

Fortnightly links: contractors, SDGs, Mosul, polio, UK aid, and more

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The Economist [reports](#) on the rise of for-profit contractors in the aid world.

How will we know if the SDGs are having any impact? Duncan Green [blogs on](#) the SDGs numbers and politics.

Ghaith Abdul-Ahad on the [grim brutality](#) of the battle for Mosul. In light of the situation there, it's unsurprising that [the story of an American missionary family](#) who recently moved to Mosul to provide humanitarian support has attracted controversy.

Though it was good to see the Australian aid program [commit another A\\$18m](#) to the Global Polio Eradication Initiative, there were also reports of polio outbreaks in [Syria](#) and [DRC](#) this fortnight. Both outbreaks are believed to have been caused by patchy vaccine coverage.

A new UN report takes on the big topic of masculinity and gender equality, based on a multi-country study conducted in Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, and Palestine. Read a summary [here](#) or download the full report [here](#).

"Aid: something to boast about?" A [podcast from BBC Radio 4](#) explores, among other issues, why UK politicians seem to be willing to risk voter ire to keep the volume of British aid at 0.7% of GNI.

On a similar topic, Adam Ramsey [writes](#) for *The Guardian* on why the public seem to be losing faith in NGOs, while in the *New York Times* David Duhigg [explores](#) why some of the "most important and heart-wrenching issues have so much trouble attracting donations".