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Refugees and the Rebalancing of State and Human Security in Europe and Southeast Asia



Rohingya refugees in Kutupalong Makeshift Camp, in Ukhiya, Bangladesh, September 2017. To date, more than 500,000 Rohingya people are estimated to have fled to Bangladesh from neighbouring Rakhine state, Myanmar

Photo Credit: Tommy Trenchard/ Caritas/ CAFOD via flickr

Baroness Valerie Amos, the former Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator at UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, and Ms. Janet Lim, the previous Assistant High Commissioner (Operations) of UN High Commissioner for Refugees, referenced Europe's reduced human security ambitions at seminars here at RSIS last month. Comparing the EU's response to the ongoing crisis in Rakhine state, Myanmar, with its actions during the refugee crisis on its door-step, demonstrate what this means in practice.

On 23 October 2017 in Geneva, the EU co-hosted an event for Rohingya refugees fleeing Rakhine state, and promised €30 million in aid on top of the €21 million already pledged this year. The funding is intended for the 900,000 Rohingya currently estimated by the EU to have fled, as well as the 300,000 Bangladeshi host population in the Cox's Bazaar area to provide emergency shelter, food and health assistance.

In 2016, the EU agreed a deal with neighbouring Turkey for €6 billion to handle the influx of an estimated 2.2 million asylum seekers trying to reach Europe. These massively imbalanced donations for comparable crises demonstrate at best a limited human security motivation: a little over twice as many are people seeking asylum in Europe, but the EU is dedicating more than 117 times as much money.

The widely noted terms of this EU-Turkey deal further underscore this conclusion. The agreement has meant sending those arriving "irregularly" in Greece back to Turkey, despite concerns over their safety once they return. Amnesty International reports subsequent cases of *refoulement* in which asylum seekers have been returned once more to Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan, where they risk serious human rights violations. Nonetheless, the EU is reportedly considering this cash-for-containment model for places with even more dubious records, including Libya.

Institutional aid generally comes with

political considerations. It is, therefore, unsurprising that the EU is giving more to address an issue with direct local implications. But these two agreements suggest a substantial minimisation of concern with human security, together with a significant rebalancing towards using EU member-states as principle security referents. This is reminiscent of debates here in Southeast Asia.

The human security doctrine has penetrated institutions in this region to some extent. The 2007 ASEAN Charter and the 2012 ASEAN Human Rights Declaration attest to this. The ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Affairs on disaster management's (AHA Centre) recent involvement in providing aid to those affected by conflict in Marawi City, Philippines, and in Rakhine State, Myanmar – beyond its conventional natural disaster experience thus far – provides some evidence of practical implications. However, it is likely to be commitments at na-

tional level that will ultimately determine the protection of human security here. The treatment of several minority groups in the region – including Rohingya and other minorities in Myanmar, and Muslims in the Philippines – often justified through appeal to state security, demonstrate the tensions that remain between using the state or the human as a security referent in countries in this region.

In their seminars, both Baroness Amos and Ms. Lim contrasted the role of Europe during their careers at the United Nations with its current positioning. Europe has historically exercised exaggerated influence in the institutions and doctrines that frame human security. With the EU pivoting back towards a state-focus in security policy articulation, Europe and Southeast Asia may now be pursuing a similar balance. If this is the case, it could conceivably produce greater cooperation between the two regions on security articulation, or an overall retrenchment on human security, or even both

together. In other words, there may be both threats and opportunities for proponents of the human security concept.



A child in the Kutupalong Markeshift Camp in Ukhiya, Bangladesh, in August 2009. Some Rohingya have been displaced in Bangladesh since the 1990s. Their children have grown up in camps there.

Photo Credit: Javier Arcenillas via flickr

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CLIMATE CHANGE, ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY AND NATURAL DISASTERS

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30 October 2017

U.S. report says humans cause climate change, contradicting top Trump officials

Lisa Friedman and Glenn

Thrush,
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4 November 2017

Climate change: 5 things to know about Bonn climate summit

Associated Press,
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Climate change imperils one in four natural heritage sites: Report

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Perception of climate change in patients with chronic lung disease

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Climate change: The facts 2017

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The 4th Global Science Conference On Climate Smart Agriculture

28–30 November 2017

Johannesburg, South Africa

International Conference on Resilient Hindu Kush Himalaya : Developing Solutions towards a Sustainable Future for Asia

3–6 December 2017

Kathmandu, Nepal

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Looking back and looking ahead: Energy development in South-east Asia

Fatih Birol,
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24 October 2017

Malaysia's Green Islamic Sukuk funds green tech projects

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Assessing the benefits of an Open Electricity Market for households and small businesses

Allan Loi,
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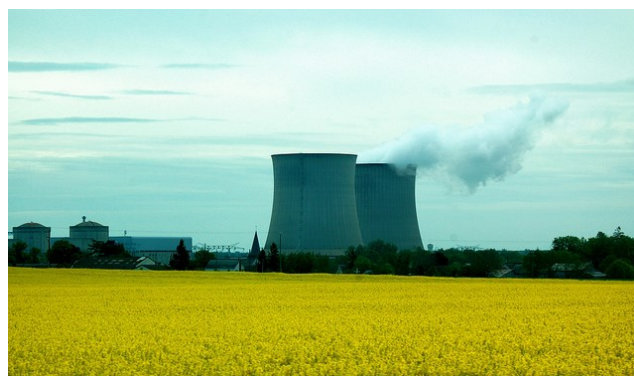
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Third International Conference on Human Resource Development for Nuclear Power Programmes

28-31 May 2018
Gyeongju, South Korea

Asia-Middle East Energy Security Summit 2018

14-16 February 2018
Karnataka, India

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Security culture: An educational handbook of nuclear & non-nuclear case studies

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World nuclear performance report- Asia edition

London: World Nuclear Association
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Millions either malnourished or obese in global nutrition crisis

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Bigger push for high-intensity, large-scale commercial farms

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Papua villages under rebel blockade receive food, aid

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8th International Conference on Food Safety, Quality & Policy

27-28 November 2017
Dubai, United Arab Emirates

3rd International Conference on Global Food Security

3-6 December 2017
Cape Town, South Africa



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HEALTH SECURITY



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Climate change already damaging health of millions globally, report finds

Damian Carrington,
The Guardian
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Climate change isn't just hurting the planet - it's a public health emergency

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What Canada taught Bernie Sanders about health care

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Asia takes robotic body parts and smart hospitals further

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Ending cholera: A global roadmap to 2030

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3rd World Congress on Public Health & Nutrition

26-28 February 2018
London, UK

SingHealth Nursing Conference 2018

5-7 April 2018
Singapore



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PEACE, HUMAN SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT

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Fall of Raqqa inflames Southeast Asia terror threat

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With Iraqi-Kurdish talks stalled, phone diplomacy averts new clashes

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International Conference on Human Rights and Human Security 2018

25-26 June 2018
Paris, France

International Conference on Universities and Women's Studies

8-10 March 2018
Hong Kong

TRANSNATIONAL CRIME



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The Christian vigilantes fighting Myanmar's heroin epidemic

Josh McDonald,
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**21st Annual IBA
Transnational Crime
Conference**

16-18 May 2018
Krakow, Poland

**4th Annual Anti-
Trafficking Conference**

26 January 2018
Kansas, United States



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HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE AND DISASTER RELIEF



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**The global refugee crisis:
Regional destabilization and humanitarian
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Marsa Alam, Egypt

Launch of the Sendai Framework Monitoring Process

6-8 December 2017
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WATER SECURITY

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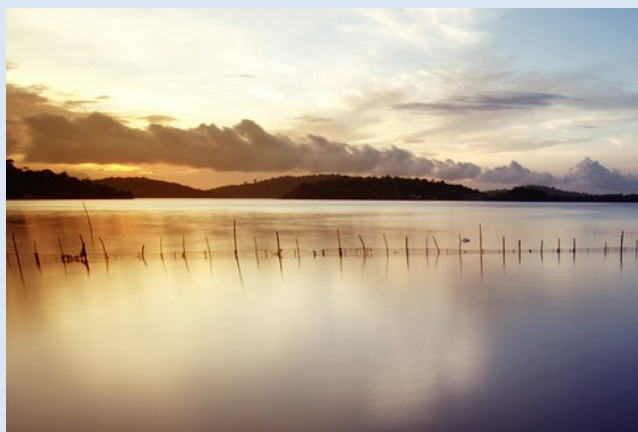
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Call for Papers: 1st International Conference on Water Security

15 December 2017
Toronto, Canada

WASH Futures Conference 2018

5 - 9 March 2018
Brisbane, Australia