

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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Protests and Violence in Chad

Anu Maria Joseph



At least 50 people were killed in protests against extension of the transition period until 2024.

(Image Source: Blaise Darioustone/DW)

Chad: Extension of transition period sparks pro-democratic protests

In the news

On 21 October, dozens of people were killed in Chad as security forces clamped down on pro-democracy anti-government protests in the capital N'djamena and Moundou city. The protests were carried out in response to the extension of the 18 month transition period to 2024. The newly-appointed Prime Minister Saleh Kebzabo said that at least 50 people were killed and 300 were wounded, adding that security forces responded “only in self-defence as armed demonstrators were seeking to seize power by force.” However, the opposition said the death toll was closer to 70, and the toll was expected to rise with hundreds wounded. The military government declared a state of emergency in N'djamena, Moundou, and Koumra and directed respective regional governors to “take all necessary measures in compliance with the law” to contain the protests.

On the same day, Al Jazeera reported that the African Union Commission Chair Moussa Faki Mahamat “strongly” condemned the incident. He said: “I call on the parties to respect human lives and property and to favour peaceful ways to overcome the crisis.” The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Association said: “any use of excessive force against demonstrators exposes their perpetrators to prosecution in accordance with international standards.” The US said it was “deeply concerned” by the number of casualties; the US State Department statement said: “We also condemn the attack that occurred outside the main gate of the US Embassy in which assailants in civilian clothes and private vehicles cleared police checkpoints and killed four individuals.”

Issues at large

First, Chad's political crisis. Chad's recent political crisis began with President Idriss Deby's death on the battlefield in April 2021, ending his three decades of authoritarian rule. His son, Mahamat Idriss Deby, was sworn in as interim president by the military, dismissing the constitution and the parliament. He had promised a return to democratic rule after an 18-month transition, adding further that he will not contest in the presidential elections. The National Dialogue to determine the future of the country, which was promised as part of the deal last year, finally commenced in August this year. The dialogue which concluded on 8 October extended the transitional period by two more years to 2024. It also declared Deby “transitional president” adding he could be a candidate in the upcoming election. On 10 October Deby was sworn in and he appointed former opposition leader Saleh Kebzabo as the prime minister.

Second, the failure of the National Dialogue. A crucial part of the transition was the promise of an inclusive National Dialogue for a consensus on constitutional reforms and elections. However, the Dialogue was delayed until August 2022, two months before the transition was to end. The absence of several major political players and several rebel groups brings to question the inclusivity of the dialogue and its potential for a democratic transition. Besides, the dialogue failed to establish a body to direct debates and form an agenda. Most committee leaders had close relationships with the old system and regime.

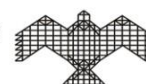
Third, the series of political upheavals amid military takeovers in West and Central Africa. Military takeovers, the extension of transitional periods, and repression by security forces are increasingly common in West and Central Africa. Mali experienced two coups in 2020 and 2021 and the military government further extended the transitional period. In May, the coup leader of Guinea announced a transitional period of three years. Burkina Faso experienced two coups in eight months in 2022. Further, the military governments in the respective

countries use security forces to suppress pro-democratic protests, mostly resulting in clashes and casualties.

In perspective

First, the protests and violence in Chad taking place in response to the National Dialogue's decision to extend the transition have raised international concerns that the country could plunge into another period of uncertainty. The exclusionary approach of the National Dialogue suggests to a post-Dialogue period where stakes could be higher along with instances of social and political turbulence.

Second, Chad and other West and Central African countries currently under military transitions share a similar trajectory. Despite the military leaders promising a democratic transition, their actions speak otherwise when it comes to ending the transition periods, thereby challenging the fragile peace and stability in the region.



Also, from around the world

Joel Jacob, Abigail Fernandez, Apoorva Sudhakar, Anu Maria Joseph, Sai Pranav, Bhoomika Sesharaj, Sethuraman N, Rishma Banerjee, and Padmashree Anandan

East and Southeast Asia

North Korea-South Korea: Seoul's military drills spark Pyongyang's nuclear tests

On 26 October, South Korea conducted its annual amphibious training exercise as a part of the Hoguk drills to train the navy and soldiers against North Korean threats. Around 40 Korean Assault Amphibious Vehicles (KAAVs), the ROKS Dokdo (LPH), the Cheonwangbong-class Ilchulbong (LST-II) and other vehicles participated in the drill. North Korea considers the Hoguk drill and the ongoing US-South Korean maritime exercise in the Yellow Sea as “hostile” against North Korea. In response to the above, North Korea fired artillery rounds and conducted nuclear tests near the border between both Koreas, which the South Korean government deemed a violation of the 2018 inter-Korean military agreement.

Indonesia: Country to suspend the sale of syrup medication after 100 deaths

On 19 October, the death of 100 children was reported which prompted the country to suspend sales of all syrup and liquid medication. The decision comes weeks after the Gambian government found some syrups containing ingredients causing acute kidney injuries (AKI). It is unclear if the medicine was imported or locally produced. Health officials have reported around 300 cases of AKI in children, mostly below five years of age.

Myanmar: Confrontation over bomb explosion in jail kills eight people

On 20 October, at least eight people were killed when a bomb inside a parcel exploded at a jail in Myanmar, prompting soldiers to return fire. An armed anti-junta group claimed responsibility for the attack, stating: “We are retaliating against junta chief and prison officers for continuously oppressing the revolutionary comrades.”

Myanmar: Air raid kills at least 50 in a concert organized by KIA

On 24 October, at least 50 people were killed and 100 injured in an air raid targeting one of Myanmar's biggest ethnic insurgent groups. The aircraft dropped three bombs on a concert organized by the Kachin Independence Army (KIA). Villagers said there was no warning before the raid. The concert in Kansai was to mark the 62nd anniversary of the rebel army's campaign for autonomy. The bomb ripped apart a cluster of buildings and caused heavy casualties in the audience. Eyewitnesses claim the military blocked medics trying to move the injured to the nearby hospital.

South Asia

Pakistan: Policeman killed during polio vaccination drive

On 25 October, a policeman guarding a polio vaccination team was shot dead by unidentified gunmen in Pishin in Balochistan. The Pishin Deputy Commissioner said the police started a search operation to arrest the attackers. The attack comes after a five-day special anti-polio campaign began in 19 out of 34 districts, including five high-risk districts bordering Afghanistan on 24 October. The Balochistan Emergency Operation Centre said: “We are providing foolproof security to polio teams who are involved in the anti-polio campaign in the province,” adding, “We are continuing our journey towards a polio-free province.”

Afghanistan: Taliban denies claims of human rights violations in Panjshir

On 24 October, Tolo News reported that the Taliban denied claims by the UN Special Rapporteur for Afghanistan, Richard Bennett of human rights violations in Panjshir. The deputy spokesperson for the Taliban called on Bennett to form his report based on the realities in Afghanistan and added: “The rights of all people of Afghanistan are protected under the umbrella of the Islamic Emirate. Of course, if any violation occurred somewhere and someone was treated in error, it will be investigated by the Islamic Emirate.” Previously, Bennett via Twitter stated that during his visit to Afghanistan he met with several stakeholders including female and male representatives of civil society, during which he said: “Representatives from Panjshir described a massive crackdown on civilians by Taliban and widespread human rights abuses.”

Bangladesh: Cyclone Sitrang kills 24; scarce power supplies dampen rapid restoration

On 25 October, Bangladesh reported 24 deaths because of Cyclone Sitrang; millions are left without power and fear further destruction from the climate-induced catastrophe. Government officials have not received a cohesive report of all the damages caused by the cyclone but have managed to get a million people to safety before it struck. Landfall in southern Bangladesh, the Bay of Bengal, and other low-lying regions have left nearly 10,000 homes either destroyed or damaged. Dhaka received 324mm of rainfall on 24 October and other cities reported flood damages.

India: Ammunition to be supplied to Nepal Army

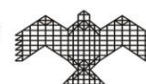
On 25 October, a defence company named SSS Defence took up the contract to supply the Nepali Army with ammunition through a government-to-government contract mechanism. Enhancing the Nepali army’s small arms firepower, ammunition of this stature will help Nepal to boost its weaponry amongst a host of NATO weapons. This deal will leave China behind as the Indian government has procured a fair advantage in its export intentions with Nepal, while also encouraging the Indian Armed Forces to consider domestic weapons and ammunition.

Sri Lanka: Lawyer testifies that Sri Lankan police attacks peaceful commemorations

On 20 October, the Young Journalists Association’s president Tharindu Jayawardena complained to the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka (HRCSL) that the police assaulted people at the peaceful commemorations in the Galle Face Green on 9 October. Attorney Jayantha Dehiattage provided evidence to the Commission and said that the police made several arbitrary arrests on the day and violated the fundamental rights of the participants. Jayawardena said: “The police have also forcibly taken the candles brought by the demonstrators and had even hassled those who were carrying their children.” The commission has granted a one-week period for submission of additional evidence through the affidavit.

Maldives: Gender Ministry reports 92 child abuse cases in September

On 26 October, the Gender Ministry of the Maldives stated that it received reports of 92 cases of different forms of violence against children in September. The Ministry said it received and attended 219 cases in September, the majority of which involved violence against children, including negligence, sexual abuse, and physical abuse, where 19 cases have been reported on all three forms of abuse; 17 cases involving child behavioural



problems have been reported, including five cases of refusal to attend school, three cases of running away from home, three cases involving disciplinary issues, one case of temper tantrums, one case of aggression, oppositional or antisocial behaviour, and four cases involving other issues. The Ministry also attended to five cases involving the violation of child rights in September.

Central Asia, Middle East, and Africa

Tajikistan-Kyrgyzstan: Dushanbe accuses Bishkek of concentrating military equipment at the border

On 17 October, Tajikistan's Border Guard Service accused Kyrgyzstan of violating cease-fire agreements near disputed segments of their shared border. A statement from the service said: "The provocative actions of some Kyrgyz citizens to destabilise the situation, preparation of assault points, digging of trenches, continuation of concentration of military equipment, and regular violations of the air space of the Republic of Tajikistan clearly confirm the Kyrgyz side's malign plans." In response, Kyrgyzstan's State Border Guard Service accused Tajikistan of using a month-old photo of Kyrgyz military trucks that were withdrawing from the border to falsely show it as a new photo to make it seem as if they were concentrating military equipment at the border.

West Bank: Israeli raid kills five in Nablus, one in Ramallah

On 25 October, Israeli raids in Nablus, a city in the West Bank, killed five and injured nearly 20 Palestinians. Another Palestinian died from a bullet shot in his chest during clashes with Israeli forces in Ramallah. Israel confirmed the operation in Nablus targeting Lions' Den, a Nablus-based group responsible for attacks on Israeli forces in recent months. Thousands of people gathered for the funeral procession of the dead, and establishments were shut down in support.

Syria: Refugees return as Lebanon begins repatriation

On 26 October, about 700 Syrians returned home as part of the repatriation process started by Lebanon. The country hosts one of the highest numbers of Syrian refugees since the war broke in 2011. Human rights groups have raised concerns about the probable element of coercion during the repatriation. However, the General Security Agency emphasised that it is a voluntary exercise. The repatriation process began in 2018 through a scheme which saw about 4,00,000 refugees return to Syria. The scheme was halted due to COVID-19 and has now been revived by President Michael Aoun.

Iran: Mourners gather at Mahsa Amini's grave

On 26 October, hundreds of Iranian mourners gathered near Mahsa Amini's grave, 40 days after her death, as part of a ceremony held by her family marking the end of the traditional mourning period observed in Iran. The crowd braved the heavy security cover that was in place since 25 October in anticipation of the event. Slogans such as "women, life, freedom", "death to the dictator" and "Kurdistan, Kurdistan, the graveyard of fascists" were heard.

Ethiopia: Government and TPLF holds peace talks in South Africa

On 25 October, the Ethiopian government and Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF)

began first formal peace talks aiming to end a nearly two years of conflict. The African Union brokered talks are being held in South Africa. The Chairman of the African Union Commission Moussa Faki said he was “encouraged by the early demonstration of a commitment to peace.” A spokesperson for South African President Cyril Ramaphosa said: “The talks have been convened to find a peaceful and sustainable solution to the devastating conflict in the Tigray region.” Nigeria’s former President Olusegun Obasanjo and Kenya’s former President Uhuru Kenyatta are facilitating the talks along with South Africa’s former Deputy President Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka.

Sudan: Anti-government protests marks first anniversary of coup

On 25 October, the security forces of Sudan closed major roads and bridges in the capital Khartoum, as anti-government protesters organised a mass demonstration on the first anniversary of the latest military coup. Since October last year, more than 100 people have died in violent protests across the country. Besides international pressure, the junta has tightened their hold on power and undermines the transition to civilian rule.

South Sudan: Inter-communal violence claiming lives, says human rights body

On 23 October, South Sudan Human Rights Commission told the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights that inter-communal violence in the country was claiming lives and displacing thousands, depriving them of their property and livelihoods. The statement marked the Commission's acknowledgement of gravity of the violence in South Sudan, for the first time. Further, the statement said the implementation of the 2018 peace agreement "remains slow."

Sudan: Thousands protest against violence in Blue Nile

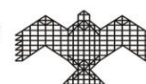
On 23 October, thousands of people protested outside the army headquarters against the violence in Blue Nile state which claimed around 200 lives in the previous week. On the day, protesters demanded the resignation of the Blue Nile state governor and set fire to the secretariat building. Sudan Tribune added that some protesters had looted an arms depot as well. The development comes after a tribal leader called on the federal government to replace the state governor within 48 hours on 21 October.

Somalia: Nine killed in attack in Kismayo

On 23 October, nine civilians were killed and 47 injured in an attack in Kismayo city in southern Somalia. The security minister for Jubbaland said the security forces killed three gunmen and the fourth attacker died in a bomb blast. The attack was claimed by al Shabab, where the group’s military operation spokesperson said that they intended to target the Jubbaland administrators working at the hotel.

Guinea: At least three people killed in pro-democracy protests

On 21 October, BBC reported the country’s justice minister statement that at least three civilians were shot dead during protests against Guinea's military leaders. The protests were carried out by the opposition National Front for the Defence of the Constitution (FNDC), which calls Guinea’s coup leaders “dictators” and demands the return of civilian rule.



Burkina Faso: Government to recruit civilians in fight against Islamist extremists

On 26 October, the military government announced its decision to recruit civilians to fight against Islamist extremists in the north. The commander of the "Volunteers for the Defence of the Fatherland" said they aimed at recruiting 35,000 civilians. The recruited civilians are expected to "protect the population and belongings of their districts alongside the security forces." The recruits will be trained for two weeks before being provided with weapons and communication channels. Previously, on 24 October, the government had announced that it would deploy 15,000 volunteers across the country.

Europe and the Americas

Turkey: Human Rights Watch raises concerns over repatriating Syrian migrants

On 24 October, Human Rights Watch released a report on Turkey's treatment of Syrian refugees, where it said that between February and July 2022, Turkey had arbitrarily arrested, detained, and deported hundreds of refugee men and boys back to Syria. Even though Turkey houses the world's largest refugee population with nearly 3.6 million Syrians living in the country, Human Rights Watch reported that Turkey is also violating international law by forcing some of these refugees to sign voluntary repatriation agreements. Deported Syrians have said that after signing the form, they were taken to the border and forced at gunpoint to cross into Syria under threat. This move aligns with President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's promise of facilitating the return of one million refugees from Turkey.

Bosnia and Herzegovina: Dodik supporters protest against election commission's order of recounting votes

On 25 October, thousands of people in Bosnia and Herzegovina protested against the election commission's decision to recount the votes cast in the presidential election in Republika Srpska. The protestors alleged that the election commission was trying to silence the will of the Serb people in electing the pro-Russian Milorad Dodik. The votes are being recounted as Dodik's main contender; independent candidate Jelena Trivic alleged that Dodik's SNSD party had rigged the election. So far, the election commission has informed the judicial authorities in the country about a few dozen fake ballots that have been found.

Hungary: Protests in Budapest against higher wages and "runaway inflation"

On 23 October, thousands of Hungary's teachers and students staged protests by marching through Budapest, where they were demanding higher wages for teachers and a curb on surging inflation. The protest came hours after Prime Minister Victor Orbán announced that he will preserve economic stability and maintain a cap on household energy bills amidst the EU's impending economic crisis. However, in this latest protest in the series of such anti-government protests, the participants are demanding higher wages for the teachers as they are being paid extremely meagre salaries after several wage cuts and effective measures to stop the rising inflation in the country.

Poland: Ministry of National Defence leases US based drones ahead of purchase

On 21 October, the Polish Ministry of National Defence leased a US made MQ-9A to buy MQ-9B drones. The move comes as an attempt to strengthen its defence amid the Ukraine war. The contract for MQ-9B drones includes a training facility; this makes Poland the first NATO ally in the Eastern Flank to have a medium-altitude-long-endurance drone.

Poland: Poland considers building border wall with Kaliningrad

On 25 October, the General Secretary of Poland's ruling Law and Justice party, Krzysztof Sobolewski, said that Poland is considering building a border wall with the Russian enclave of Kaliningrad. It has accused Russia and Belarus of using migrants as a part of a "hybrid warfare" campaign to destabilize Europe. Poland has already built a 187-kilometre-long border wall with Belarus to prevent a repeat of 2021 when thousands of migrants tried to cross into the country through Belarus. With Kaliningrad, around 200 kilometres of an electronic barrier wall will be decided only by the end of November. Sobolewski said: "We will have to strengthen our forces on this section of the border and also consider ... building similar border fortifications to those we now have on the Polish-Belarusian section."

Ukraine: To acquire 11 unmanned aircraft systems

On 24 October, Ukraine's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Digital Transformation Mykhailo Fedorov announced that the Armed Forces of Ukraine will be acquiring 11 PUMA-LE unmanned aircraft systems. The purchase worth UAH 540 million is a part of the Army of Drones project by the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and the Ministry of Digital Transformation. The PUMA-LE drones are a part of 18 countries' armed forces and are equipped with thermal imaging systems and antennas with an operational range of 60 kilometres, 6.5 hours of flight capability and can fly as low as three kilometres from the ground.

Moldova: Protestors demand the president to step down

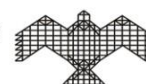
On 23 October, over 7,000 protestors gathered in Chisinau for a sixth consecutive day against the high gas prices. The protests backed by the opposition parties of Moldova led by Ilan Shor called for the resignation of President Maia Sandu. This comes as Moldova faces issues in procuring gas from Russia through Gazprom. Previously, the Moldovan government reported uncertainty regarding the volume of gas that will be supplied by Gazprom as the gas giant reduced supplies by 30 per cent and pressed Moldova to pay its high debt of USD 709 million.

Spain: Fighter jets to be sent to Bulgaria and Romania

On 22 October, Spain announced that 14 fighter jets will be sent to Bulgaria and Romania to increase NATO's eastern line of defence. Spain plans to send six Eurofighter jets and 130 soldiers to Bulgaria by mid-November and early December to train local forces. Spain will be deploying eight F18M fighter jets and 130 air force personnel to Romania between December and March 2023. This will form part of NATO's deterrence strategy to support Spain to form an "aerial shield" by increasing its air force missions in the region.

The US: Police officer pleads guilty in George Floyd trial

On 24 October, former Minneapolis police officer J Alexander Kueng pleaded guilty to the second-degree manslaughter of George Floyd, which sparked the widespread Black Lives Matter movement in 2020. Another former police officer involved in the death of Floyd, Tau Thao waived his right to a jury trial and has agreed to proceed with the trial. Currently, both former officers are serving time on federal convictions of violating Floyd's civil rights.



The US: Two killed in school shooting in Missouri

On 24 October, a teen and an adult were killed in a shooting at St. Louis, Missouri in the Central Visual and Performing Arts High School. The gunman was identified as Orlando Harris, a 19-year-old graduate of the same school. The victims were a 61-year-old woman and 15-year-old girl. The shooter had a note which read “I don’t have any friends, I don’t have any family.” The shooter’s family had sought mental health treatment for him and taken away his gun from him a few days ago. Harris was shot dead by the police officer on site.

About the authors

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Haiti's Gang Violence, Venezuelan Migrants and the US, and Global Hunger Index

Madhura Mahesh, Sejal Sharma and Sandeep Ganesh



(Haitians fleeing for their lives amidst a crackdown on gangs. Image Source: The Hindu/Reuters)

Conflict Weekly Exclusive: Report Review
Global Hunger Index: Four Takeaways



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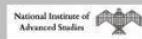
29 September 2022, Vol.3, No.26

Protests in Iran

Lavanya Ravi



(Mahsa Amini's death sparked protests across the world Image Source: Reuters)



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UNHRC proceedings on Xinjiang and the Oxfam report on reducing inequality

Avishka Ashok and Madhura Mahesh



(The 51st session of the UNHRC rejected the draft resolution on holding a debate on the human rights situation in China's Xinjiang Autonomous Region. Image Source: VCG/Global Times)

SPECIAL
Report Review
The Commitment to Reducing Inequality Index 2022



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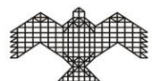
6 October 2022, Vol.3, No.27

North Korea's missile tests and Russia's annexation of four territories

Avishka Ashok and Padmashree Anandhan

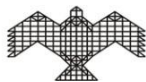


Source: Institute for the Study of War (21:00 GMT, 03 October)
Map outlining the four regions annexed by Russia and advance of the Ukraine forces into Lyman in the Donetsk region. (Image Source: BBC/OSN)





National Institute of
Advanced Studies



About NIAS-International Peace Research Initiative (IPRI)

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 commentaries.

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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