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Championing rule of law and justice

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RULE OF LAW

40 years of IDLP
-P.5, 10, 14 and 16

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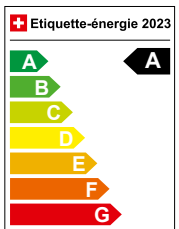
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Championing rule of law and justice

The development agenda has gotten a bit of a boost in the past month, with commitments and statements. In some sectors, such as health, a number of high-level events and declarations. Time will tell how these will translate into action and results, but there is optimism in the air.

Those results depend on multiple layers of factors and sectors. We have brought you a collection of articles from the International Development Law Organization (IDLO), who are celebrating their 40 years of championing the rule of law and justice. With the overall breakdown in trust in major institutions worldwide on the rise, the work done by IDLO is ever important for security, stability, and development. We also have a piece on progress made by the parties to a protocol to eliminate illicit trade in tobacco products, allowing for improvements in global health, security and government revenues. Don't miss these articles!

Other notable articles in this issue are focused on art and travel in nearby regions of Geneva or Switzerland. If you missed the event or the season, plan ahead, you could explore these with the advice of our contributors next year.

I hope you enjoy this issue. ■

Défendre l'état de droit et la justice

Le programme de développement a reçu un certain élan au cours du mois dernier avec des réengagements et des déclarations. Dans certains secteurs, comme la santé, un certain nombre d'événements et déclarations de haut niveau. L'avenir nous dira comment cela se traduira en actions et en résultat, mais il y a de l'optimisme dans l'air.

Ces résultats dépendent de multiples facteurs et secteurs. Nous vous proposons une collection d'articles de l'Organisation Internationale de Droit du Développement (OIDD), qui célèbre ses 40 ans de défense de l'Etat de droit et de la justice. Avec l'augmentation de la perte de confiance dans les grandes institutions mondiales, le travail de l'OIDD est toujours important pour la sécurité, la stabilité et le développement.

Nous avons également un article sur les progrès réalisés par les parties à un protocole visant à éliminer le commerce illicite des produits du tabac, permettant ainsi d'améliorer la santé mondiale, la sécurité et les revenus gouvernementaux. Ne manquez pas ces articles!

J'espère que vous apprécierez ce numéro. ■

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Interview with Mark Cassayre¹

The rule of law: more important now than ever

IDLO's representative to the UN speaks about ways International Geneva can advance human rights, peace, and development.



© Mark Cassayre, 2022

Mark Cassayre, IDLO Permanent Observer to the UN and other international organizations in Geneva.

Mark Cassayre is the Permanent Observer of the International Development Law Organization (IDLO) to the United Nations and other international organizations in Geneva. He has over 25 years of diplomatic experience. Prior to joining IDLO, he served as the Deputy Permanent Representative of the United States to the UN in Geneva and served as a U.S. diplomat in Mozambique, Namibia, Ukraine, and Kenya. An alumnus of the Geneva Graduate Institute, Mr. Cassayre also holds degrees in Political Science and French Literature from the University of California, Santa Barbara. *NewSpecial* interviewed Mr. Cassayre in the context of IDLO's double anniversary – 40 years since its founding and 10 years since the establishment of its Permanent Delegation to the UN in Geneva.

people's lives and tackle new challenges. We need to reinvigorate that belief in cooperation by proving the value of the work we do here and delivering tangible results for people. The actors in Geneva are essential to making that a reality.

Geneva's concentration of international organizations, skilled diplomats, and engagement opportunities, makes it the ideal place to solve today's problems.

1. You have seen International Geneva under many lights, first through your studies, then as a U.S. diplomat and now as a representative of an intergovernmental organization. Is Geneva still relevant in today's complex world?

Absolutely. Seventy-five years ago, the post-war world turned to multilateralism. Geneva's history of global norms setting, humanitarian action, and international problem-solving made it the ideal place for States to collaborate. Today, climate change, inequality, global conflicts, and nationally focused populism are powerful centrifugal forces tugging at the multilateral system and threatening peace, stability, and development. Geneva's concentration of international organizations, skilled diplomats, and engagement opportunities, makes it the ideal place to solve today's problems. Geneva represents the aspiration that, by working together, States can improve

2. What will it take for international Geneva to have a real impact in overcoming these challenges?

Motivated individuals change the world. It's not only Henry Dunant or Kofi Annan that mark history. I have often witnessed the impact that a driven international civil servant, a very small national delegation, or an NGO can have on international affairs. The Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, the International Health Regulations, and other recent initiatives began with an idea and the tenacious optimism of a handful of people who put the issues on the agenda, made the effort to understand others' positions, and then pushed their own and other governments to agree. International Geneva is at its best when the actors here are able to step out of the comfort zones of fixed speeches at recurring meetings, focus on people's needs, and take necessary risks to find compromises and collaborate.



Mark Cassayre at the 2023 edition of the Walk the Talk: Health for All Challenge.

Our partner countries have specifically invested in the rule of law because they see the benefits in terms of economic growth, stability, and sustainable development.

3. Where does IDLO fit into this picture? Could you provide our readers with an understanding of IDLO’s mission and your role in Geneva?

IDLO is the only global intergovernmental organization devoted exclusively to promoting the rule of law to advance peace and sustainable development. Created 40 years ago as a judicial training institute, IDLO currently works with countries in every region of the world to strengthen justice institutions and enhance people’s access to justice. We work with governments and civil society actors alike, with all legal systems across the justice chain and related institutions, formal and informal, to help build more peaceful, inclusive, and resilient societies. IDLO’s mandate is particularly relevant to face the challenges I mentioned earlier. With our headquarters in Rome, the majority of our staff work from our nearly 20 country offices,

plus our offices in New York, The Hague, and Geneva. We work in over 40 countries and partner closely with UN agencies, not only through our observer status at the UN, but also through joint programming, research, and advocacy. My role as IDLO’s Permanent Observer in Geneva is to collaborate with the organizations, institutions, and diplomatic partners here to advance the rule of law around the world.

4. What is it about the “rule of law” that you believe makes it so fundamental?

The rule of law is a powerful tool. It is essential for nearly every aspect of life. Peace and security, human rights, health, trade, sustainable development, climate mitigation, anti-corruption and investment all require the rule of law. This is because good intentions are not accountability mechanisms for governments or citizens. Laws, regulations,

and policies are. Genuine rule of law goes deeper than laws on the books. It requires inclusive decision-making, adherence to international standards, fair implementation, and a focus on solving people’s problems. It responds to the needs of the most vulnerable and treats all equally under the law. The rule of law generates trust in institutions and governance. It is a cornerstone of peace and prosperity.

The rule of law generates trust in institutions and governance. It is a cornerstone of peace and prosperity.



©Mark Cassayre, 2022

Mark Cassayre with Ambassador Cleopa Kilonzo Mailu, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Kenya to the UN and other international organizations in Geneva.

Governments, international bodies, civil society, and everyday citizens must defend the concept of the rule of law and continue to strengthen institutions, as agreed in SDG 16. Political will and investment at the national and international levels are a must. Although exact numbers are hard to come by, it is estimated that less than two percent of overseas development assistance went to justice funding. At the national level, investment levels vary widely. Yet, people rely on the rule of law for solutions. The advantage of looking at governance through the lens of the rule of law is that it has such positive benefits, not only for accountability and enforcement, but for economic growth, human rights, peace, and stability. Our partner countries have specifically invested in the rule of law because they see the benefits in terms of economic growth, stability, and sustainable development.

strengthened legal frameworks, and improved accessibility. To cite a few examples, IDLO's model for judicial oversight assists governments to curb corruption in the judiciary. Our pro bono legal support for LDCs enhances investment and helps resolve international commercial disputes. IDLO has done innovative work to improve the standards used by customary and informal justice systems. Working with WHO, we support countries' efforts to combat non-communicable diseases and respond to health emergencies. We work at the nexus of climate and gender to advance women's participation in decision-making and responses, and our legal reviews are empowering governments and communities to roll-back laws that discriminate against women.

5. But isn't the rule of law under threat? What can be done to address failing institutions, political instability, discrimination, and waning trust in governance that you mention?

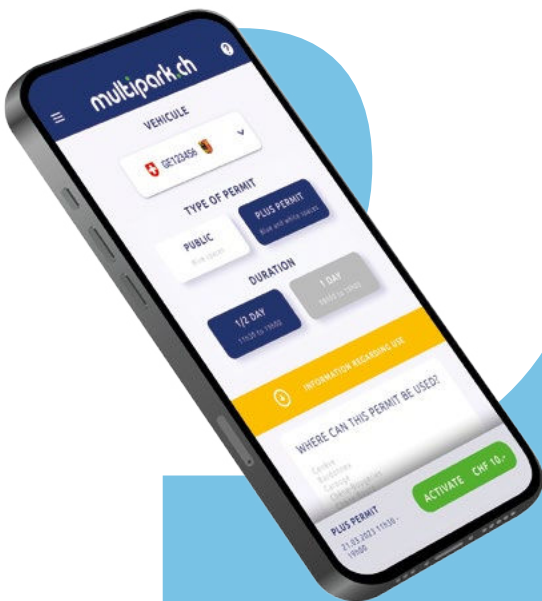
The rule of law is under threat in many places. Inequality, discrimination, repression, and disregard for the law undermine people's rights and undercut development.

6. What specific initiatives or projects does IDLO propose to address these challenges, and how can others collaborate with your mission?

IDLO has a toolbox that States and civil society can use. We regularly support countries' efforts to improve justice service delivery, be it through enhanced capacity building,

I would be happy to explore opportunities to collaborate with potential partners in Geneva. I am only a phone call away. I also invite partners in Geneva to join our anniversary events in October and November, where they can contribute to discussions about how the rule of law can promote human rights, peace, and sustainable development. ■

¹ Mark Cassayre is the IDLO Permanent Observer to the UN and other international organizations in Geneva.



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The third act

From *Winka* to *Katripache*

This is a story told in three acts.
I don't know how the third act will end.

ERIC STENER CARLSON,
UN SOCIETY OF WRITERS

Act 1

During my career, I've had the privilege of working with indigenous persons from around the world. There's something so compelling about the richness of their (many and diverse) cultures and languages and ways of looking at the world – and stories. Perhaps, because I'm an author, I like their stories most of all, because they tell us about creation, about where we came from.

One of my favourite experiences was collaborating with the Mapuche people in Chile, promoting the rights of persons living with HIV, and the rights of LGBT persons in their communities. They have a beautiful term, *epupillan*, which is a person with “two spirits”, a bridge between the masculine and feminine – with spirit in the sense of otherworldly, transcendent.

Working together, we developed educational materials in their language, Mapudungun, we held consultations with government officials, we had dialogues with workers and employers. We'd meet in *rukas*, communal and ceremonial houses made of wood, with a firepit in the middle of the floor. We'd sit in a circle, and the men would wear *trarilonkos*, traditional headbands. They gave me one to wear in these meetings, a beautiful green-and-white wool band with geometric patterns, which I still cherish.

Some of my mapuche colleagues, half-jokingly, would call me “*winka*” which is, essentially, a non-Mapuche, an outsider. That was certainly the case. I did come from outside. I did not pretend (nor do I now) to be an expert on Mapuche culture. I was merely there to facilitate the work *they* wanted to do, to undertake the actions *they* decided on, for the benefit of their communities. So, I accepted my role as *winka*.

Later, I learned that *winka* also has a negative connotation – it means invader, liar, thief. (It's a reference to the European *conquistadores* and colonists who murdered their people and stole their land.) As I'll explain in a moment, the word's not too far off the mark.

But please have patience, while we move to the second act; this takes us from South America to North America, and we also go farther back in time. It all starts with one sentence.

Act 2

“The Sioux Chief, Sitting Bull, used to camp near our family farm in South Dakota.”

That's a phrase I heard many times growing up. It's part of my family's folklore. You see, my ancestors on my father's side migrated to the United States from Norway in the late 1800s. They first arrived in Minnesota, near the border of Canada. Then they moved west and south, finally settling in South Dakota.



A *trarilonko*, a traditional Mapuche headband.

© Eric Stener Carlson

My family's story is a typical immigrant story, I suppose. Poor farmers came to a foreign country, without speaking the language. They cleared land, tore great rocks out of the earth, dug wells, tamed horses, drove cattle. They built towns and schools. They suffered, too, from insects, disease and wild animals. They were looked down upon by the English-speakers. They gave up their language to assimilate. They were poor at first. Some went hungry, some died, but they finally prevailed.

My father was the first generation born in the States – the first to leave the farm, the first to go to university. Thanks to this, I didn't have to farm the fields. But because of the values of the

farm – hard work and independence and family – I went on to get a B.A., an M.A., a Ph.D. and a Fulbright Scholarship. Four generations before, we'd come off the boat, landless and poor. Now I have a good job, I'm never hungry, I travel the world.

And that land in South Dakota was a big part of this. It helped establish my family, gave us roots, set us upon a path to success.

The only problem is the land wasn't ours.

I don't know, exactly, how my ancestors obtained the land, but it was probably one of two ways. According to the South Dakota State Historical Society, they'd

either have to live on it for five years and make improvements – in that case, they’d get it for free. Otherwise, they’d pay \$1.25 an acre.¹ Either way, it was a steal.

This was thanks to the Dawes Act of 1887. With that legislation, the U.S. Government broke into allotments land where Native Americans had lived for generations – and they didn’t get the best of it. As the U.S. National Archives note,

“The land allotted to individuals included desert or near-desert lands unsuitable for farming. In addition, the techniques of self-sufficient farming were much different from their tribal way of life. Many did not want to take up agriculture, and those who did want to farm could not afford the tools, animals, seed, and other supplies necessary to get started.”²

Essentially, the Dawes Act “gave” Native Americans a fragment of the land that was already theirs. The rest of the land was made available to settlers, such as my ancestors – and to miners, as there was a gold rush in the Black Hills of South Dakota that the Native Americans consider sacred land.³

This was the continuation, by other means, of a policy started over fifty years before. Back in 1830, Congress passed the Indian Removal Act, forcibly removing Native Americans west of the Mississippi river – sometimes at gunpoint, sometimes after being put in chains. This resulted in the infamous “Trail of Tears”, where tens of thousands of indigenous people were sent on a forced

march across the country, and thousands died. The Dawes Act was another nail in the coffin.

In other words, whether knowingly or unknowingly, my ancestors participated in the *winka* expansion west, benefitting from the suffering and homelessness of others. And, because I also benefited, that makes me *winka*, too.

Act 3

F. Scott Fitzgerald once said, “There are no second acts in American Lives”, let alone third acts. Yet here I am, at the start of my third act. I know my ancestors’ past. I know my present. How do I fit them together into the story of my own life?

Most importantly, if my success in life can somehow be traced back to that stolen land, if it comes back to that one, original sin, is everything undone? Does all the hard work, struggles and aspirations of my ancestors come to nothing, because the land was not theirs, the trees were not theirs, the water was not theirs?

Will I forever be *winka*?

All I can say is that Act 3 is about hope. I hope there’s a way out, and it comes in the form of another word in Mapudungun: *katripache*. It has no negative weight. It merely means someone from outside. I aspire to that word. I aspire to be just myself, an outsider, a stranger, not a participant in the history of oppression – just a colleague, just a friend.

So, what would it take for me to transition from *winka* to

katripache? Others have asked this same question. There’s one answer I recently read in a newspaper article from two Chilean anthropologists that I rather like: “A *katripache* knows how to greet people, they always have something to offer an outsider when they’re in their land, even if it’s just a glass of water. A *katripache*... gets their hands dirty with the sheep, and cuts firewood with an ax. Or at least tries to. A *katripache* takes time to listen and doesn’t go ‘busy’ through life, like the *winka*. A *katripache* isn’t interested in taking anything from the persons they meet, and they can also bring news and information from one place to another, like a bird.”⁴

From this description, it seems to me that being a *katripache* has three main elements: solidarity (the act of giving a glass of water), action (cutting firewood) and telling the story (bringing news from one place to another).

I have tried solidarity and action, and I will continue down that path. But I haven’t written the story, or, rather, I haven’t rewritten it yet. So, here is my attempt:

The Sioux Chief, Sitting Bull, did not used to camp near our family farm in South Dakota. Yes, the three elements are correct – Sitting Bull was there, and so were my ancestors, and so was the land. But it was never “ours”. The complete story of what happened was that the government forcibly removed the Native Americans who had lived on that land. (Sitting Bull himself was imprisoned, placed on a reservation, and killed.)⁵ They

stole the land and then gave it to us for “free”. But that free land comes with a heavy price. Part of that price is that I must tell this story, I must recognize that everything happens all at once, that there is good and evil swirled together, that I am a result of that. No matter the nobility of the immigrant experience – for there is nobility in leaving everything you have behind, in starting a new life, in learning a new language, in building and farming, and creating – my ancestors benefitted from a system of oppression, and I continue to benefit from the echoes of that oppression that reverberate through time. I can change nothing that happened up until this very moment. But I can change everything that happens from this moment on.

I arrived upon this stage as *winka*. I now choose to start learning my new role of *katripache*. As I wrote above, I don’t know how it will end. But this is the story I will tell my children and my grandchildren. This is not all I can do, but it is the beginning of my Third Act. ■

1 <https://history.sd.gov/museum/docs/Homesteading.pdf>

2 <https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/dawes-act>

3 <https://history.sd.gov/museum/docs/Homesteading.pdf> (page 4)

4 My translation from the Spanish of: Marcelo González and Cristóbal Bonelli, “¿Winka o katripache? Consejos prácticos para un Chile no racista”, *El Mostrador* (10 January 2023) <https://www.elmostrador.cl/noticias/opinion/2013/01/10/winka-o-katripache-consejos-practicos-para-un-chile-no-racista/>

5 <https://www.unhcr.org/ceu/9507-sitting-bull-tatanka-yotanka.html>

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National Police officer in Liberia.

Building trust

Anti-corruption initiatives can improve people's faith in public institutions

The UN Secretary-General's report *Our Common Agenda*, notes the overall breakdown in trust in major institutions worldwide, with consequences for security, stability, and development.

**ANDREW BWIRE BULUMA, IDLO
CRIMINAL JUSTICE ADVISOR**

This trust deficit stems in part from institutions' real and perceived failures to deliver fairly, transparently and inclusively. People's experiences of inequality and corruption are key factors. Rebuilding trust and reviving the social contract requires accelerated action to tackle corruption.

At the International Development Law Organization (IDLO), we have learned that confronting corruption requires a comprehensive approach with the rule of law at its centre. With many governments making genuine efforts to tackle corruption and promote transparency, accountability, and integrity in public institutions, IDLO is committed to supporting these endeavours. We do so by assisting



Immigration Service officer in Liberia.



Thematic discussion with IDLO's Director-General Jan Beagle (lower-right corner) at the SDG16 Conference co-organised by UN DESA, the Government of Italy, and IDLO in 2021.

States to strengthen legal frameworks; reinforce institutional and professional capacities to prevent, investigate, prosecute, and adjudicate corruption offences; and conduct asset recovery.

IDLO's partnerships in many regions of the world offer promising examples of how States

can leverage the rule of law to enhance anti-corruption efforts that rebuild trust and improve people's interactions with the institutions of governance.

Prevention

Often, the aspects of the institutions requiring assistance are those hidden from view: the legal

frameworks, the organizational architecture, and sound models that underpin prevention.

IDLO partnered with Kenya's Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission to develop the National Ethics and Anti-Corruption Policy. Launched in 2020 and currently in use, the policy offers an

integrated framework to address corruption in public institutions and facilitates enhanced coordination across relevant state agencies.

E-justice and e-governance innovations have been key tools in **Ukraine's** efforts to mitigate corruption risks, enhance



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High Anti-Corruption court building in Kiev, Ukraine.

interactions among state institutions, and improve the quality and accessibility of services for citizens and businesses. IDLO contributed its expertise in shaping these mechanisms by establishing a legal framework for a modern, efficient, and unified system of electronic public registers.

In **Moldova**, we support the Independent Anti-Corruption Advisory Committee in establishing its secretariat and facilitating the work of its members, thus strengthening the State's anti-corruption architecture and deepening understanding of large-scale corruption challenges.

As a means to introduce international and regional good practices promoting transparency, accountability, and integrity of public institutions, **Honduras** turned to IDLO to help strengthen the capacity of Honduran anti-corruption mechanisms.

Investigation, prosecution, adjudication Rule of law interventions can be essential elements to support States in investigating, prosecuting and adjudicating corruption cases.

As part of a comprehensive approach to public sector reform, IDLO has provided several countries with technical support to aid in the selection of prosecutors, judges, and investigators of anti-corruption bodies. These efforts have supported national efforts to improve the integrity and quality of key justice institutions, including in **Ukraine** and **the Bahamas**.

The Office of the Ombudsman (OMB) in the **Philippines** has an obligation to investigate and prosecute allegations of public sector corruption. Over the past six years, IDLO has supported the OMB through capacity-building and institutional support.

Asset Recovery

Following the establishment of the Independent Authority Against Corruption (IAAC), **Mongolia** has partnered with IDLO to formalise its operational processes through Standard Operating Procedures. Moreover, we have conducted comprehensive training programmes for IAAC investigators to build skills in international cooperation and asset recovery.

In **Somalia**, IDLO supported the Financial Regulatory Center, responsible for financial investigations in the country, in developing and enacting key regulations and reporting tools for banks and money transfer businesses to better address shortcomings in the sector.

Strong, effective, Inclusive Institutions are trusted institutions

Through all these initiatives, it is critical to keep people and their justice needs at the centre. By responding to people's needs and expectations through effective, fair, and transparent anti-corruption efforts, justice institutions earn trust. They also contribute to building just and peaceful societies that can thrive and develop. IDLO remains committed to continuing and expanding these programming, as well as advancing policy and advocacy initiatives at the national and multilateral level. We stand ready to provide technical assistance to national partners in collaboration with key global stakeholders in this important endeavor. ■

Delve into the details of IDLO's anti-corruption efforts over the past year. IDLO Annual Report 2022 is now available and provides a comprehensive overview.



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Law is the means, health and justice are the ends

The progressive realization of the right to health is not only a legal obligation enshrined in international human rights treaties. It is indispensable for human well-being, just societies, and sustainable economies. Yet, delivering the right to health is easier said than done.



Two women receiving health treatment from a nurse at their home.

IDLO HEALTH LAW PROGRAMME ASSOCIATE EDA PÜTGUL AND IDLO HEALTH LAW PROGRAMME LEAD GIULIA ZEVI

One often overlooked but particularly effective tool to improve health outcomes is the rule of law.

Well-designed legal frameworks, an effective judiciary, and strong legal capacity are building blocks that assist countries in confronting health threats and fulfilling their populations' health needs. At a broader level, the rule of law is able to address factors that otherwise can impact health, such as environmental degradation, food insecurity, and harmful

products. Moreover, the rule of law provides for more equitable responses to health challenges that disproportionately affect poor, vulnerable, and marginalized groups.

The experience of the International Development Law Organization (IDLO) illustrates that States and other stakeholders can effectively implement rule of law strategies to promote better health outcomes and uphold the universal right to health. Here are just two examples to demonstrate this positive impact.

Legal and policy measures are essential in promoting countries' preparedness to



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Dhaka, Bangladesh, April 2022

prevent and respond to Public Health Emergencies (PHE). COVID-19 demonstrated that one of the major obstacles to States effectively managing the pandemic was the inadequacy of legal instruments and legal capacity at the domestic level. Ideally national laws and policies should:

- establish dedicated emergency centers and institutions;
- define authorities, roles, and responsibilities;
- ensure equal access to medical countermeasures and products;
- set up processes and mechanisms for access to justice and judicial review of emergency measures; and
- promote effective communications, among others.

Through its Pandemic Preparedness and Response Project (PPRP)¹, IDLO supported Zambia and Uganda to better align their national laws and policies with the

International Health Regulations (IHR). The PPRP project revealed the demand for support, in particular to low and middle-income countries (LMICs), to map national legal frameworks, identify gaps, and provide technical assistance to enhance national legal preparedness to PHEs. For example, the project assisted Zambia to draft statutory instruments (regulations) that delineate the leadership role of the Zambia National Public Health Institute to address PHE, thereby better preparing the country to respond to future health threats.

Legal and policy measures are also cost-effective ways to tackle non-communicable diseases, such as cancer, cardiovascular disease, respiratory diseases, and diabetes, which are primary causes of premature mortality and morbidity around the world, including in LMICs. Since 2019, IDLO, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) have jointly supported five countries (Bangladesh,

Kenya, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, and Uganda) to strengthen their policies and regulations promoting healthy diets and physical activity to address NCDs risk factors.² The interventions integrate capacity building, social mobilization, and evidence generation to create a conducive environment for policy and legal reforms. In Tanzania, for instance, the successful collaboration among government actors, policy makers, civil society organizations, researchers and academics resulted in the National Physical Activity Guidelines, which align the national standards with WHO global guidance on physical activity. This has moved the country to undertake regulatory measures that promote greater access to healthier diets among the population, thereby advancing the right to health, and related rights.

Effective laws, policies, and regulations can help countries to safeguard and promote public health and create equal opportunities for all people to live healthy lives. IDLO's report [“Advancing the Right to Health: The Vital Role of Law,”](#) provides an extensive look at how to the law can improve health outcomes.

States and the international community should keep readily at hand the rule of law toolbox to comply with their international obligations and to advance the right to health. IDLO stands ready to partner with others to achieve this goal. ■

¹ Between 2020 and 2022, IDLO has implemented the PPRP in consultation with WHO that aimed to strengthen legal and policy frameworks to prevent, detect and promptly respond to PHEs and other public health risks, including COVID-19. During the pilot phase of the PPRP, IDLO provided technical assistance to the governments of Uganda and Zambia. Currently, the partners are in the process of scaling up the project to several new countries.

² The Global RECAP: Global Regulatory and Fiscal Capacity Building Programme is a collaborative project between IDLO and WHO, supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, in coordination with the IDRC. Since 2019, the Global RECAP builds national legal capacity to address NCDs risk factors through legal and regulatory reforms to promote healthy diets and physical activity in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka.

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UNHCR and IDLO partner to improve development actors' ability to address statelessness

More than 4.4 million people in the world are not recognized as a national by any country. Stateless people are impeded from contributing economically, socially, and politically to their communities. They are at a heightened risk of abuse and exploitation. Their marginalization risks undermining peace, security, and sustainable development.



© UNHCR / Didier Sautoufiev / 2019

Forty-two-year-old Mokhitobon Loikova (rear, centre) holds up her newly-obtained identity documents with her five children and a grandchild at their home in Dushanbe, Tajikistan. As she was stateless, her children did not receive birth certificates, which created obstacles for them in receiving proper education and finding employment.

A rule of law approach can both assist States to meet their international legal obligations and support stateless people to be full, legally recognized members of society.

IDLO PERMANENT OBSERVER MARK CASSAYRE AND UNHCR SENIOR STATELESSNESS COORDINATOR MONIKA SANDVIK

Until now, addressing statelessness has largely been seen through a humanitarian lens.

Recognizing the need to involve more development actors in the effort, the United Nations High

Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Development Law Organization (IDLO) joined forces to delineate the compelling links between statelessness, the rule of law and sustainable development.

The initial result of UNHCR's and IDLO's collaboration is an issue brief entitled, *Addressing*

*Statelessness Through the Rule of Law*¹. The paper makes the case that the rule of law and statelessness matter for sustainable development. Stateless people are often denied education, health care, employment, property ownership, freedom of movement, and political participation. Their marginalization can be a source of conflict, economic loss, and displacement. The costs to the individuals and to society are high.

Drawing on existing evidence on the scope and consequences of statelessness, as well as analysis of key international legal frameworks and a range of country-specific case studies, the issue brief argues that, by upholding the rule of law, States can unlock lasting solutions to the anomaly of statelessness. Those solutions can, in turn, dramatically improve the lives and futures of stateless people, and the prospects for sustainable development in the societies in which they live.

The issue brief offers concrete recommendations that all actors can apply to address statelessness. These include: Ensuring equality before the law and non-discrimination; compliance with

international human rights norms and standards; legal empowerment and access to justice; and inclusive and participatory system of governance.

Adding the rule of law angle to this discussion has the further benefit of providing an opening for development actors, who often apply such approaches, to include statelessness in their work, development plans, and discussions with governments. A rule of law approach can both assist States to meet their international legal obligations and support stateless people to be full, legally recognized members of society.

Building on this concept, UNHCR, with the support of IDLO and other partners, is developing a more expansive toolkit to assist development actors to incorporate statelessness into their work. The hope is to combine the expertise of development partners in this important effort, address these needs of this vulnerable group, and assist states to meet their Sustainable Development Goals and promote peace and inclusive development. ■

¹ https://www.idlo.int/sites/default/files/2022/other/documents/addressing_statelessness_through_the_rule_of_law_publication.pdf

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Children's rights through continuing education

Unveiling the new Children's Rights Academy

In 2021, the University of Geneva's Centre for Children's Rights Studies (CIDE), backed by the Centre for Continuing and Distance Education (CCED), conducted an assessment study exploring the landscape of children's rights continuing education.

**DR. ROBERTA RUGGIERO¹ AND
SIMON NEHME²**

The study delved into the European and Swiss higher education landscape, highlighting the emergence of numerous academic programmes addressing diverse facets of children's rights.

It also examined the CIDE's existing initiatives and looked at stakeholders' perspectives to identify trends and shed light on the alignment between the continuing education offer and the prevailing research trends and emerging professional learning needs. Notably, the study underscored the need for continuous education in the field of children's rights, as voiced by stakeholders within the international and national children's rights arena. This article unveils the result of the study by mapping the landscape of children's rights education and presenting the strategy of the CIDE to empower children's rights advocates. It also presents the vision and pillars of the children's rights academy, the entity within the Centre, that leads the CIDE continuing education portfolio.

Mapping the landscape of children's rights in continuing education

While analysing existing continuing education programmes

in the field of children's rights across Europe and, more particularly, the Swiss context, it emerges that at the European level, numerous universities have established programmes encompassing both broad and specific children's rights topics, which complement and, to some extent, intersect with the current offer from the Centre for Children's Rights Studies. Several academic member institutions of the Children's Rights European Academic Network (CREAN)³ primarily provide residential continuing education programmes on general children's rights issues, emphasising specialised themes such as child participation or juvenile justice in each respective programme. Whereas, in Switzerland, a variegated range of actors offers continuing education programmes, primarily focusing on mediation issues, child protection, child and adolescent psychology, juvenile justice, and child hearings in legal contexts. Notably, several emerging academic players have recently invested in distance learning and blended programmes, exploring new themes like children's rights in the context of media, digitalisation, environment, and global health.

The study also engaged with key stakeholders in the professional

children's rights field at international and national levels. The outcome reveals an ongoing demand for continuing education in children's rights. This demand encompasses a need to grasp foundational concepts, norms, and developments within the field, prompting a call for well-informed professionals. Stakeholders emphasise the growing need for blended learning options that combine in-person and distance education. Clarity regarding programme objectives and learning outcomes is deemed crucial. Additionally, stakeholders advocate for short-term specialised training, like seminars for child protection professionals and certified programmes tailored for specific groups such as early childhood educators, sports coaches, and police officers. Systematic training on children's rights emerges as a recurrent key request for all professionals working for and with children, particularly those working in education, health, child protection, social protection, alternative care, justice, and asylum.

This underscores the importance of interdisciplinary and intersectoral continuing education in children's rights studies, and the need for consistent monitoring of evolving learning needs is highlighted as essential

for effectively addressing emerging themes and expectations. In addition, the key professional stakeholders also highlighted the CIDE's outstanding and committed international academic networks as well as its long-standing working relations with major UN entities, international NGOs and professional networks such as the Committee on the Rights of the Child, UNICEF, World Vision, Save the Children, the Council of Europe, and the European Network of Ombudspersons for Children (ENOC).

Empowering children's rights advocates: the vision and pillars of the children's rights academy
The children's rights academy (CRA) was created in response to the findings of the study.⁴ The CRA label brings together the continuing education programmes and activities of an international academic centre specialised in the interdisciplinary study of children's rights. Originated in 2003 through the launch of the Master of Advanced Studies (MAS) in Children's Rights⁵, a flagship programme that has been successfully delivered for almost 20 years, the Centre undertakes research, teaching and outreach activities that aim to better understand questions that affect childhood as a social



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group and children as social actors and subjects of rights.

Children's rights studies critically investigate the content, origins and consequences of global, national and local norms, practices and discourses in the field of children's rights, emphasising children's agency, social justice, and human dignity. The Centre's strong attachment to interdisciplinary perspectives on knowledge production guarantees the children's rights academy to create stimulating study programmes meant to develop both theoretical and practice-oriented understanding of the growing complexity of children's rights-related issues, leading to the identification of innovative solutions to dealing with the increasing complexity

of children's interconnected local and global experiences.

Continuing education offers solutions to an ever-changing society, and the field of children's rights is no exception. Recognising this critical need in the vision of the children's rights academy, continuing education is a means through which appropriately skilled labour can contribute to advancing the societal acceptance and fulfilment of children's rights. By developing its programme offering through a deep understanding of the context and terrain of academic research, practice, and policy on children's related issues, the CRA accomplishes the social relevance of its continuing education portfolio. This approach is applied through the following strategic pillars:

- **Partnerships:** building partnerships with national and international organisations to develop and deliver continuing education programmes relevant to different professional groups' needs.
- **Innovation:** applying innovative pedagogical approaches bridging between academic research outputs and discussion, and policy-makers and practitioners' buy-in.
- **Digitalisation:** utilising digital technologies to deliver continuing education programmes to a broader audience.
- **Impact:** evaluating the impact of its continuing education programmes to ensure that they are meeting the needs of children's rights professionals and making a positive difference in the lives of children.

Based on these key pillars, the CRA is confident that its new strategy will enable it to continue to be a leading provider of continuing education in children's rights to professionals worldwide to advance children's rights.


Paving the way for a brighter future

Responding to the insights of the assessment study, the children's rights academy has been established as a cohesive entity under the auspices of the Centre for Children's Rights Studies. Rooted in the interdisciplinary field of children's rights studies, it embodies a holistic approach that bridges research, policy, and practice. By adopting a unified governance structure, fostering innovation, collaborating with a diverse range of partners, and implementing effective communication strategies, the Academy paves the way for a brighter future where children's rights are upheld and deeply ingrained in society's fabric. In doing so, it fulfils its mission of nurturing professionals equipped to create positive change for children and youth worldwide. ■

- 1 Senior Research and Teaching Associate at the University of Geneva's (UNIGE) Centre for Children's Rights Studies (CIDE)
- 2 Scientific Associate at CIDE, Assistant to the Director of the Children's Rights Academy
- 3 Children's Rights European Academic Network (CREAN) overseen by the Centre for Children's Rights Studies: <https://crean-network.org/index.php>
- 4 www.unige.ch/cra
- 5 www.unige.ch/mcr/index.php

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“Graines de Paix” continues its evolution with the appointment of a chief executive officer

GRAINES DE PAIX

Delia Mamon’s aspiration in founding the NGO Graines de Paix 18 years ago was to strengthen and secure peace through education. Every child in the world should be able to both live and to contribute to a culture of peace and respect. Over the years, the reputation of the NGO has exceeded our borders and those of West Africa, where the Foundation is very active.

A woman of action and vision, Delia Mamon felt that it was time to strengthen her teams to continue the development of the Foundation, pilot its international expansion while professionalizing it. Adding the services and skills of a CEO seemed obvious to her to lead Graines de Paix’s long-term strategy and vision.

Knowing Delia Mamon and the tender gaze she casts upon the world, one immediately understands her choice, which was made for a woman of conviction combining energy and determination.

Céline Maret takes the helm of Graines de Paix

An expert in the field of humanitarian aid, Céline Maret began her career in 2006. She has worked with several international organizations, including missions for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), particularly in Africa and Bangladesh. She has mobilized and established strategic partnerships, coordinated large-scale programs, and implemented effective governance structures. After heading large emergency field operations, she was most recently deployed by the Swiss Humanitarian Aid Corps of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (DDC) as an Expert in Protection and Humanitarian Coordination in Geneva, working with OCHA and UNHCR.



In the search for sustainable solutions for refugees and internally displaced persons, she came to realize the importance of developing lasting actions with strong social impact, especially in terms of education. Possessing a keen sensitivity towards education and the related social issues, Céline Maret states she could not dream of a better place to work than Graines de Paix. *“It’s during emergency situations that I understood the importance of enabling children to develop their autonomy and become actors of their future beyond protection. Indeed, it’s high time to provide all children, girls and boys, with wider quality education – one that integrates the life skills for addressing all forms of violence and for fostering cohesive communities. Graines de Paix, through its programs, addresses these goals, and I am so happy to contribute to it by joining Delia Mamon’s team. As two strong-willed women, we are determined to bring about fundamental changes in our societies through such expanded quality education”.*

Graines de Paix in a few words

Graines de Paix was founded in 2005 in Geneva by Delia Mamon, initially as an association, transforming it into a foundation in 2020. Its goal is to promote comprehensive quality education that fosters inclusion, violence prevention, and a culture of peace while developing the full potential of children, adolescents and the teaching community. Through her innovative spirit, Delia Mamon focused on the values and life skills that prevent and defuse violent outbursts with peace-triggering responses. Over the years, she led Graines de Paix to adopt a systemic pedagogical approach aimed at children as well as teachers, educational and social authorities, and also parents. In 2019, Graines de Paix received the Smart Peace Prize from the Leaders for Peace Foundation. In 2022, the Foundation was honoured with the UNESCO-Hamdan Prize for Innovative Education. ■

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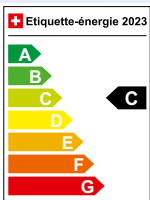
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Art en campagne

Chemin d'art transfrontalier

L'exposition transfrontalière en plein air *Art en Campagne*¹, organisée par les communes d'Ornex (F) et Collex-Bossy (CH), a eu lieu pour la neuvième fois entre le 24 juin et le 3 septembre. Elle a été éclipsée par le décès de M. Jean-François Obez, le 28 juin, maire d'Ornex, qui s'était beaucoup engagé pour cette exposition lors de son mandat depuis 2014.



39 œuvres d'art ont été exposées au bord des champs, à côté des vignobles, cognassiers et pommiers, le long d'un cours d'eau et dans la forêt. Le parcours de quelque 5 kilomètres était bien aménagé, il y avait même des bancs pour se reposer et méditer sur les merveilleuses créations des artistes, mais on aurait bien aimé d'avoir deux ou trois de plus côté Collex-Bossy. Nous étions impressionnés par leur originalité, par la variété des pays d'origine des artistes et nous nous sommes réjouis qu'il y eût aussi des écoles de la région qui ont participé, de l'école primaire au collège. Cette exposition est biennale et pour la population locale et internationale elle est devenue un rendez-vous estival incontournable. Un spectacle, préparé par Francesca Giarini Dalhen avait été prévu à quatre différents lieux le long du parcours de l'exposition pour le 26 août, mais dû aux prévisions incertaines de la météo, il a eu lieu à la salle communale de Collex-Bossy ce que lui a enlevé un peu son charme.

ALFRED DE ZAYAS, UN SOCIETY OF WRITERS

Le comité d'organisation qui met sur pied cette exposition est composée d'élus des deux communes et de quelques bénévoles, comme Meike Noll-Wagenfeld, ancienne Chef du service juridique à l'ONUG et plus tard au HCR. Toutes ces personnes ont mis la main à la pâte pour que cette neuvième édition soit de nouveau un succès. Elle n'aurait pas été possible sans la coopération des agriculteurs et autres propriétaires de terrain. Au vernissage et à la clôture les deux communes ont été représentées par M. Skander Chahlaoui, adjoint au maire à Collex-Bossy, ainsi que par M. Olivier Guichard, élu maire d'Ornex depuis le 17 juillet.

Cette fois le thème de l'exposition était autour de l'importance des «contrastes» dans la vie. Les thèmes des expositions précédentes étaient «des messages et du vent», «no-man's land», «leures et lueurs», «Rêveries d'un promeneur solitaire», «au-delà des bornes», «passerelles de l'espoir», «la cinquième saison» et «équilibre». Des reportages ont été publiés dans *l'UN Special* d'octobre 2012 et dans les *NewSpecial* de septembre 2021 et mars 2023.

Un jury a attribué une dizaine de prix aux œuvres exposées et le public avait également l'occasion de voter pour son œuvre préférée. Il a choisi celle de Luc Tiery auquel le jury avait également décerné un premier prix ainsi qu'aux deux œuvres de Christian Viladent.

Deux écoles, l'Ecole primaire de Collex-Bossy et l'Ecole de Haller en ville de Genève, se sont partagées le Prix des écoles. Les organisateurs lancent déjà un appel aux artistes pour 2025, mais le thème n'a pas encore été déterminé.

Jusqu'au 3 septembre l'exposition pouvait être visitée à pied, à vélo et même à cheval. Ma femme Carla et moi y sommes allés à pied et avons pendant notre promenade même rencontré des vieux amis des Nations Unies, également retraités comme nous. Nous avons apprécié plusieurs œuvres, entre autres l'installation «écoute-écoute» par Claude Ninghetto (Troinex) qui nous a proposé un contraste entre le calme de la campagne et le mouvement et le bruit du vent.

La démarche artistique de Susanne Lewest (franco-allemande) était très amusante: un oiseau fictif, le pommerac, grande de 1.40m, avec un poids de 40 kilos et un œuf énorme en forme de pomme tous les 5 ans. La nature, si harmonieuse, nous donne à voir des contrastes, la coquille en spirale d'un escargot, le cœur d'une fleur de tournesol, les rainures d'une feuille «tout est équilibré, tout est à sa place. Et pourtant, des contrastes inexplicables attirent notre regard.» Pour une autre œuvre Susanne a collaboré avec une autre artiste allemande, Cordelia von Klot, dans une démarche de rêve, parmi les arbres sombres, immobiles, silencieux - un «Highway» très coloré sur un tronc tombé en diagonal entre deux arbres avec de douzaines de petites voitures et camions collées dessus qui se pressent et se perdent de vue. Cette œuvre a reçu un deuxième prix par le jury.

«La rencontre» est la démarche de Christian Viladent qui vit dans le Gard (France), et qui a créé une grande sculpture en métal inspirée par l'olivier millénaire situé au pied de l'aqueduc romain du Gard dans le Sud de la France.

Cet œuvre nous montre différents contrastes entre l'homme et le monde végétal, la mobilité de l'un, l'enracinement de l'autre. Pour ceux qui aiment les miniatures, Christian nous offre «Bossy Bonzaï», qui se trouve en face des champs du côté d'Ornex. Il nous propose «Placez-vous à 1 mètre en face du petit arbre métallique, puis penchez la tête légèrement de côté et fermez un œil. Grâce à la perspective, vous voyez l'arbre au loin, à peu près à la même hauteur que la sculpture en métal... La chaleur du bois, le froid du métal, la verdure du feuillage, la rouille sur la sculpture, etc. Quelle est la frontière entre création figurative et abstraite?» Le jury a attribué à Christian pour ses deux œuvres un premier prix.

Pas loin de cette petite sculpture de Christian Viladent nous découvrons la démarche de Youlichka Fioramonti (Genève), «the luminous nests and the tree». Les nids, issues de la réalité ou du rêve, prennent vie sous une nouvelle forme cristallisée, dans une peau de porcelaine et émergent doucement du feuillage. Elles s'allument la nuit.

«Poussières cosmiques» est une construction de Chantal Carrel (Genève), qui nous a fait penser aux vitraux de la Grossmünster de Zurich. Il s'agit de deux grands et trois plus petits vitraux ronds pendus dans l'air entre les arbres. «Dans la continuité de mes recherches sur les transparences et la lumière, les pièces présentent des jeux de contrastes clair-obscur et opacité-transparence».²

Très belle aussi la démarche de Noopur Ahuja, qui habite à Chambésy (Genève) mais vient de l'Inde. Elle utilise un petit pont à l'entrée des bois d'Ornex pour jouer avec le contraste entre le ciel et la terre. «Dans la vie, aucun problème n'est vraiment simple et... les limites opposées de problèmes sont perpétuellement

en mouvement.» Donc elle représente le ciel sur la terre et la terre sur le ciel à l'aide de miroirs. «Devant vous, ce pont... observe le jeu de contrastes dans les miroirs situés sur le côté. Ceux-ci capturent le ciel et la cime des arbres tandis que les CD au-dessus donnent des aperçus du petit ruisseau en dessous.»

Il y avait tellement à découvrir! Une sculpture en bois très réussie au milieu de la forêt par le Colombien Mateo Carreño nous fait penser à Ernst Barlach. Et encore la mâchoire de la baleine de Luc Tiercy³, qui nous rappelle Moby-Dick de Herman Melville - elle aussi, située entre les arbres. Le jury et le public ont très apprécié cette œuvre.

Comme je l'ai écrit dans un autre reportage pour le *New Special* d'octobre 2021, il y a plusieurs villes en Suisse qui organisent de telles expositions. Le Landschaftspark-Binntal dans le haut Valais offre tous les ans un parcours artistique le long la gorge près de Binn. Nous avons aussi visité l'édition 2023⁴ et par la suite nous avons visité la Musikdorf Ernen presque à côté pour écouter un merveilleux concert de Bach, Haydn, Schubert et Richard Strauss. Là aussi, c'est de l'art en campagne, de la musique en montagne. ■

1 www.artencampagne.org

2 www.chantalcarrel.com

3 <https://tiercy.ch>

4 <https://www.landschaftspark-binntal.ch/de/entdecken-erleben/sommeraktivitaeten/landart.php>



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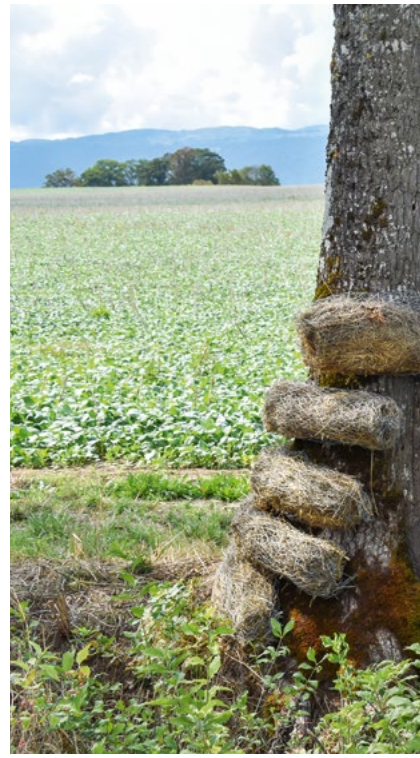
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A blueprint for peace in Ukraine

As more and more politicians and scholars recognize that the Ukraine conflict cannot be solved militarily, that there will be no winners but only losers, we should concentrate on stopping the slaughter. This is the only rational policy we can follow, and should be advanced by all United Nations agencies, notably the General Assembly, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, the World Health Organization, etc.

ALFRED DE ZAYAS¹

My blueprint for peace is simple:

1. Ceasefire based on the UN Charter,
2. A ban on deliveries of weapons to the belligerents,
3. UN organized international assistance to all populations suffering because of the war, lack of energy, lack of food,
4. UN organized and monitored referenda in Crimea and Donbas,
5. Lifting of sanctions that have nullified the benefits of globalization, broken supply chains, upset international trade, endangered food security,
6. Drafting of a new security architecture for Europe,
7. Coordinated efforts by States and UNHCR to facilitate the repatriation of Ukrainian refugees “in safety and dignity”,
8. A Global fund for reconstruction of infrastructures in all regions affected by the war,
9. Establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission to hear grievances from all sides,
10. Investigation and punishment of war crimes by the respective governments as stipulated in the 1949 Geneva Conventions and 1977 Protocols: Ukrainian crimes to be prosecuted by Ukrainian judges, Russian crimes to be investigated and prosecuted by Russian tribunals.

There is a pre-history of this catastrophe. If we want to arrive at a viable peace settlement, we

must understand the root causes and create an atmosphere of mutual trust. We must also analyse the conflict not only from the US, Western European or Eastern European perspectives, but also take into account the views of 1.5 Billion Chinese, 1.5 Billion Indians, 240 million Pakistanis, 170 million Bangladeshis, 280 million Indonesians, 220 million Nigerians, 220 million Brazilians, 140 million Mexicans etc. The stakes are too high, and we Americans and Europeans have no right to risk the survival of the planet because of an internal European dispute. Indeed, for the average African, Asian or Latin American, it is wholly irrelevant whether Crimea is in Russia or in Ukraine.

African leaders have come forth with a 10-point roadmap to peace², and China has issued its own 12-point proposal³. Both initiatives are balanced and neutral.

What is crucial is to agree NOW on a cease-fire and bring in mediators like Pope Francis to make concrete proposals. Professor Jeffrey Sachs⁴ has given numerous lectures urging a negotiated end to hostilities and warning about the danger of a nuclear war. He quotes a 1963 speech by John F. Kennedy: “Above all, while defending our own vital interests,

nuclear powers must avert those confrontations which bring an adversary to a choice of either a humiliating retreat or a nuclear war. To adopt that kind of course in the nuclear age would be evidence only of the bankruptcy of our policy—or of a collective death-wish for the world.”⁵

A realistic blueprint for peace in Ukraine cannot expect to go back to the world before 24 February 2022. The unipolar model is no longer viable. A new order is emerging in which the Global South will be having greater influence than before.

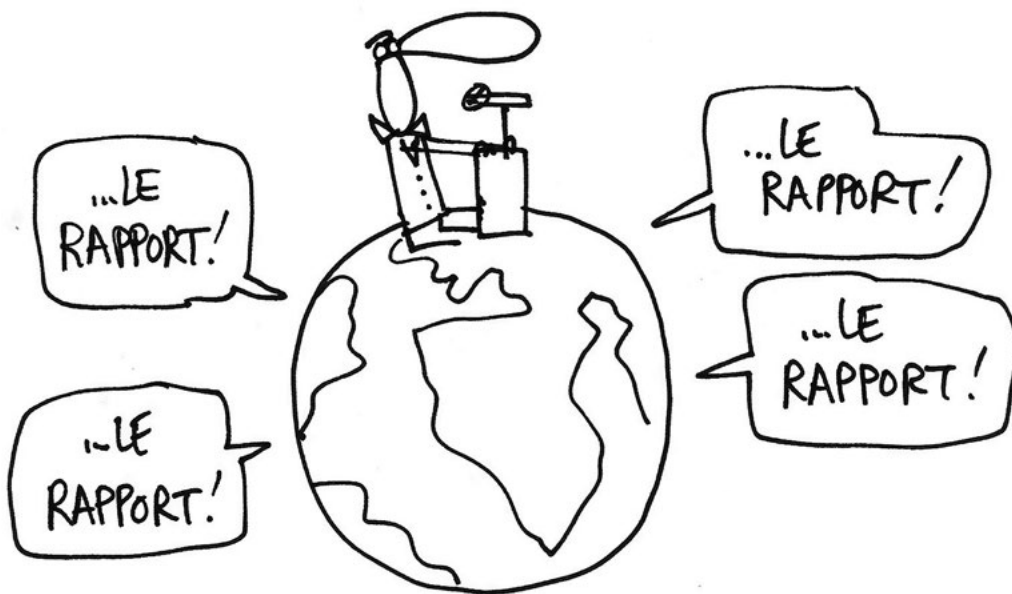
Crimea, Donetsk and Lugansk will never go back to Ukraine, because after the shelling of these territories by the Ukraine since 2014, a considerable level of hatred toward the Ukrainian authorities has emerged. It is not a matter for NATO to decide, but exclusively a matter of self-determination and the decision of the populations concerned.

The right of self-determination of peoples (arts. 1, 55, Chapters XI and XII UN Charter) is solidly anchored in article 1 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. It is for the UN to organize referenda, which would be monitored

internationally. But the UN failed the Ukrainian and Russian peoples, when it failed to organize and monitor referenda in these Russian-populated territories in 1991, when the Ukraine unilaterally split from the Soviet Union, or in 2014 following the Maidan coup. A referendum 2014 would have prevented the tragedy we are witnessing today.

As the Kosovars will never consent to be reincorporated into Serbia, the Russian populations of Crimea, Donetsk and Lugansk would rebel against any such proposal. A new European security architecture should be built that takes into consideration the legitimate security concerns of all persons living in the area. The independence of Ukraine must of course be guaranteed, as indeed the independence of Russia. As Austrian Foreign Minister Alexander Schallenberg recently said, Russia exists and will not go away: “*We cannot cancel Russia. We cannot do ghosting on it*”.⁶

War in Ukraine was eminently avoidable. Russia’s two draft treaties of December 2021⁷ deserved honest discussion, but they were rejected out of hand by Jens Stoltenberg. Peace would have been possible if the mediation of Turkey and Israel had not been



torpedoed by those who really believed that “victory” over Russia was at hand.

Among the many obstacles to peace are lack of imagination and trench mentality. Whether we in the West agree or not with this assessment, NATO’s eastern expansion was perceived by Russia as an existential threat. Sooner or later Russia would react, as George F. Kennan⁸ and John Mearsheimer⁹ warned. Let us not forget that from 2014 to 2022 Russia participated in the Minsk Accords, in OSCE meetings, in the Normandy Format. Russia acted in conformity with article 2(3) of the UN Charter and spent 8 years trying to solve by peaceful means the issues arising from the 2014 Maidan coup. Alas, it was Ukraine, supported by the US and UK, who refused to implement the Minsk agreements.

As a UN official, I had the opportunity to learn the Russian language and obtain my proficiency certificate. I had the chance to use Russian at OHCHR during numerous missions to the Baltic states and Russia, and in 1994 during missions to Ukraine to monitor the parliamentary and presidential elections. Doubtless, the vast majority of the

people in Donbas and Crimea feel Russian.

Punishment

There is no doubt, that Russian soldiers have committed atrocities in Ukraine, and that Ukrainian soldiers have committed crimes, NATO forces in Afghanistan, Iraq, Abu Ghraib, Guantanamo as well. It is unhelpful to prepare war crimes trials, because experience shows that such trials can only take place if there has been unconditional surrender, as 1945 when Germany and Japan capitulated.

Today’s scenario is different, because there is zero chance that Russia would surrender. If the escalation of tensions continues, there is a danger that someone at NATO will propose a “pre-emptive” nuclear strike against Russia. This would trigger a nuclear response from Russia. Let us remember that the oceans are alive with NATO and Russian submarines all equipped with nuclear warheads. Thus, we should not provoke a nuclear confrontation that could very well terminate human (and animal) life on the planet.

Common sense tells us that we must reduce tensions and try to

reach a compromise, a *modus vivendi*, even though it will take many years before relations between NATO countries and Russia can be restored to a respectful co-existence. What we need is reconciliation, not the continuation of the war by war crimes courts.

There are many historical precedents of major wars ending with amnesties¹⁰. The Thirty Years War (1618-48) that wiped out some 8 million Europeans did not envisage retribution. The 1648 Treaties of Münster and Osnabrück stipulated in common Article 2: “There shall be on the one side and the other a perpetual Oblivion, Amnesty, or Pardon of all that has been committed... in such a manner, that no body... shall practice any Acts of Hostility, entertain any Enmity, or cause any Trouble to each other.”¹¹ The Peace of Westphalia of 1648 has gone down in history as a milestone of international law¹².

We can refer to article 3 of the Treaty of Rijswijk (1697), which ordained amnesty for the soldiers of the French and British monarchies. Article XI of the Final Act of the Congress of Vienna (1815) stipulated amnesties notwithstanding the atrocities of the Napoleonic wars.

In the Brest-Litovsk treaty of 3 March 1918, a treaty imposed by the Central powers on Russia, the parties renounced any claims for their costs of warfare as well as any compensation for war damages. No war crimes trials were envisioned. More recently, Chapter II of the Evian Accords of 1962, which ended the ferocious Algerian war of independence, ordained an amnesty for both sides. The idea of reconciliation was behind article 6 of the 1977 Second Additional Protocol to the Geneva Conventions of 1949, which stipulates in part: “At the end of hostilities, the authorities in power shall endeavour to grant the broadest possible amnesty to persons who have participated in the armed conflict.”

My 2018 report to the Human Rights Council proposed Peace as a human right, a right to reconciliation.

Admittedly, today’s world does not like the concept of “amnesty” and seems to be hooked on revenge. This is dangerous, as we dance on the rim of the precipice. ■

1 UN Society of Writers, former UN Independent Expert on International Order

2 <https://todaynewsafrika.com/african-leaders-present-10-point-solution-to-putin-urging-resolution-of-war-with-ukraine/>

3 <https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/2022/303/1286595.shtml>

4 <https://www.jeffsachs.org/interviewsandmedia/sfky22dgggez9rmkpet9dnthx3yt6ll>

5 <https://www.jfklibrary.org/archives/other-resources/john-f-kennedy-speeches/american-university-19.630.610>

6 https://vk.com/wall-221571675_1272

7 <https://archive.org/details/russia-draft-agreements-nato-usa-december-2021>

8 <https://www.nytimes.com/1997/02/05/opinion/a-fateful-error.html>

9 The Great Delusion, Yale University Press, New Haven, 2018.

10 Alfred de Zayas, “Amnesty Clause” in Rudolf Bernhardt (ed.) Encyclopedia of Public International Law, vol. I, North Holland, Amsterdam, 1992, pp. 148-151.

11 https://avalon.law.yale.edu/17th_century/westphal.asp

12 Alfred de Zayas, “Westphalia, Peace of” in Bernhardt, Encyclopedia of Public International Law, vol. IV, pp. 1465-1469, North Holland, Amsterdam, 2000.



© Guillaume BURLET (Gburlet)

The sheer face of Mont Granier

The Mont Granier landslide

In the mid-13th century, the largest and deadliest landslide ever to occur within the recorded history of the Alps thundered through a valley in the Savoy. Supposedly cheered on by the Devil and miraculously arrested in one area by a Black Madonna and a bunch of exiled monks, the dramatic reshaping of the region gives rise today to the Apremont appellation of wines. So, on a day trip out of town, you can visit the Madonna (she's still there), see a mountain cut in two, and enjoy some fine tasting.

KEVIN CRAMPTON, WHO

An hour south of Geneva, beyond the pretty towns of Annecy, Aix-les-Bains, and Chambéry is the Chartreuse limestones mountains, a part of the French Pre-Alps and the source of the herbal green liqueur for which the region's name is known.

The area is a paradise for walkers, climbers, and skiers, and extends from Grenoble in the south to Lac du Bourget in the north. It is a mysterious landscape carved out

by glaciers some 20,000 years ago and home to some unique geological features such as a double rock arch (the Tour Percée) which has the longest span of any in the Alps. The dramatic arches were only discovered in 2005 when an author was exploring lesser visited areas of the *massif* to write a walking book!

An equally impressive and unusual feature is found at the northern end of the range; Mont Granier has one of the tallest

© Florian Papein / Wikimedia Commons



Sight of the *dent du Chat* (cat's tooth) mountain (1390 meters high), from the *Molard Noir* mountain (1452 m), with the *lac du Bourget* lake and Aix-les-Bains at the background (Savoie, France).

Across the Lac du Bourget from Mont Grainer is the distinctive outcrop known as the *Dent du Chat*. Although innocent of any cataclysmic rockslides, it does boast an equally interesting story. Its name is attributed to the legend that the wizard Merlin (when passing through the area with King Arthur on his way to Italy) trapped and killed a monstrous cat that had been tormenting the local inhabitants.

© Hartman Schedel's Nuremberg Chronicle of 1493



15th century woodcut of the disaster

Woodcuts of the period depict a sky of angry rock closing in on the terrified populace and Salimbene di Adam, a Franciscan chronicler and theologian, recorded the event as follows:

"Between the cities of Grenoble and Chambéry, there is a valley. Above it rises the slope of a very high mountain. One night the mountain collapsed and filled the entire valley. The pieces of rock covered a space 4 miles wide and 4 miles long. In the valley, there were 7 parishes that were buried under the slope. 4,000 people died. Thus, was fulfilled what was written in the book of Job."

Perhaps the most famous story about the catastrophe was a supernatural one. On that fateful evening a group of monks had been expelled from the convent of St. Benoit, reportedly so the local Lord could seize their goods. The monks had taken refuge for the night in the small sanctuary of Our Lady of Myans where they were praying in front of the Black Madonna statue about the injustice. Their prayers turned to desperate pleas for survival as the mountain collapsed above them and the story relates that the rockfall miraculously stopped just in front of the chapel and all were spared.

The monks later related how they heard the voice of Satan that evening, inciting the evil spirits to complete their work of destruction, saying, *"Plus loin, plus loin encore, détruisez la chapelle,"* to

which the spirits replied, *"Nous ne pouvons pas car la Noire nous empeche. Elle est plus forte que nous."*

The Black Madonna is still there and can be visited today in the enlarged Sanctuaire Notre-Dame de Myans, a popular pilgrimage destination. The new church retains traces of the old and has a very unusual structure of two superimposed sanctuaries, the only other church in the world with this feature is the Basilica of the Nativity in Bethlehem.

The falling rock completely reshaped the affected area, burying some areas under 40 metres of debris and creating strange hills (locally called *"mollards"*) as the debris settled. The devastated area was given the name of *les Abymes de Myans* but in the centuries that followed life did return. The limestone soils proved to be ideal for viticulture and the area is now the home of the *Apremont* appellation, the *mollards* providing an ideal slope for catching the grape-ripening sun.

The landslide of 1248 (and a smaller one that occurred in 2016) remain ingrained in the history and memory of the area however. Even the name of its most famous product, the *"Apremont"* wines bears witness to the catastrophe as it is believed to be derived from old French for *"bitter mountain"*! ■



The Sanctuary of the Black Madonna at Myans

sheer cliffs in the Alps (700 metres straight up) and the story of its formation is a blend of the awe-inspiring, the terrifying, and the outright supernatural.

The towering cliff exists because at some during the evening/early morning of November 24th and 25th in 1248, a landslide of truly Biblical proportions cleaved the mountain in two. It had been raining particularly heavily and the water had seeped down through the limestone to the impermeable

marl beneath. This created the slip conditions that, sometime in the very early morning, allowed an estimated 500 million m³ to break off of the mountain and rush into the valley below covering an area of around 30km² in rock, mud, water and dust. It is still the largest and deadliest landslide recorded in the history of the Alps, as five villages were buried entirely (and a further two partially) and an estimated 1,000 people were killed although some sources suggest a much higher figure.

Join the ITU¹ chess club and unleash your inner grandmaster!

The game of chess was born in India during the Gupta dynasty in the 6th century. Today, more than 1500 years later, it is played in 172 countries. Chess is one of India's contributions to world culture, from the games played in the court of kings, to those played in villages, and now, it is a professional sport. Why don't you come to play and forget your work worries for a while? By changing your activity, you will return to work with more energy.



ITU

The ITU Chess Club is one of the oldest leisure clubs in existence of the UN system in the region, as it was created in the 1970's. The Chess Club also acts as the focal point for the UN chess community in Geneva.

Are you ready to make your strategic moves and conquer the chessboard? Look no further! The

ITU Chess Club welcomes chess enthusiasts of all levels to join our vibrant community.

Why Choose join the ITU Chess Club?

Improve Your Skills: Whether you're a beginner or a seasoned player, our club offers a supportive environment to enhance your chess prowess. Learn from experienced players and boost your tactical and strategic abilities.

Connect with Chess Enthusiasts: Chess is more than just a game; it's a way to connect with like-minded individuals. Join us to forge lasting friendships and engage in thrilling chess battles team competitions.

Compete and Win: Sharpen your skills by participating in our club tournaments. Show off your abilities and compete for prestigious titles and prizes. Strong players will find exciting challenges in our participation in regional competitions, simultaneous tournaments against Grandmasters, and prize-winning club events.

Fun and Fellowship: Our club is not just about competition; it's also about having fun! Enjoy

casual games, chess-themed events, and social gatherings with fellow members.

Even in the most intense chess matches, there's always room for a bit of humor. Chess enthusiasts often inject humor into their games to lighten the mood, and it's moments like these that make the game even more enjoyable. Even in the most serious of competitions, moments of levity can arise, demonstrating the human side of even the greatest chess players.

Hereafter there is a funny story, but probably untrue, as you can read on Edward Winter's website¹.

Emmanuel Lasker was on a long boat ride. Several people were playing chess to pass the time aboard the ship. Blissfully unaware they were in the midst of a world champion (from 1894 to 1921), the amateurs invited Lasker to play.

One of the amateurs asked Lasker before their game, "how is your chess?"

To which Lasker casually responded, "mediocre".
"Then I will play without my



queen to make the game fair”, proudly stated the unknowing amateur.

Lasker of course lost the game on purpose. But after the game Lasker protested, “the game was not fair! My queen constantly got in the way of my King attempting to find safety. I was checkmated because my queen restricted my King’s ability to find safe squares. I demand a rematch so that you will have to play with your queen and I will not play with mine.”

Most of the onlookers laughed behind his back. His opponent reluctantly agreed as he marked this spectacle as a waste of time. Lasker played this time at full strength but without his queen. To everyone’s surprise, Lasker won the game in embarrassing fashion. Afterwards he remarked, “you see? Having a queen only inhibits your ability to win.” Lasker left a group of chess players silent and questioning all they knew in the world to be right, not realizing they had just been duped by the world champion. ■

1 International Telecommunication Union

2 https://www.chesshistory.com/winter/winter81.html#CN_7057

Do you want to play chess?

Come to our club reunions on Fridays between 12:30 and 14:00 in room T.09 in the first basement of the Tower opposite the lifts, behind the door marked “press room”, or contact us! Or play a giant chess garden game at the patio of Montbrillant cafeteria freely available from May to November.

Eventful Calendar

From rapid tournaments to chess workshops and analysis sessions, we offer a diverse range of events to keep your chess journey exciting.

- *Jorge Besada Cup*: The annual tournament open to all club members.
- *Ernst Smirnov Cup*: An enjoyable annual Blitz tournament as an end-of-year event.
- *Coupe du Léman*: A regional tournament of Geneva clubs. At present, ITU is playing in Category B. See <https://www.coupe-du-leman.ch/>
- *UN Inter-Agency Games*: Actively sending players and a team. Won 2nd place just before the pandemic. See <https://www.interagencygames.org/>
- *Chézery Open*: A traditional informal get-together at the President d’honneur’s mountain residence.

Ready to make your next move? Join the ITU Chess Club today and immerse yourself in the world of kings, queens, and knights!

Contact Us

Derrick Deane, +41 22 776 63 04, deaned@bluewin.ch
Adrian Soriano, +33 7 53 54 88 48, manuel.soriano@itu.int

Rate/fees: CHF 20 per year

Composition of the Committee:

- President: Derrick DEANE
- President d’honneur: Peter HENDI
- Secretary: Nelson VERASTEGUI
- Treasurer: Adrian SORIANO
- Focal Point: Rhisael RABE

Where

Room V.09 in the 1st basement of the Tower behind the Press Room door

When

Friday from 12:30 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Remember

Chess isn’t just a game; it’s a lifestyle. Join us and experience the thrill of the board like never before. Checkmate boredom, join the ITU Chess Club now!

Five years on – the value of the protocol to eliminate illicit trade in tobacco products

Illicit trade in tobacco products continues to undermine tobacco control measures, posing a threat to global public health, security and government revenues. In response to this pressing concern, Parties adopted the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products¹ under the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC).



SECRETARIAT OF THE WHO FCTC

As we mark the fifth anniversary of the entry into force of the Protocol, its governing body – the Meeting of the Parties – will convene in Panama City this November for its third session, where cross-border strategies to counter illicit trade will be reviewed and strengthened. Additionally, a global information-sharing focal point is set to be launched to assist Parties in monitoring and controlling the movement of tobacco products to prevent diversion into illicit channels.

The financial losses incurred by governments due to illicit trade are substantial, as customs duties and excise taxes on tobacco products are not collected. Recent estimates indicate that the elimination of trade in illicit cigarettes could potentially yield annual global revenues of about US\$ 47.4 billion.

Illicit trade increases the accessibility and affordability of tobacco products, thus fueling the tobacco epidemic and undermining tobacco control policies. The most vulnerable groups, including low-income populations and young people, are disproportionately affected by increased access

to often cheaper tobacco products. If illicit trade were eliminated globally, it is estimated that a million premature deaths could be avoided every six years, thanks to higher average cigarette prices and reduced consumption.

The United Nations International Computing Centre (UNICC) supports the Secretariat of the WHO FCTC in their work to eliminate illicit trade in tobacco. Sameer Chauhan, Director at the UNICC says, “Our collaborative efforts have led to the development of a fit-for-purpose platform that facilitates a secure information exchange between Parties to the Protocol, allowing Parties to fulfil a key requirement of the Treaty.” Both teams are working to further demonstrate how innovative digital tools can be used to strengthen international cooperation.

The Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products represents a global solution to a global problem. The international treaty, the first of its kind, aims to eliminate all forms of illicit trade in tobacco products through a comprehensive package of measures to be implemented by countries in cooperation with each other. The Protocol builds upon and complements Article 15 of the WHO FCTC, which requires Parties to implement measures to counter illicit trade in tobacco products,

such as supply chain control measures and cooperation in law enforcement and prosecution.

Article 4 of the Protocol is based on the provisions of Article 5 of the WHO FCTC, including Article 5.3 on the need for Parties to protect tobacco control policies from commercial and other vested interests of the tobacco industry. Moreover, it explicitly calls for Parties to ensure maximum possible transparency with respect to any interactions with the tobacco industry; and Article 8.12 regarding tracking and tracing systems states that obligations assigned to a Party shall not be performed by or delegated to the tobacco industry.

Negotiated over several years, the Protocol entered into force on 25 September 2018, and currently 67 Parties are committed to its implementation. It not only assists Parties in protecting the achievements under WHO FCTC, but also addresses key issues such as transnational organized crime, corruption, money laundering, national security, losses in government revenues, poverty, and tobacco-related diseases.

The Protocol aligns with the United Nations’ 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, specifically Goal 16, which aims to promote peace, justice and strong

institutions. Illicit trade, often associated with organized crime, poses a significant challenge to achieving that Goal. By combating illicit trade in tobacco products, the Protocol contributes to better governance, strengthened enforcement capacities and international cooperation in the fight against organized crime.

Dr. Adriana Blanco Marquizo, Head of the Secretariat of the WHO FCTC and the Protocol celebrates this occasion adding the following message: “today we celebrate 5 years of the entry into force of the Protocol, which is still a young treaty. There is work to be done to achieve the cross-border implementation required to meet its objective. I encourage Parties to ratify the Protocol and look forward to continuing our efforts to successfully implement this vital link to a healthy, tobacco-free future.”

The Third Session of the Meeting of the Parties (MOP3)² to the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products will take place this year in Panama City, Panama from 27–30 November 2023. Accredited journalists are permitted to observe the event, which is a meeting of the governing body of the international treaty. Information on accreditation is available on the FCTC website³. ■

- 1 [Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products](#)
- 2 <https://fctc.who.int/protocol/governance/meeting-of-the-parties/third-session-of-the-meeting-of-the-parties>
- 3 <https://fctc.who.int/newsroom/information-for-the-media>

GLOBAL HEALTH MATTERS

RISKING LIVES TO SAVE LIVES: HEALTH WORKERS IN CONFLICT ZONES

with your host, **GARRY ASLANYAN**

FEATURING:

- ANONYMOUS**
Health worker, Sudan
- SAMER JABBOUR**
Cardiologist and Professor of Public Health Practice, American University of Beirut
- SUSANNAH SIRKIN**
Independent advocate and former Director of Policy, Physicians for Human Rights

The tides of human rights

Progress and retrogression characterize the history of international law and human rights. There are tides of opportunity, moments of glory, moments of shame.



Eleanor Roosevelt portrait

ALFRED DE ZAYAS, UN SOCIETY OF WRITERS

Today our world is experiencing chaos, but not more so than in the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries. At least we are not burning witches or massacring indigenous Hopi, Pequots, Sioux and Tainos, the slave trade is abolished, colonialism is drastically reduced. We have seen a phenomenal codification of legal norms, the UN Charter, the UDHR, the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Geneva Conventions, the establishment of regional human rights courts. We hail the growing recognition of the rights of half the population of the planet – women – the measures taken on behalf of persons with disabilities. We welcome the entry into force in

January 2021 of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, the Declaration of October 2021 by the Human Rights Council recognizing the Environment as a Human Right. While we deplore the continued practice of torture in some countries, we express relief over its universal condemnation, and the gradual abolition of the aberration of “capital punishment”.

On the other hand, we must admit that there is significant retrogression in many fields, including the erosion of the concept of Peace as a Human Right, the backsliding from General Assembly Resolution 39/11 of 12 November 1984, the unwillingness of belligerents to talk with each other. We deplore the scourge of 25 million victims of human trafficking, including 3.4 million children. We denounce the escalation of urban violence and mass-killings, the rise of international terrorism.

Today there is scarce protection of the democratic right to know, the right to access information, the right to freedom of opinion and expression. We see censorship by governments and the private sector, arbitrariness in Facebook and YouTube, the blocking of news services including RT, Sputnik and Tass in EU countries, the Orwellian new Digital Services Act, the brazen indoctrination practiced by the media, the excesses of “cancel culture”, the epidemic of self-censorship, the social acceptance of Russophobia and Sinophobia, the

weaponization of sports so that sportswomen and men can be banned from competition merely on account of their nationalities.

Serious retrogression becomes evident in the weakened protection of privacy, family life and family values, the concerted attacks on the concept of the family and parental authority, the denigration and ridicule of religious beliefs.

Retrogression is apparent in the practices of institutions established to protect our rights. Many institutions have been hijacked for geopolitical and ideological purposes. *Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?* (Juvenalis, 6th *Satire*), who guards over the guardians? Crucial institutions such as the UN Human Rights Council, ECHR, IACHR, OPCW are betraying their mandates, instrumentalizing human rights for purposes of geopolitical confrontation, instead of devising preventive strategies and mechanisms to secure human dignity. *Only we can be the guardians!* While we realize that governments lie to us on a daily basis, we must push back and reclaim democracy. We do not need any Ministry of Truth as in 1984. Alas, we are already in the dystopia of Huxley's *Brave New World*.

Among the gravest instances of retrogression is the obsession with punishment, that self-righteousness that invites us to lapidate the adulteress (*John VIII, 1-11*), the arrogance of “lawfare”, both in domestic and



Fountain of Warsaw, with the Palais de Chaillot in the background, where the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted on 10 Dec. 48.

© Plocc / Wikimedia Commons

international affairs. If Christianity taught us anything, it is that we must forgive to be forgiven: *et dimite nobis debita nostra sicut et nos dimittimus debitoribus nostris*. Alas, the mainstream ngo's – with the complicity of the media – have transformed the concept of “amnesty” into a curse word. Yet, amnesties are not bad *per se*. Sometimes amnesties pave the way to reconciliation. Article 6 of the Second Additional Protocol of 1977 to the Geneva Conventions stipulates “the authorities in power shall endeavour to grant the broadest possible amnesty to persons who have participated in the armed conflict”. Article 2 of the Peace of Westphalia stipulates “there shall be on the one side and the other a perpetual Oblivion, Amnesty, or Pardon of all that has been committed since the beginning of these Troubles, in what place, or what manner soever the Hostilities have been practiced, in such a manner, that nobody, under any pretext whatsoever, shall practice any Acts of Hostility, entertain any Enmity, or cause any Trouble to each other other... but that all that has passed

on the one side, and the other, as well before as during the War, in Words, Writings, and Outrageous Actions, in Violences, Hostilities, Damages and Expenses, without any respect to Persons or Things, shall be entirely abolished in such a manner that all that might be demanded of, or pretended to, by each other on that behalf, shall be buried in eternal Oblivion.”

We are told that the International Criminal Court represents progress. Some, however, consider it a significant step back to the primitive age of the law of revenge, *lex talionis*. Indeed, vengeance is incompatible with the *acquis* of civilization. Punishment is hardly a civilized answer to problems. Education, conflict-prevention, good faith, mutual respect and international solidarity are.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted 75 years ago at the Palais Chaillot in Paris, was indeed a high point in the tide of human rights. Hitherto we have failed to implement its provisions, particularly article

28: “Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized”. That remains our challenge. ■





Field research, India.

© Kevin Crampton

The WHO business analysis community

A group of colleagues are coming together at the World Health Organisation to share tips and tricks for their work as “business analysts”. This discipline, which has gained recognition and importance over the last decade, is now understood to be key to successful projects. The group is looking to expand and find kindred spirits beyond the WHO, hence a shameless bit of self-publicity in the pages of *newSpecial*.

KEVIN CRAMPTON, WHO

Are you a “business analyst”, or do you perhaps work with business analysts? Would you even know what the role entails and just what they do? I mean, it is a pretty generic term, isn't it? Don't we all need to bring some analysis skills to bear in the execution of our everyday business? Why should some (probably overpaid)

consultant claim the title and some specialist knowledge in this area?!

In fact, the term has come to encompass a specific discipline and skillset which has become increasingly respected and recognised as an integral part of project delivery. A business analyst is the person that analyses



© Kevin Crampton

Classroom training for the roll out of new software, Democratic Republic of Congo.

a business need and works on options to suggest potential solutions and there is more to that than you might first imagine.

Still sound too general and woolly? Well consider a concrete example; you're commissioning a new software product – the business team know exactly what they want and describe it in detail in a set of workshops, and then the information technology team go off and build what they understood is wanted. Months into the future when the work is finished, the software is shown and the business responds with either, "Ah that is not what we meant, you misunderstood a few points," or more commonly,

"It is what we asked for, but now that we see it, we understand how it could work differently and would like you to rebuild half of the work."

This sort of scenario was surprisingly common in the past, leading

to loss of good will, overspend, and overrun on projects. And it was out of this sort of gap that the need for a more formal role arise, a way of getting better at capturing, documenting, and validating needs before running off and building a solution. Also, to study whether that solution, when delivered, is really providing the expected business value. In short to get more structured and formal on how we study, plan for, execute and then monitor a business change.

This led to the discipline of the business analyst – someone who effectively acts as a bridge between the customer that needs a business change and the project team that are tasked with bringing that change about. The business analyst learns the processes, vocabulary, and terminology of the area in which they work, and also speaks the language of the developers, engineers, software architects that need to build a

solution but shouldn't need to become experts in the business domain to do that.

As a result, it is a very varied and interesting role, around which a recognised methodology, tools, and certifications have grown. A business analyst becomes adept at research, running workshops and interviews, asking the right questions and even challenging the customer on what they think they need to ensure requests are grounded in proper future value. Organisations like the International Institute of Business Analysts (IIBA) in Toronto provide training and certifications for business analysts, shortened to the acronym BA, and the ranks of recruits making the career choice is growing with salaries above the mean for the IT sector.

The World Health Organisation employs a number of dedicated business analysts. The majority of these are in the Information

Management & Technology (IMT) department, because it is there that a large number of projects are run under an established Project Management Office. But BAs also arrive at the organisation from the ranks of contractors and vendors, suppliers that are asked to run a project for the organisation and bring their own BA expertise to ensure that they capture and analyse requirements properly.

Although the WHO has a Project Management Office and a Project Management Centre of Excellence, responsible for training and guiding managers to keep projects on track, there has historically been a lack of a similar support and organisation for business analysts.

This gap meant that the discipline of a BA was practiced in different ways across the organisation and using different approaches, templates, methods, and metrics.



@KevinCrampton

Business analysis workshop to understand needs.



@KevinCrampton

Business analysis isn't confined to the office only. A WHO business analyst studies the use of a contact tracing application in Bangladesh.

In 2021 a group of BAs decided therefore to self-organise into a community that would be open to anyone practicing or interested in the role and exist to share resources, tips and tricks and provide support and mentoring to one another. This group was deliberately not turned into a formal mechanism but kept as a “grass roots” initiative of interested colleagues providing their time for mutual benefit. Colleagues helping colleagues.

The community grew from an initial core group of BAs to encompass others from across the organisation, involving those with business analyst on their CVs and those that were being asked to perform the typical tasks of a BA without even being aware that such a job title exists.

The group has a central repository for sharing templates, training material, useful links, examples of others’ work and meets every three months in a virtual call to hear a presentation of interest and swap information. They have also made contact with the local Geneva chapter of the International Institute of Business Analysts to forge stronger links with the wider community of local BAs beyond the United Nations structure.

The purpose of this article therefore is to extend a warm invitation more generally among the Geneva United Nations agencies, to say that we are interested in hearing from Business Analysts in any sister organisations beyond WHO and particularly keen to link with any other BA communities that already exist. We want to grow and learn from others’ experiences and ideally create a Geneva-wide business analysis community who understand the special challenges of executing our work in the United Nations culture and context.

We feel that context is a pretty special one. Often business analysts come into the United Nations system bringing experience from the private or Government sector and then have a miniature culture shock as they need to adapt to our particular culture and ways of working. A business analysis community also aims to help colleagues navigate those challenges; the kind of support network I wish I had found when first joining WHO. The United Nations in Geneva and WHO both have excellent mentoring services, and our BA Community members also engage there if colleagues want a more formal and structured mechanism for “buddying-up” for professional guidance.

Finally, business analysis communities should act as centres for continuous improvement for the discipline; not just how it is applied in our work each day, but an end-to-end services that helps us strengthen our recruitment of business analysts, the monitoring of their work and then capturing the lessons learned and institutional knowledge when they roll off of their mission, thereby taking a holistic approach to the role.

All noble aims, but the challenge is always in the details of course - as you come to put your high principles into practice. Business analysts are attracted to the work that they do however precisely because they have curiosity and like working in lots of different business areas and domains. They are often asked to work on business process improvements or strategies for strengthening work, and so it should be natural to turn that same critical eye onto themselves and the way they deliver their own service. If that can be done within the friendly and constructive framework of a community of peers, then we feel that the potential benefits are clear.

All of that might seem like a pretty heavy preamble but, in essence, if you find yourself being asked

to work on any kind of business “change” – be it a project to create a new product or service, or inputting to a strategy on a new direction of work, then you may already be doing business analysis, and a friendly bunch of colleagues are ready to hear about your experience, share their own and push for mutual excellence in this critical, and often neglected, area of our work. ■

The IIBA describes the work as follows:
“Business Analysis is the practice of enabling change in an organizational context, by defining needs and recommending solutions that deliver value to stakeholders.”
 Taken from <https://www.iiba.org>

IVANA KNEZEVIC¹

Vaccination for healthy nations

*Don't hesitate!
Hurry and get vaccinated
not attacked,
devastated and wracked
by a merciless foe
that will never forgive
your failure to prevent,
and chance to live.*

*Protect your loved ones
and all
who may be hurt
in the storm of a pandemic released.
Stop spreading the virus,
help prevent the epidemic.
And let your calming wisdom fly
to those who cry.*

*Bid farewell to fear,
by explaining
how every dose
given to those
who need it most
will kindle hope
of a healthy tomorrow,
and vanquish pain, vanquish sorrow.*

*Science in a vial,
confirmation in a clinical trial,
a tireless public health army
lives devoted to finding solutions,
opening eyes to the reality
of ignorance
and misunderstanding never-ending,
the modern plague of social trending.*

*The hollow needle, an arrow of promise
to pierce the despair
of those who want the chance
to create a better place,
of joy, play and dance,
and to enjoy life and the freedom
to breathe in the mountainous air
of challenges always there.*

*So again I say,
don't hesitate, don't delay.
Gather your courage
and get protected,
remember
that every shot counts,
saving lives
and dispelling fear.*

*So an act of solidarity then,
for the future health
and well-being of all,
in place of illness and of death.
But also a tribute to those
lost in the swell of earlier waves,
who taught us all
that vaccination saves.*

¹ WHO Headquarters, Geneva, Switzerland



© Carli Edelembos

Cols routiers de Suisse (8)

Le col du Grand St-Bernard

Le passage du col du Grand-Saint-Bernard, situé à 2473 mètres d'altitude, est considéré comme l'un des plus vieux itinéraires européens reliant le nord et le sud des Alpes. Des monnaies gauloises trouvées au col indiquent un passage commercial déjà bien avant l'époque romaine.

CARLA EDELEMBOS,
UN SOCIETY OF WRITERS

Au temps des Celtes, le col était dédié à Pen, le dieu des sommets. Le col reste aux mains des Celtes jusqu'en 57 av J.-C., quand les Romains conquièrent le col. Sous l'empereur Claude (41-54 apr. J.-C.), la route fut rendue carrossable et un temple dédié à Jupiter y fut construit. C'est pourquoi pendant des siècles, le col s'est appelé Mont-Joux, la montagne de Jupiter. Afin d'intégrer le culte celte de Pen, son nom fut ajouté à celui de Jupiter, et le dieu vénéré sur le col fut donc appelé Jupiter Pennin. Le col figure sur la table

de Peutinger, une copie du douzième siècle d'une carte romaine indiquant les routes principales de l'empire romain. Une borne romaine se trouve toujours à côté de l'église à Bourg St. Pierre, le dernier village avant le col.

À la fin du 3^e siècle, le soldat Maurice et ses compagnons de la légion thébaine passèrent probablement par le col pour rejoindre Acaunum dans la vallée du Rhone, où ils furent mis à mort sur ordre de l'empereur Maximien, parce qu'ils avaient refusé de persécuter des chrétiens. Une abbaye dédiée

à saint Maurice fut fondée à Acaunum en 515 et, au 11^e siècle la ville prit le nom de son saint.

Même après le déclin de l'empire romain, la route continua à être fréquentée, comme en attestent des écrits du Moyen Âge. Pendant le règne de Charlemagne, la voie romaine fut améliorée et fortifiée et son armée transita par le col en 773. Charlemagne lui-même passa vraisemblablement par le col en 801, sur le chemin de retour de Rome où il fut couronné empereur par le Pape Léon III. L'archevêque de Canterbury, Sigéric, passa par

le col en route pour Rome, en 992. En écrivant son itinéraire, il fut à l'origine d'un chemin de pèlerinage, la Via Francigena, qui est maintenant un chemin pédestre européen et également un itinéraire pour cyclistes.

Au 10^e siècle, les Sarrasins avaient pris le contrôle du col. Après leur départ, le col restait peu sûr, et des bandits rendaient le passage dangereux. En 1027 les souverains d'Europe décident de sécuriser le chemin vers Rome. Bernard, l'archidiacre d'Aoste, se voit confier la tâche de restaurer le monastère de Bourg-Saint-Pierre,



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© Carla Edlerbos



© Carla Edlerbos



© Carla Edlerbos

détruit par les Sarrasins. Mais c'est au sommet du col, à haute altitude, que Bernard décide de bâtir son hospice en 1050, en se servant des pierres des ruines du temple de Jupiter. La communauté religieuse qui y est installée a pour vocation de secourir et servir les passants du col. Vu l'importance de cette mission, des dons ont afflué de partout en Europe, et d'autres hospices ont pu être construits, comme au col du Petit-Saint-Bernard reliant la Vallée d'Aoste à l'Isère.

On sait très peu de choses à propos de Saint Bernard qui reste un personnage mystérieux. Il est souvent mélangé avec son homonyme Bernard de Clairvaux qui vivait un siècle plus tard. Une fausse biographie écrite au 15^e siècle l'a associé à la famille noble de Menthon près d'Annecy, mais ce lien n'est pas établi historiquement et même peu probable. Aucune autre famille ne le situe dans son arbre

généalogique. Le 15 juin 1923, le pape Pie XI le déclara patron des habitants et des voyageurs des Alpes, des alpinistes et même des skieurs. Bernard est donc le premier saint qui protège des gens qui pratiquent un loisir! Afin de marquer ce centenaire, une année jubilaire a été ouverte le 15 juin 2023. Le 18 juin 2023, une messe pour des guides de montagne a été célébrée au col, avec bénédiction des cordes.

Des centaines de vies ont été sauvées grâce à l'hospice. Malheureusement, beaucoup de passants furent aussi retrouvés sans vie. En 1476, une morgue fut construite, où se trouvent les dépouilles de 150 victimes de la montagne. La visite de la morgue fut une attraction macabre jusqu'au milieu du 20^e siècle, quand les chanoines la firent murer. Avant l'arrivée du télégraphe puis du téléphone, les chanoines et les marronniers, des guides de montagne

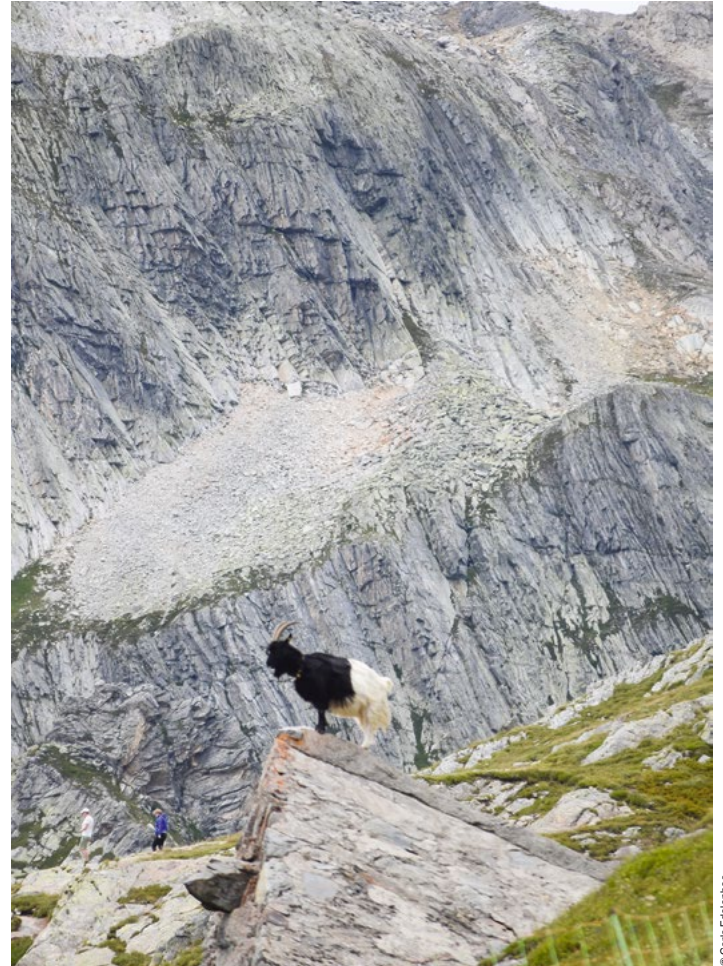
employés par l'hospice, descendaient chaque jour d'hiver ou de mauvais temps pour voir s'il y avait des voyageurs en route qui auraient besoin de leur aide. Les fameux chiens saint-bernards arrivèrent au col dans la deuxième moitié du 17^e siècle. Ils ont beaucoup contribué au renom et à la popularité de l'hospice. Le chien Barry I est réputé pour avoir sauvé la vie de plus de 40 personnes entre 1800 et 1812. Des générations de Barries lui ont succédé, aidant les chanoines dans leur mission de sauvetage. Avec l'arrivée des moyens de sauvetage modernes, les chiens ont perdu leur rôle de héros. En 2005, l'hospice a confié l'élevage des chiens à la Fondation Barry et les chiens se trouvent actuellement sur le col uniquement pendant l'été, pour la grande joie des familles venues les admirer.

Les prévisions météorologiques ont toujours été importantes pour l'hospice, vu les conditions

extrêmes à cette altitude. En 1817 une station météorologique a été installée et des mesures météorologiques sont transférées quotidiennement à MétéoSuisse. La station climatologique du Grand-Saint-Bernard est une de deux stations en Suisse (l'autre se situe sur le Säntis) qui font partie du système mondial d'observation du climat SMOC (plus connu sous son acronyme anglais GCOS) lancé en 1992 par l'OMM. Le climat au col est rude: le froid, le brouillard, la neige et le vent qui peut souffler très fort créent des conditions de vie difficiles. En hiver, la qualité de la neige est contrôlée chaque jour depuis l'hospice pour établir le risque d'avalanche et une luge d'avalanche reste toujours prête à l'usage. La neige peut tomber encore tard dans la saison: en 2023 le *Giro*, le tour cycliste d'Italie, a dû prendre le tunnel à cause d'une trop épaisse couche de neige tombée sur la route du col le 19 mai 2023.



© Carita Estelombos



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Pendant des siècles le col du Grand-Saint-Bernard faisait partie de la Savoie. Mais après la bataille de la Planta en 1475, les Valaisans chassèrent les Savoyards du Bas-Valais et le col devint valaisan. La frontière actuelle avec l'Italie, qui se trouve une centaine de mètres au-delà de l'hospice, n'a été définitivement fixée qu'en 1906.

Beaucoup de personnes célèbres ont traversé le col, comme l'écrivain français François Rabelais en 1541 et, au 18^e siècle, le naturaliste genevois Horace Bénédict de Saussure qui y étudia la géologie et la météorologie avec l'aide des chanoines. Le registre des passants à l'hospice montre qu'au 19^e siècle, les premiers touristes anglais commencèrent à voyager par le col, à côté des diplomates, des marchands et des pèlerins qui y passaient depuis toujours. Mais le passage le plus renommé est bien celui de Napoléon

Bonaparte avec son armée de plus de 30 000 hommes en mai 1800, pour se battre contre des troupes autrichiennes en Italie. Qui ne connaît pas le fameux tableau peint par Jean-Louis David qui montre Napoléon héroïque sur un fougueux cheval blanc, franchissant le Saint-Bernard? Peu importe que ce tableau soit de la propagande, et que Bonaparte ait traversé le col sur le dos d'une mule, escorté par un guide. Son passage du col a causé beaucoup de dégâts, l'armée requérant bêtes de somme et vivres, sans paiement bien sûr. Des habitants aidaient à transporter l'artillerie vers le col sur promesse de mille francs par canon – et ils n'ont rien reçu. Une plaque inaugurée en l'an 2000 commémore ce passage et les épreuves endurés par les populations des vallées du Grand-Saint-Bernard. D'ailleurs, à l'intérieur de l'hospice se trouve le mausolée du jeune général Louis Desaix, tué en Italie dans la

bataille de Marengo en 1800, à qui Napoléon voulait offrir «les Alpes pour tombeau et les chanoines du Saint-Bernard pour gardiens».

En novembre 1839, la Diète du Valais décréta l'ouverture d'une route à véhicules par le Grand-Saint-Bernard. Après de longues années de travaux, la route rejoignit enfin le col côté suisse en 1893. La route sur le versant italien s'acheva en 1905. Après avoir été bitumée en 1920, elle fut ouverte à la circulation automobile. La route n'étant praticable que 4 mois par an, en 1938 déjà l'Etat du Valais décida d'autoriser le percement d'un tunnel. Mais des oppositions diverses, surtout de la part des autorités militaires et des partisans du tunnel ferroviaire du Simplon, retardèrent sa réalisation. Finalement, les travaux commencèrent en 1958, et le 19 mars 1964 le premier tunnel routier transalpin d'Europe, long de presque 6 kilomètres,

fut inauguré. La route menant au tunnel fut modernisée.

Juste avant l'entrée du tunnel, se trouve le lac du barrage des Toules, construit dans les années 1960. Sur ce tronçon, la route a dû être déplacée de quelques centaines de mètres. La cantine de Proz, qui servait de relais où les passants pouvaient se reposer avant de continuer la montée, se trouve maintenant sous les eaux. En décembre 2019, un petit parc solaire flottant fut installé sur le lac, à 1800 mètres d'altitude, une première mondiale en milieu alpin, pour vérifier la faisabilité d'un plus grand parc. Après trois ans d'exploitation, les résultats ont montré que l'installation photovoltaïque a produit environ 30% plus d'énergie qu'une installation classique. Romande Energie, qui mène le projet, pense élargir le parc dans les années à venir sur un tiers de la surface du lac et produire 22 millions de



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kilowattheures par an pour couvrir les besoins de 6 200 ménages.

En été, des voyageurs peuvent emprunter l'ancienne route du col à partir d'où commence le tunnel, ce que nous avons évidemment fait. Le contraste est saisissant: la route à partir de Martigny passant par les villages d'Orsières, Liddes et Bourg St. Pierre, est moderne et plutôt ennuyeuse, à quelques exceptions près. Mais à partir de l'embranchement du tunnel, nous voici dans un décor alpin impressionnant! Arrivés au col, nous nous sommes réjouis de contempler les parois enneigées du Grand Combin dont le sommet se situe à 4314 mètres d'altitude. Vers l'Italie, la vue donne sur les Alpes pennines dont le pic du Pain de Sucre se distingue avec sa silhouette typique, on dirait un petit Cervin.

L'Italie commence à l'autre bout du petit lac du col. Côté italien, des kiosques à souvenir longent le lac et une grande statue de saint Bernard domine la scène. Côté suisse, l'ambiance est un peu moins commerciale, et la

présence de l'hospice crée une belle spiritualité. Jusqu'au début du 20^e siècle, dormir et manger à l'hospice étaient offerts aux passants en accord avec la devise de l'hospice: *Christus adoratur et pascitur*, ici le Christ est adoré et nourri. Mais avec l'inauguration de la route carrossable en 1905 et la progression du tourisme qui s'en est suivie, cela a changé. Maintenant il y a la possibilité de loger moyennant paiement soit à l'hospice (toute l'année) soit à l'auberge (uniquement en été) qui est reliée à l'hospice par un passerelle. D'ailleurs, la cuisine de l'auberge est très bonne, et nous en avons bien profité.

L'hospice se visite gratuitement. Dans une petite salle, nous regardons un film qui montre des images des années 1930 quand des chanoines très sportifs sortaient à ski pour aller secourir des passants perdus dans la neige. À l'église qui a été reconstruite en 1685, nous remarquons une corde d'escalade et un piolet, placés sous la croix, comme prière pour la protection des alpinistes. La crypte au

sous-sol est un lieu de silence et méditation; nous y admirons les œuvres d'art du sculpteur français Jean-Pierre Augier, surtout la statue du pèlerin, emblème de l'hospice. Un étage plus haut, le trésor de l'hospice montre des objets remarquables qui sont encore régulièrement utilisés pendant les célébrations. Parmi les objets précieux, il y a un buste reliquaire de saint Bernard datant du début du 13^e siècle qui est la première représentation du saint.

Derrière l'auberge se trouvent le chenil des saint-bernards et le musée de l'hospice. Malheureusement, quand nous voulons admirer les chiens, ils sont tous en profond sommeil. Plus tard nous rencontrons encore quelques saint-bernards sortis pour une promenade. Il est possible de réserver une balade avec les chiens, une activité que les enfants adorent! L'origine du musée remonte à 1764, quand les chanoines ont commencé à présenter leurs découvertes archéologiques à leurs hôtes parmi lesquels se trouvaient des scientifiques et

des archéologues. Ce premier musée du Valais raconte maintenant la riche histoire de l'hospice et contient entre autres une stèle égyptienne obtenue en échange d'un chien saint-bernard! On peut y admirer une grande collection d'objets archéologiques trouvés sur place, ou encore des collections de papillons et des collections botaniques.

Presque 1000 ans après la fondation de l'hospice, les chanoines sont toujours là, prêts à accueillir des passants l'année durant. N'hésitez pas à leur rendre visite, cela vaut la peine de monter en voiture, à moto, à vélo ou à pied! ■

Plus d'informations:

- <https://www.gsbernard.com/fr/>
- www.viefrancigene.org/fr
- <https://fr.eurovelo.com/ev5>
- <https://www.centenairesaintbernard.ch/>
- <https://barryland.ch/fondation-barry/>
- <https://gcos.wmo.int/en/home>
- <https://www.aubergehospice.ch/>



Construit entre 1350 et 180 av. J.-C. par Ptolémée VI, le temple de Kom Ombo honore les dieux Sobek et Haroëris.

© Claude Maillard

ÉGYPTE (4/4)

Néfertari, femme de pouvoir

«Maîtresse de la Haute et de la Basse-Égypte», «Dame de charme», «Douce d'amour», «Riche de louange», «Belle de visage»... les épithètes les plus sublimes ont été employées pour qualifier la reine Néfertari, la principale grande épouse royale du pharaon Ramsès II.

CLAUDE MAILLARD

L'histoire de l'Égypte ancienne est prodigue en grandes figures politiques féminines. On pense évidemment aux véritables «pharaonnes» que furent Hatshepsout et Cléopâtre qui tinrent les rênes de l'État égyptien pendant plusieurs décennies. On songe également aux grandes reines du Nouvel Empire, Néfertiti qui partagea la vie d'Akhénaton, mais aussi Néfertari.

Son nom signifie «*la plus belle*». Néfertari et Ramsès II, l'un des plus beaux et touchants pharaons de toute l'histoire d'Égypte, forment un couple souverain et amoureux. Pendant vingt ans, ils incarnent côte à côte la destinée d'un empire alors à son apogée. De toutes les épouses

de Ramsès II, aucune ne rivalisera avec Néfertari. Elle est associée au pouvoir du Pharaon. La reine disparaît en l'an 24 du règne de Ramsès II, au moment où l'on procède à la construction du temple que lui consacre son époux à Abou Simbel. L'ultime, le plus sensible des hommages à la belle Néfertari.

Kom Ombo, à la gloire de deux grandes divinités

Le jour se lève sur le Nil, la faune s'éveille et le silence de la nuit fait rapidement place au concert matinal des oiseaux. Le soleil qui se profile à l'horizon au-dessus des dunes illumine le désert et réchauffe l'atmosphère. La vie reprend son cours sur les rives du fleuve. C'est le moment où les pêcheurs qui ont sorti leur

barque dès l'aube remontent leurs filets. Il est temps pour nous de larguer les amarres et poursuivre notre navigation en direction d'Assouan distante d'une cinquantaine de kilomètres.

Après quelques instants se profile au loin le temple de Kom Ombo. Majestueux au bord du Nil, entouré d'une palmeraie luxuriante, il possède une situation vraiment digne des dieux et sa visite s'impose. C'est l'un des temples égyptiens antiques les mieux conservés. Il reflète une époque particulière du passé de l'Égypte, sa période gréco-romaine. Construit par Ptolémée VI, il a été ensuite embelli par de grands monarques comme Ptolémée XII, Auguste ou encore Domitien. Jouant sur la symétrie,

les architectes de ce chef-d'œuvre ont modelé l'architecture du bâtiment pour qu'il puisse rendre gloire à deux grandes divinités égyptiennes. Ainsi, la première moitié du sanctuaire a été aménagée pour honorer Haroëris («Horus l'ancien», le dieu faucon), tandis que la seconde a été dédiée à Sobek (le dieu crocodile).

À quelques kilomètres de Kom Ombo, Daraw est une localité qui, comme la plupart des villages égyptiens, donne sur le Nil. Les habitants vivent essentiellement de l'agriculture, surtout de la culture de la canne à sucre. Mais avant tout, Daraw est connue dans toute l'Égypte car c'est ici que se tient le plus grand marché aux dromadaires de tout le pays. Dégambuler dans le fouillis de ce marché



Le Souk d'Assouan, un vieux marché à ne pas manquer où l'on trouve notamment un large éventail de fruits et d'épices.

© Claude Maillard



Dédié à Isis, déesse de l'amour, le temple de Philae est l'un des plus beaux et des mieux conservés d'Égypte.

© Claude Maillard



Dans la carrière de granit rose d'Assouan, le plus grand de tous les obélisques connus est resté inachevé suite à une fissure dans la roche.

© Claude Maillard



La viande de dromadaire, ici sur les étals d'un boucher de Daraw, un mets très apprécié par les Égyptiens.

© Claude Maillard

populaire aux couleurs et parfums mêlés d'orient et d'Afrique est une symphonie, autant pour les yeux que pour le nez.

Philae, un temple sur le Nil

Le temple de Philae revêt une importance toute particulière pour les Égyptiens. Selon la légende, le roi Osiris aurait été tué par son frère qui aurait ensuite découpé et dispersé son corps dans tout le pays. Son épouse Isis aurait récupéré les restes et se serait réfugiée sur l'île de Philae pour le reconstituer.

Situé dans un décor somptueux, le temple de Philae dédié à Isis, l'une des divinités les plus populaires du panthéon égyptien, est l'un des plus extraordinaires du

pays. C'est Nectanébos I^{er}, l'un des derniers pharaons d'Égypte, qui entreprit sa construction au III^e siècle av. J.-C. mais il fut achevé par les Romains. Outre ce temple, le site comporte plusieurs tombeaux et sanctuaires. Initialement édifié sur l'île de Philae, maintenant engloutie sous les eaux après la construction du barrage d'Assouan, il a nécessité son déplacement, pierre par pierre, pour être reconstruit sur l'île d'Aguilkia, au milieu du Nil. Après que l'UNESCO permit de réunir les fonds indispensables au sauvetage du temple, huit années de travaux furent nécessaires. Son accès uniquement possible par bateau procure une vue tout à fait exceptionnelle et originale sur l'édifice et lui donne beaucoup de charme.

Assouan, la ville la plus au sud d'Égypte

D'une longueur de 977 m, l'élegant pont à haubans d'Assouan permettant de franchir le Nil apparaît à l'horizon. A partir d'ici, notre aventure en Égypte va se poursuivre par la voie terrestre et nous quittons avec regret notre embarcation et son équipage. Notre idyllique croisière s'achève et longtemps nous nous souviendrons de ces fabuleux moments vécus au fil du Nil: le bonheur à l'état pur.

Dernière grande ville au sud du pays, Assouan est la cité charnière avec la Nubie - région s'étendant sur près de 1400 km jusqu'à la confluence du Nil Bleu et du Nil Blanc à Khartoum - et l'Afrique. Assouan émerge d'un

plateau désertique entaillé par le Nil au niveau de la première cataracte, chute d'eau qui entrave la navigation sur le fleuve. Regorgeant de spécialités orientales - épices, encens et parfums, tissus, cuir, artisanat du métal et de l'ébène, vanneries et verrieres -, le souk d'Assouan est aussi le lieu de vie de la communauté nubienne qui y exerce de multiples petits métiers. Réputé depuis des millénaires, il est particulièrement animé, surtout en soirée quand l'endroit devient magique lorsque les lampes éclairent les étals des commerçants.

Les grands monuments de l'Égypte antique témoignent de la grandeur des pharaons qui les avaient fait construire. Les carrières de pierre, elles, révèlent



Scène de vie du quotidien sur une place de village le long des berges.



Lever de soleil sur le lac Nasser qui fait frontière entre l'Égypte et le Soudan.

les efforts fournis par le peuple égyptien pour faire naître les énormes édifices commandés par leurs rois. La plus célèbre d'entre elles est sans doute la carrière de granit d'Assouan située au nord de la ville. Elle abrite le fameux obélisque inachevé, gigantesque bloc monolithique long de 40 m et pesant plus de 1000 tonnes. Sa taille avait débuté 1500 ans av. J.-C. mais a dû être interrompue suite à l'apparition d'une fissure en surface.

Abou Simbel sauvé des eaux

Complexe de deux temples taillés dans une falaise rocheuse, l'un dédié à Ramsès II et l'autre à Néfertari, son épouse favorite, Abou Simbel est resté enterré sous le sable pendant des siècles. Une partie des temples a été découverte en 1813 par l'explorateur suisse Jean-Louis Burckhardt et le reste des vestiges a été mis

au jour quatre années plus tard par l'italien Giovanni Belzoni. En 1964, la construction du grand barrage d'Assouan a nécessité leur démantèlement et leur déplacement en lieu sûr pour les sauver des eaux dévastatrices du lac Nasser.

Quatre colosses assis, deux de chaque côté de l'entrée du Grand Temple, représentant Ramsès II sur son trône mesurent chacun 20 m de haut. Au pied de ces figures géantes se trouvent des statues plus petites exhibant les ennemis conquis par Ramsès II, les Nubiens, les Libyens et les Hittites. L'intérieur du temple est décoré de gravures montrant Ramsès II et Néfertari rendant hommage aux dieux. La grande victoire de Ramsès II à Qadesh est également représentée en détail.

À proximité se dresse le Petit Temple également orné de



Construit dans la roche à Abou Simbel, le plus éblouissant des temples dédiés à l'illustre pharaon Ramsès II.



Près du temple de Ramsès II à Abou Simbel, le Petit Temple consacré à la reine Néfertari.

colosses sur la façade, représentant Ramsès II et sa reine Néfertari. Le Petit Temple est également remarquable dans la mesure où c'est la deuxième fois dans l'histoire de l'Égypte ancienne qu'un souverain dédiait un temple à sa femme (la première fois étant lorsque le pharaon Akhénoton, 1353-1336 av. J.-C. dédia un temple à sa reine Néfertiti). L'intérieur est notamment décoré d'illustrations représentant la déesse Hathor, déesse de la beauté, de l'amour et de la joie, l'une des plus populaires, importantes et vénérées tout le long de l'histoire de l'Égypte antique. L'emplacement du site d'Abou Simbel était sacré pour la déesse Hathor bien avant que les temples n'y soient construits et on pense qu'il fut soigneusement choisi par Ramsès II pour cette raison même. Dans les deux temples, Ramsès II est reconnu comme un dieu parmi d'autres

dieux et son choix d'un lieu déjà sacré aurait renforcé cette impression auprès du peuple.

Face à nous s'étend le lac Nasser, la plus vaste retenue d'eau artificielle du monde résultant de la construction du grand barrage d'Assouan. Il marque la frontière avec le Soudan où nous allons poursuivre notre voyage, toujours accompagnés par notre guide Mohamed¹. *Aventure à vivre dans le prochain numéro du newSpecial.* ■

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Aimeriez-vous partager votre opinion avec nous au sujet de *newSpecial* et de son contenu?

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