

## **Border Walls and the Rise of the Right**

By  
Dawit W Giorgis

A wave of right wing nationalism is sweeping across Europe and the US. A decade ago it was not so visible but in the last two years the phenomenon has gripped the world and created a tension that could lead into global turmoil. From UK to France, Netherlands, Hungary, Poland, Austria, Germany, Greece, Sweden, Slovakia, and the United States, the slogan of **WE FIRST** has been resonating with fury and passion. It is far from certain that the hard right will prevail in all these contests in the near future but they are gaining ground. They may not have identical visions but they all share a **WE FIRST**, a sign of hard-core nationalism.

“From UPIK’s Farage “we want our country back” to the Austrian Freedom Party’s guiding principle, “Austria First”, to Trump’s promise to ‘Make America Great Again’ they all share a “put us first!”<sup>1</sup> The battle line has been drawn. The cornerstone of this new phenomenon both in Europe and USA is opposition to immigrants and immigration with the hard-right parties in Germany, France, Austria and the Netherlands explicitly anti Muslims and the USA anti Mexicans and anti Muslims.

In a speech on March 9, 2017, at a Brookings Institution event in Washington, D.C, former President Bill Clinton warned against the rising popularity of nationalism across the world, such as Trump’s “American First” policy. “People who claim to want the nation-state are actually trying to have a pan-national movement to institutionalize separatism and division within borders all over the world...And it always comes down to two things — are we going to live in an **us** and **them** world, or a world that we live in together? If you got that, in every age and time, the challenges we face can be resolved in a way to keep us going forward instead of taking us to the edge of destruction.”

Some vocal segments of rights in Europe and America want to be acknowledged as a homogeneous society based on common cultural, color and ethnic identity, essentially as a white society, which owns the nation states. Africans, Muslims, Minorities are portrayed as immigrants who don’t belong there.

The greatest contributing factor to this emerging ideology of exclusion and separation is the increasing wealth gap between the haves and have-nots both in Europe and America. The world today is far more divided between rich and poor than it was a quarter of a century ago. Successive governments both in Europe and America have failed to address this wealth gap, which has lead to increasing social economic instability and to a very narrow and dangerous worldview and self-definition, which is anti immigrant and anti establishment.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/brexit-trump-le-pen-and-the-rise-of-the-right-a7443241.html>

Ruth Wodak distinguished Professor of Discourse Studies at the University of Lancaster, divides the right wing in Europe into four groups.<sup>2</sup>

1. Parties that gain support via an ambivalent relationship with fascists and Nazi parties. (E.g. Austria, Hungary, Italy. Romania, and France) and I would add Germany
2. Parties that 'focus primarily on a perceived threat from Islam (e.g. Netherlands, Denmark, Poland, Sweden and Switzerland)
3. Parties that 'restrict their propaganda to a perceived threat to their national identities from ethnic minorities' (e.g. Hungary, Greece. Italy. OHK)
4. Parties that "endorse a fundamental Christian conservative reactionary agenda (e.g. Poland, Romania, Bulgaria)

In the past anti-Semitism was a unifying factor for the right movement but now 'Islamophobia' has replaced it. Nationalist parties are mainly in the opposition in Europe, except Macedonia and Serbia but across the rest of Europe they have been able to establish a formidable movement that could win elections.

In the US, Donald Trump beat all the odds and now placed himself at the center of the most conservative groups in the US. The right in Europe has been boosted by his victory. The right's ideology of hate and exclusion is spreading across Europe and the USA like wildfire. The most recent event was the 'Brexit' referendum in the UK; the election in the US; the size of support 'The Party of Freedom' got in last March's election in the Netherlands; the French National Front popularity, are all spurring the inertia of populism in Europe. .

"Donald Trump surprised everyone by beating the political odds and won the US presidency, and after 'Brexit,' mainstream parties, media, and pollsters in the EU are struggling to make sense of the sudden rise and support for extreme right parties in just about every member nation of the EU."<sup>3</sup>

Extreme-right parties in Europe are poised to win elections if not now in coming elections by continuing to promote the lies and distorted worldview and domestic economic and social issues like Donald Trump did in the USA. Hitler and Mussolini managed to mobilize enormous support by telling lies over and over again. Hitler's minister of propaganda Goebbels said "Tell a lie often enough and people will believe it." They were both elected by a significant majority of their population. "By setting the right frames against which facts are processed in the minds of voters, elections may be won. The frequency of the lie is in some way the deep background."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Right Wing Populist on the Rise: <http://Cyprus-mail.com/2014/03/04/right-wing>

<sup>3</sup> Facts: truth, Rationality and the Rise of the Ultra-Right in the West. <http://moderendilpomcy.eu/by> Emanuel Paparella, PhD, Feb 20, 2017

<sup>4</sup> Emanuel Paparella

In the USA as well as EU the right has been successful in framing impoverished immigrants looking for jobs and refugees fleeing from war ravaged areas, as huge threats to their security. The poor helpless immigrants have been transformed from victims to threats.

Migration polices have been fought hard in European governments and the US. It is obvious that the West should have at least the moral obligation to help the poor and the persecuted, particularly when we remember that most of the countries where migrants are coming from, were their colonies from where they got their slaves and the enormous resources to be where they are to day.

Since the colonial times when Europe and America used to move freely across the globe to plunder, the former colonist are now unable to freely move to the lands of their 'masters'. Though it is understandable that these movements need to be regulated, permission to enter need not be based on a skewed vetting system that excludes people who belong to a certain type of religion and or region.

"While nationalism does not necessarily imply restrictions on immigration it is clearly the case that without a sense of nationalism there would be no basis for restrictions. ...If the people living in a territory do not share any greater sense of common identity with each other than with foreigners there would-be no 'us 'and 'them.'<sup>5</sup>

One of the solutions promoted by these right wing leaders is building walls across national boundaries. Border walls, though ineffective, are powerful symbols of exclusion: **WE** are going to keep **THEM** out. And, by doing so, **WE** are going to protect our people, our way of life, our society and economy from the threat that they represent. It is a concept reminiscent of Nazism and Fascism. It is a platform upon which Donald Trump launched his campaign when he gave his speech admiring the "beautiful southern wall" that he was going to build to stop Mexican immigrants who he believes are drug dealers, rapists and terrorists.

In the real world, walls don't actually guarantee "security" in any sense of the word. New York Times article on October 14, 2016, (on the prospect of a US Mexico border) titled "The Wall is a Fantasy" it says: " the closer you get to the border, the fewer people think that it might work-even among Trump supporters and law enforcement officials."

History's most famous walls were constructed to serve specific defensive purposes but more importantly to project an image of power for the leaders who built them. Modern walls are means of implementing a nationalist and populist ideology designed to keep away the poor and the undesirables. According to a report released on October 5, 2016 by the Migration Policy Institute (MPI)

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<sup>5</sup> Book: by Paul Collier: Immigration and multiculturalism in the 21<sup>st</sup> century

“Border walls have become all the rage. There weren’t even five on the planet at the end of World War II; a figure which had risen only to 15 when the Berlin Wall fell in 1989 before jumping to nearly 70 today.”

## **Border Walls in History**

Babylon was the most fortified cities of ancient Mesopotamia. It seemed impregnable, impenetrable indestructible. Located 85 kms from current Bagdad it was, according to the bible, a symbol of evil. John the author of The Revelations, says Babylon “ has become a home for Demons and a haunt for every evil spirit”<sup>6</sup>

King Nebuchadnezzar II, (605-562 BC); fortified the old walls and made Babylon a magnificent, protected and isolated city, together with the hanging walls “ In addition to its size, Babylon surpasses in splendor any city in the known world” .<sup>7</sup> According to Herodotus the wall was 350 feet high (apparently including the height of the towers, which were built at regular intervals on the top of it), with a thickness of 75 feet. The Euphrates passes right through the center of Babylon but the king built a moat around the city by diverting the waters of the Euphrates and built the walls higher and fortified the Northern part through which invasions have taken place over the years.

Herodotus gives a very vivid account of the construction which astonished him: "And here I may not omit to tell the use to which the mold dug out of the great moat was turned, nor the manner wherein the wall was wrought. As fast as they dug the moat, the soil, which they got from the cutting, was made into bricks, and when a sufficient number were completed, they baked the bricks in kilns. Then they set to building and began with bricking the borders of the moat, after which they proceeded to construct the wall itself, using throughout for their cement hot bitumen, and interposing a layer of wattled reeds at every thirtieth course of the bricks."<sup>8</sup>

Babylon was completely ‘walled-in’. But God did not like it; because it has been an enclosure for demons according to John. This is what God told Isaiah would happen to Babylon:

“Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them... And Babylon, the jewel of kingdoms, the glory of the Babylonians pride, will be overthrown by God like Sodom and Gomorrah. She will never be inhabited or lived in through all generations; no Arab will pitch his tent there, no shepherd will rest his flocks there.” (Isaiah 13:17-20 from The Full Life Study Bible 1991.)

Isaiah had predicted that God would destroy Babylon. Indeed Babylon’s greatness did not last long. A few years after the death of King Nebuchadnezzar II, in 559 B.C.,

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<sup>6</sup> Revelation18;2

<sup>7</sup> Description of Babylon and the Babylonians( The History of Herodotus, by George Rawlinson)

<sup>8</sup> Herdotus

Cyrus the Great King of Persia invaded Babylon. Cyrus' army passed the fortified wall and waterways and captured the city. After successive invasions including that of Alexander the great, Isaiah 's prophesy was fulfilled. The walls did not prevent the capture and destruction of Babylon. Babylon is still an empty city. In times of peace tourists can go see the partially rebuilt ruins of Babylon that have remained empty for almost 2,000 years. The city is exactly like Isaiah predicted: "It will never be inhabited, nor will it be settled from generation to generation" (Isaiah 13:20).

Donald Trump's associate, Rev Robert Jeffress, Southern Baptist, and Evangelical Pastor, endorses the prevention of movement and physical interaction of people across national boundaries and to this end supports the building of walls. It is said that the teaching of Rev Jeffress has in some ways influenced Donald Trump. The Pastor refers to God's instructions to Nehemiah to build a wall around Jerusalem to protect its citizens from its enemy's walls. "You see, God is not against building walls," Jeffress said in his sermon at St. John's Episcopal Church in D.C. Donald Trump reportedly listened to Jeffress's sermon on the morning of his inauguration. Rev. Jeffress said that Nehemiah refused to allow his critics to distract him, noting how some people still don't believe Trump would succeed.<sup>9</sup>

Nehemiah, Jeffress said, had two antagonists named Sanballat and Tobiah. "They were the mainstream media of their day," he said. "They continued to hound and heckle Nehemiah and spread false rumors while he and the Israelites were building the wall. He noted that Nehemiah answered his critics by saying: "I'm doing a great work . . . Why should I stop the work and come down to you?" (Nehemiah 6:3). Trump's work, he said, "is a work far too important to stop and answer your critics."

## **The Great Wall of China**

'Walled-In vs. Walled-Out concept,' which is the precursor of modern day 'gated community', shaped Chinese worldview for centuries.

Chinese believed that they were the center of the world and all other people around them were barbarians. In the 7<sup>th</sup> century China started building the Great Wall of China, 5500 miles, to defend itself from invasions. The Great Wall was truly a show of power and invincibility that sent a clear message to the barbarian riders, but for all the time it took to build it and the size and resources it failed miserably when it mattered most; to deter invasion from the North. The Great Wall was supposed to show the world China's superiority, making a clear distinction between civilized people and barbarians, primarily the Mongols and the Manchu. But the Mongols penetrated the Great Wall and overthrew the Jin Dynasty, took control Northern China and soon wiped out all other Chinese dynasties as well. By the year 1271, the Mongol Kublai Khan (Beijing was established by Kublai Khan) declared the creation of the Yuan Dynasty, which ruled with a heavy hand over the Chinese until 1368. However, the wall failed to keep invaders out entirely. Genghis Khan and his Mongol

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<sup>9</sup> [www.washingtonpost.com/news/acts-of-faith/wp/2017/01/20](http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/acts-of-faith/wp/2017/01/20)

warriors, the Liao, the Jin, and the Manchus all managed to invade and take territory across the wall. The Great Wall was again nothing more than a scarecrow.’<sup>10</sup>

## **The Hadrian Wall**

In 122 AD the Roman Emperor Hadrian built a 73-mile wall, what is now known as the Hadrian Wall, to protect Roman occupied Britain from invaders from Northern England. The Romans maintained and occupied the Wall into the fourth century AD, and for sometime were able to repel aggression from the barbarians in the North but in AD 367 the united force of the barbarians put up a big offensive and the Hadrian forces were overcome and finally abandoned the wall.

"The Romans used it as a symbol of power but you can turn that on its head and say it is a symbol that they never fully conquered Britain otherwise they would not have needed the wall."<sup>11</sup>

## **The Wall of Athens**

There are many books and versions written regarding the wall of Athens. According to one, 'Themistocles & the walls of Athens:' the Athenian "Long Walls" were built after the invasion by Xerxes of Greece (480-479); their construction was proposed by Themistocles, but the actual building started in 461, when Athens was at war with Sparta (the First Peloponnesian War). The walls were finished in 457, although later, Pericles took the initiative for doubling the western wall (445-443). The "Long Walls" created a siege-proof triangle of land that allowed the city to easily resupply itself from the sea, which was itself guarded by the well-known Athenian Navy. Athens seemed impregnable, impenetrable for a time, particularly at the first Peloponnesian War with Sparta and its allies; but Athens was forced to surrender after its navy was defeated at sea.

When the Athenian fleet was defeated in 405, the food supply was imperiled, and Athens had to surrender. One of the main demands of the Spartans was the destruction of the hated Long Walls. According to Xenophon, the enemies of Athens "tore them down among scenes of great joy and to the music of flute girls".

## **The Walls of Constantinople**

Constantine the Great initially built the 14-mile wall of Constantinople. The walls succeeded in turning back a host of would-be conquerors from the Arabs to Attila the Hun. Constantinople, the capital of the Byzantine Empire was one of the most heavily fortified cities in the world at the time. But finally they were penetrated and the forces of Constantinople defeated in 1453, when the Ottoman Empire besieged the city with a frightening new weapon—the cannon. According to some historians

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<sup>10</sup> <http://gbtimes.com/life/failure-great-wall>

<sup>11</sup> Hadrian's Wall: Roman power symbol; By Christine Jeavans, BBC online

the city was defended by, at most, 10,000 men. Sultan Mohmed II, ruler of the Ottoman Turks, led the assault. It is said that the Turks had between 100,000 and 150,000 men on their side. The Turks used warships to cut the city's sea defense. They also used foot soldiers to surround the city.

The walls of Byzantine Constantinople (Istanbul) lasted very long but the might of the Turks penetrated it and captured it, effectively toppling the Byzantine Empire and turned the city into Istanbul, the capital of the Ottoman Empire.

### **Berlin Wall**

Modern history's most infamous wall that divided Germany into two separate political states, was erected in 1961, when the Soviet-aligned East German government built a series of concrete partitions separating East and West Berlin. It lasted 28 years and was opened on Nov 9, 1989 uniting the people of Germany. The world was taken by surprise when, during the night of November 9, 1989, crowds of Germans began dismantling the Berlin Wall—a barrier that for 28 years had symbolized the Cold War division of Europe. By October 1990, Germany was reunified, triggering the swift collapse of the other East European regimes and the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The Berlin wall was a political wall and did not achieve the intended purpose of establishing two Germanys.

### **The Moscow Wall**

Under Tsar Ivan I, Muscovy began a concerted project to construct a wall around the Kremlin made of oak (1339-1340). In 1365, these walls were destroyed and a new wall made of limestone was constructed under the reign of Dmitri Donskoi in the late 14th century. The Kremlin walls failed, however, to keep Batu Khan, the Poles, and Napoleon. The walls were never destroyed and today the Kremlin's walls which originally served a solely defensive purpose, stand as a powerful symbol of Russian national identity.

### **Wall Street**

Many don't know why Wall Street in New York was given this name. In the seventeenth century, the wall in what is now known as Wall Street, created a barrier to protect the Dutch settlers from their Native American neighbors and from pirates and other dangers. The area had been a bustling center of commercial activities because it connected the banks of East River and the Hudson. The merchants built their warehouses and shops along this line. New York was the capital from 1785 until 1790 and federal hall was built on Wall Street. George Washington was inaugurated in this building.

The fortified wall stretched from Pearl Street, which was one shoreline of Manhattan at the time, to the other shoreline, modern day Trinity Place. During this period, Wall Street was also the marketplace where owners could hire out their slaves. The

Buttonwood Agreement started the New York Stock in 1792 that organized a traders' association—which was the origin of the New York Stock Exchange. Businesses slowly moved to the area, pushing out residents in the nineteenth century, and the Wall Street of today was born. The wall never achieved its purpose. Today Wall Street is the place where the world meets.

**The above are samples of walls in history. Every wall in history was a failure or symbol of power.**

Walls may be useful for the temporary deterrence of invasions but they can never be a means of lasting security nor can they succeed in deterring the movement of people across boundaries. Humanity is the product of migration. Migration is a natural phenomenon. All major studies confirm that modern humans evolved in Africa roughly 200,000 years ago. Almost all living people outside of Africa trace back to a single migration more than 50,000 years ago. The world was truly a global village.

In the 1990s it was popularly declared that the world has become a global village. The West saw only the economic benefits that it can reap from the emergence of a new interconnected and interdependent world separated by geographical boundaries and political systems. But that never happened. Today we live in a divided world, a polarized world where 80% live in poverty. We live simultaneously in a global village and a divided world. The global village was meant to bring about a more unified world where **the** effects of globalization would allow us to overcome the limitations of physical distance. In other words since the world is connected by the new advanced travel and communication technologies and systems of information exchange, it was believed that the world would effectively become one global community.

“But the evidence paints a different picture,” writes Bruce S Scott, in his series ‘The Great Divide in the Global Village’: “Average incomes have indeed been growing, but so has the income gap between rich and poor countries. Both trends have been evident for more than 200 years, but improved global communications have led to an increased awareness among the poor of income inequalities and heightened the pressure to immigrate to richer countries. In response, the industrialized nations have erected higher barriers against immigration, making the world economy seem more like a gated community than a global village. And although international markets for goods and capital have opened up since World War II and multilateral organizations now articulate rules and monitor the world economy, economic inequality among countries continues to increase. Some two billion people earn less than \$2 per day.”

Hence people started moving in search of new opportunities. Western industrialization and the quest for natural resources introduced conflicts, proxy wars and internal instability in the former colonies, in Africa and the Middle East. The promise of a prosperous more connected world failed and countries started building

barriers and walls to exclude each other. The need for walls were evidently signs of increasing gap between the rich and the poor and the failure of diplomacy to prevent conflicts, and “not since medieval times have walls been so in demand around the world.”<sup>12</sup>

The world never learns. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century around 40 nations in the world have built barriers on their borders with 70 other countries since the fall of the Berlin Wall. Some of these have become total failures and others wait the tide of time to be proven wrong once again. Let us visit some of them.

## **Modern Walls**

### **The DMZ in the Korean Peninsula**

The wall in the Korean Peninsula is 160-mile-long, two-and-a-half-mile-wide buffer zone between North and South Korea. The Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) was constructed along the 38th Parallel and is considered to be the most heavily militarized border in the entire world. The DMZ has been successful in dividing two people but more than that, the Korean Peninsula has now become a hot bed of tension and a threat to global peace. According to some studies of North Korea, despite the fact that the country is ostensibly a communist dictatorship is, according to Professor Nadav Morag, “obsessed with the idea of Korean racial purity and sees itself as the guardian of the Korean race and culture. If this analysis is accurate, it means that the regime ensconced in the country’s capital, Pyongyang, views its role in an irrational fashion (i.e., protecting the Korean race against those who would supposedly corrupt it), rather than safeguarding the welfare of its people. This harks back somewhat to Nazi ideology, and it was this same desire to supposedly safeguard the Aryan race that led Adolf Hitler to embark on a course of destruction against others and ultimately against Germany itself. This aspect of North Korea’s worldview can lead to further concerns that the country may lash out at its perceived enemies (the United States, South Korea and Japan) without any rational reason for doing so.”<sup>13</sup>

It is difficult to imagine the extent of the destruction and loss of lives if North Korea were to use its nuclear arsenal. In addition to professor Morag’s assessment many experts and scholars believe that the leadership of North Korea is reckless and has the capacity to trigger a world war whatever the consequence would be. The DMZ and the elaborate fence across the borders of the two countries have failed to bring peace in the region and between the two countries. Unless the wall collapses there will be no peace in that region with a threat to global security crisis.

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<sup>12</sup> Aljazeera July 2016

<sup>13</sup> Nadav Morag, Ph.D, University Dean of Security Studies Colorado Technical University

## The Wall in Western Sahara's and the Struggle for Freedom.

The conflict in Western Sahara is the continuation of the past insurgency by Polisario against the Spanish colonial forces in 1973–75 and the subsequent Western Sahara War between the Polisario and Morocco (1975–91). The "Berm" is a sand wall surrounded by thousands of Moroccan soldiers and millions of land mines which has isolated the Sahrawi people of Western Sahara for decades and the world rarely talks about it. Morocco built a wall down the middle of the territory, to keep Sahrawis and the Polisario Front in the desert. The question of self-determination of Western Sahara remains unresolved to this day. Morocco claims the area as a territory and oversees resource extraction on their side of the wall, such as phosphate mining and fishing. The government backed by the Polisario Front - the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) - oversees the Eastern part of Western Sahara. Forty years after the beginning of this conflict there can be no justification for continuing to maintain the status quo and failing to engage constructively and imaginatively in the search for a solution. The savage wall must be removed and UN resolutions on the matter implemented to be able for millions to be free.

## The Walls of Belfast

In Belfast, 99 "peace lines" silence the daily war between Catholics and Protestants. This wall has been the only means through which war and conflict could be avoided between the loyalist/(protestants) and the nationalist (Catholics) a violent, bitter conflict, both political and religious, between those claiming to represent the predominantly Catholic nationalists and those claiming to represent the mainly Protestant unionists.

Aljazeera writes in 2007 writes: "what Northern Ireland has now is not so much peace as an absence of conflict after the Good Friday Agreement was signed in 1998. Far from disappearing, the walls have grown. Instead of reconciliation, there is partition - an ill-tempered stalemate of separate identities and separated lives."

## The Evros Wall in Greece

The Greek government in 2016 to stop immigrants landing in the Greek coast bordering Turkey constructed the Evros. It is about 11,000 meters long. As thousands of refugees arrived on Greece's shores on their way to Western Europe, and the harrowing images of young children who drowned in the Eastern Aegean Sea made headlines around the world, Greece became the center of attention.

The record numbers of migrants and refugees arriving in Greece from Turkey by boat created enormous pressure to the fragile economy of Greece. . The shortest, and safest, route was the 125-mile land border that runs along the Evros River in northern Greece. It is a controversial fence, not supported by the European Commission but seen by the Greek government as a cost effective way of policing this part of the border. The River Evros acts as a natural barrier for the remainder of

the 200km land border and has claimed many migrants' lives, especially following the erection of this fence as the safer route across the fields has been closed.

### **Mexico, India and Israel.**

The book titled "**Border Walls**" by Professor Reece Jones, is exclusively on these three border walls. It is an excellent book, which deals, extensively on the justification of building these walls, the short and long-term implications and I recommend it for people interested on this subject. In his introduction to his book he writes: " the governments of the US, India and Israel describe these barriers as essential tools to protect the ideals of freedom that defines the modern democratic state. This book finds however that what prompted the US to begin the walls on its border with Mexico was mostly the 9/11 tragedy and the Israel/Palestine was the second intifada and the India/Bangladesh was to protect India from terrorism coming across from Bangladesh. The exclusion and violence necessary to secure the borders of the state often undermine the very ideals they are meant to uphold."

The walls separating Mexico and the US, Palestine and Israel and India and Bangladesh are the three "largest and most expensive infrastructure project in each country in the new millennium," according to Prof Reece Jones.

### **US, Mexico Border**

In the US a 700-mile border fencing along the country's 2000-mile border with Mexico began during George W. Bush and completed during Obama years. President Trump has said he wants to extend and fortify with a concrete barrier as high as 55 feet tall and has described his proposed wall as "impenetrable, physical, tall, powerful, and beautiful," across the full breadth.

The mayor of Berlin city, a city that was walled-in for 28 years, Mr. Michael Müller wrote : "We Berliners know better than most the pain caused when a whole continent is split by barbed wire and walls. Our division destroyed the prospects of millions. Now, in the early years of the 21st century, we cannot let all our historical experience get trashed by the very people to whom we owe much of our freedom: the Americans. I call on the president of the USA not to go down that road to isolation and ostracism. Wherever such divides exist, like in Korea and Cyprus, they cause slavery and pain. I call on the American president: remember your forerunner, Ronald Reagan. Remember his words: 'Tear down this wall.' And so I say: 'Mr. President, don't build this wall.'"<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Muller:Jemand hatdie Absicht,eine Mauer zu Errichten (Pressemitteilung vom 27,01,2017

President Ronald Reagan's famous phrase "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down the wall" was made at Brandenburg Gate in 1987 two years before the fall of the wall.

## **India and Bangladesh**

India and Bangladesh share a 4,097 km long porous border, which meanders through plains, rivers, hills, and rice fields. This borderland is heavily populated with people sharing culture and language religion on each side.

In 1993 India started building a wall across its 3200 kms border with Bangladesh. The official version was to protect the country from Islamist terrorists and illegal migrants from Bangladesh. Thousands of Bangladeshi have died crossing this wall. Bangladesh tolerates the wall to keep good relationship with India. Extreme poverty and or density population, frequent natural calamities force people to cross the border to look for opportunities and to survive. India sees Bangladesh as a country that cannot control its borders and cannot prevent extremist and terrorists from crossing the border. Referring to this situation Reece writes. "The people on the other side of the border are described in ways that dehumanize them and make them appear unworthy of modern human rights."<sup>15</sup>

An eight-foot-high fence of barbed wire, electrified in some stretches, runs along roughly 70 percent of this border. It is an intimidating structure but it hasn't deterred Bangladeshi migrants anxious to cross into India to visit relatives or in search of livelihood from making the perilous journey. Smugglers, drug couriers, human traffickers, and cattle rustlers from both sides of the border continue to cross the border to trade, often with the connivance of Indian and Bangladeshi border guards. As for its efficacy in keeping out terrorists from India, Jones says that the India-Bangladesh fence "likely has no impact." A terrorist, he points out, "typically has the funds to pay for fake documents and simply cross the border at checkpoints or travel with valid documents."

"Border fences rarely work to stop migration," observes Reece Jones, professor at the University of Hawaii and author of *Violent Borders: Refugees and the Right to Move*. Most borders, he points out "are too long and too lightly guarded to have an impact on people moving through that space."

## **Israel**

In June 2002, the Israeli cabinet decided to erect a physical barrier separating Israel and the West Bank with the declared objective of regulating the entry of Palestinians from the West Bank into Israel. In most areas, the Separation Barrier is comprised of an electronic fence flanked by paved pathways, barbed-wire fences, and trenches. The average width of the barrier is 60 meters. In a few locations, the security establishment decided to build a concrete wall six to eight meters high in place of this type of barrier. The full route of the Separation Barrier – the portions already

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<sup>15</sup> Book: Border Walls by Reece Jones

built, those under construction, and those not yet implemented – is 709–kilometers long, twice as long as the Green Line.

“Israel has both the right and the duty to protect its citizens from attacks. However, the building of the Separation Barrier as a means to prevent attacks inside Israel is the most extreme solution and one that causes the greatest harm to the local population. Israel preferred this solution to alternate options that would cause less harm to the Palestinians. However, if it is Israel’s decision to protect its population by constructing a physical barrier between it and the West Bank, such a barrier must be built along the Green Line or in Israel proper. Israel may not use the route of the Separation Barrier to expand the area of settlements or its sovereignty. Israel must dismantle all parts of the Barrier constructed within the West Bank.”<sup>16</sup>

The Israel Defense Forces (IDF), the military forces of the state of Israel, in a May 5, 2015 posting on their official blog titled "Setting the Facts Straight on the Security Fence," available from [www.idfblog.com](http://www.idfblog.com), wrote: “The security fence serves one purpose and one purpose only: to prevent terrorists from carrying out deadly attacks on Israeli civilians. Since the construction of the fence began, there has been a significant decrease in the number of attacks”

The PLO states "The Annexation Wall is the most visible element of Israel's occupation and control over the land and people of Palestine. Behind it, and indeed all around it, lie a series of equally ugly policies and practices designed to colonize and annex as much land as possible."<sup>17</sup>

The UN passed a resolution that condemned the barrier by a vote of 150-6 with 10 abstentions. The International Court of Justice found the barrier to be a violation of international law, and in 2004 General Assembly Emergency Session overwhelmingly demanded Israeli’s compliance with International Court of Justice Advisory Opinion

### **The Push Factors**

According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) “a record 7,495 refugee and migrant deaths were recorded worldwide last year - almost a third higher than in 2015 - with the vast majority perishing in the Mediterranean Sea The 2016 total of 7,495 deaths compares with 5,740 last year and 5,267 in 2014 and according to the UNHCR, in 2016, 362376 migrants crossed the Mediterranean and of these 31% are from Africa.

In the mean time in Europe there is an ongoing discussion to shift from open door polices to building a “Fortress Europe” approach. However we learn from everyday experience in the region that closing borders is not working as long as there are no serious efforts to address the root causes of migration and the problems in the Internally Displaced people (IDP) centers and in the countries where the refugees are

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<sup>16</sup> Tselem-The Israel Information center for Human rights in the Occupied Territories

<sup>17</sup> [israelpalestinian.procon.org](http://israelpalestinian.procon.org)

coming from. Illegal migration will never stop so long as there are traffickers who constantly design new ways of trafficking people usually with increased risks of death

A year ago, more than 60 heads of states and government met in Malta for the first summit between the European Union (EU) and the African Union (AU) solely dedicated to the topic of migration. Contrary to initial hopes, (Valetta Summit, (11-12 November 2015 Political Declaration) it was not much different from previous EU policies on migration and therefore did not achieve the desired result.

Recently EU interior ministers have pushed ahead with plans to finance camps in Africa, where the UN refugee agency and aid groups would process people to prevent them from trying to cross the Mediterranean to Europe by sending them to a transit point before they cross the borders to Europe. This approach does not go far enough.

The countries that carry the biggest burden of refugees and IDPs are in Africa, one of the poorest countries on earth. No continent hosts as many refugees and internally displaced people as Africa. The refugee camps are also the breeding grounds of criminal gangs and terrorists and are places where traffickers find their victims.

In South Sudan renewed fighting, which erupted again last year has caused over 100,000 people to flee. Today, more than 20% of the South Sudanese population is forcibly displaced. Eritreans, Ethiopians, Somalis, Libyans, Malians, Nigerians, Sudanese, Gambians, and the list goes on, have hundreds of thousands of displaced people across their national boundaries. According to International Displacement Monitoring Center (IDMC) report of 2016: "In total, 12.4 million people were living in ongoing displacement in Africa as a result of conflict and violence. This figure is 30 per cent of the total number of people internally displaced by conflict globally (40.8 million people) and twice the total number of African refugees (5.4 million). Under these circumstances EU will only be able to address the symptoms of forced displacement rather than root causes. In the future, more migrants are likely to come to Europe from Africa due to the expected escalating conflicts, severe poverty recurring drought, famine and population growth.

### **Africa's Rising Population and Youth Unemployment Challenge**

In 2015 the population of the African continent grew by 30 million. Now home to 1.2 billion (up from just 477 million in 1980), by the year 2050, annual increases will exceed 42 million people per year and total population will have doubled to 2.4 billion, according to the UN. This comes to 3.5 million more people per month, or 80 additional people per minute.

According to United Nations, from any big-picture perspective, these population dynamics will have an influence on global demography in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Of the 2.37 billion increases in population expected worldwide by 2050, Africa alone will contribute 54%. By 2100, Africa will contribute 82% of total growth: 3.2 billion of the overall increase of 3.8 billion people. It is said that Nigeria will add more people to the world's population by 2050 than any other country.

According to the UN “The concentration of population growth in the poorest countries presents its own set of challenges, making it more difficult to eradicate poverty and inequality, to combat hunger and malnutrition, and to expand educational enrolment and health systems, all of which are crucial to the success of the new sustainable development agenda.”

Africa has the largest “youth bulge” in the world, and the number of youth is expected to grow by 42.5 million between 2010 and 2020, says the World Bank. The International Labor Organization (ILO) study reveals that Africa, the world’s youngest region, continues to be confronted with high levels of unemployment, vulnerable employment and working poverty with little signs of potential recovery in 2017. According to ILO youth population is expected to double, to over 830 million, by 2050 in the whole continent, one third of the projected population (2.4 billion). How can the world expect these people to stay where they are when the options are starvation and death?

### **The Arab World**

The Arab world is equally experiencing demographic boom as population doubled in the three decades after 1980, to 357m in 2010. According to the UN, it is expected to add another 110m people by 2025—an average annual growth rate of 1.8%, compared with 1% globally. In 2010 the proportion of Arabs aged 15-24 peaked at 20% of the total population. But the absolute number of young will keep growing, from 46m in 2010 to 58m in 2025. And the demographic stress is compounded by rapid urbanization.

Moreover, for the young, jobs are few. In 2010, on the eve of the Arab uprisings, total youth unemployment rates in the Arab world were already the highest of any region, at 10% and 27% respectively. Since then these figures have risen further, to nearly 12% and 30%. Amazingly, in some Arab countries, the more time you spend in school, the less chance you have of finding a job. In Egypt 34% of university graduates were unemployed in 2014, compared with 2% of those with less than a primary education.<sup>18</sup>

Continuing conflict in Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Palestine, Afghanistan, remains one of the main drivers of poverty and migration in the Middle East. In Syria, after five years of civil war it is estimated that 80 percent of the population lives in poverty, and life expectancy has been cut by 20 years.

Almost a decade after the US-led invasion in 2003, poverty rates are on the rise in Iraq with statistics from the World Bank showing that 28 percent of Iraqi families live under the poverty line. Yemen’s poverty rate has increased rate from 42 percent of the population in 2009, to an even more alarming 54.5% in 2012.

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<sup>18</sup> [www://economist.com/blogs/graphical/2016/08/](http://www.economist.com/blogs/graphical/2016/08/)

In Egypt, the Arabs world's most populace country, five years of political upheaval have taken a toll on the economy. Increased unemployment, lower tourist arrivals, and according to UNDP country information, dwindling foreign currency reserves, and weaker Egyptian pound meant that 26% of Egypt's 90 million people live under the poverty line.

In Tunisia, one in every six Tunisian lives below the poverty line as well. Tunisia is one of the highest contributors of ISL fighters per capita, and Tunisian leaders continue to make direct correlation between poverty and terrorism.

In the Palestinian territories including Gaza extreme density of population, lack of employment opportunities and rampant poverty due to restrictions imposed by the Israeli occupation continues to drive raising levels of poverty.

In Africa and much of the Arab world poverty and unemployment is the main reason for radicalization, though these are not the only reasons. A 2012 Gallup poll called the International Religiosity Index found that out of all countries on earth, the most religious 10 nations had 85 percent of their citizens respond as "a religious person." These 10 nations were also increasingly impoverished with the average "per capita income" around \$14,100.<sup>19</sup>

In 2012, the Fata Research Centre (CRC) published a report called "Extremism and Radicalization: An Overview of the Social, Political, Cultural and Economic Landscape of (Federally Administered Tribal Areas)" detailing the factors behind poverty that result in radicalization of youths. The report showed a stunning correlation between poverty, lack of educational opportunities, lack of employment and growing up in a violent society that leads the youth to become religiously extremist. 89 percent of those surveyed emphasized the essential "importance of youth role in bringing prosperity to the region."

The modern day youth hungry, angry, desperate, impatient is ready to move the mountains between them and the other side, unless a better way is found to create a more inclusive world.

## **Conclusion**

History has shown time and time again that Walls and any kind of barrier to separate human beings in this day and age will not succeed nor would they be able to prevent a determined people to find a way to go on the other side. Walls are imposing features that intimidate and challenge those who want to cross. If that determination to cross was never there, walls can bring out the best of spirits, talent, creativity and the needed courage to cross. If walls have served a purpose it has always been temporary and eventually they are overcome at a great cost though.

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<sup>19</sup> [2012 WIN-Gallup International Religiosity and Atheism Index](#)

Walls of any kind make it difficult to find lasting solutions as they exacerbate the problems that they were supposed to solve like we see in Belfast, Israel Palestine Border, the DMZ, the Indian Bangladesh wall, Western Sahara, the US Mexico border and others.

According to Daily Mail UK, published on 21 March of this year, migrant crossing season begins and it's worse than ever. Spring weather sparks rush of attempts to cross the sea with more than 6,000 rescued in the last few days. The IOM reports that around 500 migrants are believed to have drowned so far this year three times higher than it was this time last year. IOM is dealing with an unprecedented amount of migrants and deaths. Between January 1 and end of February of this year more than 16,000 migrants and refugees crossed the Mediterranean Sea and entered Europe, the majority of them following the route from Libya to Italy, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) reports.

Despite these, Hungary's prime minister, Viktor Orban, wrote in a German newspaper that it was important to secure his nation's borders from mainly Muslim migrants "to keep Europe Christian."<sup>20</sup>

The French Nationalist leader states; "Immigration is an organized replacement of our population. This threatens our very survival. We don't have the means to integrate those who are already here. The result is endless cultural conflict."<sup>21</sup>

Leader of UKIP. Nigel Farage in January of this year that Britain should follow Trump's lead and introduce 'extreme vetting at the borders.

Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) is an anti-immigrant party that was founded in 2013. As of September 2016, the AfD had gained representation in ten of the 16 German state parliaments. The party is currently led by Frauke Petry. It has been reported that she suggested that German border guards should shoot illegal immigrants and [they] should use firearms. When asked if that extended to opening fire on women and children, she replied: "Yes."<sup>22</sup> It has been widely reported that the AfD, which has links to its fascist past, celebrated Trump's win as a historic chance.

Geert Wilders the head of the right Wing Party of Freedom of the Netherlands has made his anti Islam policy the bedrock of the party's main agenda. His statement is venomous and he does not mince any words when he vents his hate and anger towards ISLAM. "The Koran is a fascist book which incites violence. That is why this book, just like [Adolf Hitler's] Mein Kampf, must be banned...take a walk down the street and see where is going. You no longer feel like you are living in your own country. There is a battle going on and we have to defend ourselves. Before you know it there will be more mosques than churches."<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> NY Times Sept 2015

<sup>21</sup> **Marine Le Pen** the leader of the France's National Front

<sup>22</sup> The Telegraph, March 13, 2017

<sup>23</sup> Geert wilders Quotes ONLINE

Representative of Iowa and a close associate of Donald Trump and Geert Wilders Mr. Steve King, said, referring to Geert Wilder's statements, " Wilders understands that culture and demographics are our destiny. We can't restore our civilization with somebody else's babies." King doubled down on what he earlier said and in an interview with CNN: "You cannot build your civilization with somebody else's babies. You've got to keep the birth rate up, and that you need to teach your children your values. In doing so, you can grow your population, can strengthen your culture and way of life."

Obviously for Steven King and his associates 'Making America Great Again' means Making America White. For that matter America was never white nor black or Hispanic. It was native Indians first and after that it has always been a country of diverse culture color and race. That is why it is home for millions of us. "This whole movement has a certain global aspect to it," Steve Bannon said, linking Trump's rise to a constellation of populist revolts across Europe. "People want more control of their country. They're very proud of their countries. They want borders. They want sovereignty."<sup>24</sup> It's not just a thing that's happening in any one geographic space. " Their world is crumbling. Ours is being built," tweeted Florian Philippot, Mary Le Pen's chief strategist. As reported in the NY Times of November 9 of 2016, Gérard Araud, the French ambassador to the United States, echoed this sentiment with clearly less enthusiasm: "A world is collapsing before our eyes."

Studies after studies show that such kind: " discrimination make the situation worse and lead to greater support for radicalism, which promises a sense of meaning and life purpose. Such insights could be of use to policymakers engaged in efforts against violent extremism, including terrorism." (publication of the Behavioral Science & Policy Association (BSA) 2015) The BSA reinforces this study by another research of 2016 which indicates:

"that in general, terrorists are not unusual in terms of their psychopathology or personality. But recent studies have shown that some people who join violent extremist movements are on a quest for significance, a sense that their lives have purpose and meaning. They want to generate this sense of worth in themselves and appear worthy in the eyes of others. Personal trauma, shame, humiliation, and perceived maltreatment by society can cause people to feel a loss of self-worth, which we call significance loss. Individuals who have experienced such losses of significance may be attracted to opportunities to restore a sense of self-worth and clear identity."<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> <https://www.buzzfeed.com/nathanielmeyersohn/trump-campaign>

<sup>25</sup> Publication of the Behavioral Science & Policy Association (BSA) 2015)

The measures that governments take to day will come back to haunt them as the world becomes even more unsafe. Migration from poverty and conflict-ridden Africa and the troubled parts of the Middle East and highly populated and impoverished countries of Asia will not stop. With the effects of climate change on food production and availability of water a large-scale migration is expected as the world fails to take the necessary steps for mitigation. The problem is global and the solution cannot be left to individual countries. The world has to be involved in this. Walls and other kinds of barriers have proven to be failures.

The options to peaceful co existence are truly scary. People and governments must regain their senses and realize that after all, we have only one planet and nowhere to go except to learn to open up ourselves and begin to live together and fight the evil in us together. Whatever our social status, race creed or religion “ we all share this planet earth, we have to learn to live in harmony and peace with each other and with nature. This is not just a dream, but a necessity.” [Dalai Lama XIV](#)

*Dawit W Giorgis is currently the Executive Director of the Africa Institute for Strategic and Security Studies AISSS. [www.africaiss.org](http://www.africaiss.org)*

