

New Normality

We wake up dry-mouthed, fearful, to yet another insecure dawn. Mist has spread across the hillside overnight. Only the blurred tops of the tallest trees are visible, black-green poking through the grey underfur of a morning still holding its breath for sunrise.

Feral dogs snarl in the woods beyond the electrified perimeter fence. The only road out of the compound winds slowly uphill to a checkpoint at the top, where armed policemen wearing black leather jackets and permanently heavy-duty frowns maintain an endless watch.

From our window we see an overcoated figure, bag slung from one shoulder, trudging towards the barrier. Familiar with the procedure, he stops outside the guard post, assumes the position while they frisk him, waits for his clearance to be checked, for permission to begin another day.

By Ken Head