

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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Chaotic evacuation in Kabul, Crimea Summit over seven years of Russian occupation, anti-lockdown protests in Australia, and continuing kidnappings in Africa

Abigail Miriam Fernandez, Sourina Bej, Avishka Ashok and Apoorva Sudhakar



Amidst the threat of terrorist attack, chaos continues outside Kabul Airport as thousands attempt to leave amid the evacuation process. However, Biden has announced sticking to the 31 August deadline for evacuation. (Image Source: Reuters)

Afghanistan: Chaos continues in Kabul airport over evacuation, with threats of terror attacks

In the news

On 23 August, the US Defence officials stated that the US military evacuated about 11,000 people from the Kabul airport in 24 hours, bringing the total to 37,000 since 14 August. On 24 August, a spokesperson for the European Commission stated: "All the staff who needed to be evacuated have been evacuated." Similarly, other countries, including the UK, Canada, Japan, India, Turkey, Australia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Poland, and Switzerland have evacuated their nationals and Afghans who worked with them.

On 22 August, Biden stated that his administration might extend the 31 August deadline for removing all American troops from Afghanistan, promising that all evacuated Afghan allies will be given a home in the United States after they are screened and vetted at bases in other countries. On 24 August, German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas stated: "Even if [the evacuation] goes on until 31 August or even a few days longer, it will not be enough to allow those who we, or the United States, want to fly out." Similarly, French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian said: "We are concerned about the deadline set by the United States on 31 August. Additional time is needed to complete ongoing operations."

On 23 August, Taliban spokespersons warned that the US troops staying beyond the agreed deadline of 31 August would be "extending occupation" and this would "provoke a reaction." They said: "It's a red line. President Biden announced that on 31 August, they would withdraw all their military forces. So, if they extend it, that means they are extending occupation while there is no need for that," adding, "If the US or UK were to seek additional time to continue evacuations - the answer is no. Or there would be consequences."

Issues at large

First, the chaotic evacuation scenes at the Kabul Airport. Since the Taliban's takeover, foreign governments have tried to get their citizens and affiliated Afghan nationals out of Afghanistan while thousands of Afghans have gathered at Kabul airport in hopes of an evacuation. . The chaotic scenes outside the Kabul Airport have produced images of panic and desperation showing massive crowds of Afghans pressed up against a barbed-wire fence with children and women at the front crying for help. Additionally, there have been horrific scenes of people hanging onto departing planes. According to media reports, several people have been killed while others have been injured at the Kabul airport in stampedes.

Second, not all foreign governments are evacuating. While the US and most European countries have begun evacuating from Afghanistan, several other countries, including Pakistan, China and Russia, have not done the same. Additionally, the people being evacuated include foreign government staff and aid agency workers along with Afghan residents who have worked with these governments or their agencies.

Third, the withdrawal deadline. With the evacuation process far from being completed, the question of whether the withdrawal deadline of 31 August will be extended has been raised. In this light, several countries have called for the extension of the deadline, particularly the G7 countries that were scheduled to deliberate on the matter. However, the extension is a dilemma given that the Taliban has already issued a warning on the same.

In perspective

First, the evacuation process was bound to be disorderly. With the deadline for withdrawal soon emerging and the Taliban's offensive and subsequent takeover, the evacuation process is likely to get complicated. With the evacuations still far from completion, countries are bound to facing more challenges.

Second, the focus has shifted from the Taliban's takeover to the situation at Kabul Airport. Over the last week, the horrid scenes at the Kabul Airport have preceded the issue over the Taliban's takeover. Additionally, the situation at the Kabul Airport has reinforced fears that the withdrawal would aggravate the already deteriorated security situation.

Third, rehabilitation of affiliated Afghan nationals post evacuation. Several countries have pledged to provide sanctuary for Afghans. However, with no logistics, it remains uncertain where they will be rehabilitated initially and their lives post-evacuation.

Crimea Summit: Seven years on, Ukraine calls for the peaceful return of Crimea by Russia

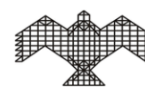
In the news

On 23 August, Ukraine held an international summit focusing on the Russian occupation of Crimea. The Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy created the Crimean Platform and, in his inaugural speech, said: "Ukrainian Crimea was a guarantee of regional stability. Now it is a powder keg." The event drew leaders from more than 40 countries, and they adopted a joint resolution on "peacefully ending the Russian Federation's temporary occupation" of Crimea. The European Council President Charles Michel said: "Brussels would never recognize Crimea as part of Russia." "This flagrant violation of international law is still on the international agenda," said Latvian President Egils Levits in support of Ukraine's call for the peaceful return of Crimea by Russia. The Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov called the summit "extremely unfriendly" towards Russia and added, "the attitude is absolutely unambiguous. We treat it as an anti-Russian event."

Issues at large

First, seven years of Russian annexation of Crimea. Since the March 2014 annexation of Crimea, the region has undergone systemic integration by Russia. The residents have been issued Russian passports, and the Kremlin has spent around Euro 2.6 billion to construct a bridge connecting Crimea to the Russian mainland. Local residents and advocacy groups have reported harsh discrimination against the Crimean Tatar community, but the majority Crimean population remains ethno-linguistically closer to Russia. The presence of the Russian military in Crimea serves as a geo-peripheral base with a strategic depth for Kremlin.

Second, Russia's claims in Crimea. Putin clarified that he views the annexation of Crimea as non-negotiable. Crimea's historic, linguistic and cultural ties served as a justification for the annexation in 2014. The referendum results claimed more than 80 per cent of Ethnic Russian voted to be a part of Russia. 15 per cent of Crimean Tatars who opposed the annexation suffered systemic exclusion. The referendum was deemed illegitimate by most of the world's governments owing to the Russian military presence. Russia's claim over Crimea stems from its historicity, now, bolstered by Putin's article titled, 'On the Historical Unity of Russians and Ukrainians,' published on 12 July 2021. Putin conceptualized the geographical belonging of



Crimea and Ukraine within the larger Russian nation-building process, drawing on Russians, Ukrainians, and Belarusians being descendants of Ancient Rus. The Malorussian cultural identity within the greater Russian nation forms one of the many identity constructs that have formalized Russia's stronghold in Crimea, along with the geopolitical moorings.

Third, Ukraine's response. On the domestic front, Zelenskiy's government has worked to demonstrate support for Crimea, which was designated as an autonomous zone under the Ukrainian Constitution. In March, the Ukrainian government had adopted a Strategy of Deoccupation and Reintegration of Crimea. It also passed a law granting Crimean Tatars special status as an indigenous community. The parliament repealed a law creating a "free economic zone" that critics said was used as a mechanism to bypass sanctions. Ukraine's support for the Tatars was also visible when the summit was not hosted in Russian, which is the native tongue of a majority of residents in the region. Language has become deeply politicized in the seven years of conflict between Russia and Ukraine. The conflict in the Donbas has also reached an impasse. Earlier in 2021, Putin had authorized a military build-up at the border, further pushing Ukraine's domestic policies concerning Crimea.

Fourth, responses by international actors. Post-2014, sanctions and international condemnation followed Russia's annexation. Yet little was done to formalize a peace process, for instance, the Normandy Format. The summit lacked West European leaders, Macron and Merkel. Moreover, the countries sent their second-tier ministers as representatives. Merkel, who is nearing the end of her fourth and final term as the Bundeskanzlerin, visited Putin in Moscow last week. Germany clarified that its top priority is securing an agreement to guarantee Ukraine five more years of natural gas transit revenues from Russia.

In perspective

The summit and the lukewarm response from the West highlight the deep-rooted divide within Europe over the conflicts in the Balkans. The Black Sea peninsula remains a region of resource interest. The political/geopolitical divide between the Eastern and Western periphery leads to little Balkan interest. Looking through the Russian lens at the Balkans, the ethnolinguistic conflict remains subsumed in the larger geostrategic milieu. What the summit fails to ponder is the need for charting a Balkan dialogue/diplomacy independent of either the Russian tilt or support from Western Europe.

Australia: Anti-lockdown protests amidst rising delta variant cases

In the news

On 21 August, more than 4000 Australians gathered in Melbourne city to protest against the coronavirus lockdown, which has been deemed necessary by the state. Multiple protests were held across different states like New South Wales and Victoria and in Brisbane, Sydney and Canberra. However, the most violent protest took place in Melbourne, where protestors carelessly burst firecrackers, blasted loud music and wreaked havoc in the city. The authorities have arrested more than 250 people for breaching lockdown guidelines and issued fines to more than 200 citizens. On the same day, the police used rubber bullets, tear gas and pepper spray to diffuse the angry crowds from causing further cluster cases.

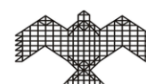
On 20 August, the government in New Zealand also extended the lockdown in the country after observing a steady increase in the number of cases. While announcing the extension in lockdown, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said: "We have seen what happens elsewhere if we fail to get on top of it. We only get one chance."

Issues at large

First, the lockdown. Australia has been dealing with the highly infectious delta variant of the coronavirus since June 2021. With the gradual increase in the number of cases in multiple cities, the government has placed strict restrictions on the movement of the people. The delta variant threatens to spread at a much faster pace and is spreading quickly amongst the indigenous communities who were otherwise unaffected in the previous waves of the pandemic. On 24 August, New South Wales registered more than 753 cases, whereas Victoria acquired another 50 cases due to local transmission of the virus.

Second, the protests. The protesters in Australia believe that the lockdown must be lifted despite the rise in cases. The restrictions were imposed with the intention of lifting them within two weeks. However, neither the upsurge in cases nor the restrictions have been eased. Most of the attendees of the protests seemed agitated by the idea of another lockdown which may portray the frustration of the public as a whole.

Third, poor vaccination drive. Australia has managed to completely vaccinate only 15 per cent of its population while 50 per cent have only taken one dose. The numbers are much lesser for the indigenous communities, where only eight per cent have been completely vaccinated, and 26 per cent have been vaccinated once. Although the country managed to protect its population in the initial waves sufficiently, the inoculation drive has been extremely delayed due to supply shortages and institutional mismanagement. Other than the government's inefficiencies, certain sections of the society also refused to vaccinate due to mistrust and incorrect information.



Fourth, premature celebration. Australia and New Zealand were lauded for their handling of the pandemic, after which most cities and towns proceeded to lift Covid related restrictions and enabled the public to move in public without masks and proper and regular sanitization. These actions may have been hasty for a pandemic that is still in the process of being discovered as countries inspect its origin and continuous mutation.

Fifth, anti-lockdown protests across the world. Contrary to the belief that most developed countries would have an informed population that would value the vaccines and prevent the overburdening of the healthcare systems, there has been an apparent pattern that suggests the opposite. Anti-lockdown protests have been observed in Germany, Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Hungary, Ireland, the UK, Finland, Romania, Switzerland and many more.

In perspective

Regardless of the frustrations faced by the public, it is imperative for the people to understand the reality of the ongoing pandemic. With the constant mutations of the virus and the current status of vaccine efficiency, it is hard to think of a day when one can assume victory over the virus, at least in the near future. As long as the origin of the virus is not certain, countries cannot prevent future outbreaks. Nonetheless, most anti-lockdown protests have been witnessed in the developed first world countries, raising questions on the conduct and sensibility of these countries.

West Africa: Over 100 killed in series of attacks by bandits across countries

In the news

On 20 August, the UN Secretary-General António Guterres condemned an armed assault in Burkina Faso's Arbinda region, which left at least 80 people dead on 18 August. The casualties from the attack, suspected to be carried out by jihadists, included 59 civilians, 15 military police personnel and six pro-government militiamen. Guterres's statement conveyed that the UN would stand in solidarity with the Burkinabe government and other Sahel countries "in their efforts to counter and prevent terrorism and violent extremism, promote social cohesion and achieve sustainable development."

On 20 August, unidentified gunmen killed 16 people in the Tillaberi region within Niger, four days after 37 people were massacred in a different village in the same region on 16 August. On the same day, several parliamentarians reportedly called for enhanced security measures in the region.

On 21 August, 12 people were killed and six injured by gunmen in Nigeria's Katsina State. In two separate attacks, two people were killed each on 19 and 20 August. On the same day, Chad announced that it would withdraw 600 troops from G5 Sahel forces from the border between Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso, and termed it a "strategic redeployment to better adapt to the organization of the terrorists" in the country.

Issues at large

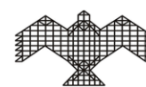
First, the continuation of violence and large-scale massacres. The attack in Burkina Faso took place two months after gunmen, including child soldiers aged between 12 to 14, massacred over 130 people. Similarly, in Niger, in the Tillaberi region, 137 and 66 people were massacred in two different instances in March. Meanwhile, in Nigeria, apart from massacres like that of 88 people in a coordinated attack across seven villages in June, bandits also frequently abduct students and villagers in regular raids.

Second, different regions, different actors, same issues. Insecurity and instability are common among these countries, despite the perpetrators being different. Regional governments refer to perpetrators with no particular allegiance to any group as bandits, who are involved in cattle-rustling, resource conflicts, inter-communal conflicts. Lately, several attacks have also been linked to an "Islamist insurgency" on grounds that groups like the Islamic State and the al Qaeda, have shifted base to Africa from the Middle East. Following the latest massacre in Burkina Faso, the Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Office said that the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara had spread across the African continent, particularly in Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso. Meanwhile, Nigeria has already been facing the brunt of terrorism since 2009 when Boko Haram marked its presence and later paved the way for the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP).

Third, collective regional failure and external intervention. France intervened in the fight against this insurgency in 2013 in Mali; since then, it has deployed 5,000 troops. However, observing that there was no indication of violence abating, in July 2021, it announced that it would withdraw over 2,000 troops. Similarly, Chad's decision to withdraw 600 of its 1,200-strong troops from the G5 forces will also affect the fight against the above threats as the country had been one of the strongest contributors to the task force.

In perspective

Some regions in West Africa have been witnessing a slow burn for over a decade since Boko Haram established its base in Nigeria. The latest series of attacks indicate that despite regular and similar tactics used by the perpetrators, the regional governments have not served their promises of security and stability of neither their respective countries, nor the affected region. Therefore, it is likely that the gaps in governance are being exploited by terrorist groups in the region, therefore, leading to the expansion of the IS and al Qaeda bases in the continent. Some media reports also suggest that these terrorist groups are gradually bringing bandits into their fold. In light of this, the protection of civilians is at stake.



Also, from around the world

By Apoorva Sudhakar and Abigail Miriam Fernandez

Peace and Conflict from East and Southeast Asia

China: Two cities in Henan issue highest flood warning

On 22 August, the Henan province's Xingyang and Changyuan cities issued the highest flood alert and warned of possible dam collapses. The issuance of the alert came after over 300 people were killed by heavy rains in Henan province in July. Meanwhile, at the provincial level, port and wharf production were suspended, schools, businesses and factories remained closed until 23 August.

Hong Kong: China postpones vote on anti-sanctions law

On 20 August, Reuters referred to a South China Morning Post news report which said that China's National People's Congress Standing Committee had deferred a vote on the extension of anti-sanction laws on Hong Kong. The law was previously introduced in China; under this, individuals involved in discriminatory measures against Chinese citizens or entities can be denied entry into the country or expelled. Beijing was expected to vote on the law in Hong Kong on 20 August and financial entities have been anticipating how and when it would be implemented in the city when approved.

South Korea: US and Russian dignitaries arrive to discuss nuclear diplomacy programme

On 21 August, the US Special Representative for North Korea Sung Kim and Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Igor Morgulov arrived in Seoul for a four-day and six-day visit respectively, focusing on the nuclear diplomacy programme with North Korea, which has been on halt. On 24 August, the Unification Minister Lee In-young met with Kim; the former expressed the necessity of a stable management of the Korean Peninsula situation and the latter maintained that the US had no hostility towards North Korea. Both officials agreed to continue cooperation to improve inter-Korean and US-North Korea relations. Meanwhile, no trilateral meeting has been scheduled between South Korea, Russia and the US.

Indonesia: 53 arrested for allegedly plotting an attack on Independence Day

On 20 August, police said that 53 militants had been arrested on suspicion of plotting attacks for 17 August, which marks the country's Independence Day. The arrested persons reportedly belong to the Jemaah Islamiah who are linked to the Sulawesi bombings of March in 2021 and the 2002 Bali bombing. A national police spokesperson said that the 53 had been arrested in a week-long operation across 11 provinces and also mentioned that weapons, ammunition and donation boxes had been recovered in operation.

Myanmar: Rohingya camps and villages in Rakhine State face food shortage

On 23 August, The Irrawaddy reported that the Rohingya communities in displacement camps in two townships of Rakhine State have been starving due to food shortage. A camp manager in Sittwe township said that they had not received relief aid since June. Similarly, Rohingya villages in the Buthidaung township have also not received relief aid for three months. The camp managers and residents said that several people have no money left and have sold off belongings to buy rice; some also said that people were committing petty crimes due to starvation. The news report quoted a person from the camp who said that the World Food Programme had told them the aid was not being released due to orders from their managers.

Myanmar: Suu Kyi's trial postponed until September

On 23 August, The Irrawaddy referred to Aung San Suu Kyi's legal defense team who said that the leader and the former President's trial have been postponed to September. The defense team has not met the two for six weeks and will apply for permission this week. Meanwhile, U Sithu Aung Myint, a political columnist and critic of the junta, who has been in detention since 15 August, is facing life in prison on sedition charges for reportedly supporting the government in exile. In a separate development, ousted parliamentarians criticized the ASEAN for inviting the junta representatives as an observer at the 42nd summit on 21 August in Brunei. In yet another development, on 21 August, the military forces shot down a couple for allegedly refusing to stop at a military checkpoint; a 72-year-old civilian succumbed to his injuries inflicted on him as the military reportedly tortured him during a raid on 19 August. Meanwhile, 30 troops were killed in an ambush by civilian resistance fighters on the Gangaw-Kale Highway. Simultaneously, military crackdown in the Sagaing and Magwe regions against civilian resistance fighters, has forced thousands to flee their homes; a member of the People's Defense Force (PDF) also alleged that the troops were using villagers as human shields during the raids.

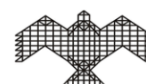
Peace and Conflict from South Asia

Pakistan: Two children killed in a suicide attack targeting Chinese nationals

On 20 August, a suicide bombing targeting a vehicle carrying Chinese nationals at the East Bay Road in the port of Gwadar killed two children and wounded two other children and one Chinese national. Balochistan Liberation Army claimed responsibility for the attack. Following the attack, the Interior Ministry released a statement terming it a cowardly act. Meanwhile, the Chinese embassy in Pakistan urged Pakistan to ensure such incidents will not happen again and called for a thorough investigation and severe punishment of the attackers.

Afghanistan: We do not want a war to break out, says Ahmad Massoud

On 22 August, Ahmad Massoud, leader of Afghanistan's last major outpost of anti-Taliban resistance stated "We want to make the Taliban realize that the only way forward is through negotiation," adding, "We do not want a war to break out." However, he said that his supporters were ready to fight if Taliban forces tried to invade the valley, adding, "They want to defend, they want to fight, they want to resist against any totalitarian regime." Massoud, who has a stronghold in the mountainous Panjshir valley northwest of Kabul issued an appeal for assistance from western countries and called on all 'free Afghans' and those opposed to



'servitude' to join him in Panjshir to fight the Taliban. Meanwhile, on 23 August, the resistance forces received the first support from Tajikistan airdropped military equipment, guns, full ammunition, and food supplies for Massoud's army.

Afghanistan: Kazari and Abdulla meet with Taliban

On 21 August, Hamid Karzai, former Afghan president and Abdullah Abdullah, the chairman of the High Council for National Reconciliation, met with Taliban political office members. During the meeting, both sides exchanged views on the current security and political developments as well as an inclusive political settlement for the future of Afghanistan. Additionally, the two also met with Abdul Rahman Mansour, the Taliban's acting governor for Kabul during which they discussed the security of the citizens of Kabul, reiterated that protecting the life, property and dignity of Afghan's in the capital should be prioritized.

India: NHRC issues notice to Centre, Assam, Mizoram over the border clash

On 22 August, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) issued notices to the Centre, Assam and Mizoram governments over the violent border clash between the two North-eastern states in July 2021. According to the Commission, a "grave violation of human rights" took place in the Assam-Mizoram border. It said, "the Commission has considered the matter. Facts of the case are disturbing. The allegations made in the complaint are serious in nature involving deaths and injuries to public servants," adding, "the case, therefore, involves a grave violation of human rights of the deceased and injured. Such types of cases are viewed very seriously by the Commission. In these circumstances, let a notice be sent."

Peace and Conflict from Central Asia, Middle East and Africa

Syria-Iraq: Millions at risk of losing access to basic necessities, warn aid groups

On 23 August, 13 aid groups jointly published a report warning that over 12 million people are at the risk of losing access to food, water and electricity in Syria, which is facing its worst drought in 70 years, and Iraq. The reasons behind the risk have been attributed to rising temperatures and dangerously low levels of rainfall. Al Jazeera quoted the regional director for the Norwegian Refugee Council: "The total collapse of water and food production for millions of Syrians and Iraqis is imminent," and added, "With hundreds of thousands of Iraqis still displaced and many more still fleeing for their lives in Syria, the unfolding water crisis will soon become an unprecedented catastrophe pushing more into displacement."

Israel-Palestine: Teenager killed in cross-border fighting between Israeli forces and Hamas

On 24 August, Arab News referred to officials in the occupied West Bank who reported that a 15-year-old was killed in overnight cross-border fighting between Israel and Palestine; Israeli warplanes targeted Gaza and Hamas retaliated with machine-gun fire. According to the Israeli military, their soldiers were attacked during an arrest raid in Balata refugee camp. On 24 August, Al Jazeera quoted the Defense for Children International-Palestine (DCIP) which said that several evidence suggest that Israeli forces have used lethal forces against Palestinian children, several of which may come under extrajudicial or wilful killings; this is forbidden under international law, unless under circumstances which pose a direct threat to life. Statistics

from the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) record that 12 boys were killed in the occupied West Bank and 67 children in May in Gaza.

Lebanon: Hezbollah claims to secure fuel from Iran; the US to help in electricity crisis, says Presidency

On 19 August, the Presidency announced that the US would help Lebanon with electricity provision amid the fuel shortages. The proposed plan reportedly provides for Egyptian natural gas to be provided to Jordan for a generation which will, in turn, be transmitted to Lebanon through Syria; it will also assist in the transfer of natural gas to the country. Earlier on the same day, the Hezbollah Secretary-General claimed to have secured fuel supply from Iran. The Hezbollah leader snubbed the US embassy saying: "The US embassy in Lebanon is not a diplomatic representation, but rather an embassy of complicity against the Lebanese people."

Yemen: Outgoing UN envoy highlights the severity of the famine-like crisis

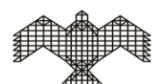
On 23 August, the outgoing UN Special Envoy for Yemen Martin Griffiths outlined several crises in the country and said that around 20 million people, roughly two-thirds of the Yemeni population, are dependent on humanitarian aid. He stressed on the food crisis in the country and said that close to five million people are a "step away from succumbing to famine and the diseases that go with it," adding, "Famine isn't just a food problem. It's a symptom of a much deeper collapse. In many ways, it is all of Yemen's problems rolled into one, and it demands a comprehensive response."

Mozambique: 100 hostages rescued by Mozambican and Rwandan forces

On 23 August, BBC reported that Mozambican and Rwandan troops had jointly rescued people who had been held hostage by militants linked to the Islamic State in the country's north. Radio Mozambique said that several of the rescued were women, children, and the elderly. The operation against the militants took place in Mbau, a location believed to be a key base of the militants.

Nigeria: Two army officers killed by gunmen as spate of kidnappings sees no respite

On 24 August, the Nigerian Army confirmed that two officers had been killed and one senior officer of the Nigerian Defence Academy abducted by unknown gunmen in Kaduna State. Meanwhile, 15 students have been freed in Kaduna, after they were abducted on 5 July, along with an unspecified number of students from a high school; 65 are yet to be released. In separate developments, on 20 August, the Zamfara State Commissioner of Information announced that at least 60 people had been abducted by bandits on 19 August. On 23 August, four people were killed and 50 abducted by bandits, again in the Zamfara State.



Ethiopia-Eritrea: US imposes sanctions on Eritrean Chief of Staff

On 23 August, the US Department of Treasury, citing rights abuses in Ethiopia's Tigray region, imposed sanctions on the Eritrean Defense Forces (EDF) Chief of Staff. The allegations against the EDF include rape, massacre, looting, indiscriminate killings. The Director of the Office of Foreign Assets Control said: "Today's action demonstrates the United States' commitment to imposing costs on those responsible for these despicable acts..." The Director called on "Eritrea to immediately and permanently withdraw its forces from Ethiopia" and urged all sides "to begin ceasefire negotiations and end human rights abuses." Meanwhile, on 22 August, Al Jazeera reported that following the spill over of the Tigray conflict into Amhara. An ethnic minority of the Amhara region has fled to Sudan. A member of the Qemant ethnic group said that the Amhara fighters wanted them out of their land. However, the Amhara spokesperson denied the claims.

Peace and Conflict from Europe and the Americas

Poland: Polish government plans to build a new fence along the Belarusian border

On 23 August, Poland's defence ministry announced that a fence along its border with Belarus would be built and double the number of troops to be deployed to curb the influx of migrants. The Deputy Foreign Minister stated that allowing the migrants to enter Polish territory would encourage further illegal migration and would also play into Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko's hands, arguing, "these are not refugees, they are economic migrants brought in by the Belarusian government." The European Union has stated that Lukashenko is waging "hybrid warfare" with migrants to exert pressure on the bloc.

The UK: Over 800 migrants cross the English Channel, a new daily record

On 21 August, the UK's Home Office stated that a record of 828 migrants were intercepted by authorities while trying to cross the English Channel. According to the Home office, the UK authorities intercepted 828 people in 30 small boats, while French officials prevented 193 people in 10 different boats from reaching Britain. The previous record for a single day was 592 on 12 August. Overall, more than 12,000 migrants have attempted to cross the Channel to the UK since the start of 2021.

Greece: Wildfires broke out on the second-largest island, Evia

On 23 August, two wildfires broke out in Greece's, which is already devastated by major wildfires. The first fire broke out in the southern part of Evia, Greece's second-largest island, previously devastated earlier by a blaze that burned for more than 10 days in the north. The second fire broke out in Kaza, in the Vilia area northwest of Athens where a major blaze was brought under control on 20 August after burning for five days. The fires have forced thousands of people to move out of their homes, and are turning into one of the country's most destructive fire seasons.

Brazil: Bolsonaro asks Senate to impeach a Supreme Court judge

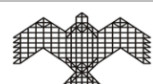
On 20 August, President Jair Bolsonaro requested the Senate to impeach one of the Supreme Court justices, Justice Alexandre de Moraes, who has begun two investigations into Bolsonaro. According to the 18-page impeachment, Bolsonaro alleges that Moraes has launched the probes with partisan and anti-democratic bias without the involvement of state prosecutors. Additionally, it accuses Moraes of acting as both investigator and judge while also censoring free speech. Previously, the investigations were ordered after Bolsonaro's repeated attacks on the integrity of the nation's electronic voting system.

The US: Tropical Storm Henri makes landfall

On 22 August, Tropical Storm Henri made landfall in southwestern Rhode Island and moved slowly northwest across the region bringing heavy rain and 40-mile-an-hour winds. The slow-moving storm is expected to continue across southern Vermont, New Hampshire and Southern Maine before heading out to sea again. On the same day, President Joe Biden said he had approved emergency declarations for Rhode Island, Connecticut and New York and added that the Federal Emergency Management Agency was already in position in the region and prepared to help with recovery efforts

About the authors

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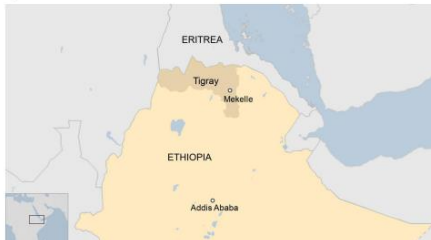
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A brief review of conflict and peace processes across the world

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Ceasefire in Ethiopia, Berlin Conference on Libya and the World Drug Report

Apoorva Sudhakar and Jeshil Samuel J



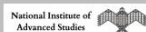
The TPLF rebels returned to Tigray and took over its capital last week in Ethiopia. The government has announced a unilateral ceasefire. (Image Source: BBC)

Ethiopia: Federal government declares unilateral ceasefire after TPLF recaptures Mekele

[In the news](#)

On 29 June, the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) spokesperson vowed to clear the Tigray region off all "enemies." BBC quoted the spokesperson's remarks to CNN: "We will not stop until Tigray has been cleared of any and all enemy forces. We will do whatever it takes." On the same day, Tigray residents reportedly celebrated the recapture of Tigray by the TPLF. Meanwhile, the US State Department warned that if hostilities continue in Tigray, Ethiopia and Eritrea should be prepared for actions from the US.

On 28 June, TPLF troops seized the regional capital, Mekele, forcing Tigray's interim authority appointed by the federal government to flee. Following this, the federal government



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23 June 2021, Vol.2, No.12

The US Juneteenth, UN resolution on Myanmar and Global Peace Index

Vishnu Prasad E, Anju C Joseph and Abigail Miriam Fernandez



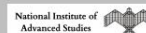
Juneteenth has become more than a day just to commemorate the end of slavery in the US. (Image Source: Reuters)

The US: Juneteenth approval a step in the right direction

[In the news](#)

On 17 June, President Joe Biden signed the Juneteenth National Independence Day Act, which made 19 June an official federal holiday to commemorate the end of slavery in the country. Biden said: "I have to say to you, I've only been president for several months, but I think this will go down, for me, as one of the greatest honors I will have as president. By making Juneteenth a federal holiday, all Americans can feel the power of this day and learn from our history — and celebrate progress and grapple with the distance we've come (and) the distance we have to travel." It became America's first new holiday since Martin Luther King Day in 1983.

On 19 June, the holiday celebrations were marred by acts of violence across the country that left at least five people dead. In Oakland, California, seven people were shot at a Juneteenth



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16 June 2021, Vol.2, No.11

Three new reports on Child labour, Ethiopia and Xinjiang, Tensions in Belfast, and the Suu Kyi trial

Apoorva Sudhakar, Mohamad Aseel Ummer, Dincy Adlakha, Sourina Bej and Vibha Venugopal

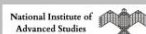


12 June was observed as World Day Against Child Labour, marking 2021 as International Year for the Elimination of Child Labour. According to the latest report of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) "160 million children – 63 million girls and 97 million boys" were engaged in child labour in 2020. (Image Source: UNICEF)

Child labour: 160 million children, one in ten, are engaged in labour, says the new ILO-UNICEF report

[In the news](#)

On 12 June, countries observed World Day Against Child Labour marking the 2021 International Year for the Elimination of Child Labour.



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09 June 2021, Vol.2, No.10

The UN report on Taliban-al Qaeda links, Denmark on relocating refugee camps, Burkino Faso massacre, Arctic melt, and Afghan trilateral dialogue

Abigail Miriam Fernandez, Sourina Bej, Apoorva Sudhakar, Rashmi BR and Sarthak Jain

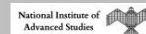


According to the latest report of the UN Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team "the Taliban and Al-Qaida remain closely aligned and show no indication of breaking ties." (Image Source: BBC)

Afghanistan: Taliban still closely aligned to al-Qaida, says UN report

[In the news](#)

On 1 June, the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team of the UN, in its twelfth report, has observed: "the Taliban's messaging remains uncompromising, and it shows no sign of reducing the level of violence in Afghanistan to facilitate peace negotiations with the Government of Afghanistan and other Afghan stakeholders. The Taliban's intent appears to be to continue to strengthen its military position as leverage." The report maintained as earlier: "the Taliban and Al-Qaida remain closely aligned and show no indication of breaking ties. Member States report no material change to this relationship, which has grown deeper as a



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02 June 2021, Vol.2, No.09

Continuing protests in Colombia, another mass abduction in Nigeria and a controversial election in Syria

Vishnu Prasad, Apoorva Sudhakar and Jeshil Samuel J



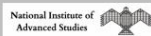
Street protests returned in Colombia, as the negotiations between the government and protesters failed. The UN has called for an independent investigation. (Image Source: BBC/Reuters)

Colombia: The protests continue

[In the news](#)

On 28 May, at least four people died in Colombia after police took on protesters who attempted to lift roadblocks. Protesters were back on the street after talks between the government and protest groups had broken down. On the same day, President Ivan Duque announced that he was deploying the military to the town of Cali, which had been hit by violence.

On 30 May, the United Nations called for an independent investigation into the number of casualties that had happened since the protests began on 28 April. UN rights chief Michelle Bachelet voiced 'deep concern' over the violence.



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26 May 2021, Vol.2, No.08

Ceasefire in Israel, NLD ban in Myanmar and a new Belarus crisis

Lakshmi V Menon, Aparupa Bhattacharjee and Sourina Bej



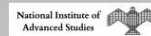
"We see the cease-fire not as an end, but as a beginning — something to build on" commented the US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken in his first visit to the Middle East. (Image Source: Al Jazeera)

Israel-Hamas ceasefire: The long road to peace

[In the news](#)

On 21 May, Israel's Cabinet voted to approve Egypt-mediated ceasefire with the Hamas in the Gaza strip, following 11 days of airstrikes and rocket attacks. Palestinians conducted celebratory gatherings in the occupied territories, and Israel removed emergency restrictions in rocket-hit areas. While both parties have claimed victory, they also maintained that the holding of the ceasefire would depend on ground circumstances.

During 25-27 May, Antony Blinken, as a part of his first visit as the US Secretary of State to the Middle East, met the leaders of Israel, Palestine, Egypt and Jordan. On 25 May, in a statement in Jerusalem, he said: "I traveled here at the request of President Biden, who asked me to come to pursue four basic objectives. First, to demonstrate the commitment of the United States to Israel's security. Second, to start to work toward greater stability and reduce tensions



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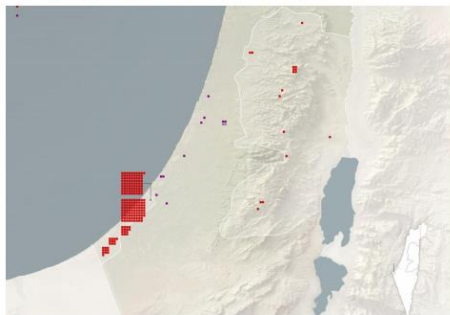
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19 May 2021, Vol.2, No.07

Elusive ceasefire in Israel-Palestine conflict, a migration crisis in Spain, three weeks of protests in Colombia, and the rise of Ransomware reign

Udbhav Krishna P, Mohammad Aseel Ummer, Vishnu Prasad, and Jeshil Samuel J

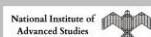


The clashes between Hamas and Israel continue into the second week, as there is no end to the rocket attacks. Casualties are increasing across Israel, as could be seen from the above image by the New York Times. (Image Source: The New York Times)

Israel-Palestine: Who wants what?

[In the news](#)

On 18 May, a White House statement stated that President Joe Biden had extended his support for a ceasefire in the Israel-Palestine conflict during the phone call with Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. As of 18 May, Gaza health officials reported that at least 212 Palestinians had been killed, including 61 children and 36 women, in more than a week of fighting. Meanwhile, ten people have been killed in Israel, including two children. Around 3,350 rockets



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Escalating Israel-Palestine violence, an attack and a ceasefire in Afghanistan, and the fallouts of Scotland election for the UK

Jeshil Samuel J, D. Suba Chandran and Sourina Bej

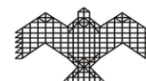


Following clashes between the Israeli police and Palestinians last week in East Jerusalem, the violence escalated further as Hamas and Israel exchanged rocket attacks. (Image Source: Agence France/Getty Images/The New York Times)

Israel: Surge in violence, as the Hamas and security forces engage in rocket attacks, escalating the conflict

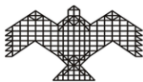
[In the news](#)

On 07 May, a series of skirmishes started between the worshippers and the Israeli police in the Al Aqsa mosque compound, with an exchange of stones, stun grenades and rubber bullets. The Palestinians had been protesting against any possible eviction in the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood in East Jerusalem that would follow a Court verdict and the Israeli government's settlement policies.





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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 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. With 16 regional offices in Germany and over 120 offices abroad, the Konrad Adenauer Foundation is committed to achieving and maintaining peace, freedom and justice through political education. KAS promotes and preserves free democracy, social market economy, and the development and consolidation of the value consensus. KAS also focus on consolidating democracy, the unification of Europe and the strengthening of transatlantic relations, as well as on development cooperation.

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

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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