

Midwife cont'd from pg 1

more than 60 nations. In Bangladesh, Pfeil spent two months offering services to incoming refugees and survivors of sexual violence.

The United Nations have called the brutality against the Rohingya a campaign of “ethnic cleansing” – yet almost six months into the crisis, little has been done in the way of international intervention.

“Most everyone fled with whatever they had on

On Jan. 23, the gradual repatriation of the Rohingya from Bangladesh to Myanmar was set to begin, after an agreement was signed back in November. It’s since been postponed amid fears that the return of the refugees would be neither safe nor voluntary.

The same day, several U.S. Senators, including Oregon’s Jeff Merkley and Ron Wyden, introduced a bipartisan Senate resolution condemning the Myanmar campaign of ethnic cleansing against the Rohingya and calling for the “safe, dignified, voluntary and sustainable return” of the refugees.

Pfeil – whose work as a midwife with MSF has taken her to South Sudan, the Ethiopian-Somali border, Haiti, and Papua New Guinea – spoke with *The Skanner* on her experiences with Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh. This interview has been edited for space and clarity.

The Skanner News: What was your first impression when arriving

at the Kutupalong refugee camp?

Aerlyn Pfeil: It’s a stark contrast. The camp is an ocean of plastic sheeting and bamboo sticks and feces and mud. It kind of looks like hell on earth, honestly. And then you have the beautiful landscape of the forest and Myanmar mountains. My first couple of days I spent out on the berm – this narrow strip – waiting for the border to be opened for people to cross over. There were about 14,000 people over that period of a couple days. It was a piece of land about as wide as one car lane and a mile and a half long, and it was just packed with thousands of people with nothing, because most everyone fled with whatever they had on.

For a lot of them, it’s the first time they’ve ever had healthcare, so there’s a big education gap in understanding the free services. Certainly, there was sometimes a lack of awareness that we even existed at the camp. Part of that was due to how large the camp is and how hard it is to navigate. When we imagine a refugee camp, we often think of a flat expansive area with rows of tents. The Kutupalong camp doesn’t look like that at all. It’s these steep hillsides that are all sand. The tents are stacked up on each other and the pathways go all over the place. There’s no real organization. I got lost in the camp a couple of times; so did colleagues. Patients were afraid to leave their shelters because they feared they wouldn’t find their way back again.

Read the rest of this story at TheSkanner.com

BLM cont'd from pg 1

“Vancouver Public Schools has always celebrated Black History Month and heritage commemoration months, but this year we’ve formalized what we do in collaboration with the Vancouver chapter of Black Lives Matter. Together, we’ve collected resources for teachers and schools that can be used in the classroom and are appropriate for students at all levels. These resources include information about notable African-Americans and links to documentaries and articles,” said Vancouver Public Schools spokesperson Amanda Richter in a statement to *The Skanner*.

“We celebrate and honor a variety of groups, national holidays/observances and causes within our schools, including special celebrations and community service activities around the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday, as well as several of our secondary schools’ longtime

work with the local NAACP chapter,” said Evergreen Public School’s spokesperson Gail Spolar. “Ms. Towner has agreed to provide additional age-appropriate Black History resources to our district that will complement the diversity and equity focus we already provide in our schools that happens not only in February, but throughout the school year.”

“There was nothing schoolwide, districtwide – and there was no tracking of what they were doing

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PHOTO BY COLUMBIA GSAPP (CC BY 2.5) VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Angela Davis to Speak at ACLU of Oregon Dinner

Political activist, author and scholar, Angela Davis will speak at this year’s 2018 ACLU of Oregon Liberty Dinner, which will take place March 9 at the Oregon Convention Center. An influential figure of the civil rights movement and co-founder of Critical Resistance, Davis came to be a prominent leader of counterculture activism in the 1960s. She continues to be a leading voice in conversations about feminism, social consciousness, and resistance. The Liberty Dinner includes a dinner and an auction, along with powerful conversations around the theme of Reimagining Justice. ASL interpreters and open captioning will be provided. Wheelchair, scooters, and hearing devices available upon request.

TriMet cont'd from pg 1

(either at stores or through a smart phone app) an electronic card they tap at MAX kiosks or upon boarding a bus.

Eventually, the agency plans to replace the paper tickets sold at kiosks with single-use tickets that can be scanned the same way – enabling access to the system for out-of-town visitors and others who might be unfamiliar with the system.

TriMet is touting the system as a more seamless, flexible program that allows riders to pay as they go. It can also save riders money in some cases. Anyone who taps their card twice in one day will be granted a day pass by the system, where previously riders had to guess in advance whether to use a day pass or a ticket for a single trip.

“Previously, I would go in, I would lay down \$100, get my paper tickets and would leave,” said TriMet spokesperson Roberta Altstadt. “The next month [using HopFast Pass], I could lay down \$100, and then I could have \$97 [less \$3 for the pass itself] loaded on that card. It’s kind of the same experience than leaving the paper ticket. What’s different with Hop is you can lay down \$20, you can go home and register it, you can set up auto-reload. You don’t

need that upfront \$100 for a pass.”

Hop FastPass launched quietly in 2017. Transit activists have been skeptical about the program since TriMet announced in 2016 that it would be launching an electronic fare program. They worry that TriMet’s shift away from paper tickets – and possible shift away from cash fares altogether – will disproportionately harm transit-dependent populations.

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Nicole Phillips, a member of Bus Riders Unite and a representative on TriMet’s equity advisory committee, said some transit agencies have electronic fare programs that allow users to manage multiple accounts from one card – so a parent boarding with several children can swipe one card and have the system deduct fares

for each passenger in her group. Hop FastPass, on the other hand, requires each passenger over the age of seven to have a separate card and unique account.

“Chicago does have a multiple-account card system,” Phillips said. “You just have to have the operator push a button for everyone in their group. It’s possible that the system [TriMet has] chosen doesn’t accommodate that. They’ve acknowledged that it is an issue and said that they will consider adjustments in the future.”

Another problem? The new passes aren’t quite as easy to find as paper tickets or passes were.

TriMet’s website – which used to sell paper passes and tickets to riders and could deliver them through the mail for a slight surcharge – allows users to register their Hop FastPass cards and add more money to their accounts. (Accounts can also be managed using a smart phone app, or with cash payments at retail locations that support the pass.) But it doesn’t sell or mail the passes.

Instead, riders need to go to a retail location or to TriMet’s ticket office in Pioneer Courthouse Square.

Read more at TheSkanner.com



PUBLIC DOMAIN PHOTO VIA WIKIPEDIA

This photo shows the entrance of Skyview High School in Vancouver, Washington. Vancouver and Evergreen Public Schools have partnered with Black Lives Matter Vancouver to more formally celebrate Black History Month this year.