thing. Comments sections on international news sites and social media pages are an interesting sample of public opinion, and some people seem to buy into the idea that the mainstream media is lying (we after all live in the post-truth era) and that the Rohingyas' plight is either exaggerated or somehow deserved. These terrorism-truthers are who you'd expect: Myanmarese self-defenders, westerners who talk about Islam like it stole their car, and the Indian right-wing.

Narratives aren't merely some sort of trifling wrapper around the important hard facts. They

While simple charity should in an ideal world be taken for granted, in this world of closed borders, ideologies and poverty, we can at least congratulate ourselves a little for having kept the door open to the Rohingyas. Make no mistake: arriving in Bangladesh is not necessarily a solution to all their problems, but at the very least they are for now safe from harm.



Rohingya refugees walk on a muddy path after crossing the Bangladesh-Myanmar border in Cox's Bazar, September 8, 2017.

PHOTO: REUTERS/DANISH SIDDIQUI

are the core of how we see the world. We respond to good stories over good arguments.

We can reduce the framing of the Rohingya crisis to two competing narratives. In the first one the Rohingyas are innocent victims of government-backed ethno-religious persecution. The second has them as foreign upstarts, illegal Bangladeshi migrants to the Rakhine state, and the local purveyors of Islamist terror. Foreign in origin, language and faith, at best undeserving of a part in the Burmese nation, and at worse actively hostile to it. There are a range of narratives that bridge this gulf and stories that we can nestle under each of them (example, the Myanmarese junta is seizing land for settlement and development and vulnerable minority groups are the easiest to disenfranchise.) The reasoning and circumstances vary but the Rohingyas are either victims or victimisers. Suu Kyi is either a national hero or a traitor to the values the world thought she represented. The stories change based on the beliefs and priorities of the storytellers and the intended audience—and we in turn react to these narratives on an individual level.

Consider how we, as Bangladeshis, react to the

crisis. The Rohingyas are Muslim, as are most of us. Just as in Myanmar, religion is a key part of the narrative used to justify the violence against the Rohingyas, for many Muslim Bangladeshis—and indeed Muslims abroad—it is the central fact that must guide the international response to the violence. Muslims have a moral duty to the Rohingyas: Bangladesh must admit more refugees from Myanmar because they are coreligionists. This is a point of view even espoused by Turkey's Erdogan, who has publicly offered to pay Bangladesh to house more Rohingyas. Matters of faith tend to trump all other concerns—at least in public opinion—and so for critics and supporters of the Rohingyas, their status as Muslims is central to the "plot".

This is not to say that Bangladeshis only support the Rohingyas because of Islam. Transcending identity politics, many of us are sympathetic to the Rohingyas just because it seems to be the right thing to do. This is the narrative of the humanitarian crisis. It is the attitude shared by the bulk of the mainstream Western media. The Rohingyas are clearly the victims of the narrative and deserve help. Religion is only relevant as a motivating factor of their oppression (or at least, the public face

QUOTABLE Quote

Through our eyes, the universe is perceiving itself. Through our ears, the universe is listening to its harmonies. We are the witnesses through which the universe becomes conscious of its glory, of its magnificence.

ALAN WILSON WATTS
British philosopher, writer, and speaker

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Wearing less
- 6 Pretender
- 11 Stood up
- 12 Full of energy
- 13 "Die Hard" actor
- 15 Dawn goddess
- 16 Morse sound
- 17 Poem of praise
- 18 Like Ingrid Bergman
- 20 Top rating
- 21 Had supper
- 22 Layout choice
- 23 Edinburgh natives
- 26 Breath fresheners
- 27 Give a hoot
- 28 Like '60s fashions
- 29 Clumsy one
- 30 Sang seasonal

DOWN

- 1 Innocent ones
- 2 Quiver item
- 3 Wake
- 4 PC key
- 5 Fixes copy again
- 6 Religion basis
- 7 The works
- 8 Bomb unit
- 9 Plain to see
- 10 Bristles at
- 14 Judicious
- 19 Postmark part
- 22 Rover's pal
- 23 Sacred beetles
- 24 Juliet's last name
- 41 Halt
- 42 Puts away
- 43 Story meanies
- 30 Shoppers' aids
- 31 Truman's hometown
- 32 Make blank
- 33 Has supper
- 38 Fresh
- 39 Beer bash need

YESTERDAY'S ANSWER

THANT CORE
ROGUE ONEND
ELATE PASTE
ELI SEE IRA
SYNTHESIZED
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ASSET TASTY
STAR ESQ
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EMU PSI AGO
SIRE S REPRO
SEATO TYPER
DIAS SEATS

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E-Tender ID No.	SESI Tranche 2 Package No.	Description of Goods	online Invitation Date and Time	Last Selling Date and time	Closing & Opening Date and time
119906	GD49 Comilla Zone	Science Class Room Furniture (Steel Almirah & Wooden Shelf) (1681+1681= 3362 Numbers)	14/09/2017 10:00 am	15/10/2017 05:00 pm	16/10/2017 12:00 noon

This is an online tender where only e-Tender will be accepted through the National e-GP portal and no offline / hard copies will be accepted. To submit; e-Tender registration in the National e-GP portal is required. The fees for downloading e-Tender documents from the national e-GP Portal must be deposited online through any registered Bank Branches.

Further information and guidelines are available in the e-GP website and from the e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd) or 01762625528/01762625529.

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