

Headlines:

- **The Global Tax Scam**
- **Karachi's Water Problems**
- **New Report Reveals Russia's Syria Role**

Details:

The Global Tax Scam

From Vladimir Putin to Lionel Messi, the Panama Papers which were leaked from the fourth biggest offshore law firm, Mossack Fonseca, showed the accounts of famous individuals held in tax havens around the world. Described as "the biggest leak in history," the Panama Papers have exposed many politicians who, whilst enjoying profitable ventures, run countries whose populations are in dire need such as Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. The leaks have also exposed the contradictory discourse employed by some politicians such as the Conservatives in Britain who despite claiming to combat against such ventures, are funded by individuals who hold such funds. These leaks have also led to countries such as Iceland to call for their Prime Minister to step down. Undoubtedly, these leaks have come at a time where populations around the world are realising the unequal, Capitalist economic system they live under where personal benefit is the only criterion used to drive policies.

Karachi's Water Problems

Water shortage crisis are something of a common occurrence within Pakistan's coastal city of Karachi. The cause of the shortages range from disputes between the KESC and the water board, to poorly built dams incapable of fulfilling their purposes. But this time the problem is worse specifically in Western Karachi where on multiple occasions "illegal" pumping sites have appeared to profit off the shortage by supplying water at extortionate prices to vulnerable people. It is also of no surprise, in a nation that operates by utilising patron client relationships, that those water pumps controlled by "powerful" (as one citizen described them) men, are allowed to operate whilst those that don't have this backing or refuse to pay a tax to the water board have their pumps taken down regardless of how important they are. The head of the Western Karachi Water Board, Ovais Malik, attributes the problem to climate change and corruption, however he perceives the corruption to only exist at an individual level and not institutional. The fact that the water shortage problem is nothing new and has been a recurring issue for the past decade, the fact that the water board receives a share of profits from water pumps that are created by individuals with powerful backing and the fact that parts of Karachi are still without any form of water pumps all point to the case that this problem is not individual, nor institutional but rather systemic. It is the system that allows powerful individuals to exploit situations at the expense of the average citizen and it is the system that refuses to address the water issue as for them, quite clearly it's a non-issue. Karachi itself is a coastal city, with the technology available in the current age and the billions stored in the offshore accounts of the elites, it would not be difficult to create and finance a sustainable water source. However this problem cannot be addressed unless the system is focused on solving the affairs of people as opposed to accumulating wealth, as quite clearly capital accumulation is a failed policy, capitalism is a failed system.

New Report Reveals Russia's Syria Role

Russian claims to have mostly bombed ISIS targets during its Syrian campaign were wildly out of step with reality, according to a report using aerial surveillance, crowdsourcing and other open source techniques. The report by the Washington-based Atlantic Council describes such claims by Vladimir Putin and the Russian defence ministry as "inaccurate on a grand scale." Its analysis of video footage of targets released by the Russian defence ministry between 30 September and 17 November last year repeatedly found them to have been outside Isis-controlled territory. The report confirmed the almost six months of Russian airstrikes up until the 27 February ceasefire caused only peripheral damage to ISIS. The report confirmed the main focus of the Russian intervention in Syria before the ceasefire was to bolster the Assad government by pushing back rebel groups while claiming to be working alongside the US-led international coalition against ISIS. This Atlantic Council report is the most forensic analysis to date of where Russian bombs fell.