

# Conflict Weekly

An initiative by NIAS-IPRI and KAS India Office

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

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

consequence of personal bonds of marriage and shared partnership in struggle, now cemented through second generational ties."

The report also highlights the issue of narcotics in Afghanistan which continues to remain the Taliban's largest single source of income, Taliban's leadership structure, the 2020 fighting season and expectations for 2021, the challenges posed by Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan (ISIL-K) and other foreign fighters in Afghanistan.

### Issues at large

First, the continuing Taliban- al-Qaida nexus despite the US-Taliban deal. The report finds that al-Qaida continues to operate under the Taliban umbrella, with a significant part of its leadership based in the border region of Afghanistan and Pakistan. This nexus continues despite the US-Taliban deal signed in 2020, which called for severing ties with the group. The report also contradicts President Biden's remarks that al-Qaida's presence in Afghanistan has been "greatly degraded."

Second, the status of the Taliban. The report claims that despite internal tensions, the group has remained outwardly unified as the Taliban Leadership Council (Quetta Shura) continues to pursue a diplomatic policy and military strategy to gain leverage for negotiations and raise their international profile. Meanwhile, the primary sources of Taliban financing remain criminal activities.

Third, the continuing trend of violence. The report assesses that the "security situation in Afghanistan remains as tense and challenging as at any time in recent history," adding, "many interlocutors believe that the Taliban have used the 2020 fighting season to further strengthen strangleholds around several provincial capitals, seeking to shape future military operations when levels of departing foreign troops are no longer able to effectively respond." However, the Taliban in most instances has denied responsibility for this surge in violence.

Fourth, the threat of ISIL-K and other foreign fighters in Afghanistan. The report highlights the lingering presence of the ISIL-K in parts of Afghanistan and the threat it has posed in the last year. Similarly, although the Taliban has denied the presence of foreign terrorist fighters in Afghanistan, several groups continue to operate in the country under the protection of the Taliban.

### In perspective

First, the Taliban's unkept promise and the US's claims. The Taliban has continued to maintain ties with al-Qaida and other militant groups, despite the pressure to sever ties. Conversely, the Biden administration has claimed that the threat of al-Qaida is diminished. However, reports such as these and UN Security Council (UNSC) Watchdog Group on al-Qaida, ISIL prove otherwise.

Second, the Taliban's links with militant groups. With the withdrawal of foreign troops from the country, the Taliban would want to consolidate itself; therefore, they would need all the allies, including al-Qaida, other militant groups, the drug mafia and others with a vested interest in Afghanistan.

Third, the threat of militant groups. Afghanistan is moving towards becoming a safe haven for militant groups. Although the Taliban has some control over the spread, the instability caused by the stalled negotiations and violence makes the environment suitable for such groups, which automatically pose a threat.

## Denmark: New legislation to relocate refugees outside Europe

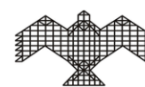
### In the news

On 3 June, Denmark passed a law enabling it to process asylum seekers outside Europe. Voted in favour by 70 lawmakers, the new law now establishes a system where an asylum-seeker will need to apply in person at the Danish border and then be flown outside Europe to be hosted in a third country. If their application is successful, they would be granted refugee status and be allowed to live in the host country, but not in Denmark. Knowing that one will be sent back, "we hope that people will stop seeking asylum in Denmark," said Rasmus Stoklund, the Social Democrat government party's immigration speaker to broadcaster DR.

On 5 June, a similar anti-refugee measure was adopted by Greece where it used high-tech "sound cannons" to stop crossovers from Turkey. Both the law and the measure have been criticized by the European Commission wherein the commission spokesperson said: "external processing of asylum claims raises fundamental questions about both access to asylum procedures" and equal protection.

### Issues at large

First, externalizing the burden of hosting refugees. At a time when Denmark is receiving the lowest number of refugees in Europe, the new law aims at conceptualizing aid and welfare schemes to contain the refugee influx within the borders of the African countries. The vision to externalize the burden of hosting refugees to another host country started with a report in 2002 by the Danish Centre for Human Rights and the European Commission. It became functional when Denmark's immigration minister, Mattias Tesfaye, whose father was an Ethiopian immigrant, visited Rwanda in April to sign agreements on asylum matters. Denmark, along with Austria, has pledged support for an UN-operated refugee camp in Rwanda, set up to receive refugees stuck in Libya. The Danish media has reported the government negotiating with Tunisia, Ethiopia, Egypt and Eritrea to set up refugee centres on Denmark's behalf.



Second, growing political reluctance, social paranoia and fractures within the EU towards migrants. Since the 2015 refugee crisis, Denmark, Spain and Italy have adopted restrictive policies with an ethnonational approach in dealing with immigration. With welfare dualism such as reducing social benefits for new residents, Denmark revoked the residence permits for 94 Syrian refugees on the ground that the security situation around Damascus has improved for them to return. While the eastern European countries like Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic had hardened their border police to stop the influx, the West European countries have attempted to integrate the refugees through housing settlements. However, across Europe, the inflow of refugees and along with it a scope for multiculturalism has stymied as political leaders exhibit anti-immigration attitudes. Complete sealing off the borders to "irregular" migrants or sending troops to push back refugees are compounded by equal public suspicion towards anyone "non-Western."

Third, Denmark and the EU's effort at the uniform rule for refugees. The Danish law is incompatible with the EU international law that stresses individualism and universal human rights and further complicates its efforts to have a uniform regulation for refugees. Along with raising the bar for asylum seekers, the EU has remained divided when different countries use different policy instruments to deal with the same crisis. In 2020, the UK considered building asylum processing centres on Ascension Island, a remote territory in the Atlantic Ocean. Merkel's Germany has famously "managed this" crisis through its nationwide housing policy and at the same time became the first EU country to lift its ban on deportation to Syria. France, Spain and Italy have exhibited strong anti-immigrant sentiments as they continue to receive most refugees. The result has been to think of a deal with Turkey which would again externalize the refugee burden. The host countries battle upholding their liberal ethos with hardening internal anti-migration and anti-refugee attitudes causing social exclusion, documentation hurdles, subsidiary protection and restrictive free travel within the EU.

#### In perspective

Denmark's law sets a precedent of obvious discrimination but the language is now spoken by both the extreme left and the right ideology-based political parties. Denmark seeks to solve the problem of internal integration by looking outside. The new law will likely deepen the boundaries favouring segregation and apathy towards non-West multiculturalism. As a region, the EU could rethink its integration policies beyond housing and as identity challenges that will now be further complicated with issuing of multiple identity cards for a single refugee.

## Burkina Faso: Another massacre in Africa

### In the news

On 7 June, BBC cited AFP and reported that at least 160 people had been killed in a spate of attacks in northern Burkina Faso on 5 June; armed men had burned the local market and homes. According to AFP, 160 bodies had been recovered from three mass graves by local communities on 6 June. Meanwhile, Aljazeera reported that the death toll included seven children.

On 7 June, a statement from the African Union Commission Chairperson read that he "expresses his indignation and condemnation at this barbarity and calls once again for a prompt and vigorous regional and international response against terrorists in Burkina Faso and throughout the Sahel region."

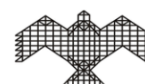
On 5 June, the UN Secretary-General spokesperson released a statement: "The Secretary-General is outraged by the killing, early today, of over a hundred civilians, including seven children, in an attack by unidentified assailants on a village...He strongly condemns the heinous attack and underscores the urgent need for the international community to redouble support to the member states in the fight against violent extremism and its unacceptable human toll."

### Issues at large

First, the threat of violence in Burkina Faso. According to the BBC report, the latest attack comes less than a month after 30 people were killed in eastern Burkina Faso. The UNOCHA's situation report on Burkina Faso says that more than a million people have been displaced due to violence since 2019. Further, the report links violence to the presence of non-state armed groups in the northern and eastern parts of the country.

Second, the perpetrators. As of 8 June, no group has claimed responsibility for the attack. Several media reports, however, link terrorist organizations such as the al Qaeda and Islamic State to the attacks. Apart from terrorist groups, armed bandits operate in the region for multiple reasons including the need to control access to resources. In 2020, the UN outlined a growing link between the terrorists, organized crime and intercommunal forces owing to "the absence of the State in peripheral areas."

Third, the larger instability in the Sahel region. The region has been vulnerable to political instability, armed groups and Islamist militants; three neighbouring countries - Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger - are hotspots of the same. For example, the attack in Burkina Faso shares similarities with the massacre of 137 people in Niger in March when gunmen had raided three villages. On the other hand, in May, Mali witnessed its second military coup in less than 10 months. A letter written to the AU Commission chairperson by activists, writers, and regional institutions, mentions that 2440 civilians had lost their lives in 2020 alone due to the instability and violence.



Fourth, failure of regional and international response. The African Union has condemned all instances of violence and called for a stronger fight against militancy and extremism. However, no concrete plan has been followed up to address the situation. Meanwhile, France had intervened in the Sahel region in 2013 in order to address the militancy. However, in light of the latest coup in Mali, France announced the suspension of a joint military operation with the country.

#### In perspective

First, the scale of the attack signifies that the regional security situation in the Sahel is undergoing an unprecedented deterioration. France's suspension of the joint military operation could also become a contributing factor to further instability in the region. Second, if the attacks have indeed been carried out by Islamist militants, then it signifies an expansion of extremism in the region. Therefore, the responsibility to address the root causes of the same lies with the governments of countries most affected.

## The Arctic: New report on accelerated melt and its consequences

#### In the news

On 4 June, a new study titled "Faster decline and higher variability in the sea ice thickness of the marginal Arctic seas when accounting for dynamic snow cover" was published by researchers in the reputed journal the Cryosphere. Using computer models to produce snow cover estimates from 2002-2018, the study analyzed the declining snow depth for the first time and concluded that the Arctic sea ice is melting twice as fast as previously estimated.

The research combined the results obtained by SnowModel-LG and satellite data and found that the rate of decline of sea ice thickness in three Arctic seas- Laptev, Kara and Chukchi, increased by 70, 98 and 110 per cent respectively in the considered time period.

#### Issues at large

First, the intersection of the Arctic and the world climate processes. Environmentally unsustainable actions impact the Arctic, and in turn, changes in the region will influence other parts of the globe. Polar vortex, changes in monsoon patterns in the Indian subcontinent, increase in sea level are some of the manifestations of this intersection.

Second, concerns over the Arctic melt. The region is certainly experiencing disproportionate effects of climate change, warming three times faster than the global average. Over the years, scientists have observed a decrease in the extent of sea ice, with a mere two per cent of the oldest ice covers existing, as opposed to 20 per cent in the 1980s. Older and thicker ice is being replaced by younger and thinner ice, a common trend now in the Arctic. The Climate Change Impact Assessment, a landmark study, reported a decreasing albedo, which implies more absorption of solar radiation. Extreme weather conditions, increased heat, ocean acidification,

coastal erosion, flooding, wildfires, unusual lightning and precipitation are some of the serious signs of climate change being witnessed.

Third, Arctic governance. A greater aspect of the governance in the region is focused on climate change and the effects the region is facing. Most institutions in the Arctic are founded based on scientific cooperation to frame policies to mitigate climate change and support adaptation. There is increasing global attention on the regional developments and thus the participation of non-Arctic European countries and Asian countries like India, China, Japan, South Korea and Singapore.

#### In perspective

First, despite some pathbreaking studies on the Arctic, actions being taken by the stakeholders are not sufficient. Second, indigenous knowledge, experiences and perspectives should be taken into consideration and translated into tangible actions. Third, unsustainable economic activities by the Arctic countries themselves should be reconsidered, given the threats associated. Fourth, the consequences of a rapidly melting Arctic are multi-layered. There is a clear, profound impact on the ecology, politics, economics and society of the region. In this regard, studies such as the above are a welcome move and a step in the right direction. lies with the governments of countries most affected.

## Afghanistan: Trilateral meeting highlights China's push for regional peace

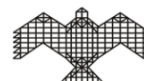
#### In the news

On 3 June, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, Afghan Foreign Minister Mohammad Haneef Atmar and Pakistani Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi held the fourth China-sponsored trilateral meeting virtually.

A joint statement issued after the trilateral talks stated: "The three sides underlined the importance of a peaceful resolution to the conflict in Afghanistan and called on all parties for an early declaration of a comprehensive ceasefire and an end to the senseless violence, to create the conditions needed for negotiation between the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the Taliban."

#### Issues at large

First, a brief on the trilateral meeting. It started in December 2017 with Beijing making a clear statement that it wants to include Islamabad and Kabul on the Belt and Road Initiative. In 2018, the three sides introduced the term "Afghan-led and Afghan-owned." Three parties signed the Memorandum of Understanding on Counter-Terrorism. In 2019, a joint press release said: "The three sides committed to promote measures to counter terrorists' logistical capabilities including terror-financing, recruitment and training." In July 2020, the three sides agreed to prevent discrimination and stigma pertaining to allegations on China and support the World



Health Organization's leading role in coordinating global COVID-19 response. The idea of inclusion of Kabul in BRI has changed the importance of peace in the region.

Second, stability in Afghanistan and the BRI concerns. To expand the BRI, regional stability and peace in Afghanistan are important. Therefore, China had to intervene to maintain peace to ensure Kabul joins the BRI. Apart from holding peace talks, China has assisted with humanitarian aid, food aid and exporting vaccines to war-torn countries.

Third, Afghanistan and China. Kabul has welcomed Chinese involvement. The Afghan government realizes the importance of investment in the region and thus appreciate any foreign support. The project offers much-needed infrastructure development to the nation.

#### In perspective

China believes in non-interference in internal conflicts of other nations. However, in this case, Beijing is breaking this pattern. It sees Afghanistan as an opportunity. To extend the BRI project, China needs a peaceful Afghanistan. Therefore, China has initiated its operations through dialogue. For Pakistan, China's involvement is a welcome step, as it would bring Islamabad and Beijing closer on the regional issue. For Afghanistan, external investments in the post-withdrawal period is even more important.



## Also, from around the world

By Apoorva Sudhakar and Abigail Miriam Fernandez

### Peace and Conflict from East and Southeast Asia

#### North Korea: Serious humanitarian crisis, says a report

On 8 June, The Korea Herald referred to a briefing by the Assessment Capacities Project (ACAPS) which said that North Korea is on the verge of a humanitarian crisis owing to food insecurity and limited healthcare. The report further says that the problems have been aggravated due to sanctions. The ACAPS says: "Chronic food insecurity and limited access to basic services, such as healthcare and clean water, have left more than 10 million people in need of humanitarian assistance."

#### South Korea: District court rejects petition on wartime labour against Japanese firms

On 7 June, a district court dismissed a lawsuit filed by 85 farmers and their relatives who claimed that they were victims of forced labour for Japan during the Second World War. The petition was filed in 2015 against 16 Japanese firms with a demand for compensation of USD 90,000 dollars each. Meanwhile, the Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary said that their government would monitor the developments. Japan maintains that a 1965 agreement had put an end to the right to claim compensation.

#### Japan: House of Representatives adopts resolution condemning Myanmar coup

On 8 June, the Lower House adopted a resolution condemning Myanmar's military coup; the resolution demanded the Japanese government utilize diplomatic resources to ensure the restoration of democracy in Myanmar. The resolution terms the coup an "act to trample on efforts and expectations for democratization." Further, the resolution expressed solidarity with the Myanmar people and highlighted the military crackdown on civilians, which has led to the death of over 800 people. The resolution maintained that the military junta is not justifiable.

#### Myanmar: ASEAN ministers review progress regarding political dialogue

On 7 June, ASEAN foreign ministers expressed disappointment over the "very slow" progress towards a political dialogue in Myanmar. The ministers outlined ASEAN's role and investments in Myanmar. Reuters quoted the Singaporean saying that the regional bloc's efforts "only makes sense if there is a genuine desire within Myanmar itself for genuine dialogue and negotiations and reconciliation...To be honest with you, we are disappointed at the slow – very, very slow progress." Meanwhile, the Malaysian Foreign Minister opined that the ASEAN should act quicker "to reduce tensions and stop violence."

---



## Peace and Conflict from South Asia

### **India: Farmers gather again**

On 6 June, many farmers from Haryana's Ambala reached the farmer unions' protest site at the Singhu border in New Delhi. The protest was led by the Bharatiya Kisan Union (Charuni). Meanwhile, on 7 June, the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) had called for a four-hour sit-in outside police stations across Haryana.

### **India: Position on Palestine not new, abstained on previous occasions also, says MEA**

On 3 June, the Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson clarified that India's position to abstain at the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) during the resolution to probe Gaza violence was not new. The spokesperson said: "Palestine wrote similar letters to all countries who abstained. The position that we took is not a new position. And we have abstained on previous occasions. I think that explains our position quite clearly and addresses these questions." Previously, the Palestinian foreign minister, in a letter to the Indian Foreign Minister said: "New Delhi's abstention at the UNHRC stifles the important work of... advancing human rights for all peoples, including those of the Palestinian people."

### **Sri Lanka: Environmentalist warns of dangers from the burning ship**

On 6 June, experts recovered the data recorder belonging to a fire-ravaged ship carrying chemicals which is slowly sinking off Colombo. Meanwhile, environmentalists have warned that there is the potential for "a terrible environmental disaster" as hazardous goods, plastics, chemicals and oil could be released into the water and destroy marine ecological systems. Further, the Sri Lankan navy spokesperson said: "Now our concern is about any oil spill. We are closely monitoring this and so far we have not detected any spill. It will be devastating if that happens, but we are taking all precautions."

### **Bangladesh: Rohingya feel trapped, fear monsoons, says HRW**

On 7 June, a Human Rights Watch report said that Rohingya refugees who were moved to Bhasan Char fear they will be exposed to terrible conditions during the upcoming monsoon season. Further, refugees on the island reported inadequate health care and education, onerous movement restrictions, food shortages, a lack of livelihood opportunities, and abuses by security forces. However, the Bangladesh government stated that it had "ensured adequate supply of food along with proper sanitation and medical facilities for Rohingyas on Bhasan Char."

### **India-Bangladesh: BSF-BGB hold a conference to discuss border issues**

On 7 June, the border coordination conference between Inspectors Generals of Border Security Force (BSF) and Region Commanders of the Border Guards of Bangladesh (BGB) began virtually. During the meeting, border issues including trans-border crimes, smuggling of contraband articles and cattle, Indian Insurgent Groups activities from Bangladesh side, FICN etc, the construction of Single Row Fence (SRF) in the State of Tripura & other pending developmental works were discussed. The conference is scheduled to continue till 10 June.

### **Pakistan: 55 killed, 150 injured in train collision in Sindh**

On 7 June, at least 55 people were killed and 150 injured after a train collision in Sindh's Ghotki district; a passenger train headed to Sargodha derailed and led to a collision with a train coming from Rawalpindi. The Minister of Railways said he, along with senior officials under him, took responsibility for the train accident in Ghotki. The Minister said: "This track is stuck like a bone in our throat. We can neither eat it nor throw it out. I admit that safety of passengers at this track is compromised." However, he added that the corrupt officials who did nothing in the last 25-30 years were also responsible for the accident.

### **Pakistan: FATF APG moves Pakistan from enhanced (expedited) to enhanced follow-up**

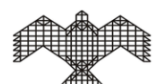
On 2 June, the Asia Pacific Group (APG) released the second Enhanced Expedited Follow-Up Report of Pakistan in which it stated "Overall, Pakistan has made notable progress in addressing the technical compliance deficiencies identified in its Mutual Evaluation Report (MER) and has been re-rated on 22 recommendations," adding, "Pakistan will move from enhanced (expedited) to enhanced follow-up, and will continue to report back to the APG on progress to strengthen its implementation of anti-money laundering and combating financing terror (AML/CFT) measures."

### **Pakistan: NSA Sullivan confirms the US had intel, military talks with Islamabad**

On 7 June, US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan said: "We have had constructive discussions in the military, intelligence, and diplomatic channels with Pakistan about the future of America's capabilities to ensure that Afghanistan never again becomes a base from which al Qaeda or Daesh or any other terrorist group can attack the United States." This statement comes as Pakistani officials reject reports on Pakistan's willingness to allow US bases on its soil to maintain counterterrorism capabilities in Afghanistan.

### **Afghanistan: NATO to continue support post-withdrawal**

On 7 June, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg reiterating that they are looking into ways "to preserve our hard-won gains" in Afghanistan as the withdrawal of troops begins. He said: "We will also look into how we can provide out-of-country training to train the Afghan forces, especially their special operation forces outside Afghanistan." Meanwhile, The New York Times reported that the CIA is seeking ways to maintain its intelligence-gathering, war-fighting and counterterrorism operations in Afghanistan while warning of the "ever-growing risks" of a Taliban takeover.



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

### **Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan: Bishkek accuses Dushanbe of border agreement violation**

On 4 June, the Kyrgyz State Committee for National Security said that Tajikistan had violated agreements regarding border delimitation and demarcation. Kyrgyzstan accused the Tajik military personnel of placing a container 1,000 metres inside the Kyrgyz territory, along a disputed border area on 4 June. However, Tajikistan rejected the claim and said that a border guard unit had moved to an area in line with the agreement.

### **Iraq: Interior Ministry announces detention of 964 wanted terrorists; fire destroys Yazidi refugee camp**

On 5 June, Middle East Monitor cited Anadolu Agency which reported on the Interior Minister's announcement on 4 June that 964 wanted terrorists had been detained in a week. The Ministry said that an operation was conducted for the same between 20 May and 3 July. Meanwhile, on 4 June, the Daily Sabah referred to a state news agency which reported that a massive fire had destroyed a Yazidi refugee camp in an area under the Kurdistan Regional Government in Duhok province. The provincial spokesperson said that six people were injured and 400 tents had been destroyed in the fire.

### **Syria: Chemical weapons were used in 17 instances, says OPCW**

On 3 June, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) chief conveyed to the UNSC that chemical weapons were used at least in 17 instances in Syria, despite the country joining the chemical weapons convention in 2013. By August 2014, the Syrian President had claimed that the country had destroyed all its chemical weapons. Aljazeera quoted the UK's ambassador to the UN: "There are 20 unresolved issues in Syria's initial chemical weapons declaration, which is deeply concerning...The UN and the OPCW have attributed eight chemical weapons attacks to the Syrian regime. It's clear that the regime retains a chemical weapons capability and the willingness to use it."

### **Yemen: US commander calls on Houthis to join the negotiating table**

On 7 June, Arab News reported that the commander of the US Central Command had called on the Houthis to do away with their pride and come to the negotiating table with the Saudi Arabia-led coalition and the government. Arab News quoted the commander: "We're at a point in the crisis in Yemen where I'm personally convinced that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia seeks a responsible political end to the conflict. I'm convinced they're willing to take significant steps to make that happen. Unfortunately, I don't believe the Houthis are ready to seize the moment." He also urged the Houthis to give up their desire for a military solution to the conflict.

### **Nigeria: Bandits kill 88 people in Kebbi state**

On 5 June, the police told Premium Times that bandits had killed 88 people in Kebbi state in a series of attacks on communities living along the state's borders with Zamfara and Niger states. The police spokesperson said that the affected communities are hard to access from the Kebbi state and maintained that the bandits would have come from Zamfara and Niger states. Following the attack, several people fled the area; therefore, many people are yet to be accounted for.

### **Mali: Assimi Goita sworn in as interim President**

On 7 June, military commander Colonel Assimi Goita was sworn in as the interim President; he vowed to preserve democratic values and uphold the republican regime. Al Jazeera reported that usual heads of state were represented by junior diplomats. The reporter said: "It is a form of sanction to say that they do not want to see a military at the head of this transition." On the same day, Goita assigned opposition leader Choguel Maiga as the transitional Prime Minister.

### **Eritrea: Foreign Minister accuses the US of intimidation and blames it for supporting TPLF**

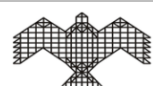
On 7 June, a letter written by the Eritrean Foreign Minister to the UNSC was circulated wherein he blamed several US administrations for allegedly supporting the Tigray People's Liberation Movement (TPLF) for the last 20 years in Ethiopia. The Minister took on President Joe Biden accusing him of "stoking further conflict and destabilization" through the recent US intervention and statements. He criticized the US move to impose restrictions on visas to Ethiopian and Eritrean officials, terming it one among the latest "unilateral acts of intimidation and interference."

### **Ethiopia: UN warns of 1984-like famine situation in Tigray and other regions in the north**

On 4 June, the UN humanitarian chief said that the conflict-ridden Tigray region and northern parts of Ethiopia were on the brink of famine. He called on the international community to show support through various means, including "through the provision of money." He added that the situation was edging close to a 1984-like situation when around two million Africans, nearly half of them Ethiopians, died of starvation or famine-related health problems.

### **Sudan: Clashes between Arab and non-Arab tribe**

On 5 June, clashes broke out between the Arab Taisha tribe and the African Fallata tribe, which led to the death of 36 people in two days in South Darfur. On 6 June, the state news agency reported that the military had been deployed to the area, and on 7 June, it reported that normalcy had been restored. However, the trigger behind the latest clash has not been identified yet. The frequency and the scale of renewed clashes between Arab and non-Arab tribes have increased in recent months.



## Peace and Conflict from Europe and the Americas

### Europe: Operation Trojan Shield uncovers organized criminal activities

On 8 June, Europol in a press conference, spoke about the successes of Operation Trojan Shield, also known as Task Force Greenlight, one of the largest global operations against encrypted criminal activity to date. Deputy executive director of Europol said: "this law enforcement operation is exceptional by its global outcomes." Operation Trojan Shield was headed by the FBI and Europol along with Dutch and Swedish police and involved 16 nations. In over 18 months, more than 800 suspects were arrested and more than 32 tons of drugs including cocaine, cannabis, amphetamines and methamphetamines were seized along with 250 firearms, 55 luxury cars and more than USD 148 million in cash and cryptocurrencies.

### Russia-Canada: Moscow imposes sanction in retaliatory move

On 7 June, Russia announced sanctions against nine senior Canadian officials in retaliation to Canada over the treatment of Alexey Navalny. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation said that the nine Canadians had been banned from entering Russia "for an undetermined period." In response, the Foreign Ministry of Canada added: "We remain deeply concerned by the deteriorating human rights situation in Russia and the shrinking space for civil society and independent voices. We stand by these Canadians that have been targeted."

### Hungary: Protests against Chinese university campus plans

On 5 June, thousands of people took to the streets in a protest against a Chinese university's plans to open a campus in Budapest. Opponents of PM Viktor Orbán have accused him of "cosying up" to the Chinese government. They also fear that the campus could undercut the quality of higher education and help Beijing increase its influence in Hungary and the European Union. Previously, the government signed an agreement with Shanghai-based Fudan University to build a campus at a site in Budapest where a dormitory village for Hungarian students had been planned.

### Switzerland: ICAN says nuclear weapons spending swelled USD 1.4 billion amid pandemic

On 7 June, the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) released a report in which it stated, "while hospital beds filled up with patients, doctors and nurses worked over hours and basic medical supplies ran scarce, nine countries found they had more than \$72 billion on hand for their weapons of mass destruction, \$1.4 billion more than last year." It added, "meanwhile, in 2020, the first treaty banning nuclear weapons, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) reached 50 states parties, triggering its entry into force in early 2021.<sup>1</sup> While these nine countries continued to waste billions on weapons of mass destruction, the rest of the world was busy making them illegal."

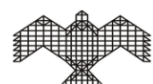
### Colombia: 58 killed in anti-govt protests, says human rights ombudsman

On 6 June, Colombia's human rights ombudsman said 58 people have been killed during anti-government protests. The ombudsman office said that it had received more than 400 allegations of human rights violations during the protests, including cases of police beatings, arbitrary detentions and sexual abuses of protesters in police custody. Meanwhile, President Ivan Duque has announced plans to "modernize" the police force as his government faces criticism over the use of force against protesters.

---

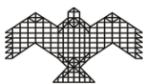
#### About the authors

Apoorva Sudhakar and Abigail Miriam Fernandez are Research Associates at the School of Conflict and Security Studies in NIAS. Sourina Bej is a doctoral candidate at the University of Bonn, Germany. Sarthak Jain is a postgraduate scholar in the Department of International Relations, University of Mysore. Rashmi BR is a Phd Scholar at NIAS.





National Institute of  
Advanced Studies



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

The International Peace Research Initiative (IPRI), initiated in 2018 at the National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS), is a part of the Conflict Resolution and Peace Research Programme at the School of Conflict and Security Studies.

IPRI undertakes research on various issues relating to peace with special emphasis on radicalisation, sustainable peace, gender roles in peacebuilding and global protest movements. IPRI research are published as briefs, reports and commentary.



### About Konrad Adenauer Stiftung

The Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) is a political foundation. Established in 1955 as “Society for Christian-Democratic Civic Education”, in 1964, the Foundation proudly took on the name of Konrad Adenauer, the first Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany. With 16 regional offices in Germany and over 120 offices abroad, the Konrad Adenauer Foundation is committed to achieving and maintaining peace, freedom and justice through political education. KAS promotes and preserves free democracy, social market economy, and the development and consolidation of the value consensus. KAS also focus on consolidating democracy, the unification of Europe and the strengthening of transatlantic relations, as well as on development cooperation.

KAS cooperates with governmental institutions, political parties and civil society organizations, building strong partnerships along the way. In particular, KAS seeks to intensify political cooperation in the area of development cooperation on the foundations of its objectives and values. Together with the partners, KAS makes a significant contribution to the creation of a global order that empowers every country to determine its own developmental priorities and destiny in an internationally responsible

### About Conflict Weekly

The Conflict Weekly an academic endeavour to bring every Wednesday/Thursday a weekly analysis of the conflict and peace processes in the world; aiming to look at the larger peace picture. It is published by the NIAS-IPRI in collaboration with the KAS India Office.



**Editor:** D. Suba Chandran

**Assistant Editors:** Abigail Miriam Fernandez & Apoorva Sudhakar