

Conflict Weekly

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A brief review of conflict and peace processes across the world

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Anti-government protests in Cuba, Pro-Zuma protests in South Africa, and remembering the Srebrenica massacre

Lokendra Sharma, Anu Maria Joseph and Harini Madhusudan



The arrest of former president Jacob Zuma has triggered violence and looting across South Africa. (Image Source: EPA/BBC)

Cuba: Anti-government protests, triggered by COVID economy and structural issues

In the news

On 11 July, thousands of Cubans marched in Havana and Santiago against the communist government led by President Diaz-Canel. The protestors called on Diaz-Canel to step down and also chanted "freedom." Protests were largely peaceful, with some instances of violence and police detentions. On the same day, in a broadcasted address, Diaz-Canel asked: "all the revolutionaries in the country, all the Communists, to hit the streets wherever there is an effort to produce these provocations." Further, the Cuban government blamed the US for fomenting protests in the country.

On 12 July, US President Biden made a statement backing the protestors. He said: "The Cuban people are demanding their freedom from an authoritarian regime." He added that the US "stands firmly with the people of Cuba as they assert their universal rights" and also called on the Cuban government "to refrain from violence in their attempt to silence the voices of the people of Cuba." On the same day, Mexico and Russia issued statements warning against any outside interference in the internal affairs of Cuba, indirectly targeting the role of the US.

On 13 July, a Reuters report, citing an exiled human rights group Cubalex, said: "At least 100 protestors, activists, and independent journalists had been detained nationwide since Sunday."

Issues at large

First, the demands by protestors. The protests come in the backdrop of the rising cases of COVID-19 and a shrinking economy particularly affected by the declining tourism sector. Protestors are demanding an end to hunger, better economic opportunities, and a more reliable electricity supply. People are also unhappy with the government's handling of the pandemic and medicine shortages.

Second, a new leader and a new generation. The protests are the largest in nearly three decades; the last such protest took place in 1994 when the country was reeling under severe economic distress after Soviet Union's collapse. The leadership was recently passed on to Diaz-Canel from the Castro brothers — Fidel and Raul — who ruled for nearly six decades. These protests are the first test of Diaz-Canel's leadership. It will be much more challenging for him because of three reasons: widespread use of the Internet and social media platforms by the country's disillusioned youth which render propaganda ineffective; Diaz-Canel lacking the charisma and popular appeal which Castro brothers enjoyed; lastly, though importantly, the receding of revolutionary ideology with a generational shift.

Third, the economic issues. Cuba has been subjected to a severe economic embargo by the US for the last six decades. Former US President Trump had imposed even more sanctions amidst the pandemic and reinstated some sanctions which were earlier lifted by the Obama administration. In part due to the US embargo, along with other factors like the pandemic and domestic policy issues, the Cuban economy shrank by 11 per cent in 2020.

In perspective

Due to the three-fold challenges of social media and lack of charisma and receding ideology, Diaz-Canel would only find it difficult to respond in a heavy-handed, repressive manner similar to what the Castro brothers did in the past. Therefore, rather than calling for counter-revolutionaries to mount a resistance, Diaz-Canel should pay heed to genuine demands for change and reform, of both political and economic nature. Failure to do so would only keep the Cuban society perpetually at the edge.

While the US has certainly played an interventionist role historically not just in Cuba but in the wider Caribbean and Latin American region, Diaz-Canel's attempts of putting all blame on the

US for fomenting the protests is unhelpful. The US, on its part, should move beyond its hypocritical rhetoric and end the most enduring and inhuman embargo on Cuba.

South Africa: Arrest of Jacob Zuma triggers violence across the country

In the news

On 11 July, President Cyril Ramaphosa called on the protesters to calm down, saying "there can never be any justification for such violent destruction and disruptive actions." Meanwhile, military troops have been deployed in Gauteng province and in Zuma's home province of KwaZulu-Natal to tackle the violence.

On 13 July, the Washington Post reported widespread violence and looting. It reported more than 70 people getting killed and widespread looting across South Africa.

On 7 July, South Africa's former president Jacob Zuma handed himself to the police. He is due to serve his 15 months sentence for contempt of court as he failed to attend the enquiry on corruption charges during his presidency. Protests following the arrest are degenerating to larger violence in the country. At least 26 people have been killed and about 800 arrested.

Issues at large

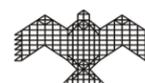
First, arrest and the allegations. Jacob Zuma was forced out of his office by his own party, the African National Congress, in 2018 over corruption allegations. He has been accused of 18 charges of racketeering, corruption, fraud, tax evasion and money laundering. The charges also include the corruption over a multi-billion-dollar arms deal in 1999 and the state capture in 2017. On 26 May, he pleaded not guilty of all the charges saying he is a victim of conspiracies involving his enemies in the African National Congress.

Second, the divisions within the ANC. The party today is divided into two factions, one supporting Zuma and the other supporting Ramaphosa. The Zuma faction claims that Ramaphosa is using the court to maintain his leadership in the party. They argue that Zuma is a victim of political witch-hunting by Ramaphosa's allies.

Third, the spread of violence. The ongoing unrest in the country began as a protest against Zuma's arrest but has now broadened to larger violence. Shops and malls have been ransacked, businesses set on fire and major highways blocked. The police say that the criminals and the opportunistic individuals are trying to enrich themselves under the situation. South Africa's consumer goods council warned that the unrest might lead to food shortages as deliveries have been disrupted, banking services and healthcare have also been impacted.

In perspective

First, the arrest of Zuma can be seen as a great achievement of the South African judiciary. It proved the accountability of the court in bringing equality before the law.



Second, but the split within ANC will be a great challenge for the party in regaining the public trust. The victims of the split will be the citizens as the governing party loses its balance. People are insecure with the government under the party in addressing their needs and issues.

Third, the pro-Zuma protests have crossed the line to larger violence. The multiple disturbances, triggered by poor economic conditions and the pandemic, may lead to larger unrest, poverty, unemployment and an increase in deaths.

Bosnia: 26 years after the Srebrenica Massacre

In the news

On 11 July, the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina gathered in thousands to commemorate the 1995 Srebrenica massacre; the day the killing began. They also reburied 19 newly identified victims whose remains were found in mass graves and recently identified through DNA analysis. The massacre is known as the only acknowledged genocide since World War II; 26 years after the genocide, only a handful of the officials and the military officers have been brought to justice, for the organized killing, burial, and cover-up operation. An estimated 20,000 people were involved in the gruesome massacre of up to 8000 Muslim Bosniaks from Srebrenica.

On the eve of the anniversary, Milord Dodik, the Serb member of Bosnia's presidency, denied that what happened in Srebrenica was genocide and stated to a newspaper that the mourners are "burying empty coffins."

Issues at large

First, a brief history of the massacre. The Srebrenica Massacre took place on the sidelines of the 1992-1995 war in Bosnia that followed the disintegration of Yugoslavia. They were unleashed by the territorial ambitions and nationalistic passions that set the Bosnian Serbs against the Croats and Bosniaks, the two other ethnic factions. During these years, Bosnia and Herzegovina were under attack by the Serbian and Croatian forces, who were each trying to carve a Greater Serbia or a Greater Croatia. An estimated 100,00 people were killed during this war. The Serbian forces were attacking villages, towns, and cities in Bosnia with an aim to "ethnically cleanse." At the time, under the protection of the UN and NATO forces, the Muslim town in Eastern Bosnia, Srebrenica, had been classified as a safe zone for non-Serbs.

On 11 July 1995, the Bosnian Serb army overruns Srebrenica which caused tens of thousands of refugees to flee to the Dutch forces' compound. Mladic, who led the Bosnian Serb army, ordered the evacuation of all elderly, women, and children civilians, and all the men of fighting age were taken as prisoners. In the days following this, more than 8000 Muslim men and boys were systematically butchered by these forces and dumped the bodies in mass graves. In order to try and erase the evidence, the forces with the help of a few civilian companies dug them and reburied them in other locations. By 17 July, witness accounts emerged of harrowing accounts of murder, rape, and torture.

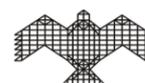
Second, the regional and global responses. The international response led to the Bosnian Serb political leader being indicted on 24 July, and the military chief Ratko Mladic on 16 November by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) for genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes. However, over the years, only a handful of the perpetrators have been indicted for the various roles they have played in the massacre. A total of 48 individuals have been sentenced in the past 26 years, and four have been given life sentences. In 2003, Bosnia and Herzegovina conducted their own set of investigations and came up with a list of names of those who played a part in the crimes in and around Srebrenica, but to date, even the direct perpetrators captured from 1995 are yet to be indicted. Additionally, even though the massacre has been declared a genocide by international and national courts, but Serb leaders in Bosnia and neighbouring Serbia continue to downplay or even deny the evidence of what happened. Two days before the 26th anniversary, a Srebrenica Genocide Denial report was published, which identified at least 234 instances of genocide denial in regional public discourse and the media in the past year. On the same day, the Bosnian media reported the celebrations of the Serbian War in the backyard of a Church right above the memorial centre, with provocative music.

Third, justice and reconciliation. International Tribunals were set up to bring to legal liability the perpetrators of the genocide. The Bosnian government in 2003 issued a public apology over the incident, and in 2019, the Dutch supreme court also upheld partial liability of the Netherlands to the deaths caused under their watch. Legal and symbolic justice have been offered at various stages through the past 26 years. Attempts have been made to engage with the survivors and make a record of their experiences to deal with the denialism and the revision of history. However, delayed justice, outright political denial, and the sheer depth of the loss from the massacre remain haunting.

Fourth, the counternarrative of historical denialism: two popular narratives from the Serbian side remain. One group believe that there were killings but state that the fatalities have been overstated and deny the role of Serbia supporting the Bosnian Serb regime. Another set of people believe the genocide never happened. The issue of Srebrenica never resonated in the Serbian society, and those that call the Srebrenica genocide in Serbia face condemnation and lawsuits.

In perspective

The parallels of denialism and the slow pace of bringing the perpetrators to justice remain a glaring reality of the massacre. This could be a reflection of the popular sentiments among Eastern European leaders against the Muslims in the region. The responses to the genocide have largely been legal or symbolic; it would be useful to see if a humanized approach to dealing with the delayed justice and losses would be helpful to the families that lost their loved ones. A large part of the narrative and the denial of the genocide is used as a divisive element in the Bosnian and Serbian societies, which are counterproductive to the creation of a safe environment for communities to co-exist.



Also, from around the world

By Apoorva Sudhakar and Abigail Miriam Fernandez

Peace and Conflict from East and Southeast Asia

China: 2600 plus children rescued under Reunion system, says Ministry of Public Security

On 13 July, the Ministry of Public Security said that 2,609 missing or abducted children had been rescued since 2016 under the Tuanyuan (Reunion) system; some of the rescued had been missing for over 60 years. A Deputy Inspector of the Ministry's Criminal Investigation Bureau said that on 1 June, almost 10,000 people gave their blood samples at blood sampling sites for the Tuanyuan; following this, 306 families reunited with their missing children.

China: Beijing removes giant pandas from the endangered species list

On 9 July, The Guardian reported that China had reclassified giant pandas by removing them from the endangered category to the vulnerable group. The head of the Department of Nature and Ecology Conservation under the Environment Ministry attributed this improvement to better living conditions "and China's efforts in keeping their habitats integrated." He said that apart from giant pandas whose population stands at 1,800 outside captivity, the number of Asian elephants, Siberian tigers, Amur leopards, and crested ibis had increased due to the conservation measures. The development comes five years after the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) had reclassified the giant pandas from endangered to vulnerable; but at the time, Beijing rejected the move on the grounds that "it was misleading and would cause complacency in China."

South China Sea: The US reaffirms commitment to defend the Philippines; China calls it irresponsible

On 11 July, the US Secretary of State called on China to "abide by its obligations under international law (and) cease its provocative behaviour in the South China Sea," and reiterated the US commitment to defend the Philippines. He was marking the fifth anniversary of a 2016 ruling by the Permanent Court of Arbitration at the Hague, which rejected China's expansive moves in the South China Sea. CNN quoted Antony Blinken: "We also reaffirm that an armed attack on Philippine armed forces, public vessels, or aircraft in the South China Sea would invoke US mutual defence commitments under Article IV of the 1951 US-Philippines Mutual Defense Treaty." On the same day, the Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman termed Blinken's statements extremely irresponsible and said that China does not recognize the arbitration.

Japan: Increasing military tensions around Taiwan threatens peace in East Asia, say white papers

On 13 July, the government approved the "Defense of Japan 2021" white papers which stated that increasing military tensions near Taiwan, along with the US-China rivalry, was a threat to East Asia's peace and stability. Al Jazeera quoted from the report: "Therefore, it is necessary that we pay close attention to the situation with a sense of crisis more than ever before." This is the latest development wherein Japan has outrightly supported Taiwan and garnered criticism from China for the same. The white papers also mentioned that China's military activities in the South China Sea and the US criticism against it were also an area of concern.

North Korea: Pyongyang criticizes US humanitarian aid

On 12 July, The Asahi Shimbun published a Reuters news report which said that the North Korean Foreign Ministry, on its website, had criticized the US humanitarian aid on 11 July. Further, a North Korean researcher from the Association for the Promotion of International Economic and Technological Exchange termed US aid as a "sinister political scheme" to pressurize other countries and listed the US withdrawal from Afghanistan as an example. He said: "This vividly reveals that the American ulterior intention of linking 'humanitarian assistance' with 'human rights issue' is to legitimize their pressure on the sovereign states and achieve their sinister political scheme," adding, "In actual practice, many countries have undergone bitter tastes as a result of pinning much hope on the American 'aid' and 'humanitarian assistance.'"

Myanmar: Suu Kyi slapped with four more charges; UN adopts resolution against rights violations

On 12 July, Aung San Suu Kyi's lawyer said that the military junta had slapped four additional charges on her; the charges are related to corruption. Al Jazeera quoted the lawyer: "There are corruption charges. We do not know why do they sue? Or for what reasons? We will find out about it." Meanwhile, the military spokesman said that Suu Kyi had violated the Constitution when the post of the state counsellor was established, which allegedly disrupted the command structure between the president and vice presidents. Previously, on 12 July, UN Human Rights Council adopted a resolution condemning the rights violations in the country and called for ceasing the hostilities. The UN estimates that since the February coup, at least 900 people have been killed.

Peace and Conflict from South Asia

India: J&K delimitation to be based on 2011 census

On 9 July, the Delimitation Commission stated that delimitation in Jammu and Kashmir would be conducted based on the 2011 Census. Additionally, the final draft would be prepared after taking into consideration all demands and recommendations. The Chief Election Commissioner of India said: "The first full-fledged delimitation commission was formed in 1981 which could submit its recommendation after 14 years in 1995. It was based on the 1981 census. Thereafter, no delimitation has taken place." This visit comes after the panel held a meeting at the Election Commission office in the national capital on 30 June. The purpose of the visit was to get inputs on the conduct of the exercise to carve out new constituencies in Jammu and Kashmir.

Maldives: "India Out" campaign spreads, High Commission seeks government action and greater security

On 13 July, The Indian Express reported that the Indian High Commission in the Maldives has written to the government in the Maldives seeking action and greater security following what it calls "recurring articles and social media posts attacking the dignity of the High Commission" and diplomats posted in the country. The "India Out" campaign which began in 2020, has now spread across social media platforms. In response, the Foreign Ministry of the



Maldives called on local media outlets not to spread stories that would damage the reputation of foreign diplomats and put them at a security risk.

Nepal: Supreme Court overturn Oli's dissolution of the House of Representatives

On 12 July, a five-member Constitutional Bench of the Supreme Court reinstated the dissolved House of Representatives for the second time in five months and ordered the appointment of Sher Bahadur Deuba as prime minister. Following the verdict, Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli said: "I have not been ousted because of people's mandate but because of the court. I have people's mandate, trust. The Supreme Court's decision has pushed away from the democracy. It has challenged the multi-party system of the country." He said that Supreme Court has "crossed its jurisdiction and interfered in political matter" and accused the court of "deliberately" passing the verdict in favour of the Opposition parties. On 13 July, Deuba took oath as prime minister for the fifth time.

Pakistan: PM Khan meets with Baloch lawmakers; calls for creating an atmosphere for talks

On 9 July, Prime Minister Imran Khan met with Balochistan's lawmakers, including Sarfaraz Bugti and Anwarul Haq Kakar. During the meeting, he asked them to prepare a conducive atmosphere for the federal government to engage with insurgents. A statement from the PM office said that senators apprised the PM about the political situation in Balochistan. Additionally, during his visit to Gwadar, he stated that he was considering "talking to insurgents" in Balochistan, arguing that the government would never have had to worry about insurgency if attention had been paid to its development in the past.

Afghanistan: Taliban says they control 85 per cent of Afghan territory

On 9 July, the Taliban claimed that they are in control of 85 per cent of Afghanistan; however, government officials dismissed the claims stating that it was a propaganda campaign launched as foreign military troops withdraw from the country. Meanwhile, on 8 July, President Joe Biden said the US military mission in Afghanistan will conclude on 31 August, reiterating that the US seeks to end the nearly 20-year war. As the US troops withdraw, Marine General Kenneth F. McKenzie took charge of the remaining US forces in Afghanistan, and the command of the forces was handed to him from General Austin Miller who served in the post since 2018.

Afghanistan: Important steps to be taken in the peace talks within the next few days, says Abdullah Abdullah

On 13 July, Abdullah Abdullah, the head of the High Council for National Reconciliation, and Hamid Karzai, former president, stated that they expect important steps to be taken in the 'peace talks' soon. Meanwhile, delegations from the Afghan government and the Taliban have said to have held a series of talks focused on at least five key issues, including a future constitution, ceasefire, political roadmap and political participation in the transition period. Meanwhile, Zalmay Khalilzad, the US Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation who has started a new series of trips to the region said that he was surprised by recent advances by the Taliban, reiterating that a military takeover was not the solution to the conflict in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan: UK withdrawals troops, senior British military official warns of civil war

On 8 July, Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced that most of the British troops had left Afghanistan. Although the combat operations had ended in 2014, around 750 British service personnel stayed in Afghanistan under NATO's mission to train and assist the security forces. Meanwhile, Britain's Chief of the Defense Staff, Nick Carter, said it was "plausible" that the country's state would collapse without international forces there, adding that Afghanistan could see a situation like the country's 1990s civil war "where you would see a culture of warlordism and you might see some of the important institutions like security forces fracturing along ethnic, or for that matter, tribal lines." He said: "if that were to happen, I guess the Taliban would control part of the country. But, of course, they would not control all of the country."

Peace and Conflict from Central Asia, Middle East and Africa

Iraq: As temperatures soar, protesters demand restoring electricity

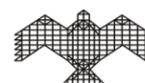
On 9 July, hundreds of people protested outside a government-run power plant demanding restoration of electricity as temperatures in southern provinces were recorded at nearly 50 degrees Celsius for several days together. Arab News quoted a protester: "We are peaceful protesters who are here only for our rights. Our demand is for electricity to return and if it doesn't we'll bring our tents and camp out." Meanwhile, the Electricity Ministry said the blackouts were taking place because of "unexplained attacks on power lines."

Israel-Palestine: Israeli forces open fire at Palestinian demonstrators in occupied West Bank

On 9 July, over 370 Palestinian demonstrators were wounded and 31 hit by live ammunition after Israeli forces opened fire on the protesters in occupied West Bank. The demonstrators were protesting against "illegal land confiscation." Al Jazeera referred to local media reports which said the protesters had burned tyres and hurled rocks at Israeli forces. Similar incidents took place in Kafr Qaddum and Beit Dajan towns.

Ethiopia: Tigrayan forces secured important towns in southern Tigray, says spokesman

On 13 July, Getachew Reda, a spokesman for Tigrayan forces told AFP that they had seized Almata town in southern Tigray after they launched an offensive on 12 July. Voice of America quoted Reda: "Yesterday, we launched an offensive in the Raya region (southern Tigray), and we managed to rout the divisions of the Federal Defense Forces and the Amhara forces." Further, he said the Tigrayan forces had successfully secured the majority of southern Tigray. Meanwhile, on 13 July, the UN Human Rights Council called for "an immediate halt to all human rights violations and abuses and violations of international humanitarian law" in Tigray, in line with a EU-backed resolution, and called for the withdrawal of Eritrean troops from the region. Eritrea criticized the resolution maintaining that the troops had already left and Ethiopia rejected the resolution; however, Addis Ababa has agreed to cooperate on an investigation carried out on directions of the UN human rights chief.



Ivory Coast: Former presidents unite to oppose current head of state

On 11 July, former presidents Laurent Gbagbo and Henri Konan Bédié announced that they were uniting to oppose the current president Allasane Ouattara. News24 quoted from a joint statement that said they were uniting because there was an "urgent need to work for a return to a definitive and durable peace in Ivory Coast." The development comes after Gbagbo returned on 17 June following acquittal from charges of crimes against humanity; Gbagbo's refusal to cede power after the 2010 elections had resulted in electoral violence which claimed nearly 3,000 lives.

Niger: 49, including gunmen killed in clashes in Tillaberi region

On 11 July, the Ministry of Defense said that 49 people - four soldiers, five civilians, and 40 armed attackers - had been killed in a clash in the Tchoma Bangou village in the Tillaberi region located at the border between Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso. The government did not identify the perpetrators but said around 100 heavily armed "terrorists" had struck the village. In January, gunmen had killed around 70 civilians

South Sudan: Kiir and Machar mark 10 years of independence with the hope to keep peace alive

On 9 July, South Sudan marked ten years of independence; President Salva Kiir said: "I assure you that I will not return you back to war again. Let us work all together to recover the lost decade and put our country back to the path of development in this new decade." However, he outlined that the country was not in a position to celebrate the occasion and blamed international sanctions for the same. With this, he said that the transitional government was aiming at improving the economic conditions. Meanwhile, Kiir's former rival and now Vice President Riek Machar said: "Our people expect a lot from us. The world is also expecting a lot from us...For us to continue (independence) celebrations every time, we need to keep the peace alive."

West and Central Africa: UNICEF chief calls for protection of children in the region

On 7 July, the UNICEF Executive Director raised concerns over the safety and wellbeing of children in parts of West and Central Africa due to the presence of non-State armed groups. The UNICEF chief, highlighting that the instances of abductions were on the rise, said that it is not only necessary to condemn the activities but also take necessary action. She said: "This starts with non-State armed groups and all parties to conflict who are committing violations of children's rights – they have a moral and legal obligation to immediately cease attacks against civilians, and to respect and protect civilians and civilian objects during any military operations."

The GERD: Taking the matter to UNSC unhelpful, Ethiopia tells Egypt and Sudan

On 13 July, the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs called on Egypt and Sudan to return of African Union-led negotiations on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam maintaining that the dam talks have been dragged and politicized. Addis Standard quoted from the Ministry statement: "Ethiopia has made its position clear time and again that this is unproductive and bringing the subject matter to the United Nations Security Council was and is unhelpful..." The development comes after the UNSC held an open session on the dam on 8 July.

Peace and Conflict from Europe and the Americas

Greece: EU officials accuse Greek government of 'pushing back' asylum seekers at sea

On 13 July, BBC reported that EU Commissioner for Home Affairs stated that the Greek government must stop the illegal deportation of migrants arriving on the country's borders. The official said that the "very well-founded" reports of "pushbacks" at sea and on land were "violations of fundamental European values." Previously, Human Rights groups blamed Greece for pushing back asylum seekers in Europe to Turkey before being given a chance to apply for asylum. However, Greece has once again denied the allegations.

Spain: Heatwave hits country as temperatures reach 44 degrees Celsius

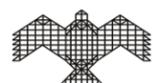
On 11 July, a heatwave engulfed most of Spain, driving temperatures to extreme levels. The National weather office AEMET issued heat warnings for most of the country, forecasting the temperature to rise above 40 degrees Celsius in Madrid and the southern city of Seville. Additionally, the heatwave is forecasted to spread east, with only a part of Spain's northern Atlantic coast said to be spared from the extreme heat.

Belarus: Lithuania, EU accuse Belarus of using refugees as 'political weapon'

On 12 July, the EU and Lithuania accused Belarus of using illegal migrants as a political weapon to put pressure on the bloc due to its sanctions on Minsk. During a meeting of EU foreign ministers, a Lithuanian politician said that Belarus was flying in migrants from abroad and sending them over the border into EU countries. Additionally, Josep Borrell, the EU's foreign policy chief, said: "To use migrants as a weapon, pushing people against the borders, is unacceptable."

Italy: G20 recognized carbon pricing as a potential tool to address climate change

On 10 July, G20 finance leaders endorsed carbon pricing, a once contentious idea, as a potential tool to address climate change for the first time in an official communique. The initiative is seen as a step towards promoting the idea and coordinating carbon reduction policies. The communique, issued after the meeting stated: "Tackling climate change and biodiversity loss and promoting environmental protection remain urgent priorities," adding that the solutions could include, "if appropriate, the use of carbon pricing mechanisms and incentives."



Italy: World hunger increased in 2020 under the shadow of the COVID-19 pandemic, says FAO

On 12 July, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the UN World Food Programme (WFP) and the World Health Organization (WHO) published a joint report titled 'The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2021.' The report stated that world hunger increased in 2020 under the shadow of the COVID-19 pandemic and projected that between 720 and 811 million people in the world faced hunger in 2020. The report states that more than half of the world's undernourished are found in Asia (418 million) and more than one-third in Africa (282 million). Additionally, it states that new projections confirm that hunger will not be eradicated by 2030 unless bold actions are taken to accelerate progress, especially actions to address inequality in access to food.

The UK: Racist abuse directed at the Black players after Euro Cup 2020 loss

On 11 July, after Italy beat England on penalties in the Euro 2020, reports of racist abuse being directed at the Black players poured in on social media. In a statement, England's Football Association (FA) said: "The FA strongly condemns all forms of discrimination and is appalled by the online racism that has been aimed at some of our England players on social media." Meanwhile, Prime Minister Boris Johnson condemned the actions saying: "those responsible for this appalling abuse should be ashamed of themselves." Additionally, Prince William who is also the president of the Football Association, said that he was "sickened" by the racism, adding, "it is totally unacceptable that players have to endure this abhorrent behaviour...It must stop now and all those involved should be held accountable."

Mexico: Over 100 journalists and activists killed since 2018

On 12 July, figures released by the Interior Department showed that at least 68 human rights activists and 43 journalists had been killed since President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador came to office in late 2018. These numbers have drawn criticism over the government promise to safeguard the lives of journalists and activists in Mexico. Currently, the Mexican government is providing security and protection for 1478 people throughout the country. Further, President Lopez Obrador stated that his government is "working every day to save lives" as part of the desire for "justice and protection of the Mexicans' lives."

Venezuela: Maduro says Mexico to host talks with opposition

On 12 July, President Nicolas Maduro announced that Mexico will host talks between the government and the opposition, however, making clear that he will only take part if international sanctions are lifted and he is protected from any plots to oust him. Meanwhile, opposition politician Freddy Guevara has been charged with terrorism and treason, on the grounds of alleged "ties with extremist groups and paramilitaries associated with the Colombian government." On the same day, the US announced that it would begin easing the sanction imposed by the Trump administration on Venezuela allowing companies to export propane to the country.

The US: Statues of two Confederate Generals removed in Charlottesville

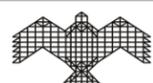
On 10 July, the statue of US Confederate General Robert E Lee and Stonewall Jackson was removed in Charlottesville, Virginia. The removal of the statues, which have been at the centre of the white supremacist rally, comes nearly four years after violence erupted at the infamous "Unite the Right" rally in 2017. Charlottesville mayor said: "Taking down this statue is one small step closer to the goal of helping Charlottesville, Virginia, and America, grapple with the sin of being willing to destroy black people for economic gain."

The US: California wildfires increases as temperature soar to 54 degrees Celsius

On 12 July, wildfires continued to destroy the northern forests of California as scorching heat and severe drought are creating ideal conditions for fires. Meanwhile, a unique kind of large storm cloud has been forming in the skies above, dubbed "fire clouds," firefighters and scientists have warned that these clouds can produce hurricanes and lightning, which can generate even more fires. Additionally, as the fire spreads, extreme temperatures continue to blast the west, with excessive heat warnings remaining in many places.

About the authors

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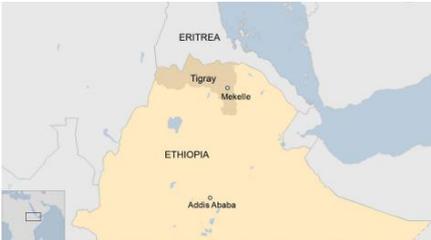
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A brief review of conflict and peace processes across the world

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

Apoorva Sudhakar and Jeshil Samuel J



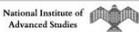
The TPLF rebels returned to Tigray and took over its capital last week in Ethiopia. The government has announced a unilateral ceasefire. (Image Source: BBC)

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



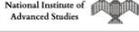
Juneteenth has become more than a day just to commemorate the end of slavery in the US. (Image Source: Reuters)

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 Adlakh, Sourina Bej and Vibha Venugopal

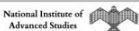


12 June was observed as World Day Against Child Labour, marking 2021 as International Year for the Elimination of Child Labour. According to the latest report of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) "160 million children – 63 million girls and 97 million boys" were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

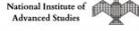


According to the latest report of the UN Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team "the Taliban and Al-Qaida remain closely aligned and show no indication of breaking ties." (Image Source: BBC)

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



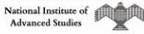
Street protests returned in Colombia, as the negotiations between the government and protesters failed. The UN has called for an independent investigation. (Image Source: BBC/Reuters)

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



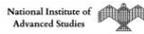
"We see the cease-fire not as an end, but as a beginning — something to build on" commented the US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken in his first visit to the Middle East. (Image Source: Al Jazeera)

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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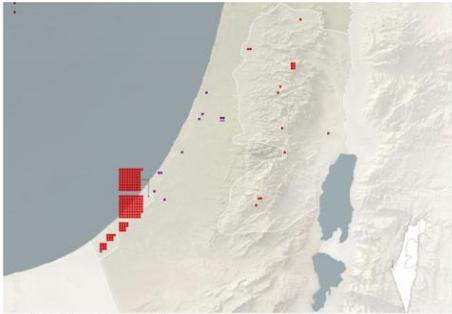
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19 May 2021, Vol.2, No.07

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

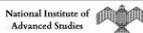


The clashes between Hamas and Israel continue into the second week, as there is no end to the rocket attacks. Casualties are increasing across Israel, as could be seen from the above image by the New York Times. (Image Source: The New York Times)

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

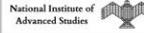


Following clashes between the Israeli police and Palestinians last week in East Jerusalem, the violence escalated further as Hamas and Israel exchanged rocket attacks. (Image Source: Agence France/Getty Images /The New York Times)

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

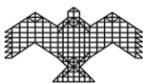
[In the news](#)

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.



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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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