

Conflict Weekly

A brief review of conflict and peace processes across the world

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People of the Garissa village leaving their homes with their belongings after heavy rains and floods in Kenya.
(Image Source: Luis Tato, AFP)

Floods in East Africa The London Summit on Global Food Security The War in Gaza



An initiative by NIAS-IPRI and KAS India Office

Gender | Environment | Ethnic Violence

External Interventions | Armed Conflicts | Peace Processes



Devastating Floods in East Africa

Jerry Franklin A

In the news

On 22 November, according to the Kenya Red Cross, the death toll due to floods rose to 71; over 20,000 families fled their homes, hundreds of acres of agriculture were destroyed and over 1,000 livestock were killed.

On 21 November, the Director of the Somali Disaster Management Agency, Mohamud Moalim Abdullahi, stated that 50 people died and 687,235 people were forced to flee their houses following the heavy rains and floods; over 1.5 million people were affected by the floods.

According to the Somali regional government in Ethiopia, the floods have claimed the lives of over 52 people, forced over 39,985 others to flee their homes and impacted 108,000 more who fear losing their livestock and homes.

From the beginning of November, the Juba and Shabelle Rivers in East Africa overflowed as a result of heavy rains in the highlands of Ethiopia and Somalia. In central Somalia, the floods submerged the surrounding countryside, including the town of Belet Weyne. According to Oxfam, in Ethiopia, Somalia and Kenya, 130 people have lost their lives. The UN has termed the floods as a "once-in-a-century event."

Previously on 10 November, UN's Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Martin Griffiths, stated: "Extreme weather linked to the ongoing El Niño risks further driving up humanitarian needs in already-vulnerable communities in Somalia and many other places."

On 21 November, referring to the situation in Somalia, the International Rescue Committee stated: "With above-normal rainfall expected to persist until the end of 2023, this will exacerbate the already grave humanitarian situation, whereby 4.3 million people, a quarter of the population are expected to face crisis-level hunger or worse by the end of 2023."

Issues at large

First, the effect of El Niño and positive Indian Ocean Dipole. In August, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) predicted that the El Niño phenomenon would likely result in heavier and unusual rains in eastern Africa during the October–December period. El Niño is a meteorological phenomenon linked to global warming that causes unusual warming which then leads to drought in certain regions and abundant precipitation in others. According to the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO), Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia are suffering from flash floods and torrential rains brought on by the El Niño phenomenon. A shift to a predicted positive Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) made the situation worse. A positive Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) favours wet conditions in eastern Africa. This is because the western Indian Ocean experiences warmer-than-normal sea surface temperatures, while the eastern equatorial Indian Ocean experiences cooler-than-normal temperatures. A positive IOD amplified the El Niño effect in East Africa.

Second, extreme weather conditions in East Africa during the recent period. For the past four years, the eastern Africa region has been facing severe droughts attributed to five consecutive failed rainy seasons. The temperature had increased by 1.2 degrees Celsius. The extended drought has led to the deaths of millions of cattle and wiped-out crops. The two rainy seasons in countries around the Horn of Africa are the long rains in March, April and May (MAM), and the short rains in October, November and December (OND). The southern region of the Horn of Africa which includes portions of southern Somalia, eastern Kenya and southern Ethiopia experienced rainfall that was below average during both the long rains (MAM) in 2021 and 2022 and the short rains (OND) in 2020, 2021 and 2022. However, the 2023 OND season saw significantly more rain than usual. The Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET) reported that since 1 October, total rainfall for southern and western Ethiopia, Somalia and Kenya has quadrupled the average.

Third, the continuing dire humanitarian situation. About 15 million people in East Africa struggled with food insecurity even before the floods. The five failed rainy seasons which resulted in prolonged drought for four years in Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya, forced millions to flee their homeland. Food insecurity throughout the region has worsened due to record-low agricultural output and months of obstructed grain imports brought on by the war in Ukraine. The adverse effects of the drought and impending hunger are currently affecting over 36 million people in East Africa. Nearly 24 million people currently face severe water shortages because of prolonged drought. According to the UN, acute malnutrition affects nearly two million children in Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia, who need immediate medical attention.

Fourth, government challenges and responses. In Ethiopia, due to a lack of resources and capacities, the level of demand for life-saving aid in flood-affected areas is not being met by the current response. In the Somali region of Ethiopia, numerous flood-affected areas are still difficult to reach due to damaged roads and bridges. In Somalia, the government declared a state of emergency following the flood. The government authorities, along with humanitarian organisations, have provided food, cash, water, sanitary facilities and other necessities to the affected population. However, the necessary aid has reached only a limited number. In Kenya, the government announced that it would not provide funds for flood response efforts, and requested the mayors of affected counties to use emergency funds allocated earlier.

In perspective

First, continuing extreme weather conditions. According to the World Meteorological Organisation, the current El Niño phenomenon is predicted to continue influencing weather patterns and causing a further increase in global temperatures until April 2024. The heavy rains in the Horn of Africa are expected to worsen the situation, posing significant challenges to the government in East Africa in mitigating the crisis.

Second, the worsening humanitarian situation. The floods have sparked a humanitarian crisis that requires immediate attention and action. In Somalia, a quarter of the population- 4.3 million people- is predicted to experience crisis-level hunger by the end of 2023 due to above-normal rainfall which is predicted to continue until the end of 2023. This will worsen the already dire humanitarian situation.



Third, limited resources in East Africa. The state capacity makes it difficult for governments to invest in flood mitigation strategies including constructing resilient infrastructure and putting sustainable land management techniques into place. Insufficient funding and early warning systems limit the capacity to promptly notify populations that are at risk, impeding evacuation attempts and raising the possibility of property destruction and human casualties.

Global Flood Security: The London Summit

Rajika Kanungo

In the news

On 20 November, the Global Food Security Summit took place in London. The summit emphasised the effort to address malnutrition and achieve Zero Hunger as stated in Sustainable Development Goal 2 (SDG 2). The summit sought support for transformative policies addressing long-term global food security. The United Arab Emirates, Somalia and the UK co-hosted the summit along with the Children's Investment Fund Foundation and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Representatives from around 20 countries participated in the summit.

On 20 November, the UK's Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak, launched a new White Paper on "International development in a contested world: ending extreme poverty and tackling climate change." Sunak stated: "We live in a dangerous world – a time of growing threats, strategic competition and conflict. Many of these challenges, like the war in Ukraine, have a direct impact on the poorest around the world. Others threaten to draw attention away from their plight, putting at risk the vital progress made over recent years. With this White Paper, we're answering those challenges."

The same day, the UK government issued a press release, stating: "The white paper priorities include mobilising international finance, reforming the international system, harnessing innovation, and putting women and girls centre stage, ensuring opportunities for all." As outlined in the White Paper, the efforts involve not merely immediate relief but a strategic integration of aid, development expertise and leadership in science and technology. Specific initiatives include combating child malnutrition, applying Artificial Intelligence (AI) to predict and prevent food crises, supporting sustainable food systems and leveraging scientific advancements. Additionally, it focuses on non-traditional aid, addressing poverty and climate change through international finance mobilisation, systems reforms, innovation promotion and recognising the pivotal role of women and girls.

Issues at large

First, the state of food security. The Global Food Security Summit convened against the backdrop of severe food security challenges, particularly in the Global South. According to the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the World Food Programme (WFP), acute food insecurity is likely to deteriorate in 18 hunger hotspots, including 22 countries, between November 2023 and April 2024. Among them, Burkina Faso, Mali, South Sudan and Sudan remain in the most vulnerable situation due to escalating conflicts. The people in these hotspots are already facing critical food insecurity (Emergency, IPC/CH Phase 4) and are at risk towards catastrophic conditions (Catastrophe, Integrated Food Security Phase Classification [IPC]/Cadre Harmonisé [CH] Phase 5). According to the World Food

Programme (WFP), over 333 million people are experiencing acute food insecurity across the world. Nearly 129,000 people are going through famine in Burkina Faso, Mali, Somalia and South Sudan due to funding deficits. Additionally, the Ukraine War, the Sudan conflict, the Israel-Gaza war and the situation in Syria worsened the global food security crisis. They have disrupted the food supply chains, increasing displacement and compounding challenges in affected regions.

Second, the persisting malnutrition. Malnutrition remains a global issue due to inaccessibility to food, poverty, inequalities, declining food production, climate change and conflicts. UNICEF, WHO and the World Bank release joint child malnutrition estimate every year, categorising it in the levels of stunting, overweight and wasting. In the 2023 report, despite various commitments to address the issue of malnutrition, an estimated 148 million children under five face malnutrition at the stunting level across the world in 2022. Out of this, 126.3 million children belong to African countries, the worst affected region. At least 45 million children under the age of five face malnutrition at the wasting level, of which 24 million are from African countries.

Third, the challenges in achieving zero hunger. The Sustainable Development Goal 2 (SDG 2), referred to as "Zero Hunger," is part of the UN's 2030 Agenda which was introduced in 2015. It seeks to eradicate hunger, provide food security and advance sustainable agriculture on a global scale. However, according to the UN, in 2022, nearly 735 million people (which is 9.2 per cent of the world's population) faced chronic hunger. Also, the numbers represent a staggering rise compared to 2019. It underscores the increasing challenge of reaching "Zero Hunger." According to the World Bank's latest update, inflation in domestic food prices continues to rise. Nearly 52.4 per cent of low-income countries, 88.6 per cent of lower-middle-income countries and 61 per cent of upper-middle-income countries experience inflation of more than five per cent with many of them facing double-digit inflation. Furthermore, there is a high rate of inflation in food prices in 67.3 per cent of high-income countries. Africa, North America, Latin America, South Asia, Europe and Central Asia are the most severely hit.

In perspective

Food security is a complex and persistent challenge that needs continuous commitment and long-term action. While the Global Food Security Summit holds great promise, there are also challenges and potential drawbacks to consider. Transforming these policy actions into practice can be challenging even with the best intentions and commitment. There is a need for continuous political will, enough funding and strong monitoring and evaluation systems to achieve SDG 2.

The issues are broader, from lack of funding, inflation and climate change to conflicts. Addressing malnutrition, hunger and food insecurity calls for an approach that incorporates sustainable agricultural practices, high productivity and low post-harvest losses. Also important are interventions that encourage access to nutritious foods among vulnerable people such as women, children and marginalised communities.

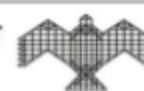




Image source: Mohammed Saber, EPA

Conflict Weekly Special

The War in Gaza: Fifth Week

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War on the ground

On 24 November, BBC reported that a group of Israeli hostages taken by Hamas during the 7 October attacks were given over to the Gaza Red Cross. According to the reports, they were moving toward the Egyptian border. Additionally, more aid is being permitted into Gaza, including 60 lorries bringing fuel, medical supplies and food.

On 24 November, Al Jazeera reported that the UN welcomed the arrival of relief trucks in the Gaza Strip from Egypt, following the start of an Israeli-Hamas truce, but it has stated that more work must be done to address the severe humanitarian crisis. According to Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Chief of the World Health Organisation (WHO), aid reaching Gaza was a “step in the right direction, but “much more is needed.”

On 23 November, a spokesperson for the Hamas-run Gaza Ministry of Health, Ashraf Al-Qidra, confirmed that Israeli forces have taken the Director of the al-Shifa hospital, Mohammed Abu Salmiya, into custody for interrogation. Israel’s military explained that the Israeli intelligence agency, Shin Bet, was questioning Salmiya “due to evidence

indicating that al-Shifa Hospital, which was directly under his supervision, functioned as a Hamas command and control centre.” Both Salmiya and Hamas have refuted these claims.

On 22 November, Al Jazeera reported that a four-day ceasefire between Israel and Hamas had been reached, during which some of the prisoners taken during the 7 October Hamas attack would be exchanged for Palestinian detainees held by Israel. According to a statement released by the office of Benjamin Netanyahu, Prime Minister of Israel, 50 captives will be freed over four days, including civilian women and children.

On 20 November, 40 trucks full of medical supplies arrived at the Rafah crossing after Jordan announced that it would establish a second field hospital in the Gaza Strip. The new Jordanian field hospital would be located in Khan Yunis, in the southern half of Gaza where tens of thousands of people are reportedly displaced in schools and tents.

On 19 November, Al Jazeera reported that sewage was flowing in the streets of Gaza due to the closure of all major sanitation facilities. There is a possibility of a sharp increase in gastrointestinal and infectious diseases, including cholera, among the local populace. For the 2.3 million people living in Gaza, access to clean drinking water has nearly disappeared. While 44,000 cases of diarrhoea and 70,000 cases of acute respiratory infections have been reported to the WHO, the actual numbers may be much higher.

Regional responses

On 23 November, Saudi Arabia's first humanitarian aid was launched by specialists and officials led by Dr Abdullah Al-Rabeeah, the Chief of King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center (KSrelief). The launched aid is worth USD 40 million.

On 22 November, the Jerusalem Post reported that foreign ministers of Arab countries welcomed the agreement calling for a temporary truce between Israel and Hamas. The Foreign Minister of Turkey, Hakan Fidan, called the humanitarian truce a “positive development.”

On 20 November, the Foreign Minister of Saudi Arabia, Prince Faisal bin Farhan, and his counterparts from Arab and Islamic countries arrived in Beijing on the first leg of the tour to permanent member states of the UN Security Council (UNSC). Farhan said that the international community should take responsibility for ending Israel’s violations in Gaza.

On 19 November, Yahya Sarea, a spokesperson for Yemen’s Iran-aligned Houthi military, said that they would target all the ships owned by Israeli companies, including those carrying Israeli flags. The group warned other countries to withdraw their crew working on those ships.

On 18 November, the Foreign Minister of Jordan, Ayman Safadi, stated: “Israel says it wants to wipe out Hamas. There's a lot of military people here, I just don't know how this objective can be realised.” He stated this at the annual IISS Manama Dialogue security conference in Bahrain. Safadi expressed doubt over how Israel could wipe out Hamas.



Global responses

On 24 November, according to Reuters, the UK promised an additional aid of GBP30 million to Gaza. The Foreign Secretary of the UK, David Cameron, during his travel in occupied Palestinian territories, further stated that “a fourth UK flight carrying critical supplies landed in Egypt.”

On 22 November, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) stated that Gaza is currently the “most dangerous place in the world to be a child.” The Executive Director of UNICEF, Catherine Russel, reported to the UNSC that at least 5,300 Palestinian children have been killed as a result of the war.

On 22 November, Al Jazeera quoted former Director of CIA, David Petraeus, who stated that Israel will continue its war on Gaza for “months, not weeks.” He said that Israel has not specified its intentions in the Gaza war beyond destroying the Hamas and that it would resume the war to prevent the Hamas from restoring itself.

On 22 November, according to Al Jazeera, the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, stated that the EU would step up the delivery of humanitarian aid in Gaza during the four-day truce window. Von der Leyen stated that the EU will “do its utmost to use this pause for a humanitarian surge to Gaza” expressing her support for the newly reached agreement between Israel and Hamas.

On 21 November, Russian President, Vladimir Putin, called upon regional and BRICS member-states to play an active role in de-escalating the ongoing conflict in Gaza during a virtual BRICS summit.

On 18 November, US President, Joe Biden stated that the West Bank and Gaza “should be reunited under a single governance structure, ultimately under a revitalized Palestinian Authority.” He further stated that “no forcible displacement of Palestinians from Gaza, no reoccupation, no siege or blockade, and no reduction in territory” must take place.

Curated by Dhriti Mukherjee and Shamini Velayutham, Research Assistants at NIAS.

Issues in Peace and Conflict This Week: Regional Roundups

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East and Southeast Asia

China: Middle Eastern and Arab countries hosted by China to resolve Israel-Palestine crisis

On 20 November, at a meeting with all Middle Eastern and Arab stakeholders concerned about the Israel-Palestine conflict, China urged for an immediate cease-fire in the Gaza Strip. China spearheaded the meeting under the Director of the Office of Foreign Affairs, Wang Yi. China expressed that it is against the forced displacement and relocation of Palestinians and instated that any decision regarding their future settlement should include Palestinian consensus. Recently, Chinese President Xi Jinping and French President Emmanuel Macron stressed that in light of the growing humanitarian crisis, it is of paramount importance that any further deterioration is avoided stressing that the two-state is the only solution.

Australia: PLA accused of using sonar pulses against Australian divers

On 20 November, Australian Prime Minister, Anthony Albanese, “strongly objected” to the Chinese destroyer using sonar pulses against Australian navy divers ignoring the personnel. Albanese expressed that it was irresponsible and unsafe on China's part and that such events would damage the bilateral relationship between the two countries. The People's Liberation Army (PLA) of China was informed of the divers and was requested to steer clear as they were freeing entangled nets near the Australian Navy's HMAS Toowoomba frigate. The Chinese Ministry of National Defence spokesperson, Wu Qian, stated that these interactions stand to be moot as they merely followed international law. Wu stated: “We urge the Australian side to respect the facts, stop rude and irresponsible accusations toward China, engage in endeavours that are conducive to boosting mutual trust, and build a positive atmosphere for developing better bilateral relations and military-to-military ties.”

Taiwan: Chinese military activities near the strait reported by Ministry of National Defence

On 22 November, the Taiwanese Ministry of National Defence reported on military activities by China near Taiwan. It accused the Chinese military wings of crossing the Taiwan Strait with 11 aircraft across the median line. The ministry is alarmed by the activities as the island is set to observe elections soon and these activities pose an intimidation tactic by the Chinese government. The ministry detected J-10 and J-16 aircraft and H-6 bombers in the area. Taiwan has continuously complained about China crossing the unofficial border which Taiwan sees as a collusion tactic.

China: Statement on North Korea's first spy satellite in orbit

On 22 November, the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson, Mao Ning, expressed that peace and stability in the Korean peninsula are in the interest of all parties. This statement came after North Korea announced that they successfully placed their first espionage satellite in orbit. Ning stated: “China has taken note of (North Korea's) announcement of its satellite launches and the reactions of relevant parties.” Ning also expressed that all parties that are concerned should practise restraint and remain calm looking to bilateral dialogue to share their concerns. Ning iterated: “China will continue to play a constructive role in promoting the political settlement of the peninsula issue.”



North Korea: Successful launch of a military spy satellite

On 22 November, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) launched the "Malligyong-1" military reconnaissance satellite on the new "Chollima-1" carrier rocket. The launch followed two failed attempts earlier in May and August. North Korean leader Kim Jong Un supervised the event. The launch successfully placed the satellite into orbit. The US and South Korea are analysing the situation despite claims that the satellite is operational. South Korea deemed the launch a "provocative act" by North Korea that violated UN sanctions on ballistic missile technology. South Korean Prime Minister Han Duk-soo responded: "North Korea is demonstrating that it has no will to abide by the Sept. 19 military agreement [Comprehensive Military Agreement] designed to reduce military tension on the Korean Peninsula and to build trust." Later, the South Korean Ministry of National Defence suspended the implementation of the no-fly zone clause in the Sept. 19 Comprehensive Military Agreement. White House National Security Council spokesperson, Adrienne Watson, stated: "This space launch involved technologies that are directly related to the DPRK intercontinental ballistic missile program." Meanwhile, the Japanese government issued a J-Alert (missile warning system in Japan) urging Okinawa residents to seek shelter after the North Korean satellite launch passed over the Pacific Ocean.

South Asia

India: Four army officials killed in Jammu

On 22 November, the Hindu reported that at least two army captains and two soldiers were killed during a military operation in the Pir Panjar valley in the district of Rajouri in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. According to an Indian Army spokesperson, the joint military operations in the region targeted the militants hiding in the Gulabgrah forest. The army spokesperson stated: "An intense firefight ensued. The terrorists have been injured and surrounded and operations are in progress, amidst acts of valour and sacrifice by own bravehearts in trying to prevent collateral damage to women and children in the highest traditions of the Indian Army." Militancy has increased in the Pir Panjal valley since 2020. According to the Hindu report, at least 13 security personnel and 22 militants were killed in the region this year.

Maldives: Request to India to withdraw its troops

On 18 November, Maldivian President, Mohamed Muizzu, formally requested India to withdraw its troops from the country. The move came hours after Muizzu took oath as the new president. He stated that the Maldivian public has expressed a "strong mandate" to make this request to India. The President's Office stated: "The President noted that at the Presidential Election held in September, the Maldivian people had given him a strong mandate to request India and expressed the hope that India will honour the democratic will of the people of the Maldives." A total of 977 Indian personnel have been deployed in the country since 2019. Muizzu is a close associate of former Maldivian President Abdulla Yameen who initiated closer ties with China during his term from 2013 and 2018. India has not yet responded to the official request. However, the Indian Minister of Union, Kiran Rijiju, while attending Muizzu's swearing-in ceremony, reiterated India's "commitment to further strengthen the substantive bilateral cooperation and robust people-to-people ties."

Afghanistan: Pakistani security forces carry out an intelligence-based operation

On 19 November, Al Jazeera reported on the killing of four armed fighters in the Khaisoor region in the district of North Waziristan in Afghanistan by Pakistani security forces. Pakistani military termed the exchange of fire between the two parties as an

“intelligence-based operation.” It added that the security forces found a cache of weapons, ammunition and explosives during the raid. North Waziristan for a long time functioned as a safe place for fighters until the Pakistani military rooted them out in response to an attack on an army-run school in Peshawar.

Central Asia, the Middle East and Africa

Azerbaijan: President Ilham Aliyev accuses France of arming Armenians

On 21 November, Azerbaijani President, Ilham Aliyev, accused France of arming Armenia, fostering conditions for a new conflict in the South Caucasus. Aliyev commented during a conference on decolonisation held in Baku. He criticised France for signing fresh contracts to provide military hardware to Armenia last month. Aliyev stated: “By arming Armenia, it implements a militaristic policy, encourages revanchist forces in Armenia, and prepares the ground for the start of new wars in our region.” Reuters quoted an unnamed French diplomatic source who responded that France was collaborating with allies in Europe and the US to establish a fair and long-lasting peace in the southern Caucasus that was founded on the values of respect for national boundaries and sovereignty.

Iran: Upgraded version of Hypersonic Glide Missile

On 19 November, Al Jazeera reported that Iran unveiled Fattah-II, an upgraded version of Fatah I which was released in June. It is a hypersonic glide missile (HGV) that glides towards its target after its launch. It offers a higher level of manoeuvrability as compared to a ballistic warhead. Fattah is also capable of moving at a speed of 15 Mach (5.1 kilometres or 3.2 miles per second) with a range of 1,400 kilometres (870 miles). It was unveiled by the aerospace division of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) along with an array of arms including an Iranian-made Gaza drone, a new version of the Shahed series of unmanned aerial vehicles, an upgraded version of the 9-Dey missile defence system and a new defence missile system called Mehran. This makes Iran a part of the countries including China and Russia which have weapons capable of travelling long distances with strong manoeuvrability.

Iraq: US strikes on Iran-backed groups

On 21 November, the US Army in Iraq stated that it carried out "precision strikes" on Iraq in response to attacks on its soldiers and coalition forces by Iran and Iran-backed groups. The US Central Command, Centcom, stated: “On the morning of November 22 in Iraq, US Central Command (USCENTCOM) forces conducted discrete, precision strikes against two facilities in Iraq. The strikes were in direct response to the attacks against US and Coalition forces by Iran and Iran-backed groups, including the one in Iraq on November 21, which involved the use of close-range ballistic missiles.” The US Department of Defence spokesperson, Patrick Ryder, stated that a US military AC-130 aircraft in the region carried out a self-defence strike after the Iraqi attack on the Ain Al-Asad base which houses the US troops “using a close-range ballistic missile that ended harm, which resulted in eight injuries and some minor damage to infrastructure.”

Lebanon: Three journalists killed in Israeli strikes

On 21 November, Al Jazeera quoted the Lebanese state-run National News Agency (NNA) that three journalists were killed in an attack by Israeli forces in southern Lebanon. NNA stated that “enemy bombing” has killed people in the Tayr Harfa region near the Israel border. Al Mayadeen TV, a Lebanese channel, stated that two of its reporters were killed during the attack. Al Mayadeen stated: “It was a direct attack, it was not by chance.” The director of Al Mayadeen, Ghassan bin Jiddo, commented that the Israeli forces have blocked access to the



Channel's website. Meanwhile, Al Jazeera correspondent in the region, Zeina Khodr, stated: "Another attack has targeted journalists in southern Lebanon, killing a reporter and a cameraman who worked for the pan-Arabic channel Al Mayadeen ... A third person, who was with them, was also killed. The feeling here is that the Israeli army wants to silence the media and punish journalists."

Yemen: Houthi's forces take hold of cargo ships in the Red Sea

On 19 November, the Houthi militants in Yemen claimed to have taken over a cargo ship, Galaxy Leader, in the southern Red Sea as regional tensions rose due to the Israel-Gaza conflict. Although Israel classified the ship as a British-owned and Japanese-operated cargo vessel with no Israeli nationals on board, the Houthis, who control northern Yemen and its coast in the Red Sea, claimed the ship was Israeli. According to ownership information in the public shipping database, the ship is owned by Abraham "Rami" Ungar, one of the wealthiest individuals in Israel who founded the Ray Car Carriers. Meanwhile, Houthi military spokesperson, Yahya Saree, stated that the seizure of the ship was in response to the "heinous acts against our Palestinian brothers in Gaza and the West Bank."

Sudan: Communal clashes kill 32 people

On 20 November, BBC Africa reported that at least 37 people were killed in a gunmen attack in the village of Abyei. One of the UN peacekeepers was killed during the attack. The attack comes alongside the ongoing communal hostilities in the village over land and resources. The village of Abyei is an oil and resources-rich region that lies on the border between Sudan and South Sudan. It belongs to both countries after a peace agreement that was signed in 2005. The previous week, the UN Security Council extended its mandate of the peacekeeping mission in the region for one more year.

Ethiopia: Peace talks with OLA end without deal

On 22 November, the Ethiopian government stated that the peace talks with the rebel group, Oromo Liberation Army (OLA), failed, describing OLA's approach as "obstructive" and demands as "unrealistic." The talks were held in the city of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania. One of the government negotiators, Redwan Hussein, stated that the government "regrets this unfortunate turn of events." Meanwhile, OLA in response stated that the government was not interested in addressing the "fundamental problems that underlie the county's seemingly insurmountable security and political challenges." The OLA has been fighting the federal forces since 2018 over what the group claims is the oppression of the Oromo ethnic group.

Cameroon: Nine people killed in gunmen attack

On 22 November, BBC Africa reported on a gunmen attack in the town of Bamenyam in the west of Cameroon that killed at least nine people. The attacks were carried out in the French-speaking region of Bamboutos by the separatist militants who campaign for an independent region for the English-speaking community. Since 2017, the separatist movement has been ongoing with the minority English-speaking community claiming that the government dominated by the French-speaking community has been marginalising them. The conflict has killed more than 6,000 people.

South Africa: Motion to end diplomatic ties with Israel

On 22 November, the South African parliament voted for a motion calling to end diplomatic ties with Israel. The motion was passed by 248 votes to 91. The governing party, the African National Congress (ANC) has been critical of Israel's attacks in Gaza. On 20 November, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa called on the International Criminal Court (ICC) to issue an arrest warrant on Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for the war crimes in Gaza. Meanwhile, the Israeli Minister of Foreign Affairs recalled its ambassador to South Africa "for consultations," a move it stated as a response to "the latest South African statements."

Europe

Ukraine: Germany announces military aid to Ukraine

On 21 November, Germany's Defence Minister, Boris Pistorius, expressed solidarity and appreciated Ukraine's efforts in the war during his visit to Kyiv. Pistorius announced EUR 1.3 billion in military gear to Ukraine. This package includes IRIS T-SLM air defence systems and artillery ammunition. Germany is the second largest supporter of military aid to Ukraine and its IRIS-T systems have been in high demand as they are used by Ukraine to counter Russia. Currently, three of the systems have been delivered and the second set is expected to be delivered in 2024.

Finland: Russia responds to Finland's border closure

On 20 November, the Press Secretary of the President of the Russian Federation, Dmitry Peskov, issued a statement expressing Russia's "regret" over Finland's decision to close some of its crossing points along its border with Russia. Peskov stated: "We regret that these relations were replaced by such an exclusively Russophobic position, which the leaders of this country began to espouse." Finland had earlier announced closing four out of nine crossing points in the eastern border with Russia in response to which the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation lodged "a formal protest" with Finland's ambassador in Moscow. According to the ministry, Finland's decision was rushed and "the rights and interests of tens of thousands of people."

Ukraine: Ukraine claim advance in River Dnipro; Russia reports Ukraine forces failure in land operations

On 19 November, the Ukrainian military claimed it had advanced into the Russian-occupied bank of the river Dnipro. According to the report, the army had advanced three to eight kilometres from the river Dnipro bank. Ukraine's army spokesperson, Natalia Gumenyuk, stated: "Preliminary figures vary from three to eight kilometres, depending on the specifics, geography and landscape design of the left bank." However, they still have a "lot of work to do" as Gumenyuk claims there were "several tens of thousands" of Russian troops. The advancement is a "successful" breakthrough after multiple advancement attempts by Kyiv. These claims were countered on 21 November when Russia's Defence Minister, Sergei Shoigu, claimed that Ukraine had failed to succeed in its land operations in Kherson.

Latin America and the US

The Dominican Republic: Abinader cites "extensive and substantial damage" as rains kill 21

On 19 November, the Dominican Republic's Emergency Operations Centre (COE) stated that torrential rains had killed at least 21 people and displaced more than 13,000. The COE cited damage to infrastructure including bridges and roads, power outages and houses. Of these, the collapse of a highway tunnel due to water which "infiltrated a saturated subsoil" killed



nine people. The President of the Dominican Republic, Luis Abinader, described the situation as the “largest rainfall event” in the country’s history saying that those who “do not believe in climate change” should “start believing.” Emphasising the “extensive and substantial” damage that has been caused and the continuing risk, Abinader ordered an evaluation of affected schools and measures to “guarantee the safety of our young people.”

Nicaragua: “Another step away from democracy” by withdrawing from OAS, US remark

On 19 November, the US State Department deemed Nicaragua’s withdrawal from the Organisation of American States (OAS) as “another step away from democracy.” The OAS has been vocal in criticising the human rights abuses by the government of Nicaragua. The statement which was issued on X by US State Department Spokesman Matthew Miller added that the withdrawal “further isolates Nicaragua from the international community.” Although Nicaragua has not responded, President Daniel Ortega has rejected the criticisms made by the OAS.

Haiti: Hospital in Port-au-Prince evacuated amid a surge in violent gang activities

On 16 November, BBC reported that the Fontaine Hospital Centre in the capital Port-au-Prince was evacuated by the police after ongoing gang activities nearby. The Director of the hospital, Jose Ulysse, stated that more than 100 patients, of which roughly half were children, had to be evacuated. He explained that the gang war “is around the hospital” which is situated in Cite Soleil, an area facing unrest after the death of the gang leader Iskar Andrice on 14 November. Houses around the hospital had also been set on fire, but local authorities were “able to get everyone to safety.” Haiti has recently been experiencing escalating levels of gang violence which began after gangs took control of the capital in 2021.

The US: White House considering redesignating Houthi rebels as “terrorist” group following ship seizure in the Red Sea

On 21 November, the US National Security Council spokesperson, John Kirby, condemned the seizure of a commercial ship in the Red Sea by Yemen’s Houthi rebels as the White House is deliberating redesignating the Houthis as a “terrorist” group. The Houthis had announced that Israeli ships were “legitimate targets” for them, following which they raided a ship and took 25 workers hostage. Kirby described the seizure as the “piracy of a ship in international waters” and that the Houthis were responsible for the “recent targeting of civilians.” He further called for the unconditional release of these hostages, blaming Iran for being complicit in these activities. In 2021, the administration of US President Joe Biden delisted the Houthis as a “foreign terrorist organisation,” formally undoing a move by former US President Donald Trump. This decision was made as the UN and aid groups asserted that these designations made it difficult to deliver aid to Yemen.

The US: Secretary of Defence makes a surprise visit to Ukraine to reaffirm US support

On 20 November, the US Secretary of Defence, Lloyd Austin, made a surprise visit to Kyiv, where he reaffirmed US support for Ukraine and announced a new military package worth USD 100 million. Austin told Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy that the message he brought “is that the United States of America is with you. We will remain with you for the long haul.” The aid includes anti-tank weapons, air-defence-interceptors and High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems. Austin’s visit was made to reaffirm US commitment to Ukraine following a diversion in international attention from the Russia-Ukraine war to the Israel-Hamas conflict. In response, Zelenskyy stated that the visit was a “very important signal” as they “count” on US support.

The US: Blinken stresses the “urgent need” to end to “de-escalate” tensions in West Bank

On 16 November, the US State Department stated that US Secretary of State, Antony Blinken, held a telephone call with Israel’s former Minister of Defence, Benny Gantz, where he asked Israel to take “urgent” steps to end the Israeli violence against Palestinians in Gaza. Blinken commented that “affirmative steps to de-escalate tensions” had to be taken along with “confronting rising levels of settler extremist violence.” According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Israel’s settler violence has increased from three to seven incidents a day. Blinken made the statements after Israel’s forces conducted raids in Gaza forcing major hospitals to suspend operations. He further highlighted efforts to “augment and accelerate” humanitarian aid to Gaza and secure the release of hostages taken by Hamas to prevent the escalation of the war to other regions.

(The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors. They do not purport to reflect the opinions or views of any institutions or organisations.)

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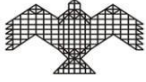
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About NIAS-International Peace Research Initiative(IPRI)

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 researches 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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