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FOR THE STUDY AND RESOLUTION OF GLOBAL CONFLICTS

The Pearson Global Forum
Part III. Consequences of a Breakdown in Social Order
Consequences of Conflict Panel featuring
Federico Borello, Executive Director, Center for Civilians in Conflict,
Ciaran Donelley, Senior Vice President, International Programs, IRC,
Anne C. Richard, Former U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Population, Refugees and Migration,
Michelle Rempel, Canadian Member of Parliament,
Moderated by Kimberly Dozier, Global Affairs Analyst, CNN.

ELAINE LI: Sorry this moves. Hi, good afternoon. My name is Elaine Lee and I am a second year graduate student at the Harris School of Public Policy and I'm an incoming foreign service officer with USAID and I'm also a recipient of the Pearson Fellowship, a unique scholarship opportunity for Harris students engaged in the study of Global Conflicts. I want to talk a little about the consequences of conflict because these consequences are magnified with time.

In communities that are affected by conflict, development staggers and progress becomes undone. Infrastructure is destroyed, there is no work, prolonged periods of unemployment result in difficulty reengaging in the workforce in the future, families are further entrenched in poverty, and surviving another day becomes all consuming. Lack of clean water and food scarcity lead to nutrition problems. The first 1,000 days of an infant's life become all that much more precarious because they are more at risk for stunted and impaired growth. Poor shelter options result in individuals living in close quarters, which increases the risk of diseases spreading. Continued poor health [inaudible 05:53:48] abilities, individuals ability to study, to work, and to contribute to the development of their communities.

But it's not just these communities that are affected. Conflict also impacts the communities that are surrounding the communities that are affected. A few months ago, I was working in Ethiopia with USAID in the Education and Youth Office. And while in Ethiopia, there was a lot to celebrate. There was a new Prime Minister in early spring. There was peace with Eritrea. There were a number of excellent political and religious figures that were overturning so it was very exciting. There was an overwhelming sense of hope. There was still also a lot to be concerned about. In particular, the Gedeo and West Guji conflict in Southern Ethiopia and while there have always been border disputes and resource allocation issues between these two groups, this recent flare up of violence... it's still unclear what caused it.

Nearly 1 million people have been displaced in this period of inter communal violence. One of the neighboring districts in the area, their population doubled, nearly doubled from 130 thousand to 230 thousand in just a few months from the influx of the internally displaced persons, IDP's. And this is in an area that is already strained by limited resources. Many of the displaced individuals are sheltering in the neighboring communities' schools, and unfinished buildings. And as the conflict dragged on over the summer, the question became "What would happen when school starts again?", "Where would the



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FOR THE STUDY AND RESOLUTION OF GLOBAL CONFLICTS

IDP's go?", "Where would the students go?". And at one point over 85 schools in the area were hosting IDP's. And at some of these schools, even if these IDP's were able to go back to their homes, the remains of the school infrastructure is too dangerous for host community students. The paper from textbooks, wood from the desks, they were burnt for fuel. And the fumes from these fires have resulted in hazardous class room conditions. Sanitation in these schools is also an issue due to overcrowding, public defecation, and the lack of waste management.

In a community where resources are already limited to begin with, the priority to rebuild schools or spaces for students to learn becomes eclipsed by all these other needs. And for both IDP and host community children, their education is disrupted. And I actually just got this email from a colleague as I was sitting in the audience earlier, so to date most students are still out of school, 18 of these schools are still occupied by IDP's, and the 60 something schools that have been evacuated are in no shape to be a learning environment for students. And the longer children are out of school, the more difficult it is to return and make up for all the lost time. And once all those years are gone, another generation will have lost hope for a better life. Each day that goes by is another in which conflict becomes a normalized part of life in affected areas. Where conflict is prolonged, children will have grown up without knowing what peace is. And so no matter where in the world it is, there are real consequences to conflict.

And with that, I want to turn your attention to the panel on "The Consequences of Conflict". Thank you.

KIMBERLY DOZIER: I want to say thank you to Elaine and also on behalf of the panel for being here at the Pearson Global Forum, the first one. We're going to discuss the consequences of conflict. Now in 19 century Europe, competing armies used to wear uniforms. Civilians were mostly able to avoid those battles but sometimes be pulled into them. Then we had the world wars that led to the Geneva Conventions, the institution of the Red Cross, things that were suppose to keep civilians safer, yet now when you look at the conflicts in Syria and Yemen it seems that international law of conflict is being regularly ignored. We're going to dig into that, to some of the reasons why.

Next to me I have Ciaran Donnelly. He is Senior Vice President of International Programs at the International Rescue Committee. And then we had Michelle Rempel. She is a Canadian member of Parliament. Then we have Federico Borello, Executive Director of the Center for Civilians in Conflict. And finally Anne C. Richard, who is the former US Assistant Secretary of State for Population, Refugees, and Migration.

So Ciaran, let's start with you. Why do you think these laws are so regularly getting ignored? What happened?

CIARAN DONNELLY: That's a big question to start with. I think we have to look at impunity, we have to look at enforceability of laws. I think we have to look at places like Syria and Yemen and in discriminative

attacks on health workers, targeting of health workers, hospitals being bombed in ways that are clearly not accidental, and the lack of consequences for that.

People who have the responsibility to uphold the Geneva Convention through their militaries, through their decisions about how they conduct hostilities, are able to conduct hostilities in a way that has little respect for human rights for civilians on the ground.

When we look at the rights afforded to refugees as they flee across borders and seek refuge in neighboring countries and the number of countries around the world in which refugees right to asylum, to safety, to dignity, to access to basic services, is at best observed in the breach and very often undermined in the name of security and in the name of economic interest of the local population. And again you look at the very limited political consequences, if any, for the policy makers and decision makers who enact those kinds of policies within their own communities. I think that's a big driving factor.

KIMBERLY DOZIER: So I'm starting with the folks who are doing the field work and then we're gonna get to the policy makers. So Federico, same question for you.

MICHELLE REMPEL: I'll build on some of the remarks that Ciaran just made but with the lens of a policy maker. I think something that has been frustrating to me is that somehow questioning the efficacy or the policies or the functioning of multilateral organizations that are designed to enforce and maintain laws, it's become almost tribal right, there's things that sometimes you just can't talk about. And you know, a specific example I would give would be the Yazidi Genocide. Canada had to have a special program to resettle the Yazidi Genocide because the UN Resettlement Programs or selection process... it didn't refer genocide victims to Canada because internally displaced person issue, difficulty of the refugee themselves to get to the camps and get into the process. And for me the question then was "Okay, well if this was a failure then how do we stop this failure, how can we look at the UN selection process and strengthen this so that we aren't missing a cohort of people.

And the political reaction to that was well you must hate the UN. And no. And I think that that's part of it too is that we are two generations, in western countries anyways, away from a global conflict and I think that in order to get back to that enforceability and remove that appearance or perception of impunity, the question for policy makers becomes how do we question the functioning of a multilateral organization and change some of these processes to achieve that objective without actually throwing the support for these organizations aside? And I think that that is gonna be a key public policy conversation en light of seeking justice for genocide perpetrators, etc.

KIMBERLY DOZIER: Federico, you and I both knew the founder of your organization and one of the things that she set out to do was to create some consequences for these civilian casualties. Can you tell us what was the pressure she was able to create with that?



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FEDERIO BORELLO: Yes. Our founder, her name was Marla Ruzicka, she was a young activist from California, who at the age of 25 in 2002, 2003 decided to get on a plane to go to Afghanistan and Iraq at different times to document the civilian casualties caused by the US Military in those countries. And she gathered all this documentation on these cases and then took them literally to the military base of the US and said "I'm an American citizen. You have killed these 20 people. You have an obligation to provide some form of reparation to their families."

And the first answer that she had was "We respect international humanitarian law. This is collateral damage. We have no obligation to these people." And her campaign was you may have no legal obligation, but you do have an ethical obligation toward these families and her legacy, unfortunately as you know well, Marla was killed in Baghdad in 2005, but her legacy is that now 15 years on, the policy of the US Military and of many other militaries, is 180 degrees changed and they do recognize the principle of amends, of providing some form of compensation whenever possible to victims of violence and of their own military operations. And this principles are gradually being spread to other governments and other militaries around the world.

KIMBERLY DOZIER: So basically to hold a very big mirror up and make people look at the consequences of their actions when it comes to civilian casualties?

FEDERICO BORELLO: Correct. It's about surfacing the true human cost of war and looking at it in the eye, and in the form of the actual people and the families that have been harmed one by one. So it's not just about numbers, but it's about putting numbers to those faces and to those civilians and that's what our organization continues to do. It continues to go out there and we have teams all over the conflict zones, where we talk to civilians and then bring their voice to military actors in today, to the militaries in Nigeria, Iraq, Afghanistan, in Ukraine, and in other places to try and find solutions that curb these civilian casualties, because it is possible to do better and in a world that is as Ciaran would say is growing worse, there are also best practices and things that are improving.

KIMBERLY DOZIER: And I know that you weren't a part of that particular decision making process but do you think that's what changed US policy?

FEDERICO BORELLO: The work that Marla did?

KIMBERLY DOZIER: Work like that. Work by NGO's who bring attention to it.

FEDERICO BORELLO: I think perhaps yes but I think also journalists, Kim, to throw it back at you, because we've seen more of what's going on overseas now than ever before. And you can follow up and talk to the survivors and you can have interviews years later with people who you had profiled earlier. So I think the world has gotten smaller and there is more attention to the repercussions. We don't just go to another country, carry out operations and leave, you know, we are in engagement and now I see this



more and more here in the United States, I mean I've had taxi drivers in Chicago from O'Hare who came to the United States, they were Afghans, and they came on the special immigrant visa, so you don't have to look far to find the connections between our country and the countries that have been these theaters of war.

KIM DOZIER: What worked though to change that past policy that we could reproduce to change what is happening on the battle field now?

CIARAN DONNELLY: So for the IRC, the International Rescue Committee, it's a really tough problem when we see the actions of combatants, whether there formal armies or more informal militia groups, because our primary mission is about providing assistance and protection to civilian populations. And with 10,000 staff around the world in conflict affected countries, any time we speak out, any time we draw attention to the actions of those groups, we put our staff at risk, and consequently we put our ability to continue providing services at risk.

So some of the most difficult decisions my teams make on a daily basis are what to do when they see these kinds of violations. We have programs in many countries that monitor violations, that gather data, but what to do with that and how to responsibly use it in a way that both promotes respect or at least tries to hold people to account for their actions is very very difficult and we are limited in our ability to do that. Where we do see more ability to change things is in the kinds of violence that you see in conflict situations that increase things like domestic violence, intimate partner violence, violence against women and girls, where through our programming approach we're able to change the behavior of perpetrators who may not be the man in uniform but might be husbands and uncles, might be teachers, might be others who are causing harm within communities.

So I think it is also important as we think about the rights as civilians and protection of civilians, we think about both in the sense of direct harm from combatants but also the secondary affects and the secondary forms of violence that can impact on civilians.

ANNE RICHARD: May I jump in here

KIM DOZIER: Yeah

ANNE RICHARD: Because Kim, the things that I've seen that have changed over time in the NGO world. One is... it has a lot to do with professionalism. The people who get hired now have to know what they are doing. They can't just be well meaning amateurs. And the conversations that are had with local people. You can't just go to the head man and ask him what the village needs. And so, there is much more of a focus on talking to women about what they need, talking to the elderly, and then also you have to assume that some of the worst excesses of war will take place instead of waiting until there's

evidence to react. And I thought that that is a big change that actually has been very very good in terms of protecting women and girls, protecting children, protecting LGBTQI folks during war time.

We know bad things will happen and we have to take efforts to protect them in a preventive way.

FEDERICO BORELLO: So when it comes to what changed within militaries, I think there is one word, mindset. What militaries are traditionally trained to see the enemy in combat and the mission to destroy the enemy. And the mindset changed, which to their credit, the US Military and NATO performed in Afghanistan, is to start seeing the civilian on the battlefield. And the guidance came from really above, from the generals commanding NATO forces, to start incorporating better protection of civilians policies. And now these policies are being taken to militaries like the Nigerian and the Iraqi's because they understand not only that they had legal and ethical obligations but also strategic interests in protecting civilians. That's why I don't think we can see the protection of civilians as only a consequence of conflict but it's an integral part of the element that perpetuates conflict and there's a lot of research that proves that. There's a recent [inaudible 06:10:31] study in West Africa that concluded that 71% of members of terrorist groups in the region joined primarily because of the killing or arrest of a family member or community member. And so there is an understanding that not protecting civilians perpetuates a cycle of conflict and therefore this shift in mindset is slowly happening.

MICHELLE REMPEL: I wanted to jump in and just build on... when I heard you talk and to me the first thing was implementation right? So what I've noticed and I've sat both in government and in opposition is that what often hampers our ability to move quickly is a few assumptions.

First of all, a lot of our processes that allow for intervention, be it prevention or what not, they sometimes assume a homogeneity in either a cultural context or a conflict context. And then what happens is, if there's a slight divergence from the assumptions from that homogeneity, the response from policy makers, civil servants organization, multilateral organizations is well, we can't do that, right? Again, internally displaced persons is one of the key topics of well, we can't do that. And it's like, why not? What's preventing us from doing that? And then it's that inertia, right?

For me, we're in a time where conflict... the comment of it's so real time, we're in the smaller situation, we know it's happening, we know there is an ability to prevent it, but that implementation concept has not caught up with the desire to do more and to me I think if there was a bigger public appetite to focus on that element and we depoliticized the questioning of ethicacy. It's not a political thing to question whether or not something works. That would help do what you're talking about, if it was a safe space to be like "Well, maybe we should intervene in this situation." Right? That's where I've been hamstrung for 7 years.

KIM DOZIER: How to try and make it worthwhile to your own population to intervene overseas at a time where increasingly many populations around the world are looking inward?



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MICHELLE REMPEL: Sure.

KIM DOZIER: So how do you make that argument to them?

MICHELLE REMPEL: You know again I would go back to the comment that I made earlier. The reality is a lot of people who are in western countries have not been to a conflict zone, right? The concept of conflict, and this is such a blessing, it's such a wonderful thing, it's the goal of peace, is that you have a population that does not know conflict. So the order of priorities in terms of political imperative for that population gets removed from conflict and the challenge to with the smaller world is, how do you make conflict real to somebody who is so far removed from it, even though they can see it? And how do you explain that conflict in one part of the world, even if it might be half a world away, impacts a small global community?

And to me part of that, very frankly, is having interchange. I mean one of the most powerful things we had in Canada, is an opportunity to congratulate her, was Nadia Murad, come to Canada and testify in front of Canadian parliaments short months after she escaped sexual slavery. And she gave this powerful testimony that the entire country stood back and said "Wait, this isn't right!". And I think that if we can somehow... even though we see conflict on YouTube or on Facebook, that human element has somehow been lost.

I think it's the role of legislators, journalist, NGO's to really bring that back in a real way.

KIM DOZIER: So one of the key ways to bring back the attention to the laws of war is to put a face on the combatants that people can see back home?

Now I want to add another layer of complexity. I set this panel up by saying oh, it was people in uniforms, horrible war, civilians didn't get caught in it that much, yet they still did, we put these laws in place to help protect them as well as the combatants. Then we had the gray zone creep in. Now to explain what that is, we went from combatants in uniforms to Vietnam where you couldn't tell who was a combatant, who was a civilian to the battles of today, where you've got the little green men in Ukraine. You don't know which foreign country is pulling the strings on which proxy army until possibly weeks, months, or years after the fact.

How do you protect civilians in an environment where the combatants don't want you to see that they're there until it's too late?

CIARAN DONNELLY: So I'm gonna answer the question but in a slightly different way in terms of when you can't tell who is a combatant and civilian. How do channel and direct humanitarian assistance appropriately? And I think there for us as... you know none of us have any interest in providing assistance that would further the cause of armed groups as a NGO that subscribes to principles of



independence and impartiality and neutrality, our very fiber of how we work is predicated on delivering assistance on the basis of need, without reference to creed or to political or ethnic or religious or other affiliations, remaining neutral in conflicts is essential to us maintaining the good faith of everybody we have to do.

And so, when we design programs we design them with that in mind. To be able to reach civilians, to benefit civilians, and we are very careful to monitor for example, is one particular group deriving benefit, political benefit, credibility, reputational credibility from our presence, from our work, and to understand and to sometimes make difficult decisions. We've closed programs in places where we were the only health provider because we were inadvertently providing that kind of legitimacy.

Where we see the biggest threat to that ability today is as much from increasing regulation and hypersensitivity on the form of donor governments who seek to limit humanitarian actions out of what I would describe as an exaggerated fear of a diversion and diversion in inadvertently benefiting armed groups that they may not agree with and that in turn is risking our ability to impartially reach all of those civilians that were reaching to those programs.

KIM DOZIER: So I was just going to ask and strategically ask you a question while you're getting a drink of water. You were at state during the height of the ISIS fight. Did it impact how you were able to reach out to refugees?

ANNE RICHARD: We were able to work with the governments in the neighboring countries, the countries neighboring Syria to get in to refugees and that you could visit them, you could talk to them, you could carry out... if they could reach those countries we could work with the best international organizations and NGO's on earth to deliver aid to them. And each country handled it somewhat differently, but they were safe from bombing from their own government.

The hard part was what happened to the people inside Syria.

KIM DOZIER: I was going to say the IDP's, internally displaced persons.

ANNE RICHARD: And so, IDP's if they could get to a safe place could also benefit from assistance. The Syrian Arab Red Crescent was put in charge and at first Congress was very hostile. We got a lot of questions about whether they were gonna divert aid and there may have been diversions of aid but overall, they represented all sides of the fight and they did a very good job and they were respected. Similarly, to the way the White Helmets were also respected as Syrians helping Syrians. And the people who really suffered were the one who were in the siege surrounded cities where they were cut off from aid and they were being bombed into submission.



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And that became the hardest set of issues for all of us to try to figure out not just how to keep them alive when they were being bombed but also how to change the circumstances. And you've seen that some of those people have died or had to capitulate.

KIM DOZIER: Do you think the US did enough to protect the civilians in the ISIS capital of Raqqa?

ANNE RICHARD: You know these questions about did the US do enough are really, really hard because of the circumstances. You know we talked earlier today about how Syria is a proxy battle filled for major powers and so getting to people, getting them the help they need, has proven to be tremendously difficult. And Americans were not going in but we could support international civil servants, UN Leaders to go in and try to do the best that they could. And so we were very supportive of the high commissioner of refugees, the head of the World Food Program, the head of the international committee of the Red Cross, that they would go in and then plead from the stand point of more neutral position to try to get help to people.

KIM DOZIER: So there was a recent bombing by Saudi Arabia in Yemen. They hit a school bus. They used US ammunition to do it. They did eventually have an investigation where they claimed fault and said, "We hit the wrong target, we will do better next time." Is that a success?

CIARAN DONNELLY: So we were very pleased recently at the introduction of a requirement for the Secretary of State to recertify that US assistance in Saudi Arabia and to the coalition was not promoting on a regular basis, had to recertify that it was not promoting or contributing to civilian casualties.

That recertification was issued just days after that Saudi attack and against the evidence we see on the ground. So I think the Saudi rations is not enough, but I think also if there are legislative and policy checks on military decisions, they need to be taken seriously by people who sign off on them. Evidence from the ground needs to be taken into account and just because it's politically inconvenient to, for example not recertify continued assistances to Saudi Coalition, that's not in my view a good enough reason to go forward with it.

KIM DOZIER: So what does the public need to learn about protection and how to extend it to these populations?

ANNE RICHARD: One of the things that has been something that I've had to learn in working with funding NGO's but also being part of NGO's once upon a time was that when we say protection we don't necessarily mean physical protection of ordinary people. What we are talking about is their legal status in a country and making sure that they can get the rights, and the respect that they deserve. If it's inside a country they deserve it as a citizen of that country. They deserved not to be bombed by their governments. If they are outside of country and they are refugees there is an international convention to protect them, to protect their rights. But when we say... I find sometimes I'm critical of my colleagues



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for talking a lot about protection but they don't really mean giving each refugee a body guard. That person may be in great peril but they are trying to speak up on behalf of them or even better yet help organize refugees or displaced people so they can seek and obtain their own legal rights.

MICHELLE REMPEL: I was going to tie your[inaudible 06:23:39] points together. The question that you asked about identification of combatants and then your discussion about concept of protection. Half of what I am wrestling with is whether or not we have a cohesive international understanding of what a consequence framework for combatants is? I do think that... sometimes I wonder how do you protect a population if you make the consequences meaningful for somebody who might choose to participate in conflict within their own context.

And you know I think the public right now thinks that consequences for genocidal actions or something, it evolves in this big big trial and it's one guy who's in charge of everything and justice will be meted out but it's really... what about the guy whose sitting in Edmonton right now in Canada who went and fought with ISIS and came back and is a Canadian citizen, he was you know podcast in one of the major US newspapers, like what do we do with that guy, right? And how do we protect people in a conflict area by making it more about individual consequences and there's really not a school of thought on that but combat has become more individualized.

... school of thought on that, but combat has become more individualized. I don't know, that's something I think that we're failing at at large, too. Because we often just talk about, again, the public perception is, it's either a big trial afterwards, or it's fighter jets coming in, or something, and to me, that's the disconnect with the public, is that there isn't a conversation about justice.

KIM DOZIER: And of course, we also have the recent Trump administration move to reject the international court of justice, which sends probably not a good message to combatants who would step out of line.

CIARAN DONNELLY: I was just gonna, on the question around how to we explain. But we struggle with explaining protection all the time. We have protection teams and programs and units, and even internally, within IRC, which is the heart of protection organization, we struggle to explain it to ourselves at times. Putting people front and center, and talking about the impact on people, I think of the kinds of things that Ann was describing, can be really powerful.

Birth certificates. Anyone here not have a birth certificate? Without a birth certificate, you can't get access to basically everything else you need to function in society. If you're a refugee in a camp, in many countries today, and you have a kid, getting a birth certificate for that kid is not straightforward or easy. In some cases, it's not necessarily even possible. So we have teams, some of the most impactful, powerful conversations I have are with our staff on the ground whose job it is to find refugees who give birth in camps, in informal settlements in urban environments, and to help them figure out how to get a

birth certificate for their child. Because it may have to come from the consonant of a country that they've fled from, who may not want them, who may not welcome them. It may require certification from a local official who may not take kindly to refugees coming at their door and asking for these kind of documents.

And so helping people to get those very, very simple and taken for granted kinds of things, but without which, they can't thrive, they can't have access to jobs, they can't have access to registration for assistance. So sometimes, protection at its very heart is about getting people the fundamentals of what it takes to survive in any society in the world today, and things that we take for granted.

KIM DOZIER: It's something that it seems our population worldwide seems to be forgetting it owes refugees. [inaudible 06:27:21], you wanted to go?

FEDERICO BORELLO: Yes, to go back to your question about what the public needs to know, and what can we do about it. And to bring it back to the physical protection of civilians, stocking conflict zones, because I do believe that that is the most valuable population of all. I think what we need to know is, first, that it's becoming more and more difficult with the, you mentioned Rakah. Mosul, Rakah, Fallujah, this really densely populated cities where fights are increasingly being fought, pose incredible risk of civilians. Much higher than in the past. But, what people need to know is, first, that there is something that can be done. I think that the narrative for decades has been, this is collateral damage, there's not much you can do about it when the war ... War is bad and civilians will be harmed. I think in the last 15 years, we have seen development, that with political will, with investment of resources, we'll never bring the civilian death toll to zero. That is obviously the north star, but it may be difficult. But things can be done, and we must request that, from our governors, people who govern, and people who support governments where wars are being fought, to use and implement those tools.

KIM DOZIER: I'd like to open up to questions, but before I do that, I wanted to ask, am I wrong? Are people not numb to the casualties? Are they paying attention?

FEDERICO BORELLO: I think the biggest problem with the compassion fatigue as its called, is that it has a big adversity, which is fear. And the unfortunately fear mongering in our societies, and I can speak about my home country in Italy, that has had problems, a number of internal problems for decades. First world problems, but still serious problems with stagnation, bad governance. But today, I was in Italy in September, everyone is convinced that refugees it the main problem. 150,000 people scattered around the country that you don't even see, but the narrative has been that this is the problem.

And so if the person you're supposed to have compassion for suddenly becomes your enemy because it's stealing your jobs, committing crimes, you're not gonna have compassion. So we really need to fight that narrative and debunk it, because it's completely based on no facts at all.



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MICHELLE REMPEL: I'm gonna jump in there, because I think that you can't have that conversation without talking about the other side of resettlement. And it's not just about getting someone to a safe place, it's also talking about integration. And what do I mean by that? Language acquisition skills, acquisition, overcoming trauma, and having someone become self-sufficient in a host country. And I think that that is probably the key tool to debunking what you're talking about. Is that if the public has faith that, first of all, humanitarian immigration in a country is focused on the world's most vulnerable, and then that there's subsequent policy, adequate policy, to ensure that that integration occurs. I think that's the core of it, and that's the way to deescalate the polarized conversation on refugees.

Unfortunately, that's a very nuanced position. It's not easy to communicate. But it's one that places, to your point, humans, and a personal experience, at the heart of policy. So we've been trying to do this in Canada, I serve as the opposition critic for immigration, and it's challenging, trying to take the conversation. It's so politically expedient to say nobody, everybody's bad, or doors wide open, and kind of say, okay, well what's the policy that enables us to do this? And I think that that's where we have to deescalate the tribalism, and start really getting to that point.

CIARAN DONNELLY: And I think we might be the first panel that doesn't have a researcher on it. So I'm gonna bring a research perspective, even though I'm not a researcher. But generating research and evidence can be really powerful in changing the policy narrative, and in debunking the myths that people have around refugees. And the research that's out there shows that communities that receive refugees have lower crime rates, they have better economic outcomes, that refugees over time contribute, net, more to the economy than they take in benefits.

There's people out there who will be convinced by the statistics and the evidence, and there's people out there who will be convinced by translating those into stories of the successful person who owns the business down the road that you know. But in all those cases, you can communicate that evidence and those stories in a way that makes people less scared.

MICHELLE REMPEL: Can I briefly push back on that? I agree. The problem for me is that we don't track that data. I don't even think that there's consistent agreement on what the metrics are for success, right? Like for me, I just threw out three that I would consider. But what is the role of government in actually tracking that at a very macro level, and then translating that into public policy, and I think that there's, certainly in my country, there's room for improvement on that.

KIM DOZIER: A friend of mine at UNHCR is trying to tell this story through food. And she got a movie star together with a refugee, and he showed, on a video, how to make the perfect falafel. So Google BuzzFeed UNHCR and falafel.

I'd like to take a couple of questions from the audience. Let's see ... Alright, it's almost four o'clock in the afternoon. Let's see who's still awake. Right here.

ELIZABETH: So I wanted to ask, my name is Elizabeth, I research Syria. And I wanted to ask, what can you do in advocacy work, like civics, like the IRCs, when you're dealing with governments that simply cannot be shamed? I mean, you can collect all the data you want. At the end of the day, Russia, the Syrian regime, the regime in Sudan, do not care about the data that you present. What can you do in those situations? Because this is increasingly, it seems, especially as the US kind of retreats from the world and the middle east in general, that this is kind of a model that is shown to be working. I mean, state terrorism is incredibly effective in achieving the goals of these governments. So why should they adopt a different policy that takes protection more seriously?

KIM DOZIER: I want to take one more question, because we only have a little bit of time left. I thought I saw another hand. You guys can see it better than I can.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: [inaudible 06:34:32] Other ideas I'd like to hear from each panelist.

KIM DOZIER: Sorry, can you start that from the top?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Yeah. From each panelist, what are some ideas or solutions you'd like future policy makers to consider when it comes to integrations of asylees and refugees in domestic economies?

KIM DOZIER: She stole my last question, which was gonna be, hey, we're in a room full of potential policymakers, what's your advice? So, a government that sees no point of working with refugees and working with you all, how do you change their minds, and advice to policymakers.

FEDERICO BORELLO: Yes, that's the million dollar question, Elizabeth. And unfortunately, there's no good answer, other than trying to defend that international order that has been designed post World War II. And we heard senator Mitchell eloquently talk about it to try to counter these cases. And that's why it is extremely dangerous, and that there are threats to this order. Not only from states that traditionally have opposed it, but also from states that have supported it. So when you mentioned the position on international criminal court of the US, it's not that new, because the US has not signed the treaty. But the fact of stating it so openly and so stridently certainly sends a message, that this is acceptable.

So it's not only Syria. South Sudan is another example, where the government doesn't hide the violation it commits against civilians. One of the big differences I see from now, from the wars of today and those of the '90s, is that in the '90s, most of the time, the governments that were involved tried to hide their role and denied it. Like Rwanda for 15 years has denied being involved in the Congo, whereas, today, they don't need to do that anymore. So there is no good, short term answer, other than the humanitarian assistance for Syria today.

But I think the long term answer is really to defend that international order, and also see why the arsenal of tools that we have, even if we look at 2012, 2013 for Syria didn't work. We had developed



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international criminal court, there is somebody to protect at the UN peacekeeping. You know, a number of tools that, in Syria, none of them was applicable. And that's something that we need to continue discussing among ourselves between civil society government policymakers to find a better answer for you.

KIM DOZIER: So it can boil down to pay them or cause them some sort of pain.

ANNE RICHARD: I think some of the lessons from earlier in the day apply in these questions, too. That there's probably no single magic bullet to deal with bad actor countries, that it has to be a series of measures to put pressure on them, and that it may not be a military. It could be, you know, there's a whole toolbox of things.

It's very frustrating right now, because there are so many conflicts. There are so many protracting conflicts. And there's so few examples, like Columbia, where you see some breakthroughs, some movement. You know, Ethiopia and Eritrea, it makes me so happy that there may actually be some movement there.

I think we can't give up. I had a senator yell at me once about Syria. It's too late, it's too late. The Obama administration screwed this up. And he had his points, but the thing was, I didn't have the luxury in my job of writing off that conflict, and say okay, you're right, we'll just focus on the other ones. So we have to somehow persevere. Even when the list of conflicts is too long. And that gets to your question about compassion fatigue, because I think Americans are caring, generous people overall. But it's hard to rally people around to save Darfur like campaign, when the list is just so long, and the crises are so complex. And they're not hearing from leaders, really strong statements right now about the differences Americans are making and could be making.

So this is pretty tough. On the future for immigrants and refugees and asylum seekers, well, I mean, you won't be surprised that I think the US should take plenty of people. But I say things like that, and then in the blogosphere, it's like, oh, typically open borders democrat. And democrats aren't in favor of open borders. You have to, countries have the right to protect their borders. We have to do more to manage migrations, to screen people. I'm really concerned that we are forgetting about our obligations to provide asylum to people who really are fleeing for their lives. And that piece, I would like to hear more leaders talk about.

MICHELLE REMPEL: Can I jump in? Because you gave me the perfect segue. So to your question, I think a lot of the hesitancy around accepting refugees is, there's a lot of narrative on, well, people are just coming to our country to abuse our social programs and they're economic migrants, right? So how true is that statement in each of our national contexts? And I think that's a question where research is very critical.



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In Canada, we don't have the same pressure as the EU has, or even as the United States has, because it's cold and we have a long border with the United States, right? But in all seriousness, I mean, we've had a recent surge in the last year of people utilizing a loophole in the agreement that we have with the United States. It's essentially to prevent asylum shopping of the safe third country agreement. And a lot of people are looking at that in Canada and saying, well, if you've reached the United States, should you be at the top of our list in terms of protection? And I don't accept the fact, whoever is in the administration, that somehow the United States has become an unsafe place. I mean, there's a public policy question that really hasn't been looked at. So that's number one, is I think that we need to have a non-dogmatic conversation around, is everybody afforded the same status of need in accepting refugees. And that's a very taboo conversation, but when you're under a high pressure to adequately pay for the integration of people, I think that's a fair question, even though it might be a taboo topic.

The next bridging into that, is do we have the right global systems to select refugees for resettlement? And this goes back to the comment that I made about, for example, internally displaced Persians. LGBTQ people have very difficult time getting into the UN selection process, for vary logical reasons, right? If you're outing yourself in a hostile area, it's problematic. How do we change that policy?

And then, in terms of resettlement, in Canada, I'd like to see some research done on how we can better resettle refugees and have our settlement supports for rural communities where we really do need the population growth. But our settlement services are so siloed and structured into urban centers, and especially when you've got people that are coming from rural agrarian backgrounds, and all of your resettlement services are structured in an urban environment, how can we help things out there?

Two very brief, brief points, another taboo topic is ... and again, the context is different in Canada than the US. The social supports afforded to refugees over time, in terms of incentive to work, and at what point does that become a disincentive. Does it? And I've probably expired all of my time, but this is a charge to all of you in the audience. It's really up to you to look at these topics in a non-dogmatic way, and inform policymakers. Be aggressive about reaching out to legislators. Not from a condemning perspective, but from a way of saying, here's something that can help.

And I think that your question is just so timely. So call me.

KIM DOZIER: Keeran 06:43:28], a quick last word?

CIARAN DONNELLY: Alright, I'll try and answer both questions really quickly. On resettlement, governments have to live up to their obligations. Geneva conventions, international law, you've signed up to obligations, live up to them. Learn from best practices. We're working with governments and partners in civil society in places as diverse as Estonia and Chile to bring lessons from what works from refugee resettlement integration in the US and Germany to those countries. Finding a network of willing partners, and people eager to learn, and connecting them to each other.



But at the same time, don't be seduced. Double down on resettlement, but equally double down on the other pillars of refugee solutions. Solving conflicts so people can go home, and finding durable integration solutions in countries of first asylum. But don't be seduced into thinking that by focusing on those, you can't focus on resettlement. You need all three for sustainable solutions.

On governments that don't want to change, it's funny for humanitarians, because we're apolitical, or we strive to be apolitical, but we exist in a very, very political space. And it's, we try to influence the environment, for the benefit of the people that we serve, but when we come up against those governments, it's time for us to put our heads back in and focus on what's most important to us. Serving people, providing humanitarian assistance, and then let other people, politicians, policymakers, people with influence, seek to bring about the kind of changes at the political level that will lead to longer term transformation and solutions.

And it's really important that as they do that, the humanitarian assistance and the interest of the people most affected by conflict don't become a chip to be put on the table to be negotiated with. And too often, you see threats to cut humanitarian assistance, as part of a political leverage strategy. And the only people that hurts are the civilians affected by conflict.

KIM DOZIER: And with that, we hope we've left you with more of an impression of passion and enthusiasm than frustration, and that we'll see some of you out there helping solve these problems. Thank you very much.