

# Conflict Weekly

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

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

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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.

On 10 June, a new report titled "Child Labour: Global estimates 2020, trends and the road forward" published by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) says progress towards ending child labour has come to a standstill for the first time since 2000. The UNICEF Executive Director said: "We are losing ground in the fight against child labour, and the last year has not made that fight any easier." Similarly, the ILO Director-General said: "The new estimates are a wake-up call. We cannot stand by while a new generation of children is put at risk."

The global estimates have been released every four years since 2000 with data pertaining to children aged between 5 to 17. The latest report reveals that in the beginning of 2020, "160 million children – 63 million girls and 97 million boys" were engaged in child labour; 86 million fewer than when the first global estimates were released in 2000. However, it says the COVID-19 pandemic is hindering progress and estimates that by the end of 2022, 8.9 million more children will be in child labour.

### Issues at large

First, the persistent problem of child labour. The prevalence of child labour can be traced back to centuries; developed countries of the modern-day employed children as young as ten, as could be seen during the Industrial Revolution of the 18th century. However, with the passage of time, development, and the introduction of several conventions, child labour became concentrated in the developing countries of Asia, Latin America, and Africa. In the late 20th century, the ILO framed two Conventions on child labour; ILO Convention 138 on Minimum Age was adopted in 1973, and Convention 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour was adopted in 1999. Developed countries have made significant progress in implementing these Conventions; however, developing countries have not. For example, the latest estimates highlight that child labour in sub-Saharan Africa has been rising since 2012 against Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean where child labour has fallen. It says that the number of children in sub-Saharan Africa is greater than in the world combined.

Second, major highlights of the report. It says that roughly one in 10 children globally is in child labour. The absolute number of children in child labour, and specifically in hazardous work, increased by eight million and 6.5 million respectively. Further, it states that 16.8 million more children were in child labour in the 5 to 11 age group in the latest estimates against the 2016 estimates. Of the total 160 million, 112 million children are in agriculture, three-quarters of them from the 5 to 11 age group.

Third, major recommendations. The report calls for extended social protection of children and the need to "address the heightened risk of child labour in growing crises, conflicts and disasters." It also highlights the necessity of "addressing gender norms and discrimination that increase child labour risks." Further, to address the impact of the pandemic, it calls for "sound policy choices and resources allocation decisions."

### In perspective

First, the grave reality in the report implies that the end of child labour is not possible in the near future. Second, the fact that the ILO, which was established in 1919, took nearly nine decades to frame a Convention on children in hazardous work, reflects that child labour was never an important issue for policymakers. Further, developed countries having lower levels of child labour is not praiseworthy; manufacturing units, supply chains - like the mining industry or textile industry - are enablers of child labour.

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## Ethiopia: The Tigray region is inching towards a major 'famine', states an IPC report

### In the news

On 10 June, the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) published a report on Ethiopia for the period May-September 2021. It reveals that nearly 5.5 million people in the conflict-ridden regions of Tigray, Afar and Amhara are facing exacerbated food insecurity. It says that approximately 350,000 people are in 'catastrophe' (Phase 5) or the last level, the highest number after the 2011 Somalian famine. Further, 3.1 million people are in the 'Crisis' category (IPC phase 3) and 2.1 million in the 'Emergency' category (IPC phase 4). Over 50 per cent of all the household in the northern regions of Tigray have inadequate food consumption, and nearly one-third of all houses have only one meal per day.

On 11 June, UN humanitarian aid Chief Mark Lowcock commented: "there is a famine in the Northern region of Ethiopia". On 13 June, the G7 leaders have called for an uninterrupted access of humanitarian aid to the northern region to mitigate the impacts of the crisis.

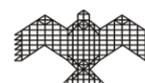
On 15 June, the Ethiopian envoy to the UN "vehemently denied" the assessment and stated that the data are collected in a "very botched" manner.

### Issues at large

First, the protracted war in Ethiopia and the conflict-induced displacement. The friction continues between the federal forces of the country and the Tigray People Liberation Front (TPLF) militants. Contrary to the government's claim that the war started in November 2020, ending by December, the fight continues. Thousands have crossed over to Sudan; many are internally displaced. According to the International Organization of Migration (IOM), most IDP camps are poorly facilitated and facing severe food shortages.

Second, hindrance in mobility and access to aid. The report observes that the roadblocks and other blockades placed by the Ethiopian and Eritrean troops have created significant difficulty for the humanitarian aid-workers and envoys to reach the conflict-hit region. The blockades also hinder the mobility of the common Tigrayans from reaching camps to receive aid and humanitarian assistance. The blockades have also resulted in difficulties in accessing medical care.

Third, continued disruption of agriculture and related activities. Approximately 80 per cent of the Tigrayan population is engaged in agricultural and pastoral activities for livelihood and for means of food. However, in 2020 the harvest was disrupted due to the conflict. The absence of agricultural and pastoral activities in the region has also added to the worsening famine.



Further, the unavailability of food products has increased the market dysfunctionality, and food remains inaccessible for the rural population.

### In perspective

It is unlikely that the report will make a significant impact in the region. The Ethiopian government has made it clear that the findings are not credible. An overall surge in the intensity of the famine is anticipated as the crisis is expected to worsen in the months ahead, causing further displacement, disruption of aid networks. Malnutrition and other health issues caused due to poor supply of nutrition are forecasted to rise and can escalate the death toll from the region.

Abiy Ahmed's administration will have to face fresh international condemnation and possibly sanctions if the situation deteriorates. This can also impact the outcomes of the general elections to be held on 21 June. Ethiopia being a key player in the Horn of Africa, the famine can have regional implications. A major migrant crisis is conceivable in the near future, causing further instability in the region.

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## Xinjiang: Amnesty International report on mass internment and torture

### In the news

On 10 June, Amnesty International released a report titled "Like we were enemies in a war" on China's mass internment, torture and persecution of Muslims in Xinjiang.

The report uses testimonies from 128 people, of which 55 were former detainees in the internment camps. The majority of the interviewees were Kazakhs, a minority were Uyghurs, and Kyrgyz or Han Chinese were even fewer. Gruesome illustrations have been included in the entire report demanding instant attention and fear from the readers.

The report finds that the Chinese state has been trying to 'erase Islam' by demolishing mosques and terrifying the practitioners of Islam.

### Issues at large

First, the increased concern over Xinjiang. This report is another card in the deck of reports covering the atrocities committed on the ethnic minorities in Xinjiang. The BBC covered a series of documentaries focusing on the experiences of a Uyghur woman in a detention camp. The Human Rights Watch released a report in April 2021 titled "Break Their Lineage, Break Their Roots." The Australian Strategic Policy Institute is working on 'The Xinjiang Data Project' that releases research reports and press investigations on the condition of ethnic minorities in Xinjiang.

Second, major findings of the AI report. The report assesses that the Chinese government is guilty of multiple crimes against humanity including torture and persecution. It also finds China guilty of violating human rights and basic liberties. Other reports have also covered similar accounts. Curtailment of economic, political, religious and social freedoms has been

highlighted in all these reports. According to these reports, the Muslims in Xinjiang are monitored through high-tech surveillance methods, are deprived of economic opportunities and are also forced to discard their religious identities. The reports create a larger picture of the Chinese oppression in Xinjiang.

Third, China's denial. Time and again, China has refuted these reports and called them a part of the western propaganda to destabilize the Chinese province. They have even claimed that the region is a 'wonderful land' and that all minorities in China enjoy equal rights and status. China has repeatedly asked external groups, organizations and countries to avoid interference in the internal matters of China.

### In perspective

First, the Chinese narrative. China has referred to these internment camps as "vocational education and training" camps which address the problems of extremism and terrorism existing in the region. Even schools for the children of detainees are created which "eradicate" the problematic thinking patterns from their minds and "correct" their behaviour to be better citizens. All these measures are a part of a larger effort by the Chinese government to forcibly assimilate the minorities into the Chinese culture. Suppressing their individual and cultural identities will help China in creating a unified country with lesser domestic opposition.

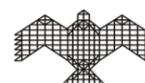
Second, the western obsession with Xinjiang. A major part of the fight against Chinese cruelty is led by western forces, especially by the US. European countries are excessively concerned with the forced labour and human rights violations in Xinjiang as their law also opposes such crimes. Although the liberal values and protection of human rights have been core to these western countries, there is also an ulterior motive. Xinjiang is a strategic region for trade and connectivity, the two most significant strengths of China.

## Northern Ireland: Belfast protest marks return of the Irish question

### In the news

On 10 June, the Greater Shankill Coalition group organized a protest in west Belfast against the Northern Ireland protocol over the Irish sea. According to reported news, the united Ireland banner, displayed on the nationalist side of the peace wall, was burned and more than 3,000 took part in the parade. The continuous riots and protests in Northern Ireland assumed centre stage at the G7 summit in Cornwall, the UK.

On 14 June, Prime Minister Boris Johnson in responding to a warning from French president Emmanuel Macron, said, Northern Ireland is part of "one great indivisible United Kingdom." At the summit, the US president, Joe Biden, urged the UK to settle its rows with the EU. The Canadian Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, also said he had raised the issue in his bilateral meeting with Boris Johnson, emphasizing Canada's role in forging the Good Friday Agreement.



### Issues at large

First, the significance of the Good Friday Agreement in maintaining peace in Northern Ireland. Ending the sectarian violence, the Good Friday Agreement established devolution of power in Northern Ireland from London and also reset Northern Ireland's external relations through an open land border. Internally, through a power-sharing method between both Catholic nationalists and Protestant unionists majority, the treaty offered dual citizenship to the population. Brokered by the Clinton administration, the US support in giving voice to the Irish Catholic minority led to episodic peace. But with the UK's severed ties with the EU, the conflict between the two groups has emerged while the majority of unionists are pushing against the strong call for unification.

Second, tensions in Northern Ireland as BREXIT fallouts. With post-BREXIT trade barriers, preserving peace in Northern Ireland without allowing the UK a back door into the EU's markets is a challenge. Tensions returned when the open border, as lettered in the Good Friday Agreement, was bypassed to harden the Irish sea border instead. This has created a sense of alienation among both the unionists and loyalists of an unequal arrangement as against the rest of the UK. While the causes for the protests are multifaceted, the ethno-religious identity has taken precedence as many unionists have come to rationalize the BREXIT a step to see them "not as British."

Third, intra-sectarian political differences as triggers for protest. Since March multiple protests have been organized to highlight loyalist opposition to the protocol. The month of April witnessed the peak of violence when rioters hijacked and torched a bus leaving 90 police officers injured. Clashes between the two communities have occurred near the 'peace wall,' built to prevent further sectarian conflict but it comes against the immediate backdrop of worsening relations between the unionist, loyalists, and the nationalist groups. It is but noteworthy that the violence has unfolded around working-class Unionist areas of Belfast and not yet a uniform sentiment across Northern Ireland.

### In perspective

First, the issue of overlapping conflicts. BREXIT has brought to the fore unresolved identity conflicts and staggered peacebuilding in Northern Ireland. Second, the issue of an alternate power-sharing agreement. Along with the BREXIT treaty, the UK could also be propelled to consider a power-sharing arrangement to continue preserving peace in Northern Ireland. For long, the UK has refused a suggested agreement like Switzerland that would remove all border checks and veterinary declarations for British food entering Northern Ireland or the EU. However, that could probably do little to address sentiments of sectarian hatred.

## Myanmar: The Aung San Suu Kyi trial begins

### In the news

On 14 June, the trial of Myanmar's ousted leader Aung San Suu Kyi, begun. The lawyers of Suu Kyi said they struggled to gain access to their client and expect that the trial will wrap up by 26 July.

It was initially only for five out of six charges; however, on 10 June, she was handed corruption charges against her over illegally accepting USD 600,000 in cash and approximately 11kg of gold which sums up her charges to seven in total. The hearing took place inside the capital Naypyidaw's council compound, where no media presence was allowed, and only heavy police presence was permitted to guard.

The leader of her legal team, Khin Maung Zaw, in a statement to Al Jazeera, said the latest accusation is "absurd" and "groundless." "She might have defects, but personal greed and corruption is not her traits," he said, calling her "incorruptible."

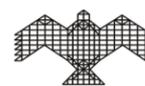
### Issues at large

First, the charges against Aung San Suu Kyi. They include corruption, violation of the official secrets act, illegally owning walkie talkies, breaching the country's telecommunication law, violating the natural disaster law, and inciting public unrest. In addition, the military looks at piling more cases on her to ensure that she would not participate in any election in the distant future.

Second, the charges against the NLD. The military has detained other members of the party, including President U Win Myint, cabinet ministers, chief ministers of various regions, opposition politicians, writers, and activists. The military has been accusing the NLD of vote fraud in the past and now have again accused them of weapons arsenal, stating that they are either grooming terrorists or training civilians on using them.

Third, the inadequate international responses. The UN deputy spokesman said: "We want her and all top members of her administration to be freed." In a similar statement the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, warned that more violence is on the way in Myanmar and urged the international community to hold the regime accountable. The G7 countries have pledged their "support to those advocating peacefully for a stable and inclusive democracy" and warned of pursuing "additional measures should they prove necessary," hinting at the possibility of additional sanctions. However, these responses have not made an impact within Myanmar so far.

Fourth, the regime's refusal to yield to international pressure. Despite multiple statements, warnings and sanctions, the regime has not yielded to any of them. Instead, it has increased its grip and expanded its actions to curb the return of democracy in Myanmar.



### In perspective

The international responses have not impacted the ground, and the regime continues to go ahead with its agenda. For the ousted leader Suu Kyi and the other senior members of the party, time is running out. Most of them are in their 70's; any long jail term, or the prolonging of military rule would impact the return of democracy and independent leadership. Perhaps, that is what the military is looking at - buying time to perpetuate its hold over Myanmar.

## Also, from around the world

By Apoorva Sudhakar and Abigail Miriam Fernandez

### Peace and Conflict from East and Southeast Asia

#### Taiwan: Twenty-eight Chinese military planes cross into ADIZ, says Ministry of Defense

On 15 June, the Ministry of Defense said that 28 Chinese military planes had flown into Taiwan's Air Defense Identification Zones (ADIZ); this included jets, bombers, and anti-submarine and early warning aircraft. Previously, the greatest such incursion was recorded on 25 April when 25 military planes flew into the ADIZ. Meanwhile, China has not responded to the Ministry's claims.

#### Hong Kong: Three protesters arrested on anniversary of 2019 protests

On 12 June, police arrested at least three protesters, including two teenagers, who were marking the second anniversary of the 2019 Hong Kong protests. The three were arrested on the grounds of "disorderly conduct and failing to produce proof of identity." Further, ten people were summoned for violation of restrictions on public gatherings. Meanwhile, on the same day, pro-democracy protester Agnes Chow was released from prison after seven months. Chow was expected to serve ten months in prison; however, reasons behind her early release have not yet been released.

#### Japan-South Korea: Tokyo calls off PM's meeting with President Moon Jae-in

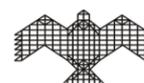
On 14 June, Yonhap News Agency reported that Japan had cancelled a meeting between Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga and South Korean President Moon Jae-in at the G7 summit. The development was speculated to be in response to Seoul's plans to conduct military drills near the disputed Dokdo Islands. However, on the same day, Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary rejected the news report terming it "one-sided." Following this, The Guardian reported that South Korea had begun its military drill near the Dokdo Islands on 15 June. To this, the Chief Cabinet Secretary said: "The drills are unacceptable and extremely regrettable. We have protested to the South Korean government and called for them to be halted."

#### The Philippines: Four Abu Sayyaf militants killed

On 13 June, four Abu Sayyaf militants, including a commander, were killed in the Sulu province. The commander, Injam Yadah, had been accused of kidnapping Filipinos and foreigners for ransom, and was also suspected to be a would-be suicide bomber. Yadah was also believed to be involved in the 2015 kidnapping of four Canadians who were later beheaded by the Abu Sayyaf.

#### The Philippines: Government halts scrapping of Visiting Forces Agreement

On 14 June, the Foreign Minister announced suspending the scrapping of the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) with the US for six more months. The scrapping was previously suspended twice after the agreement was due to expire in August 2020. The decision comes amid maritime tensions with China. Meanwhile, the Pentagon welcomed the move; CNN quoted the Pentagon spokesperson: "We value the Philippines as an equal, sovereign partner in our bilateral alliance."



Our partnership contributes not only to the security of our two nations, but also strengthens the rules-based order that benefits all nations in the Indo-Pacific."

### Myanmar: Instability continues

On 15 June, Voice of America reported that the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights had raised concerns over the spread of armed conflict against the military across the country. The High Commissioner said the military was increasing its troop presence in Kayah State, Chin State and Kachin State which have ethnic and religious minority groups. Further, VOA quoted the High Commissioner's spokesperson: "Meanwhile, sweeping arrests of activists, journalists and opponents of the regime have continued across the country, with credible sources indicating that at least 4,804 people remain in arbitrary detention. The high commissioner is deeply troubled by reports of detainees being tortured, and of collective punishment of family members of activists."

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### Peace and Conflict from South Asia

#### India: NSCN-IM says KSA must study the KAATC issue from a 'historical perspective'

On 14 June, the NSCN-IM stated that the Karbi Students' Association (KSA) is "befooling the people by being ignorant of their roots, blinded by the proposed KAATC syndrome." The statement read: "Historical references are available in plenty about the bonafide status of the Rengma Nagas, or for that matter about the Karbis in the socio-political melee of Assam history." This statement was made in response to the difference in the status of the Rengma Nagas in Assam with the proposed KAATC.

#### Pakistan: Islamabad will not take responsibility if blamed for deteriorating Afghan peace, says FM Qureshi

On 14 June, Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi said that Pakistan would not take responsibility if it was blamed for any deterioration in the Afghan peace process. He said: "If the objective of going to Washington is starting a new blame game and holding Pakistan responsible for all the ills [in Afghanistan] and the lack of progress in the [peace] process, then it will not help," adding, "It is a shared responsibility and nobody is going to buy it anymore that if things go wrong [then] Pakistan is responsible. We will not take responsibility," arguing that Pakistan was "honest and sincere" in building a peace process in Afghanistan.

#### Pakistan: Baloch fishermen protest against the grant of fishing rights to Chinese trawlers

On 16 June, Dawn reported that hundreds of fishermen, political workers and members of civil society held a protest against the federal government for granting Chinese trawlers fishing rights in Gwadar by issuing them licences. The leader of Gwadar's fishermen said, that the fishermen in Gwadar are already facing violation of fishing limits by Sindh's fishing trawlers and that this move by the federal government has deprived the fishermen of Gwadar their livelihood.

### **Afghanistan: NATO to continue support to Afghans, says Biden**

On 14 June, President Joe Biden, following the NATO leaders' summit, said: "there was a strong consensus in the room, among the leaders, in that meeting, on Afghanistan," stating that the alliance will continue its support to Afghans after the withdrawal of international troops from the country. Meanwhile, NATO leaders in a statement said: "We continue to support the ongoing Afghan-owned and Afghan-led peace process, and call on all stakeholders to help Afghanistan foster a lasting inclusive political settlement that puts an end to violence; safeguards the human rights of Afghans, particularly women, children, and minorities; upholds the rule of law, and ensures that Afghanistan never again serves as a safe haven for terrorists."

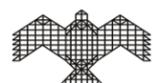
### **Afghanistan: The US can rely on Turkey once troops leave Afghanistan, says Erdogan**

On 13 June, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan stated that Turkey would be the "only reliable" country left to stabilize Afghanistan after the US pulls out its troops. He said: "America is preparing to leave Afghanistan soon, and from the moment they leave, the only reliable country to maintain the process over there is obviously Turkey," adding that Turkish officials have informed their American counterparts about Ankara's plans in Afghanistan after the US troop withdrawal. The statement comes as Turkey reportedly stated that it has prepared to keep troops in Afghanistan to protect Kabul airport.

### **Afghanistan: The US to 'Keep Pressure' on Daesh, Al Qaeda in Afghanistan, says head of US Central Command**

On 13 June, the head of US Central Command, Gen Kenneth McKenzie stated: "One thing I probably need to emphasize is we will still do everything we can to keep pressure on Daesh and Al Qaeda, from our over-the-horizon locations," adding, "We still intend to support the Afghan military from just over the horizon. We're still going to support them with funding." Meanwhile, US Defence Secretary Lloyd J. Austin said that the US military has begun conducting combat operations and surveillance in Afghanistan from outside the country.

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## Peace and Conflict from Central Asia, Middle East and Africa

### **Armenia-Azerbaijan: Armenian detainees returned in exchange for landmine maps**

On 12 June, Eurasianet quoted a statement from Azerbaijan's Ministry of Defense: "[I]n exchange for providing Azerbaijan with maps of 97,000 anti-tank and anti-personnel mines in the Aghdam region, 15 detained Armenians were handed over to Armenia on the Azerbaijani-Georgian border with the participation of Georgian representatives." The landmines were reportedly laid by Armenian forces in areas that Azerbaijan "retook" in 2020. The move is seen as a diplomatic breakthrough; the Armenian acting Prime Minister on Facebook wrote: "I note that we did not exchange the detainees for the landmine maps, but responded to Azerbaijan's step with [our own] constructive step."

### **Israel: Military conducts airstrikes in Gaza Strip in response to Hamas' incendiary balloons**

On 16 June, the Israeli military announced that it carried out airstrikes in response to incendiary balloons sent by Hamas into southern Israel. The New York Times quoted the military saying it "struck military compounds belonging to the Hamas terror organization, which were used as facilities and meeting sites for terror operatives in Hamas' Khan Yunis and Gaza Brigades." No casualties were reported. Prior to this, on 15 June, the newly-formed Israeli government, dismissing warnings from Hamas and objection from Arab parties, "permitted a far-right Jewish march to pass through Palestinian areas of Jerusalem." Meanwhile, on 10 June, an Israeli court postponed the hearing of a case of two Palestinian families at the risk of facing forced displacement from "the Batn al-Hawa area in the occupied East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Silwan." On the day, the families' supporters protested outside the court leading to the arrest of three people.

### **Syria: Terrorist group carries out 38 attacks in Idlib**

On 15 June, ANI quoted the deputy head of the Russian Defense Ministry's Center for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in Syria: "Thirty-eight shelling attacks from the positions of the Jabhat al-Nusra terrorist group were registered in the Idlib de-escalation zone in the provinces of Idlib (23 attacks), Latakia (6), Aleppo (3) and Hama (6)." The Jabhat al-Nusra is a banned organization in Russia. However, the Syrian data records only 31 attacks.

### **Syria: Observatory reports 18 deaths from shelling in Afrin**

On 12 June, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said that at least 18 people were killed and 23 injured in shelling in Afrin city, which is controlled by Turkish-backed rebels. The shelling hit a hospital leading to the death of "a doctor, three hospital staff, two women and two children." The Observatory said the rebel commander was also killed in the shelling, which was fired from Aleppo province.

### **Yemen: One child dies every five minutes, says Public Health Ministry**

On 14 June, the spokesperson for the Ministry of Public Health and Population said that at least one child dies every five minutes in Yemen owing to the dire healthcare system. According to PressTV, he claimed that the military campaign of the Saudi Arabia-led coalition had caused the "destruction or partial damage to 527 hospitals." Further, he said 2.6 million children face malnutrition, and over 3,000 Yemeni children have congenital heart defects at birth. Apart from children, he also mentioned that every year 8,000 women die and "1.5 million people are grappling with chronic diseases, of whom 32,000 need to travel abroad to receive treatment. Moreover, 5,000 patients with renal diseases require kidney transplantation, and the closure of Sana'a airport threatens their lives."

### Yemen: Bodies of 25 migrants recovered by local fishermen

On 14 June, Al Jazeera cited AFP news and reported that local fishermen had recovered 25 bodies off the Yemen coast after a boat carrying nearly 200 people overturned; details of the rest of the passengers remain unknown. Local fishermen speculated that the 25 migrants who seemed to have African origins were travelling to Yemen to enter the Gulf states. Meanwhile, the International Organization for Migration said it was trying to trace the entire details of the incident.

### The GERD: Arab League calls on UNSC to resolve the dispute; Ethiopia rejects decision

On 15 June, the Arab League foreign ministers met in Qatar to discuss the dispute between Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, also known as the Nile Dam. The Egyptian Foreign Minister briefed the ministers that Cairo sought a diplomatic solution to the dispute. Following the meeting, the head of the Arab League and the Qatar Foreign Minister said that the League would call on the UNSC to resolve the issue. Meanwhile, Ethiopia rejected the decision; Al Jazeera quoted the Foreign Minister: "The Arab League of States should know that utilization of the Nile waters is also an existential matter for Ethiopia...Ethiopia is exercising its legitimate right to use its water resources in full respect of international law and the principle of causing no significant harm."

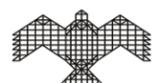
### Nigeria: Gunmen kill more than 90 in Zamfara State

On 12 June, Deutsche Welle reported that gunmen had killed over 90 people in the Zamfara State on 11 June. Earlier on the day of the attack, Zamfara's Governor was quoted: "I am calling on the people of the state to defend themselves if the bandits attack them. My government has approved that whenever the bandits attack you, do not wait for the security personnel to come to your rescue. You should rise and protect yourselves." The attack comes days after 88 people were killed by gunmen in the first week of June.

### Somalia: Suicide attack kills 15; al Shabaab claims attack

On 15 June, a suicide attack killed 15 army recruits in a military training camp in the capital, Mogadishu. An army officer said that the bomber, in disguise, had queued up with the recruits outside the camp. He said the casualties could be higher. Meanwhile, al Shabaab claimed the attack and termed it their deadliest attack in 18 months.

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## Peace and Conflict from Europe and the Americas

### **Serbia-Kosovo: Normalization talks fail to reach consensus**

On 15 June, the leaders of Serbia and Kosovo failed to make progress towards normalizing relations between the two Balkan neighbours during their first round of talks in Brussels. The talks resumed almost a year after talks broke down between the two sides. Following the talks, the two leaders gave differing accounts of the meeting; however, both acknowledged the lack of progress. Meanwhile, in a joint statement, the US and EU said: "We intend to further strengthen our joint engagement in the Western Balkans, including through the EU-facilitated dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina on normalization of their relations, and by supporting key reforms for EU integration."

### **Ukraine: Pentagon announces a new package of USD 150 million in military assistance**

On 10 June, the Pentagon announced a new package of USD 150 million in military assistance for Ukraine. This latest tranche of assistance will include counter-artillery radar, electronic warfare equipment and counter-drone technology. Previously, in March 2021, the Pentagon announced a USD 125 million package, which included armed Mark VI patrol boats. Further, the Department of Defence announced that the US military would allocate assistance for Ukraine before the end of the US government's fiscal year in September.

### **Switzerland: Voters reject government's key climate change measures**

On 13 June, voters rejected the government's key measures on fighting climate change, with 51.6 per cent opposing it in a nationwide referendum. The proposal including a new law intended to help the country meet its goal for cutting carbon emissions under the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, which is to cut greenhouse gases to half their 1990 levels by 2030, using a combination of more renewables and taxes on fossil fuels. Opponents to the proposal highlighted that Switzerland is responsible for only 0.1 per cent of global emissions and expressed doubts that such policies would help the environment.

### **Colombia: Protest leaders decide to suspend anti-government marches**

On 15 June, protest leaders said that they will suspend anti-government marches in the country to prevent more deaths of protesters by the police and to slow down coronavirus spread. The president of the Central Union of Workers said: "This does not mean that social mobilization will stop in Colombia," adding, "mobilization will continue because the causes that led to it are still unattended." Meanwhile, the protest leaders stated that since the government has not met most of their petitions, they are changing their strategy, which will focus on meeting with civil society organizations to draft legislation that will be presented to Colombia's congress in July, following a large march to Bogota.

### Peru: Pedro Castillo claims victory ahead of the official result

On 15 June, leftist candidate Pedro Castillo claimed victory after the final votes were counted from Peru's presidential election. Although the result of the elections has not been formally announced by electoral authorities, Castillo via Twitter stated, "A new time has begun," alongside a picture of himself with the word 'President.' Meanwhile, his opponent, right-wing candidate Keiko Fujimori, disputed the outcome, saying that she would keep fighting and "defend Peru's democracy," adding, "We are only asking for a clean vote and for all the irregularities to be checked. We are not going to give up."

### The US: Federal court orders temporarily block on Biden administration's oil and gas lease pause

On 15 June, a federal court temporarily blocked the Biden administration's pause on oil and gas leasing. The order granted a preliminary injunction to 13 states that previously sued President Joe Biden and the Interior Department over the freeze on new drilling auctions. Meanwhile, the Interior Department said it would comply with the ruling. However, this order comes as a blow to one of the Biden administration's key actions to address climate change.

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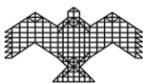
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### About NIAS-International Peace Research Initiative (IPRI)

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.

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### 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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