



INSTITUTE of CURRENT
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NEWS

SAVE THE DATE: May 17, 2024, Washington, DC James Courtright fellowship report



Returning fellow James Courtright has spent a highly illuminating two years deep in the field across West Africa exploring how Fulani societies—the world's largest pastoralist group—are responding to climate change, discriminatory governments and increasing jihadist activity, and what they reveal about the roots of violence and other major developments in the region's countries. He'll report on his fellowship in Washington, DC on Friday, May 17, followed by a panel discussion that will include former fellow Hannah Rae Armstrong (Western Sahara, 2012-2014).

After finishing his fellowship in December, James has begun work with the Dutch think-tank Clingendael, part of a team researching jihadist insurgent infiltration in northern Ghana. He's also working on a project funded by the British High Commission in Accra, researching the contributions of livestock markets to local economies in northern Ghana, and the role of marginalized Fulani in Ghanaian society. And he plans to do some long-form writing following threads uncovered during his ICWA travels.

Time and place to be determined, please stay tuned!

Upcoming discussion: Post-Putinist Russia

February 16, 2024



Please join the Institute of Current World Affairs, American Purpose and US Institute of Peace for the final in a series of hybrid panel discussions with prominent Russian exiles. The economist Sergei Guriev, journalist Mikhail Zygar, rights advocate Natalia Arno and USIP fellow Jorgan Andrews will discuss plausible scenarios for a post-Putinist Russia. The National Endowment for Democracy's Miriam Lansky will moderate the conversation.

What are the main challenges facing institutional and social reform—including the questions of decolonialization, understanding of history and Russian identity, and interests of minority regions? What roles should the United States and other Western countries be playing? What lessons learned from the 1990s?

Friday, Feb. 16, 10 a.m. ET

**United States Institute of Peace
2301 Constitution Ave., NW
Washington, DC
and via Zoom**

To register, go to: www.icwa.org//panel-series-post-putinist-russia/



Malcolm Deas dies

Oxford scholar, leading expert on Latin America, adviser to Colombian presidents and ICWA fellow Malcolm Deas explored the origins of conflict, rise of institutions and the democratic model of Colombia on his fellowship in 1964-65.

FELLOWS

Prachi Vidwans



South Korean students still under a draconian system

Levinson fellow Prachi Vidwans spoke to high school students in South Korea about the grueling eight-hour ordeal of the country's infamous college entrance examination, and what it says about society. "South Korean students start preparing in preschool" for the potentially life-changing moment, she writes.

Young South Koreans struggle to see a way forward

In her debut dispatch, Prachi discusses the four generations of South Korean society and talks with young people struggling to fit in and shape the country's future.



Edric Huang



Transgender performers in Taiwan take on personal and political issues

Mixner LGBTQ+ fellow Edric Huang reports on how transgender performers in Taiwan are telling their stories in some profoundly self-revealing productions that are both subversive and confrontational.

FELLOWS

The multitudinous facets of Taiwan's LGBTQ+ community

In his first ICWA dispatch, Edric surveyed Taiwan's LGBTQ+ community and its "collective process of self-discovery," revealing "a network of unique threads reaching for one another... in the unending dance to create change."



Steven Tagle



Greece in a changing Europe: Final report

Describing his two-year fellowship, Stavros Niarchos Foundation fellow Steven Tagle writes about opportunities and challenges facing Greece's northeastern region of Evros in "taking advantage of its crucial position in the evolving energy and security landscape" of Europe. "Borders are important," one of his subjects told him. "The border creates identity. If you don't know the other, you can't know yourself."

James Courtright

West Africa's gold mines are more organized than you might think

Donors fellow James Courtright traveled to northern Ghana, where he learned how an ethnically driven embargo of key local markets is "severely complicating any potential attempts at reconciliation and reintegration" to the benefit of Al Qaeda-affiliated jihadist insurgents.



FELLOWS

James Courtright



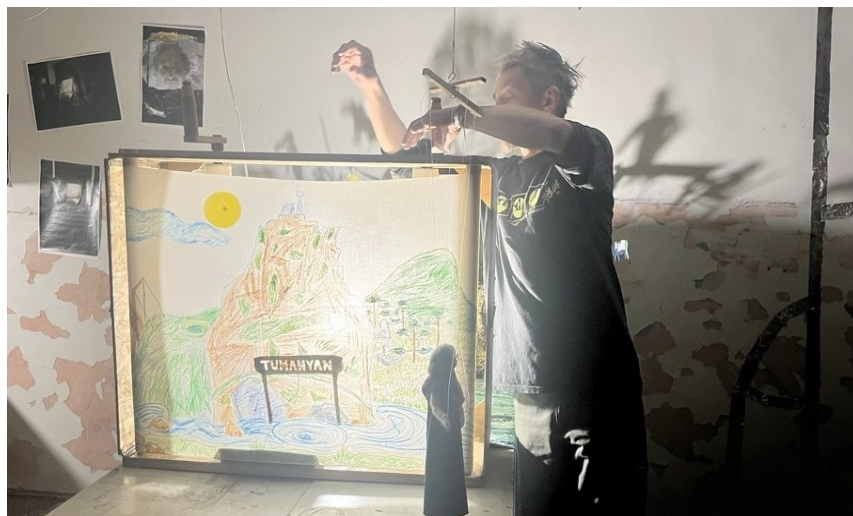
Repression, war undermining Burkina Faso

James also traveled to Burkina Faso, where a seemingly endless war against jihadist militants is pushing the embattled government to embrace harsh measures and repression from which rural residents are increasingly suffering.

Aron Ouzilevski

Russian exiles in Armenia part of a 180-year tradition

In rural Armenia, Aron Ouzilevski spoke with Russian refugees fleeing the authoritarian regime of Vladimir Putin who have found themselves working together with the descendants of a Russian religious sect that left the country more than a century ago. He describes a welcoming climate in the countryside that “has enabled new Russian exiles to recalibrate their lives and even leave a tangible impact on their host country.”



Middle-aged Russians struggle, adapt in exile

From his home base in the Georgian capital Tbilisi, Aron reports about the particular challenges faced by middle-aged Russian refugees, who remember the hopes of 1990s Russia after the Soviet collapse but now find themselves struggling to begin new lives. “My whole life was just preparation to get the f*** out of Russia,” one man told him.

GLOBAL CURRENTS



ICWA fellows on a consequential year for democracy

More than 60 countries are going to the polls this year at a pivotal time when liberal democracy must confront challenges posed by war, authoritarian regimes, the allure of right-wing populism, a global cost-of-living crisis and the effects of unchecked climate change. Several current and former fellows weigh in on this critical moment.

ALUMNI



“Pramila Jayapal: Biden’s ‘Coalition has fractured,’” *The New Yorker* Radio Hour podcast with David Remnick and **Pramila Jayapal** (India, 1995-1996), January 19, 2024

“Trump’s Reckoning Begins,” by **Andrew Rice** (Uganda, 2002-2004), *New York Magazine*, January 30, 2024

“Can Israel achieve its war goals in Gaza?” by **Neri Zilber** (Israel, 2011-2013), *Financial Times*, January 30, 2024

“Wendy Call and Shook on the Power of Titles, Decolonization, and Translating Poems in Iterations,” a poets.org interview with **Wendy Call** (Mexico, 1999-2001) and David Shook, Literary Hub, January 8, 2024

“‘Food is a tool for change’: the Turkish chef who empowers women, helps refugees – and serves a mean dobo,” by **Joshua Levkowitz** (Turkey, 2021-2023), *The Guardian*, January 1, 2024

“We’re Beginning to Learn How the War on Terror Shaped a Generation,” by **Suzy Hansen** (Turkey, 2007-2009), *New York Times*, December 21, 2023

“Alleged Hamas financier holds stake in Cyprus company that mines Egyptian gold, leaked files reveal,” by **David Kenner** (Saudi Arabia, 2019-2021) and Uri Blau, International Consortium of Investigative Journalists, December 20, 2023

“The most Istanbul thing to do in Istanbul,” by **Joshua Levkowitz** (Turkey, 2021-2023), BBC, December 14, 2023

“Tell me why the watermelon grows,” by **Jori Lewis** (Senegal, 2011-2013), Food & Environment Reporting Network, December 4, 2023

“Give Us Your Engineers, Your Doctors, Your Entrepreneurs,” by **Joel Millman** (El Salvador, 1987-1989), *Bloomberg Businessweek*, May 11, 2023

The Institute of Current World Affairs has sent outstanding young professionals abroad to acquire deep understanding of global societies for more than 97 years. Institute fellows have become some of America’s leading experts on international cultures and affairs, thanks to the unique fellowships first designed by our founders Charles R. Crane and Walter Rogers. We continue their tradition with your support.

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