

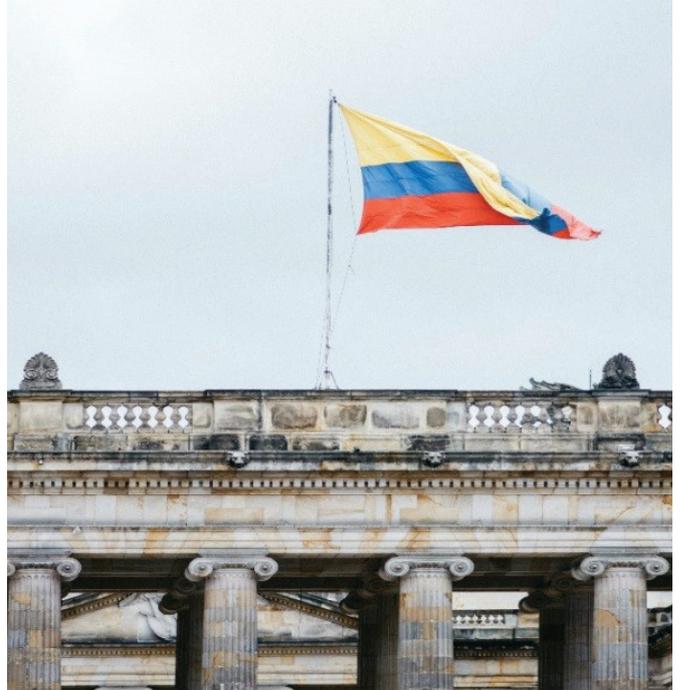


WORLD ANTI EXTREMISM
NETWORK
BUILDING A FREE WORLD

UNCENSORED WATCH

Defending Freedom, Challenging Extremism and Authoritarianism

Issue 12 | December 2025



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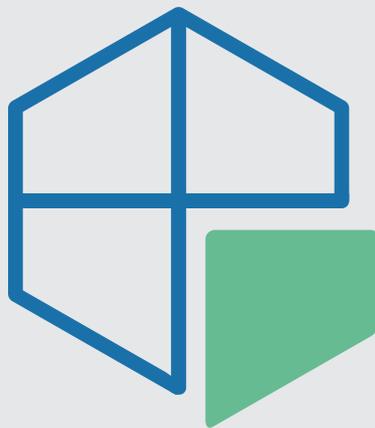
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SECTION - 1:

Welcome to Uncensored Watch - A Project of World
Anti-Extremism Network



Welcome to Uncensored Watch - A Project of World Anti-Extremism
Network

Hello, Dear Readers, and welcome to the December edition of Uncensored Watch!

We're glad to have you with us as we close out the year with another issue featuring important stories from around the world. This month's edition brings together a selection of timely news articles highlighting human rights violations, state repression, political violence, and the growing challenges to democratic values across different regions. Alongside our news coverage, this issue includes recently published research papers presented at the Toronto Democracy Forum. These studies explore civil resistance, extremism, and how communities and institutions respond to authoritarianism and radicalism.

This issue goes beyond keeping you informed; it's an invitation to engage. By exploring and sharing these insights, you help strengthen democracy, accountability, and human rights worldwide. So settle in, explore the latest news, and stay connected with the ongoing fight for justice and change.

As always, Uncensored Watch remains committed to ensuring that critical stories are documented, voices are amplified, and no issue goes unnoticed.

Until Next Month!
The Uncensored Watch Team



SECTION - 2:

Global Crisis in Focus

Bondi Beach Attack Exposes Rising Antisemitism and Extremist Violence in Australia



Photo by Levi Meir Clancy on Unsplash

A [deadly attack](#) took at least 16 lives, in a public Hanukkah celebration at Bondi Beach Australia. As one of the deadliest acts of gun violence witnessed by the country in decades, it has raised urgent questions about rising antisemitism, hatred, and the threat of violent extremism. The attackers, who were a father and son, targeted Jewish Australians during a religious gathering, marking a drastic escalation in hate-driven violence. Islamic State flags were reportedly found in their vehicle, pointing to religiously extremist motivations.

This incident occurred amidst a sharp rise in antisemitism worldwide, which is a byproduct of the deadly war between the State of Israel and Hamas since October 2023. Jewish communities in Australia and elsewhere, have reported increased harassment, threats, and vandalism. Security experts warn that smaller acts of hate, if ignored, can quickly transition into mass violence.

Antisemitism has a long history of being a feature of extremist ideologies. However, the recent spiral, especially the violence, can be attributed to the war-crimes committed by Israel in the Middle East. Criticism for Zionism, although rooted in the preservation of human rights and democracy, opens doors to other forms of ethno-religious acts of hate. The killing of a Holocaust survivor in this attack reflects the gravity of the situation, as the humanity becomes increasingly apathetic towards each other.

It is noteworthy to consider that the [person who rescued many lives](#) was a man named Ahmad-al Ahmad, underscoring the complexity and heterogeneity of hate crimes and extremist ideologies. Leaders across Australia have condemned the attack, but rights advocates say words alone are not enough. They argue that preventing extremist violence requires long-term investment in education, community engagement, and countering hate before it turns deadly.

The Bondi Beach attack has shaken Australia's sense of safety and social cohesion. For Jewish Australians, it has reinforced fears of being targeted simply for their identity. Rights groups warn that unless rising hatred and political violence are addressed with seriousness and resolve, this tragedy may not remain an isolated event, leading to more violence. Left unaddressed, such violence threatens not only public safety but also the pluralistic foundations on which democratic societies depend.

Death of Youth Leader Sharif Osman Hadi Triggers Nationwide Protests and Human Rights Concerns in Bangladesh

Bangladesh has been gripped by widespread unrest following the [death of Sharif Osman Hadi](#), a prominent youth leader and former spokesperson of the student-led 2024 uprising. His killing has not only sparked violent protests across major cities but has also reignited deep concerns about political violence, freedom of expression, and the safety of dissenting voices in the country. Hadi, 32, died on Thursday at Singapore General Hospital after succumbing to gunshot injuries sustained during an assassination attempt in Dhaka earlier this month. He was shot in the head on December 12 while travelling in a battery-powered auto-rickshaw, when two assailants on a motorcycle opened fire before fleeing the scene. After initial treatment in Dhaka, he was transferred to Singapore for advanced care but never recovered from severe brain stem damage.

A key figure in Bangladesh's recent protest movements, Hadi rose to prominence during the [2024 student uprising that challenged entrenched political privilege](#) and state repression. He later became a leading voice of Inqilab Mancha, or Platform for Revolution, and was preparing to contest parliamentary elections in early 2026. Known for his outspoken criticism of foreign influence in Bangladesh's politics, particularly India's role, Hadi was seen by supporters as a symbol of resistance and reform. His death has unleashed anger and grief across the country. Protests erupted in Dhaka and other cities, with demonstrators demanding justice and accountability. Many have accused authorities of failing to provide security to a high-profile political figure who had previously faced threats. Protesters are calling for the resignation of senior officials in the Home Affairs and Law ministries, insisting that those responsible be brought to trial without delay.

The unrest has also taken a troubling turn for press freedom. Media outlets perceived as pro-India, including Prothom Alo and the Daily Star, were attacked by protesters. Buildings were vandalized and set on fire, trapping journalists inside for hours. Rights groups warn that while public anger is because of a legitimate demand for justice, attacks on the media further weaken democratic space and endanger civilians. The government has pledged an investigation and launched a manhunt involving counterterrorism units, releasing CCTV images of suspects, offering rewards for information. At least 20 people have reportedly been detained, though no arrests of the main attackers have been confirmed.

Hadi's killing has revived memories of the 2024 protests, when a brutal state crackdown left nearly 1,400 people dead and thousands injured. That episode remains a defining moment in Bangladesh's human rights record and continues to shape public mistrust of institutions meant to protect citizens.

As Bangladesh prepares for elections, Hadi's death is a representation of the dangers faced by activists, students, and political challengers. Human rights advocates warn that without transparent investigations, protection of dissent, and accountability for political violence, the cycle of fear and unrest will only deepen. For many Bangladeshis, justice for Sharif Osman Hadi has become inseparable from the broader struggle for democracy and human dignity.



Photo by ARTO SURAJ on Unsplash

Arrest of Kashmiri Youth in Pulwama Highlights Deepening Abuse and Control by Militarized Measures

The arrest of a young Kashmiri man during a [military operation in Pulwama](#) district has once again drawn attention to the worsening of state-backed oppression in Indian-administered Jammu and Kashmir. Local political groups and rights advocates say such arrests reflect a broader pattern of authoritarianism that continues to affect daily life in the disputed region. Locals report that Indian forces arrested Javed Ahmed Hijam, a resident of Gulab Bagh in Tral, during a cordon and search operation in the Wuyan Khrew area of Awantipora. The operation involved the Indian Police, the Indian Army's 50 Rashtriya Rifles, and personnel from the Central Reserve Police Force. Authorities have accused Hijam of providing logistical support to armed groups, an allegation that Kashmiri groups say is frequently used to justify detentions without credible evidence. A case has reportedly been registered against the youth under India's stringent security laws, which allow prolonged detention and limit access to legal safeguards. Rights advocates argue that these laws are routinely misused to target young Kashmiris, creating fear and uncertainty among families who often have little information about the fate of their detained relatives.

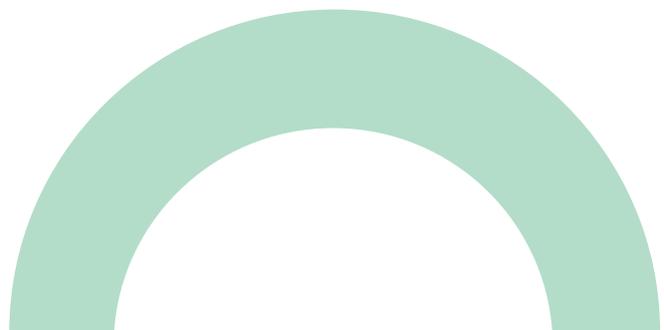
The All Parties Hurriyat Conference strongly condemned the arrest, describing it as part of a systematic campaign to intimidate and silence the Kashmiri population. In a statement issued from Srinagar, APHC spokesman Advocate Abdul Rashid Minhas said that repeated arrests, aggressive searches, and constant military surveillance violate basic human rights and further alienate the local population. Residents across Kashmir continue to live under an intense security presence, with frequent frisking, raids, and checkpoints becoming part of the norm. These measures undermine claims by Indian authorities that the situation in the region has returned to normal. Instead, such actions deepen resentment and trauma, particularly among young people who feel criminalized simply for their identity. Kashmir has remained heavily militarized for decades, with estimates suggesting more than one million troops stationed



Photo by Jeong Yejune on Unsplash

across the region. Rights groups say this prolonged military control has turned Kashmir into what many residents describe as an open-air prison. Allegations of arbitrary arrests, custodial abuse, property confiscation, and restrictions on movement continue to surface regularly.

The APHC has urged the international community and the United Nations to intervene, stressing that the ongoing situation represents a failure to protect civilian rights under international law. As arrests like Hijam's continue, many Kashmiris fear that that repression and resistance will only intensify. This will leave little space for dialogue, cooperation, or justice, with Kashmir's freedom and autonomy becoming an idea far from reality.



Syria: New Authorities, Old Prisons, and the Return of Abuse

A year after the fall of Bashar al-Assad, Syrians who celebrated their freedom are now once again facing an adverse reality. The infamous Syrian detention centers of Assad's Regime are [filling up again](#), with similar stories of widespread abuse resurfacing back to the nation's fate. Investigation reveals that hundreds have been detained by Syria's new authorities without proof of formal charges, reflecting upon the abuse, oppression, and brute force that systemically embed the institutions of the country. Repression remains deeply entrenched in the fabric of their society, despite the promises and pledges of reform. Former Assad soldiers, minority community members, activists, and even ordinary civilians have been swept by successive waves of arrests. Many are held in facilities known as torture centers under the previous government. Those who are held captive are surviving dire conditions that include, but are not limited to, overcrowding, starvation diets, nutritional deficiencies, an absence of medical care, and denial of legal rights, such as the right to fair trial. Families report of cases of extortion, where release of their family members is often conditioned on unreasonable ransom payments. Demands range from hundreds to tens of thousands of dollars, placing unbearable pressure on families that are already devastated by the horrors of war, displacement, and suffering.

Under Assad, corruption within the [prison system](#) became institutionalized, and despite multiple attempts, this system is yet to be dismantled. Syrian people see little, if any, change in the long prevailing inhumane practices and brutal measures that are common to despotic regimes. Sectarian divide further exacerbates the situation, as the arrests are disproportionately affecting Alawite and Druze communities. It is also contributing to raising fears of collective punishment and a renewed cycle of violence. The reemergence of arbitrary detention demonstrates the power of persistent authoritarian structures, that remain unbreakable even after arduous efforts and power shifts. While Syria's leadership speaks of reconciliation and institution-building, the continued use of prisons as instruments of control leans towards the extremism at the state level, attributed by coercion and censorship. Many detainees remain undocumented, thereby making them vulnerable to bearing punishments without any legal justification. The absence of public lists, legal proceedings, and proper recognition exceed these horrors beyond the limits of imagination.

The future of Syria remains jeopardized, with uncertainty lingering around the false hopes of change, justice, and peace. It is now up to those in power, at all levels, to break cycles of violence. It is high time that powerful stakeholders bring back safety to the people who have witnessed the unspeakable horrors of war for decades.



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Tanzania: Election Crackdowns Reveal a Pattern of State Violence and Impunity

Tanzania's post-election unrest in late October 2025 has exposed a [disturbing pattern of state violence](#) that is becoming increasingly normalized under the guise of maintaining order. According to reports, Tanzanian security forces used unlawful and excessive force to suppress protests following disputed elections, resulting in hundreds of deaths and injuries across the country. This operation was not merely mob control, but a systematic assault on the right to life, peaceful assembly, freedom of expression, and democracy.

Eyewitness testimony, medical accounts, and verified digital evidence indicate that police and security forces fired live ammunition at protesters, and even bystanders who were not posing any imminent threat. Tear gas was launched indiscriminately into residential neighborhoods and even into private homes, affecting women, children, and the elderly. In several regions, security forces reportedly subjected the protestors to physical violence, involving severe torture and mistreatment. Afterwards, many individuals were arrested while they were wounded in hospitals.

Most alarming of all are reports that authorities removed bodies from hospital mortuaries and transported them to undisclosed locations. Healthcare workers described scenes of mass casualties, due to which morgues were overflowing, and bodies were left unattended during the chaos. One medical professional reported that security officers ordered staff to hand over severely injured patients who were still bleeding, after which they were never seen again. Such actions raise grave concerns about enforced disappearances and deliberate attempts to conceal evidence of state violence. To facilitate the crackdown on protestors, a nationwide internet shutdown was implemented with an intent to restrict the flow of information, clear communication, and independent reporting. However, journalists managed to access dozens of cases documented through interviews with survivors, lawyers, healthcare workers, and families of victims. In addition, forensic analysis of videos showing high-velocity gunshot wounds further prove the use of state-backed security enforcement to assault civilians.

While some protesters engaged in acts of vandalism, it can still not justify the use of lethal force against unarmed individuals who do not pose an immediate threat. The reckless use of firearms and abusive deployment of tear gas point to a broader culture of impunity within Tanzania's security apparatus.

President Samia Suluhu Hassan [has announced a commission for inquiry](#), however, it lacks transparency and independence, thereby attracting skepticism on its legitimacy. It is possible that this inquiry is utilized as a tool that may serve to shield the responsible ones. With no security officials yet held accountable, families of victims continue to seek answers, justice, and reparations.

The Tanzanian crackdown reflects a troubling global trend in which governments increasingly frame political dissent as a security threat, responding with militarized force rather than dialogue. In doing so, they blur the line between countering unrest and engaging in state extremism. Violence is largely becoming a tool of governance, and the value of human lives is constantly being compromised.

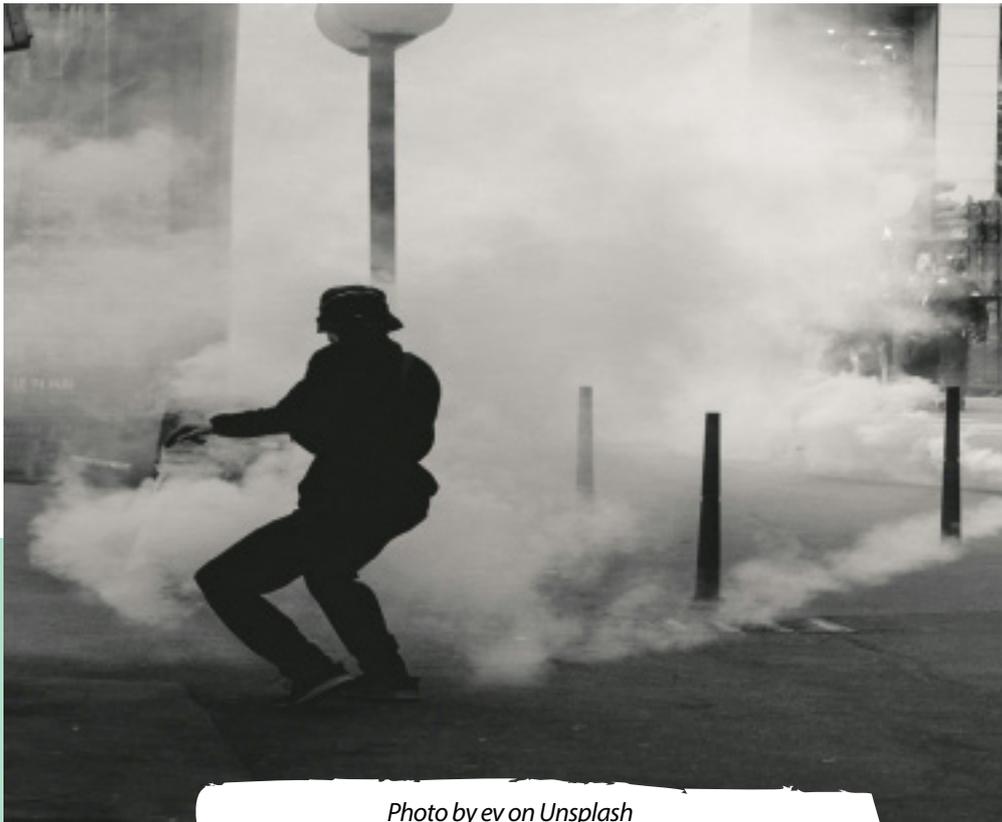


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US Halts Deportation of Chinese Man Who Exposed Abuse of Uyghurs

The United States has dropped its [plan to deport a Chinese national](#), who helped uncover the stories of alleged [human rights abuses](#) against Uyghurs in China's Xinjiang region. Following public and political pressure, this decision offers rare protection to a whistleblower who risked his life to document and expose the life of Uyghurs in China.

In 2021, Guan Heng, 38, crossed the borders to enter the United States illegally in a boat. He had secretly filmed detention facilities in Xinjiang. Activists believe that these facilities are part of a much more vast system that is used to detain Uyghurs and other ethno-religious minorities of China. However, Beijing has consistently denied these allegations, describing these centers as vocational training facilities and "educational centres".

According to advocates assisting Guan, the Department of Homeland Security has withdrawn its request to deport him to Uganda. His asylum case will now move forward as he remains in an immigration detention at New York. Guan was able to reach USA after risk-taking on his life and safety, traveling through Hong Kong, Ecuador, and the Bahamas. He crossed nearly 23 hours of open sea in a small inflatable boat to Florida. Upon arriving, he openly shared evidence against the Chinese Government, seeking protection in return, from the United States. His fear was justified, as he was soon identified online in China, where his family is now under investigation. Activists' attention was drawn to his case back in August, when he was detained by US immigration authorities, raising concerns about the consequences of deportation, which could be imprisonment or worse.

Public support for Guan has grown rapidly. US lawmakers and human rights groups argued that deporting him would contradict America's stated commitment to protecting victims of persecution.

Members of Congress said the US has a moral responsibility to offer refuge to those who expose serious human rights violations. Rights advocates welcomed the decision but cautioned that Guan's situation highlights the vulnerability of whistleblowers who flee authoritarian regimes. For many, the outcome of his asylum case will serve as a test of whether democratic states are willing to protect those who shine light on abuses, amidst the burden of political repercussions. The case also reflects the tension between human rights commitments and immigration enforcement in an era of heightened geopolitical rivalry with China.



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ICJ to Hear Landmark Genocide Case Over Myanmar's Treatment of the Rohingya

International Court of Justice will initiate the hearings against Myanmar next month for committing the [Rohingya Genocide](#), marking a historical moment in their long fight for justice. The case, presented by Gambia, will focus on brutal military operations of 2017, that resulted in the persecution of the Rohingya Muslims of Myanmar. To be held [between 12 -29th January](#), proceedings will be held under the 1948 Genocide Convention, which characterize Genocide as the acts committed with an intent to destroy an ethnic, religious, racial or national group. Representatives of Myanmar's Military Junta will defend their stance in the presence of witnesses who have testified against the country. The trials will discuss Myanmar's military campaign in Rakhine State in August 2017, which was carried out against Rohingya militants. Armed and allied groups burned villages, killed civilians, and carried out widespread abuses that forced an estimated 750,000 Rohingya to flee the country. Seeking refuge in Bangladesh, most of them

today remain in overcrowded refugee camps, unable to return home safely. United Nations investigated to conclude that the campaign showed clear signs of genocidal intent.

Earlier in 2019, Aung San Suu Kyi, Myanmar's then leader defended her government against the accusations, dismissing them as misleading. Since then, Myanmar has undergone a military coup that ousted her, diverting the country towards widespread violence and repression. The opposition National Unity Government later withdrew Myanmar's objections to the court's jurisdiction; officials aligned with the junta now represent the country.

Legal experts opine that the case of Rohingya can set a precedent for the future of justice within the international realm of justice. Leaders and states could be tried for human rights abuses, war crimes, mass killings, and genocides in the International Court of Justice. It also offers a form of closure for survivors, who will live to see acknowledgement for their sufferings at an international level. For Rohingya refugees, the hearings represent hope for justice. Although an ICJ ruling's limited power cannot immediately change conditions on ground, it will strengthen international pressure upon the perpetrators and reaffirm that mass atrocities cannot be carried out with impunity.

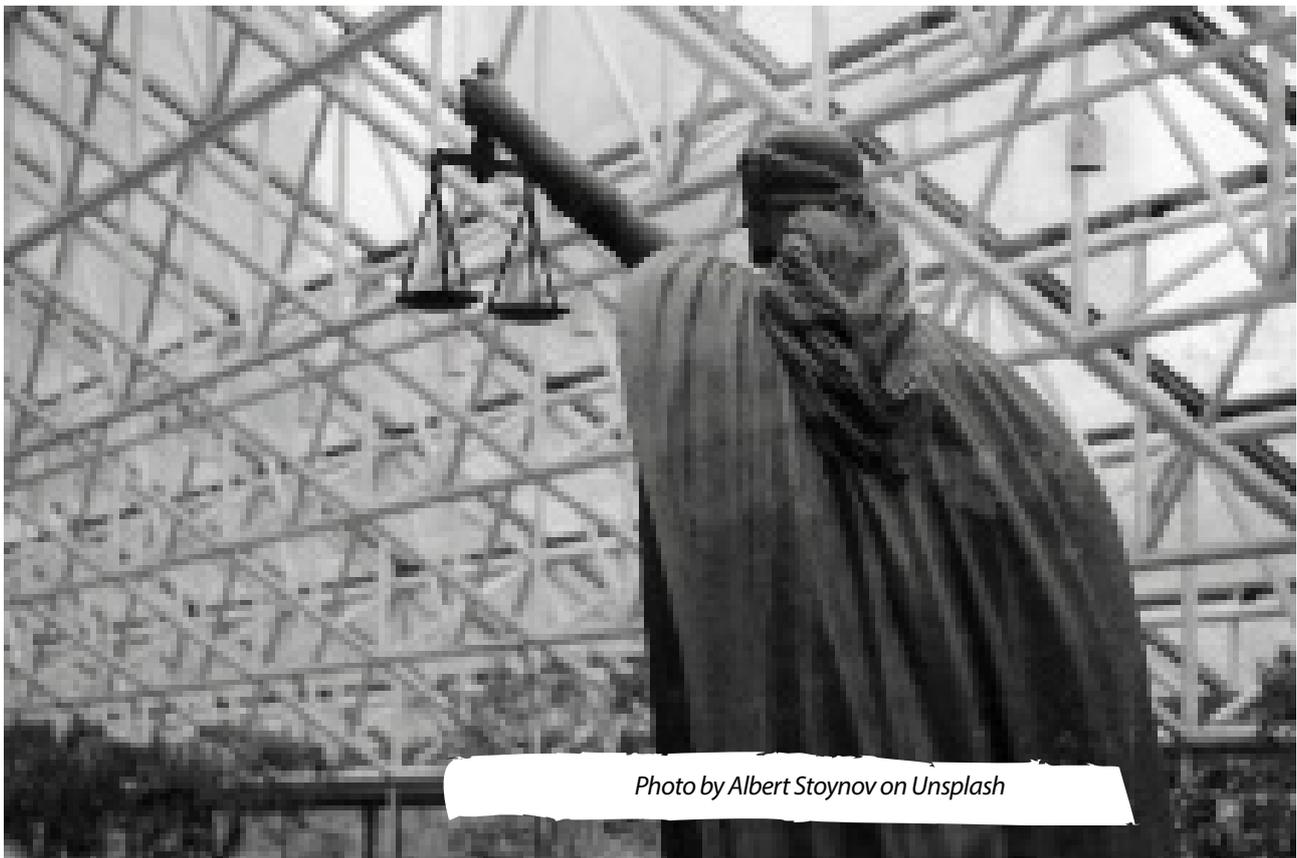
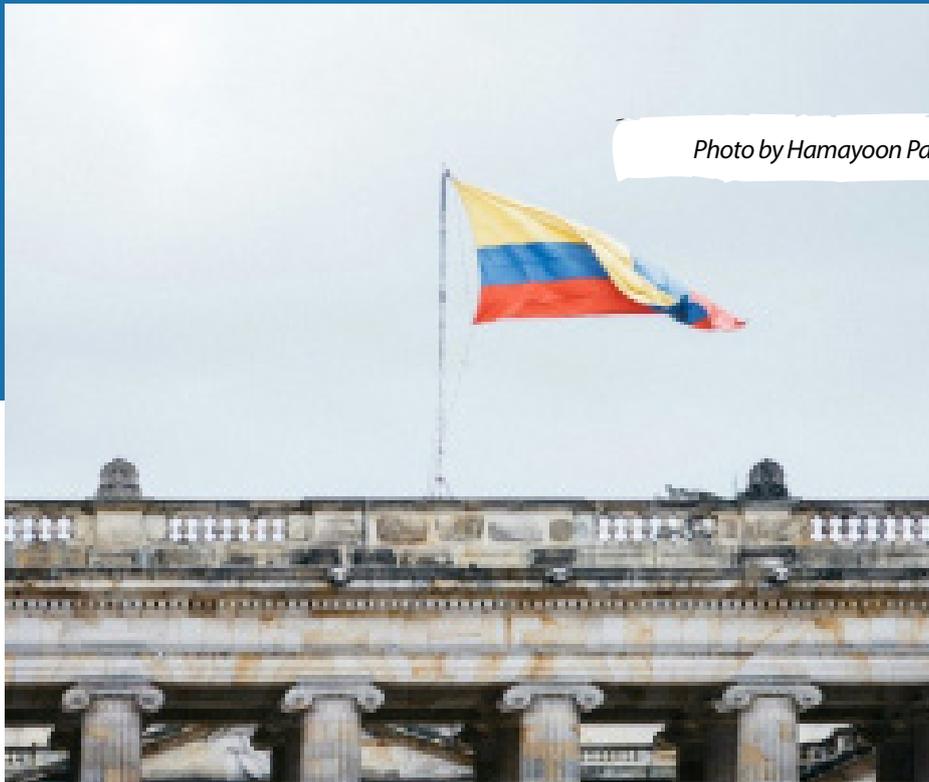


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US Seizure of Venezuelan Oil Tankers Sparks Outcry Over Sovereignty and Human Rights

The United States has seized the [third oil tanker off the coast of Venezuela](#), escalating the ongoing tensions with Caracas. US policy on Venezuela has drawn sharp criticism from officials, as well as legal experts as they consider it a serious violation of international law, national sovereignty, and fundamental human rights. The latest seizure, carried out in international waters, is part of a broader agenda, which tends to achieve “total and complete blockade” ordered by US President Donald Trump against the Venezuelan oil exports.

US Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem has confirmed that the Panama-flagged tanker Centuries was intercepted by the US Coast Guard, with backing and operational support from Pentagon. The operation, which has been captured through aerial footage shows a military helicopter hovering over the vessel, marking a third such seizure in recent weeks. This proves to show that US military presence in the Caribbean is ever-expanding, and the States have no intention of limiting their ventures so far.

Washington has justified this act of interventionism by alleging that Venezuelan oil revenues fund “[narco-terrorism](#),” thereby vowing to aggressively pursue tankers transporting this sanctioned crude. However, legal experts note that Centuries itself was not sanctioned by the United States, which leads to rise of serious questions about whether this seizure can be considered legal or not. Reports show that approximately 1.8 million barrels of Venezuelan crude oil have been seized, that were on their way to China for export.

Venezuela has condemned the action in the strongest terms. Vice President Delcy Rodríguez

described this extreme measure as an “act of international piracy,” considering US forces responsible for theft, hijacking, and the forced disappearance of the ship’s crew. Caracas has announced to react by filing formal complaints with the United Nations Security Council and supporting multilateral bodies, arguing that the interception constitutes an unlawful use of force in international waters.

Beyond economic coercion, the blockade has had severe humanitarian implications. Venezuelan crude exports have fallen sharply, with multiple vessels now stranded in Venezuelan waters out of fear of seizure. This effective embargo threatens the country’s primary source of revenue, worsening existing shortages of food, medicine, and essential services for millions of civilians. The concept of such collective punishment disproportionately harms ordinary people rather than political elites. The tanker seizures come alongside a broader US pressure campaign that includes an expanded military build-up and dozens of strikes on alleged drug-trafficking vessels near Venezuela. These operations have reportedly killed at least 100 people and have been widely described by legal scholars as illegal under both US and International Law, with some labeling them extrajudicial killings.

President Nicolás Maduro has accused Washington of attempting regime change and seeking control over Venezuela’s vast oil reserves, the largest in the world. Under International Law, those resources belong exclusively to Venezuela, a principle known as permanent sovereignty over natural resources. While US officials have cited past American investments in Venezuelan oil, nationalization of resources carried out legally by Venezuela decades ago does not justify military enforcement or economic strangulation.

“The US is not under real threat from Venezuela in any way, not even from drug trafficking. But a lot of people in the White House think that it will be convenient for the US to declare war,” Ernesto Castaneda, an expert on Latin American affairs at the American University in Washington, DC. As tensions rise, the seizure of Venezuelan oil tankers highlights a troubling erosion of international norms. Unilateral blockades, military interceptions, and economic coercion not only challenge state sovereignty but also violate the human rights of civilian populations caught in the crossfire of geopolitical power struggles. When economic sanctions and military actions are enforced without clear legal accountability, civilians bear the heaviest costs through deteriorating living conditions and restricted access to basic necessities. Framing such measures as security policy risks normalizing human suffering as an acceptable tool of geopolitical pressure.



Afghans Face Deepening Isolation as Repression at Home and Closed Borders Abroad Tighten Their Struggle

More than three years after the Taliban's return to power, Afghanistan's crisis has not ended; [it has deepened](#). Afghans, particularly those with progressive and enlightened views, now find themselves trapped between an increasingly repressive regime at home and a world that is steadily closing its doors on them. What began as a political collapse in August 2021 has evolved into a prolonged humanitarian and human rights emergency that continues to worsen with each passing day.

Senator Jan Muhammad Buledi, parliamentary leader of the National Party (NP) in Pakistan's Senate, has warned that life has become "extremely harsh" for Afghans who believe in education, freedom of expression, and social progress. Speaking during a meeting in Quetta with a delegation of Afghan affected families, Buledi said that it has become nearly impossible for such individuals to live with dignity under Taliban rule. The delegation, led by FFTA Country Director Noor Marjan, included families who had been forced to return to Afghanistan after being sent back by Pakistani authorities. Participants at the meeting emphasized that Afghanistan's suffering did not end with the Taliban takeover. "Everyone talks about Afghanistan as if it [ended in August 2021](#)," one speaker noted. "It didn't. It collapsed and then it metastasized." Since then, successive restrictions have dismantled basic freedoms, especially for women, journalists, educators, and civil society workers, leaving millions in a state of fear and uncertainty.

Afghan families described worsening conditions both inside Afghanistan and in exile. Women spoke of restricted mobility, denial of education, and the erasure of their presence from public

life. Others highlighted growing insecurity, economic desperation, and the constant risk of persecution for those previously involved in media, education, or training sectors, groups now viewed with suspicion by the Taliban. Senator Buledi said that Taliban policies have created a climate of fear that has forced thousands of Afghan families to flee their homeland. Yet, he added, countries that once offered refuge are now turning hostile. In Pakistan, where millions of Afghans sought safety over decades, refugees are facing harassment, arbitrary detentions, demands for bribes, and forced repatriation. Buledi expressed regret that Afghan refugees are being treated as security threats despite having fled the same violence and extremism that destabilizes the region. Pullain Baloch, the NP's parliamentary leader in the National Assembly, and other party leaders echoed these concerns, stressing that Afghan refugees are caught in a regional political impasse. Tensions between Islamabad and Kabul, particularly over terrorism-related incidents, have further narrowed space for compassion and humanitarian responsibility.

Buledi called for an urgent shift toward a humane and lawful approach, arguing that both Pakistan and Afghan refugees are victims of Taliban rule. He urged authorities to halt police harassment, protect vulnerable families, and ensure access to education for refugee children in line with international law.

As Afghanistan grows more isolated and Afghans are pushed further to the margins, at home and abroad, the crisis stands as a stark reminder of global failure. For progressives, women, and those who once believed in a better future, survival itself has become an act of resistance. They can only survive and then thrive, if given adequate support, resources, shelter, and opportunities for mobility from fellow nations, who have a moral responsibility to provide help.

Greta Thunberg Detained by British Police at Pro-Palestinian Protest in London

[British police detained Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg](#) on Tuesday during a pro-Palestinian protest in central London, an arrest that has reignited debate over protest rights, counter-terrorism laws, and Britain's response to activism linked to the war in Gaza. Thunberg was arrested in the financial district while attending a demonstration outside the offices of Aspen Insurance, a company known for providing insurance coverage to Elbit Systems, Israel's largest arms manufacturer. The protest was organized as an act of solidarity with members of the group Palestine Action, five of whom are currently on a hunger strike in British prisons. Campaign group Defend Our Juries said Thunberg joined the demonstration after it had already begun and was holding a placard expressing support for imprisoned Palestine Action activists. Video footage shared by the group shows her standing calmly with the sign before being approached and detained by police. This raises questions about the democratic values of the country, as individuals are facing curbed freedom of expression, with challenges to exercise their legal rights.

The City of London Police later confirmed the arrest of a 22-year-old woman for displaying material in support of a proscribed organization, citing Section 13 of the Terrorism Act 2000. Palestine Action was officially termed a terrorist organization by the UK government earlier this year, a decision that has been strongly criticized by civil rights groups and activists. The struggle for Palestine has always been met with opposition, with powerful actors using harmful labels of terrorism to misrepresent the fight for freedom. The narrative of terrorism has always overshadowed the real purpose of this movement, making it harder for activists to defend themselves. Two other protesters were also arrested at the scene. According to police, they had attached themselves to the building and caused property damage using red paint and tools. Activists confirmed the action, describing it as a symbolic protest intended to represent bloodshed in Gaza. It was an act of rebellion against what is often described as “corporate complicity” in human rights abuses. The arrest of these innocent individuals criminalizes criticism against arms manufacturers. The hunger strikers are demanding the closure of [Elbit Systems' UK](#) operations and calling for recognition of Israel's genocide against Palestinians in Gaza. Supporters argue that prisoners are being held beyond reasonable legal limits and their actions were aimed at preventing mass civilian harm.

Greta Thunberg has increasingly spoken out on Palestine over the past two years, expanding her activism beyond climate justice to include human rights and anti-war advocacy. She has repeatedly condemned Israel's military campaign in Gaza, describing it as a genocide, and has criticized Western governments for their continued political and military support for Israel. Thunberg has also participated in international flotilla efforts aimed at challenging Israel's blockade of Gaza and has used her global platform to highlight the oppression of Palestinian lives. Critics and activists argue that Britain is using terrorism legislation to silence peaceful protest and intimidate critics of Israeli policy. Defend Our Juries accused the government of refusing to engage with the families or legal representatives of the hunger strikers, despite growing concerns over their health.

In a recent social media post prior to her arrest, Thunberg said governments had failed to stop mass civilian killing and ordinary people were being punished for attempting to do so themselves. Palestine Action representatives questioned whether it was legal to treat protesters as terrorists under the British law. As for now, it seems like these arrests are a tool for silencing civilians who are only asking their government to abide by international law and principles of justice, raising concerns about the health of democratic governance in the UK. If left unchecked, this approach risks normalizing the criminalization of peaceful activism and deterring citizens from holding powerful institutions accountable.

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Denmark Blames Russia for Series of Cyberattacks as Threats to Governance and Democracy Escalate

Denmark has officially [declared Russia responsible](#) for a series of cyberattacks targeting the country's critical infrastructure since November 2024, marking a significant escalation in hybrid warfare that complicates the fight against extremism and war in the modern era. Danish authorities allege that Moscow has provided backing to hacking groups such as [Z-Pentest and NoName057\(16\)](#), which have been linked to attacks aimed at destabilizing Denmark's administrative and governance structures. The first incident occurred in November 2024, when Z-Pentest infiltrated the servers of Tureby Alkestrup Waterworks, a local utility, and tampered with its control systems. Hackers manipulated water pressure levels, causing pipelines to burst and leaving many households without water for hours. While no injuries were reported, the attack exposed vulnerabilities in critical public services and raised fears about the ability of governments to protect citizens from increasingly sophisticated technological threats.

A year later, NoName057(16) targeted government websites during regional elections, temporarily disrupting online portals essential for voter information and election administration. Although the incident did not affect vote counts or alter election results, it highlighted the potential for cyberattacks to undermine democratic processes and sow distrust in public institutions. Experts have described these operations as part of a broader hybrid warfare strategy by [Russia designed to deter](#) Western countries from supporting Ukraine, reflecting the way modern conflicts extend beyond traditional battlefields into digital and administrative realms. These events demonstrate how difficult it has become to defend against extremism and coercion in an age of technological advancement. The tools available to malicious actors are not only sophisticated but also increasingly accessible, allowing both state and non-state groups to exert influence and destabilize nations with limited risk of direct confrontation.

The case of Denmark calls for a comprehensive intervention to strengthen cybersecurity across all sectors, from public utilities to electoral systems. Officials stress that without robust protection, extremist elements, whether affiliated with foreign states or acting independently, can exploit weaknesses, disrupt governance, manipulate information, and create widespread instability.

In a world increasingly defined by digital threats and hybrid conflicts, siding with anti-extremism and advocating for peace is more challenging than ever. Efforts to prevent war and counter aggression cannot just be conventional military threats. Sophisticated technological attacks that create conflict, espionage, and civil disruption demand significant attention. Denmark's recent experiences serve as a stark reminder that defending societies against modern extremism requires efforts at all platforms as opposed to traditional frontlines

Drone Attack on Kindergarten in Sudan Kills Dozens, Exposing Brutal Toll of Ongoing War

A deadly drone attack on a kindergarten in south-central Sudan [has killed at least 50 people](#), including 33 children, in a blatant violation of international humanitarian law. The attack took place in the town of Kalogi in South Kordofan state, an area increasingly caught in the crossfire of Sudan's devastating civil war. According to the Sudan Doctors' Network, the strike hit a civilian site where children were present, leading to these mass casualties. When emergency responders rushed to help the survivors, a second drone strike targeted them. Emergency Lawyers, a rights group, later reported that a third nearby civilian location was also struck, adding to the existing devastation.

The attacks have been linked to the Rapid Support Forces, a powerful paramilitary group working to take over the power of Sudanese military since 2023. Although the RSF has denied responsibility for incidents, their actions in Kordofan and Darfur follow a consistent pattern of attacks on civilians and infrastructure, that aligns with the recent attack.

Communication blackouts in the region have made it difficult to verify the full scale of casualties, and medical workers warn that the death toll is likely to rise. Hospitals and clinics in the area are overpopulated, under-resourced, and increasingly targeted, making it harder to provide healthcare services for the victims. UNICEF strongly condemned the killing of children, calling the attack a horrific violation of children's rights. The agency urged all parties to immediately halt attacks on civilian areas and allow uninterrupted access for humanitarian aid. The consistent fighting and insecurity have made it nearly impossible for aid to reach families in desperate need.

The violence in Kordofan has worsened in recent weeks after intense fighting shifted from Darfur, which was previously under attack. The RSF's takeover of the city of el-Fasher was marked by executions, sexual violence, and mass displacement. [Graphic footages](#) from the area showed severe violations of human rights, and despite evidence, Sudan faces little help from international actors.

The United Nations has warned that Kordofan now risks similar atrocities if the conflict continues unchecked. More than two years into the war, Sudan faces one of the world's worst humanitarian crises. According to international estimates, over 40,000 people have been killed and more than 12 million displaced, though aid groups believe the real statistics are much higher. As children continue to be killed in schools and rescuers are attacked while saving lives, Sudan's war continues to cross yet another moral and legal red line, with civilians paying the highest price. The targeting of children and aid workers reflects a deliberate erosion of humanitarian norms, where civilians are treated as strategic targets rather than protected populations. Without meaningful international intervention and accountability, such patterns of violence risk becoming normalized, further entrenching cycles of war and suffering in Sudan.



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Anti-Immigration Intensifies, Creating Conditions for Division, Intolerance, and Deterioration of Social Cohesion

As 2026 approaches, the Trump administration is [dramatically escalating](#) its immigration enforcement strategy, with an increase in workplace raids by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Backed by [Congress approved \\$170 billion funding](#), this plan for intensification comes at odds with public backlash.

This year has already seen a preview of the administration's vision. Soon after his return to office, President Trump has pursued his campaigns' mission to achieve "record deportations" and has exhibited operations in major cities. These raids have been characterized by highly militarized tactics: masked ICE agents, the use of tear gas, weapons, and brute force, and mass detentions. While officials emphasize targeting criminals, the data tells a different story. By late November 2025, 41% of the roughly 54,000 people in ICE custody had no criminal charges other than alleged immigration violations, only a staggering increase from just 6% before Trump took office. This shift reveals a policy moving from targeted enforcement to widespread deterrence through fear.

The administration's extremism on immigration, often rooted in xenophobic beliefs vilifies migrants as "invaders" who are "poisoning the blood" of the nation. It has consequences that spread far beyond deportation statistics. Analysts warn that state-backed crackdowns on immigrants and dehumanizing behaviors act as a powerful base for overall societal intolerance. When the highest levels of government scapegoat a group and label them as an existential threat,

it legitimizes discrimination and violence among the populace. Hate crime tracking organizations have consistently noted a surge in anti-immigrant, especially anti-Latino violence, following major policy announcements and rhetorical presidential statements. This empowers extremist groups, who see their ideologies reflected and endorsed in official policy. Furthermore, tactics such as warrantless checks, workplace invasions, family separations, and expansive detention normalize authoritarian measures, weakening constitutional rights of all citizens. As Republican strategist Mike Madrid noted, "People are beginning to see this not as an immigration question anymore as much as it is a violation of rights."

The political demise of the President is also growing stronger. President Trump's approval rating on immigration has slipped significantly, and in Miami, a city heavily affected by raids, voters elected their first Democratic mayor in nearly 30 years. Yet, the administration appears determined to emphasize on the message of fear mongering and nationalism, with little concern for its political ramifications.

Ultimately, the planned 2026 crackdown represents more than a policy shift, it is a shift for American democracy. The strategy fuels a cycle of extremism, draconian law enforcement, public fear and division, fostering an environment for future authoritarianism. The true cost of the raids will be measured not just in deportations, but in the deteriorating social fabric of the nation.



SECTION - 3:

Multimedia Update: Voices Against Authoritarianism

Research Presented at the Toronto Democracy Forum

We are pleased to announce the publication of research presented at this year's Toronto Democracy Forum under WAEN's Call for Abstracts on "Civil Resistance Against Authoritarian and Religious Radicalism." Scholars from South Asia, the Middle East, North Africa, Eastern Europe, and the Uyghur diaspora contributed original research examining how communities respond to authoritarianism and radicalism. Below, we feature two research papers presented at the Forum that explore civic resistance, extremism, and the role of communities and dissent in democratic resilience.

Pakistan's National Action Plan to Counter Violent Extremism: Incorporating Community Resilience as a Core Component by Prof. Dr. Syed Hussain Shaheed Soherwordi

Building resilient communities is one of the most effective ways to resist extremism, empowering people through social unity, dialogue, and shared responsibility. Yet in Pakistan, despite years of military operations and policy reforms, extremist narratives continue to find space in vulnerable regions. How can the [National Action Plan \(NAP\)](#), introduced in 2014, better support communities to resist radicalization from within? Professor Hussain Shaheed Soherwordi highlights this missing dimension, showing that integrating community resilience, local "gatekeepers," and strengthened social networks could transform the NAP into a more proactive and effective strategy. To know more about these key findings, read our latest publication on the [website](#) by Prof. Dr. Syed Hussain Shaheed Soherwordi, Professor and Director of the Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Peshawar, presented during this year's Toronto Democracy Forum.

Daniel Berrigan and the Problem of Civil Obedience by Dr. Clyde Ray Daniel

Berrigan, a Jesuit priest and activist, showed how faith and civic duty can challenge systemic injustice. Through antiwar activism and civil disobedience, he emphasized morally grounded, constructive dissent that transforms society rather than merely opposes it. His concept of "[peacemaking](#)" rejected violence, favoring nonviolent resistance, dialogue, and community-building. Berrigan also questioned the need to submit to punishment, using strategic evasion to unsettle complacent authorities and awaken citizens. He warned against half-hearted activism, advocating deliberate, principled action guided by compassion and hope. Confronting systemic evil required courage, ethics, and engagement, offering a model of radical yet relational civic participation, urging citizens to shape a just society. To explore this perspective in depth, read the full research paper on our [website](#) by Clyde Ray, Assistant Professor at Holy Cross College, presented at the Toronto Democracy Forum.



SECTION - 4:

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