

# Conflict Weekly

An initiative by NIAS-IPRI and KAS India Office

*A brief review of conflict and peace processes across the world*

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## **Global Biodiversity Framework, and the EU's gas price capping regulation**

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COP 15 concluded with the adoption of Global Biodiversity Framework, setting a post-2020 agenda for biodiversity.

(Image Source: CBD/UNEP)

## **COP 15: Countries sign the historic Global Biodiversity Framework**

### In the news

On 19 December, at Conference of the Parties (COP 15) hosted by Canada and chaired by China, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) was adopted by 190 countries.

On 17 December, the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres had said: "We are finally starting to forge a peace pact with nature." Reflecting on the current state of affairs, he had remarked: "We are waging a war on nature. Ecosystems have become playthings of profit. Humanity's war on nature is ultimately a war on ourselves."

On 15 December, Chinese President Xi Jinping had urged the contracting parties to "turn ambitions into actions" as "humanity lives in a community with a shared future." He added: "We need to build global consensus on biodiversity protection."

Following the GBF, Chinese Environment Minister Huang Runqiu remarked: "The declaration will send a powerful signal, showing the world our determination to solve the problem of biodiversity loss, and our stronger actions on the issues discussed at this high-level meeting." His Canadian counterpart, Steven Guilbeault said: "It is truly a moment that will mark history as Paris did for climate."

However, the Democratic Republic of the Congo's Environment Minister Ève Bazaiba protested, saying: "We didn't accept it. We didn't have the agreement. We will go back home. Maybe the president of COP 15 and Canada will continue negotiations with countries before the next COP. We are open to that. I am sad to see that they didn't respect the procedure of an agreement by consensus."

### Issues at large

First, a background on the Conference of Parties (COP 15). The COP is the governing body of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) signed in 1992 aimed at the conservation of biodiversity, the sustainable use of its components, and the fair and equitable sharing of resources. The COP meets once in two years to monitor the implementation of the CBD. The latest COP (COP 15) concluded with the adoption of the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) which set the agenda for biodiversity post-2020. It is considered to be the most ambitious global plan ever to be developed for protecting biodiversity.

Second, the outcome of COP 15 in 2022. The agreement includes 23 targets aimed at addressing biodiversity loss, restoring ecosystems, and protecting indigenous rights. The target's focus on halting and reversing nature loss and putting 30 per cent of the planet as well as 30 per cent of degraded ecosystems under protection by 2030. Currently, only 17 per cent of land is protected. Additionally, it seeks to halve global food waste and phase out or reform subsidies that harm biodiversity by at least USD 500 billion per year. Moreover, the rights of indigenous people and local communities are to be respected while implementing the GBF.

Third, the issue of finance. The agreement also pledged to mobilise at least USD 200 billion each year from public and private sources as biodiversity-related funding. The issue of finance for developing countries has remained at the core of negotiations at COP 15 like the COP 27 held in November in Egypt. At least USD 30 billion each year is expected to flow from developed to developing countries as part of the agreement.

Fourth, bridging biodiversity and climate change. The agreement is being compared with the significant 2015 Paris Agreement for climate action making countries accountable for their actions towards biodiversity loss. It has intertwined climate action with nature and biodiversity protection and resulted in a coherent policy framework. Last year, the scientific body behind COP 27 and COP 15, the Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, released a joint report on the need to achieve climate and environmental targets highlighting the link between climate change and biodiversity loss.

Fifth, the opposition by the global south. Many developing countries have flagged their concerns over the funding mechanisms. Delegates from Latin America, Africa, and South Asia walked out of the discussion complaining that they were not being heard. While the developing countries prefer establishing a new fund for biodiversity, the developed countries prefer continuing with the existing Green Environment Facility. The DRC's objection to the current agreement stems from its reservations regarding the proposed funding mechanisms. A few countries have also opposed the 30 by 30 target fearing the potential displacement of indigenous people.

#### In perspective

First, a significant step in pushing the biodiversity agenda to the forefront. The agreement is a remarkable step towards bringing the global biodiversity agenda to the forefront at par with climate action. Such policy frameworks can inspire countries to set ambitious targets and implement them in specific areas like biodiversity.

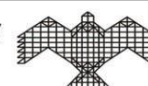
Second, more focus on implementation. Climate targets of countries reflect how declaring intent and ambition alone is not enough. The Global Biodiversity Framework, likewise, faces challenges in monitoring and implementation. Given that previous commitments on biodiversity have not been met, the current agreement needs to put in place appropriate monitoring mechanisms to ensure its implementation.

Third, the need for coordination between developing and developed countries. The debate over financing has been at the core of the global environmental agenda and developing and developed countries need to arrive at a workable solution to address their historical responsibilities while raising the requisite funds for the effective implementation of the GBF.

## **The EU: The new gas price capping regulation**

### In the news

On 19 December, European Union energy ministers reached a consensus on a market correction mechanism regarding recent fluctuations in liquefied petroleum gas (LNG). The regulation, a price capping mechanism for trade in LNG, is likely to be implemented by 15 February 2023, will be activated if LNG price at Dutch Title Transfer Facility (TTF) is above EUR 180/MWh (USD 52.8/mmbtu) for three consecutive days on TTFs front month contracts. Once mechanism is triggered, trades would not be permitted on the front-month, three-month and front-year TTF contracts at a price more than EUR 35/MWh above the reference global LNG price. Jozef SÍKELA, Czech minister of industry and trade, who holds the rotating EU presidency said: "We will set a realistic and effective mechanism, which includes the necessary safeguards that will steer us clear from risks to security of supply and financial markets stability. Once again, we have proved that the EU is united and will not let anybody use energy as a weapon."



### Issues at large

First, energy crises due to price fluctuations. Europe has been reeling under an unprecedented energy crisis following the Russia-Ukraine war which has triggered record levels of inflation. The conflict has pushed Europe to look for alternatives to avoid being blackmailed on energy security by Russia and compelled governments in the EU to arrange for extra funds. The highly volatile LNG trade has witnessed an increase of around 264 per cent since January 2022, while the drops in prices have also been over 200 per cent in the past 11 months.

Second, disparities and affordability issues within the EU. The excessive LNG pricing has exposed the faultlines in a seemingly united EU. The deal was supported by most EU members but its biggest consumer, Germany, had initially objected to the gas pricing mechanism and finally relented. The shift happened after its demands for changes to another regulation on speeding up renewable energy permits and stronger safeguards were added to the cap. The Netherlands has doubled its LNG import capacity to 24 Bcm/year and its LNG terminals will soon reach their full capacity, according to a report by SP Global. The Netherlands has also abstained from supporting the regulation as it fears the low cap could cause the sellers and LNG exporters to look for better-paying customers. The TTF has also maintained that it is reviewing the consensus reached by the EU; it had indicated earlier that it may move gas trading out of the EU if the price cap was approved. Hungary also voted against the mechanism.

Third, market intervention by the neo-liberal EU. Dutch energy minister Rob Jetten said: "Despite the progress the last couple of weeks, the market correction mechanism remains potentially unsafe." Goldman Sachs sees the mechanism as a factor that could further cause market disruptions as the sellers were not consulted and the demand side remains oblivious to corrective mechanisms that the EU could impose on itself to calibrate with current circumstances. The intervention by the EU on LNG has disrupted the global LNG supply routes and many developing countries are suffering from gas shortages as the EU could offer a higher price.

### In perspective

First, seeking guarantees without adequate infrastructure. Europe is on a path to substitute its reliance on Russian energy in an attempt to deter energy from being used as a weapon. The ground reality, however, is Europe's lack of LNG import terminals has exasperated the importers who have to wait for the offsetting of the LNG in terminals to be released into inland Europe while those who could not afford the expensive LNG wait in vain in cold and dry winters.

Second, the increasingly important role of the US in the EU's LNG imports. The US now exports more than a third of its LNG to Europe, while Russian exports which used to be around one-third have been reduced to 17 per cent. The US has come to rescue Europe by supplying 70 per cent of its LNG cargoes diverting them from Asia to Europe.

Third, from market intervention to a market correction. The price mechanism caps the maximum price of LNG that the EU members are willing to pay at USD 52.8/mmBtu, which is not much higher than the global average. This has the potential to cause speculations in the market resulting in adjusted expectations and creating scope for other countries to pre-plan on paying the LNG bill. Advanced economies of Europe means upfront payment commitments, however, the price cap being almost in line with the global average makes the price cap redundant. This points to the possibility of the mechanism signalling an anti-Russia agenda rather than ensuring energy security, at least in the medium term.

## Also, from around the world

Avishka Ashok, Sai Pranav, Joel Jacob, Akriti Sharma, Bhoomika Sesharaj, Sethuraman N. Apoorva Sudhakar, Anu Maria Joseph and Padmashree Anandan

### East and Southeast Asia

#### **China: Proposal at Biological Weapons Convention is common will of developing countries, says Ministry**

On 19 December, the Foreign Ministry spokesperson stressed China's proposal at the Biological Weapons Convention, calling it the common will of the majority of the developing countries amongst the member states. On 16 December, the ninth review of the convention concluded, approving an accord to ban bio-weapons, including its development, production, acquisition, transfer, stockpiling and use of viruses, bacteria and other pathogens. The spokesperson said: "The outcomes of the just-concluded convention marks important progress in global bio safety governance that is in line with the common interest of the international community."

#### **China: Satellite photos show China building on unoccupied territory in South China Sea**

On 21 December, the Strait Times reported that China was accused of building unoccupied land features in the South China Sea. The action is considered to be China's long-term strategy to claim the region as its national territory. Although China has previously built on reefs, islands and land formations, the report stressed that this was the first known instance of the country building on unoccupied land features that it does not occupy. The news report is based on satellite photos which display a Chinese vessel releasing an amphibious hydraulic excavator, like the one used in Spratly Islands in 2014.

#### **North Korea: Pyongyang fires two ballistic missiles at the East Sea**

On 18 December, South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff reported that North Korea fired two medium-range ballistic missiles towards the Korean Peninsula's eastern coast. Both missiles flew 500 kilometres and landed in the East Sea outside Japan's exclusive economic zone. South Korea and Japan condemned Pyongyang's missile test and stated that it escalated regional tensions.

#### **Malaysia: Flood and landslide kill 25 people including children**

On 17 December, the death toll from a landslide near a town outside the capital city Kuala Lumpur rose to 21, including five children. On 20 December, the government data showed that five people, including a 15-month-old child, had died and 56,159 people were displaced from floods in five states. The fire and rescue operation director said that aerial monitoring to assess the situation on the ground helped in the ongoing rescue missions. Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim visited the affected areas and promised financial aid to the families of the deceased.

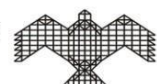
### South Asia

#### **Bangladesh: Railway Protection Force of Northeast Frontier Railway holds nine Rohingyas**

On 18 December, the Railway Protection Force (RPF) of the Northeast Frontier Railway said nine Bangladeshi Rohingyas had been held at the Agartala railway station. The development took place while the RPF, along with the local railway patrol team, conducted a "special" check against illegal migrants on all incoming and outgoing trains at the station. The RPF said that the migrants did not produce any "valid documents" and only later admitted that they were Rohingyas from Bangladesh. They were handed to the government for "further legal action."

#### **Nepal: Import of medicines from 16 Indian firms banned**

On 20 December, Nepal's Department of Drug Administration banned the import of medicines



from 16 Indian pharmaceutical companies for reportedly disobeying and “failing to comply” with the World Health Organisation’s “good manufacturing practices.” This comes after the WHO issued an alert on Indian-made cough syrups linked to the death of children in The Gambia. The ban entails mainstream Indian pharmaceuticals, along with Divya Pharmacy, which manufactures Yoga Guru Ramdev’s Patanjali products. The WHO traced the deaths in The Gambia to four cough and cold syrups produced by Maiden Pharmaceuticals whose operations were busted by the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation.

### Central Asia, Middle East, and Africa

#### **Iran: Four security officers killed near Pakistan border, says IRGC**

On 19 December, Al Jazeera reported a statement by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) which said that four Iranian security personnel had been killed in a firefight near the Iran-Pakistan border. One of the casualties was part of the IRGC and the other three belonged to the Basij forces under the IRGC. The IRGC, without naming anyone, accused a “terrorist group” of the attack.

#### **Israel-Palestine: Israel deports human rights lawyer to France**

On 18 December, Israel deported Palestinian-French human rights lawyer Salah Hammouri who had been detained since March. The development comes despite the French Foreign Ministry’s position that Hammouri “must be able to exercise all his rights and lead a normal life in Jerusalem, his city of birth and residence.” Therefore, the ministry criticised the deportation after Hammouri reached Paris and said it had “taken full action, including at the highest level of the state, to ensure that Mr. Salah Hamouri’s rights are respected, that he benefits from all legal remedies and that he can lead a normal life in Jerusalem, where he was born, resides and wishes to live.” Meanwhile, Hammouri said he would continue to fight for his rights and would pursue his “right to resist against this occupation.”

#### **Sudan: Security forces fired tear gas and stun grenades to disperse the protests**

On 19 December, Sudanese security forces fired tear gas and stun grenades on pro-democracy protesters in the capital Khartoum. The demonstrators were marching towards the presidential palace demanding an end to the military rule. Previously, on 5 December, Sudan’s pro-democracy coalition Forces of Freedom and Change had signed a new deal with the military leaders agreeing for a two-year civilian-led transition towards election. However, the protesters dismissed the agreement calling it too vague and that it does not cover security reforms.

#### **Democratic Republic of the Congo: UN report reveals Rwandan involvement in the east**

On 21 December, a group of independent UN experts said there was substantial evidence of Rwanda’s involvement in military operations in the eastern region of the Democratic Republic of Congo. The experts’ report said the Rwandan army had directly intervened and supported the rebels in the DRC’s east, by supplying weapons, ammunition and uniforms. The report said Rwanda reinforced M23 rebels “for specific operations, in particular when these were aimed at seizing strategic towns and areas.”

### Europe and the Americas

#### **The UK: Deportation of migrants to Rwanda is lawful, says High Court**

On 19 December, the UK High Court ruled that the government's proposal to deport migrants to Rwanda is lawful and that it did not violate the UN Refugee Convention or other human rights laws. The UK Home Secretary Suella Braverman said the government had always been confident about the policy and would now focus on implementing it at the earliest. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak termed the ruling a “common sense position” that “the vast majority of the British public” desired. However, the Labour Party said the policy was “unworkable” and “unethical.”

### Finland: President accepts amendment to the Abortion Act

On 20 December, President Sauli Niinisto approved an amendment to the existing Abortion Act. The new amendment, in line with the Oma Tahto 2020, was approved after Social Affairs and Health Committee submitted a report. The act mandates that for terminating a pregnancy before the end of twelve weeks, only the woman's assent is required. Earlier, the provision for abortions after the twelfth week, has only been given for cases when the woman's life was in danger or due to other complications. The act also provides for counselling and psychological support services. The amendments would come into force from 1 September 2023, as other associated decrees are yet to be amended.

### Peru: Castillo's family leaves for Mexico; Ministry expels Mexican ambassador

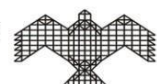
On 21 December, former President Pedro Castillo's family left for Mexico while Castillo remained in detention. The development comes after Mexico granted asylum to the family and the Peruvian Foreign Minister ensured their safe passage to the airport. Meanwhile, Peru also expelled the Mexican ambassador for "the repeated statements by that country's highest authorities about the political situation in Peru." Al Jazeera quoted Peru's Foreign Ministry statement: "The statements by the Mexican president are especially grave considering the violence in our country, which is incompatible with the legitimate right of every individual to protest peacefully."

### The US: House panel recommends Trump to be charged with four crimes on January 6 fiasco

On 19 December, a House of Representatives panel asked federal prosecutors to charge Donald Trump with four crimes, including obstruction, insurrection for his role in the riots at the Capitol Hill on 6 January 2021, and conspiracy to defraud the US. The nine-member panel took 18 months to complete its probing and conducted more than 1000 witness interviews. The request, however, does not compel the prosecutors to act.

### About the authors

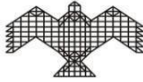
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### About NIAS-International Peace Research Initiative(IPRI)

National Institute of  
Advanced Studies



The International Peace Research Initiative (IPRI), initiated in 2018 at the National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS), is a part of the Conflict Resolution and Peace Research Programme at the School of Conflict and Security Studies.

IPRI undertakes research on various issues relating to peace with special emphasis on radicalisation, sustainable peace, gender roles in peacebuilding and global protest movements. IPRI research are published as briefs, reports and commentary.



### About Konrad Adenauer Stiftung

The Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) is a political foundation. Established in 1955 as “Society for Christian-Democratic Civic Education,” in 1964, the Foundation proudly took on the name of Konrad Adenauer, the first Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany. KAS cooperates with governmental institutions, political parties and civil society organizations, building strong partnerships along the way. In particular, KAS seeks to intensify political cooperation in the area of development cooperation on the foundations of its objectives and values. Together with the partners, KAS makes a significant contribution to the creation of a global order that empowers every country to determine its own developmental priorities and destiny in an internationally responsible manner.

KAS has organized its program priorities in India into five working areas: Foreign and Security Policy; Economic, Climate, and Energy Policy; Rule of Law; Political Dialogue focused on Social and Political Change; and Media and Youth. The India Office of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation takes great pride in its cooperation with Indian partner institutions that implement jointly curated projects and programmes.



### About Conflict Weekly

The Conflict Weekly an academic endeavour to bring every Wednesday/Thursday a weekly analysis of the conflict and peace processes in the world; aiming to look at the larger peace picture. It is published by the NIAS-IPRI in collaboration with the KAS India Office.

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