

Fortnightly links: inequality, Nicaragua, coconuts, Radi-Aid awards, Syria, and more

By Camilla Burkot and Terence Wood

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On Wednesday, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon [briefed](#) the Security Council on the fall of Aleppo and ensuing atrocities. According to a *Guardian* correspondent interviewed by the ABC, it was [Iranian influence](#) that scuppered plans to evacuate civilians trapped in eastern Aleppo. One [account](#) written by a Syrian mother who lost her child earlier this year provides a wrenching insight into the human cost of the conflict — a cost which is set to grow further still. If you are moved to do something, [this article](#) provides links to key charities working in Syria, including several which are Syrian-based or Syrian diaspora-run. You can also call or email your politicians (local MPs, Foreign Minister, and Prime Minister) asking them to make every effort to secure a ceasefire and humanitarian support to those in Aleppo and across greater Syria.

Brad DeLong offers a [brief history](#) of global inequality. And a [new report](#) from the Washington think tank Institute for Policy Studies suggests that trends in philanthropic giving are mirroring growing inequality.

Dani Rodrik [discusses](#) the complexities of international trade, stating that, “Adam Smith and David Ricardo would turn over in their graves if they read the Trans-Pacific Partnership.”

It’s sometimes suggested that the poor will simply waste cash transfers on things like alcohol. A meta-analysis by World Bank economists ([ungated](#); [gated](#)) provides good evidence that the opposite occurs: on average, cash transfers seem to reduce spending on these types of goods.

Also, research from Nicaragua suggests that exposure to local women leaders enhances durability of benefits from cash transfers ([gated](#); [ungated](#)). There’s also [evidence](#) that a range of programs instituted by the government of Nicaragua, one of the poorest countries in Latin America, are making a difference on both gender equality and economic development.

Was it right for the UK to legislate to spend 0.7% of GNI on development? This is the question tackled in an [episode](#) of BBC Radio 4’s *The World Tonight*, hosted by the Center for Global Development in London last month.

On *The Conversation*, Roland Bourdeix [warns](#) that the “world’s trendiest nut” (that’d be the coconut, folks) is at risk — a real worry for the 11 million farmers who cultivate coconut palms around the world.

A grim [photoessay](#) (not for the squeamish; includes graphic images) depicts the brutal effects of Rodrigo Duterte’s drug war in the Philippines. Just this week Duterte himself [admitted](#) to committing extrajudicial killings.

A report from UN observers is triggering warnings that South Sudan is “on the brink of catastrophe”, with a risk that violence rivalling that of the Rwandan genocide will soon unfold. Vox has a good summary [here](#).

Last week, the fourth annual Global Radiator and Rusty Radiator awards were presented to the best and worst aid ads of 2016. Congrats go out to the winner of the Golden Radiator, International HIV/AIDS Alliance, with its brilliant video on living positively with HIV, and to runners-up Plan International UK and Amnesty Poland, for countering negative stereotypes about aid work and life in developing countries. You can watch all the finalists [here](#).

That wraps up another year of fortnightly links! Thanks for reading. If you ever come across a development-related article, podcast or video that you think should be shared more widely, feel free to email (devpolicy@anu.edu.au) or tweet (@devpolicy) it at us, and we’ll consider it for inclusion in the links. Happy holidays and see you in the New Year!

About the author/s

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Camilla Burkot was a Research Officer at the Development Policy Centre, and Editor of the Devpolicy Blog, from 2015 to 2017. She has a background in social anthropology and holds a Master of Public Health from Columbia University, and has field experience in Eastern and Southern Africa, and PNG. She now works for the Burnet Institute.

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