



## Reflections

### Do something

Jean Elizabeth Hudson MD CCFP FCFP

Cancer.  
My wife.  
Husbands.  
Men.  
Why?  
Why did they?  
Why didn't they?  
If only we had gone to ...  
Her family doctor missed it.  
Her specialist missed it.  
Did you know there is a specialist in the States who could fix this?  
If only the surgeon had operated sooner ...  
Why did we have to wait?  
They said it wouldn't matter.  
Why?  
Why didn't we get more chemotherapy?  
Why did they stop chemotherapy?  
Why can't we try?  
She's going to die anyway, why don't you try?  
Why aren't you doing anything?  
Nobody cares.  
Nobody listens.  
Nobody respects me.  
In my country, this would never happen.  
You're just letting her die.  
This is a death ward.  
This is a deathbed.  
Nobody comes.  
My wife's dying, do something.  
You doctors are quacks.  
Don't patronize me.  
It's a simple problem, make her nausea go away.  
I'm fine; I don't need help; just make my wife better.  
I don't need a social worker.  
I don't need a psychiatrist; there's nothing wrong with me; just help my wife.  
I don't trust this system.  
I want another doctor.  
I want another hospital.  
I want another nurse.  
I want more tests.  
She has no nutrition, do something; feed her.  
It's in God's hands.  
It isn't up to you, only God knows.  
Nobody knows, how do you know?  
A miracle will happen.  
Why are you giving up?  
You aren't God.  
You're the doctor, you should know.  
I know she's going to die, do something now.



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**Competing interests**  
None declared

## Books | Reviews

### Damned nations

Greed, guns, armies and aid

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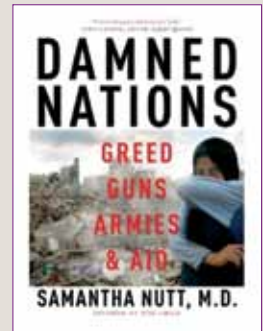
**PUBLISHED** 2011/240 pp/\$29.99

**OVERALL RATING** Very good

**STRENGTHS** Poignant and compelling

**WEAKNESSES** None

**AUDIENCE** Health professionals and the general public interested in global health



**A**uthor Dr Samantha Nutt's years of development work in conflict zones, including Congo, Somalia, Sudan, Iraq, and Afghanistan, are chronicled in *Damned Nations*. A public health-trained family physician, Dr Nutt's particular area of interest is women's health. The book presents compelling narratives about the stark realities faced by citizens in conflict zones.

While encouraging participation in global health initiatives, Dr Nutt also makes an effort to outline the potential issues that might arise from aid. The book provides a sobering distillation of the common pitfalls that can occur with official development assistance, as well as the more concerning trends of volunteer tourism or "voluntourism," and the proliferation of new non-governmental organizations lacking appropriate development training, notably in Haiti after the 2010 earthquake.

Dr Nutt finishes by outlining practical steps readers can take to address the problems of war and poverty: seek education, become engaged citizens, give to worthy charities, and lobby for improvements to official development assistance policy. Readers are encouraged to evaluate charities thoroughly and to move toward regular, long-term charitable contributions rather than 1-time disaster-based giving.

*Damned Nations* provides an intimate portrait of war and empowers readers to take concrete actions in their own communities to address global inequity.

—Natalie Lovesey MD CCFP

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