

Conflict Weekly

An initiative by NIAS-IPRI and KAS India Office

A brief review of conflict and peace processes across the world

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Denmark's referendum on EU defence and interstate tensions in Africa

Padmashree Anandhan and Apoorva Sudhakar



Political parties of Denmark conduct the Yes Campaign in Copenhagen. (Image Source: EPA/BBC)

SPECIAL

Report Review

The world's most neglected displacement crisis 2021

Denmark: Referendum favours to be a part of EU defence policy

In the news

On 1 June, Denmark voted in favour of a historic referendum to end the 30-year opt out from the EU defence and security policy. The Danes approval rate came to 65.8 per cent which is considered the highest, but it witnessed the second-lowest attendance. According to prime minister Mette Frederiksen: “Tonight, Denmark has sent a very important signal — to our allies in Europe, and to [Russian president Vladimir] Putin. We show that when Putin invades a free country and threatens the stability of Europe, so we others move closer together.”

On the same day, president of the European Council, Charles Michel said: “The people of Denmark have made a historic choice. The world has changed since Russia invaded Ukraine. This decision will benefit Europe and make both the EU and the Danish people safer and stronger.”

Issues at large

First, Denmark’s practise of opt-outs. The Danish opt-out called “retsforbehold” contains four relaxations from the EU integration. It started with the Danish voting against the Maastricht Treaty in 1992, opting out from using Euro, fearing the change from Danish Kroner to Euro, non-participation in the Euro cooperation, defence opt-out where Denmark will not engage in EU’s military operations or decision-making processes. Apart from the Euro and defence, it also introduced legal reservations on laws relating to bankruptcy, asylum standards and voted against the EU citizenship. In the other referendums held by Denmark in the 2000’s and 2015 on adopting the Euro and on Justice and Home Affairs, majority of the population voted no.

Second, the Lisbon v. Washington treaty. Article 42.7 Lisbon Treaty necessitates its member states to aid each other at the time of any invasion or aggression. Article 5 of NATO (Washington Treaty) demands members to help the state which is under attack. Denmark considers the latter to be more assertive and saw the EU only as an economic project until the Ukraine war. EU’s efforts to establish a defence union still remains a high-end goal, despite its increase in security and defence operations post 2014 Crimean annexation.

Third, the switch from Dexit to cooperation. After the UK exited from Europe, Denmark was predicted to be the next member state to Dexit as the Danes were sensitive about losing their sovereignty and being involved in the EU’s military activities. In the 2014 Eurobarometer survey, on the question of developing into a federation of nation-states, 74 per cent of Danes voted against it. The scenarios in Denmark have changed, from disintegration to solidarity with the Ukraine war. Another reason to move towards EU integration in terms of defence is the Social Democratic Party’s agenda to expand into the EU to open doors regionally than reaching the transatlantic. Through this vote, Denmark will become part of the EU’s finance and military operations and will also join the EU’s Common Security and Defence Policy.

Fourth, the Danes’ support. The vote proportion amongst the Danes in the recent referendum was 67:33 where 67 per cent voted in favour, while the 33 per cent opposed the removal of the defence opt-out. Denmark has total nine political parties out of which only four are in favour: Social Democratic government, the far-right Danish People’s Party, the far-right New Right, and the far-left Unity List. The 33 per cent and the opponent of the referendum argue that the EU’s defence is stressed due to administration and joining the EU will increase the military

costs in Denmark. They also tend to rely more on NATO than the EU due to the primary objective of NATO being collective defence.

In perspective

First, exploring nature of social democrats. Historically the Danish government are known for being restrictive when it comes to defence engagements. The Social Democrat Party's vision is to look beyond Denmark's boundaries and interest to expand into EU's defence cooperation. Although the referendum has been voted in favour by the majority, Denmark's government still opts for a cautious approach to hold back the opt-out option to bargain its sovereignty.

Second, the securitization of the Nordic. The first step taken by Sweden and Finland to join NATO has now led Denmark to rethink its defence horizon with the EU's defence and security policy. Therefore, the Ukraine war has resulted in a shift in the security strategy of the Nordic region from rearmament to regional securitization.

Third, towards defence union. EU's long-planned goal was to create a united defence. Although NATO has been the core focus for military and security operations, the EU is always perceived as a "foundation and a forum to implement decisions" uniting the EU member states. The Ukraine war and threat from Russia, have resulted in the mending of broken relations and filling of gaps between the EU and its members to form a collective defence EU force.

Africa: Tensions between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda

In the news

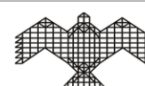
On 27 May, the UN said 72,000 people had been displaced in clashes between the Democratic Republic of the Congo's army and M23 rebel group near Goma city in the east; of this, 7,000 fled to Uganda. The rest sought refuge in Goma and nearby shelters.

On 28 May, the DRC government summoned Rwanda's ambassador and suspended RwandAir flights for Kigali's alleged support to the M23. On the same day, The New Times reported that Rwanda's foreign affairs minister Vincent Biruta responded to the allegations at the African Union's Extraordinary Summit terming the DRC's allegations baseless. Biruta said if there is a lack of political will, the DRC and Rwanda "will remain in a vicious cycle of undesirable and destructive conflicts."

On 30 May, Senegal's president and chair of the African Union Macky Sall tweeted that DRC president Felix Tshisekedi and Rwanda's president Paul Kagame had held a telephonic conversation to discuss possible solutions to the ongoing tensions.

On 31 May, Rwanda's foreign minister said Kigali will respond if they are subject to more attacks, allegedly from the DRC. The minister said Rwanda will not remain idle because it has the right to protect the security and citizens of the country.

On 1 June, hundreds of people protested outside the Rwandan embassy in Kinshasa. AFP quoted a rights group activist who said the protesters were demanding the expulsion of Rwanda's diplomat.



Issues at large

First, a brief background of the M23. The M23 group was formed in 2012 by members of a former militia group in the DRC, the National Congress for Defence of the People (CNDP), which was supported by Uganda and Rwanda. On 23 March 2009, the DRC and Rwanda signed an agreement to integrate the CNDP rebels into the DRC's national army. In 2012, a group of soldiers (formerly CNDP members) mutinied and formed the M23 rebel group, deriving the name from agreement signed on 23 March. By 2013, the M23 had captured large areas in eastern DRC, including DRC. The rebels were forced to flee to Rwanda and Uganda by 2013, with the help of UN-backed troops.

Second, the resurgence of attacks. In November 2021, the DRC army said the M23 had re-emerged and captured two towns near DRC's border with Uganda; the towns were recaptured by the army. Since March 2022, a series of attacks, including the targeting two army positions near Rwanda and Uganda, have been linked to the M23. In the most recent attack, the UN said the M23 had attacked peacekeepers and called for an end to hostilities. However, the M23 rebels accused the UN of targeting their positions and of supporting other militias. The M23 has also accused the DRC government of not adhering to existing peace agreements.

Third, instability in eastern DRC. The instability and violence dates back to 1994 when several Rwandan Hutu rebels, accused of carrying out a genocide against Rwandan Tutsis, fled to eastern DRC. Rwanda accused the DRC army of assisting the Hutu armed groups. In 1996, Rwanda invaded the eastern borders of the DRC to attack several Hutu groups, thereby sparking the First Congo War. In 1998, the Second Congo War was fought between forces and rebels from nine African countries. Despite several peace agreements signed and since 2002 and numerous counter militia operations, rebel groups continue operating in eastern DRC. As of February 2022, the UN said an estimated 120 armed groups exist in the DRC's east. The Norwegian Refugee Council says at least 5.5 million are internally displaced in DRC, facing a risk of starvation.

Fourth, fractioned relations between the DRC, Rwanda and Uganda. In 2019, Tshisekedi was elected as president of the DRC and he initiated several initiatives to improve relations with Rwanda, including signing agreements for bilateral cooperation in various sectors. Tshisekedi proposed joint military operations with several east African countries would help tackle the militia in the east. Uganda welcomed the idea; Rwanda, however, termed it a threat. When the M23 resurfaced, Rwanda and Uganda accused each other of supporting the rebel group.

In perspective

First, the resurgence of the M23 has renewed the tensions between the DRC and Rwanda. The spillover from the violence to Uganda, along with the accusations from Rwanda, could disturb the regional dynamics of East Africa.

Second, the M23's resurgence indicates the failure of the DRC government and regional efforts to implement peace agreements, hold full-fledged joint military operations and reconcile with rebel forces, despite decades having gone by.

Third, the relationship between the DRC and Rwanda cannot be improved unless historical issues are resolved. Meanwhile, the humanitarian cost of the instability will continue to rise, with the DRC witnessing one of the highest rates of displacement in the world.

Also, from around the world

By Avishka Ashok, Arshiya Banu, Ashwin Dhanabalan, Abigail Mirium Fernandez, Lavanya Ravi, Rishma Banerjee, Apoorva Sudhakar, and Padmashree Anandhan

East and Southeast Asia

China: Urges countries to support African countries in solving problems

On 31 May, China's Deputy permanent representative to the United Nations Dai Bing attended the Security Council meeting in the Democratic Republic of Congo and urged the international community to extend support to African countries in resolving their problems in their own indigenous ways. Dai further stressed the deteriorating state of security in DRC and voiced China's concerns about the attacks on civilians, massive casualties, and displacement caused by the conflict. He said: "China expresses its concern over the fierce clash in North Kivu last week. We support the swift issuance of a press statement by the Security Council, condemning the attacks and urging all armed groups to lay down their weapons immediately and unconditionally and participate in the political process initiated by regional countries in Nairobi."

China: Calls for an investigation into school shootings in the US

On 31 May, the Strait Times reported that Global Times asked for an investigation into the mass shooting in the US; a day after the foreign ministry Spokesperson Zhao Lijian called for the same from the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. The Global Times editorial said: "The US system is equally incapable, or lacks interest, motivation, and courage, to address these problems thoroughly." Chinese media agencies have been highlighting the US shootings and calling for the US to deal with its internal issues before pointing fingers at China. The People's Daily referred to the coloured killings in Buffalo in the US and said: "Racism is a poison running through American body politic."

China: The UN Human rights chief urges to rethink its anti-terrorism and deradicalization policies

On 29 May, the Asahi Shimbun reported that the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet had raised questions about the violation of the rights of the Uighur ethnic group in the Xinjiang region. Bachelet clarified that the aim of the trip was not to inspect but to have open discussions with the Chinese authorities on fulfilling its obligations under the international human rights law. She said: "It provides an opportunity for me to better understand the situation in China, but also for the authorities in China to better understand our concerns and to potentially rethink policies that we believe may impact negatively on human rights." She also discussed the broad application of the counter-terrorism and de-radicalization laws to the Muslim minorities in Xinjiang.

North Korea: Chinese UN envoy criticizes UN sanctions on North Korea

On 27 May, the permanent representative of China to the United Nations (UN) Zhang Jun stated that sanctions will not help resolve the Korean Peninsula's nuclear issue but will instead lead to an "escalation" with humanitarian repercussions. Zhang made the comments after China vetoed a UN resolution led by the United States to impose strict sanctions on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) in response to its missile tests. Zhang said: "Facts have proved that dialogue and negotiation is the only way to solve the problem," and added that "additional sanctions against the DPRK will only add to the misery of the DPRK people, and in this sense, neither right nor humane." Zhang has also accused the US of failing to follow through on past talks between Washington and Pyongyang.



Taiwan: Jets rush to warn off the Chinese air force from entering the air defence zone

On 30 May, Taiwan's Defence Ministry stated that in the latest flare-up of tensions, Taiwanese jets raced to warn away 30 Chinese aircraft in the largest incursion by China's air force in its air defence zone. For the past two years or more, Taiwan has protested about recurrent flights by China's air force near the democratically administered island, often in the southern area of its air defence identification zone, or ADIZ, close to the Taiwan-controlled Pratas Islands. Taiwan refers to China's frequent military activity in the vicinity as "grey zone" warfare, which is intended to wear down Taiwan's forces by forcing them to scramble repeatedly and test Taipei's responses. The ministry said that the current Chinese mission included 22 fighters as well as electronic warfare, early warning, and anti-submarine aircraft.

Myanmar: Foreign minister Prak Sokhonn briefs UNSC on Naypyidaw

On 27 May, Cambodia's foreign minister and ASEAN's special envoy to Myanmar, Prak Sokhonn, briefed the UNSC on Myanmar. He discussed the multifaceted challenges and the issues concerning the country's politics and economic turmoil. Sokhonn stated how the international community needed to constructively engage with Myanmar than isolate them. He further mentioned that he would be focussing on "The cessation of violence, constructive engagement, Covid-19 vaccinations, humanitarian relief and optimism" in his upcoming trip.

Indonesia: Ferry boat capsizes in the Makassar Strait

On 28 May, a ferry boat carrying 43 passengers capsized off the Sulawesi island in Indonesia. The boat had run out of fuel and was hit by bad weather, which caused it to capsize. The Indonesian weather agency had warned of waves up to 2.5 meters on the day the boat went missing. Indonesia is made up of 17,000 islands, with most of the people relying primarily on water transportation. However, the country has weakly enforced maritime safety regulations that have often led to disasters in the waters.

Southeast Asia: Cambodia and Vietnam complete 90 per cent border demarcation

On 1 June, Cambodia and Vietnam announced that they had demarcated most of their borders and were putting agreements in place for another six per cent that remains. The two countries share a 1,270-kilometer border with Vietnam and have been working on border demarcation since 2006. Three hundred fifteen border markers have been installed on the border as the countries are working to demarcate the points of Mondulkiri, Ratanakiri, Svay Rieng, Takeo, and Tboung Khmum provinces.

South Asia

Pakistan: Two killed in a landmine explosion in Balochistan

On 31 May, two people were killed after a landmine exploded in Balochistan's Harnai district. Deputy Commissioner Harnai Sardar Muhammad Rafique said that the unidentified accused had planted a landmine on the road leading toward the coal mines.

Pakistan: Federal Minister for Climate Change says its the third most water-stressed country

On 30 May, Minister for Climate Change Senator Sherry Rehman said Pakistan is the third most water-stressed country and it needs to streamline mitigation with adaptation as mitigation cannot be done in isolation. She met World Bank Country Director Najy Benhassine and discussed the ongoing projects in Pakistan. The minister also met with a Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) mission to the UN, composed of special representatives to the Director-General Dan Gustafson and Green Climate Fund (GCP) unit head Nadine Valat.

Pakistan: Gunmen kill police officer in Peshawar car attack

On 25 May, a police officer was martyred in a gun attack on the outskirts of the provincial capital in the morning as he was driving his children to the school, the police said. A senior police official told Dawn on condition of anonymity that the police considered the attack as an act of terrorism and the rapid, unplanned expansion of the city had made it easier for terrorists to attack targets and escape.

Central Asia, Middle East and Africa

Oman: Aims to Zero gas flaring goal by collaborating with US energy company to mine crypto

On 1 June, Bloomberg reported that Crusoe Energy, a Denver-based mining company opened a crypto mining facility in Oman. This comes while the debate about ethically using fossil fuel to mine cryptocurrency is at its peak. Interestingly, Crusoe Energy claims that they will repurpose wasted fuel energy to compute crypto mining, and Oman, a key member of the OPEC, exporting 21 per cent of their gas production, seems a zero gas flaring goal by 2030. As per the CEO of Crusoe Energy, the pilot project will be launched by early 2023, after they set up an office in Muskat and install the equipment's at gas waste sites.

Israel: Jerusalem Day march causes outrage

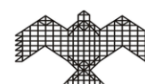
On 29 May, a crowd of 70,000 Israelis marched through the Old City celebrating Jerusalem Day. The gathering with some people draped in the Israeli flag claimed Jerusalem belonged to them and they were the true rulers of the land. The march is held annually in remembrance of the 1967 annexation of East Jerusalem but this year it attracted a huge crowd. The Palestinians viewed the march as a provocation as chants of "Death to Arabs" and "Muhammed is dead" resonated through Old City. Protesters also attacked Palestinians and asked them to "go join Shireen" referencing the celebrated reporter who was killed in Jenin recently. Prime minister Naftali Bennet has denied accusations of fascism and has stated he wants a "a right-wing peace."

Israel: Free trade agreement signed with UAE

On 31 May, Israel signed its first free trade agreement with UAE to boost its trade and develop relations with the country. The pact was signed by Orna Barbiwai, Israel's minister of Economy and Industry and Abdulla bin Touq al-Marri, her counterpart from UAE. Termed the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement, it was signed in Dubai after months of negotiations. The agreement is aimed at boosting bilateral trade to more than USD 10 billion a year within the next five years. Additionally, Israel also stated the accord would revise tariffs on 96 per cent of the goods traded between the two countries including food, agriculture, cosmetics, medicine, and medical equipment. This agreement stems directly from a result of the Abraham accords. This also marks the UAE's second free trade agreement, the first being signed with India in the beginning of May 2022.

Yemen: UN-mediated truce gets extended

On 2 June, the two-month UN-mediated two-month truce signed by the Houthis and the Saudi-led coalition expired. However, UN special envoy to Yemen Hans Grundberg has stated the parties have agreed to renew the truce for two more months. An evaluation of the performance of the treaty reveals its successes and failures. The successful reopening of the Sanaa airport for commercial flights and the resumption of inflow of aid through the Hodeidah port are benefits arising from the truce. In general, there has also been a reduction in fighting on the frontlines. Although violence has not completely ceased, its intensity has reduced. The major drawback of the truce is its failure to force the Houthis to reopen roads to the besieged city of Taiz. Even though it was agreed upon, the Houthis continue to trap a population of four million. The battle in Marib has not stopped either. Experts state the mere extension of the truce without re-negotiating terms may cause it to fail.



Yemen: US and Netherlands call for action on FSO Safer

On 27 May, the US and the Netherlands issued statements that described the FSO Safer as “decaying and unstable.” They called on the international community to consider the container which holds more than one million barrels of oil, an “imminent threat.” The container which is old and rusting sits moored in the Red Sea off the coast of Yemen. It has been termed a “ticking timebomb” and could leak, spill or explode at any time. The UN proposed a plan last month that would involve shifting barrels to a temporary vessel and scraping the Safer after the transfer. However, funding seems to be an issue as the operation is expected to cost around USD 144 million. But when the risks are weighed, it seems like a smaller price to pay as an oil spill would cost USD 20 billion to clean up. The US and the Netherlands have urged the UN to consider the humanitarian and environmental effects of a spill and not delay the transfer plan further.

Iran: Building collapse causes protests

On 30 May, protestors have taken to the streets of Khuzestan province raising their voice against a fallen office building in the region. The protests continue strong for a week after the incident occurred. The collapsed 10 stories Metropol office building left 34 dead and four people missing according to IRNA, the state-run news agency. The mayor and the building contractor were among the thirteen people who are arrested over the collapse. However, the protestors believe it is the fault of bigger authorities accusing them of negligence and corruption. People were heard chanting “Death to Khamenei” in protests taking place in Tehran. A search and rescue operation is continuing at the site of the collapse. The incident has raised serious concerns over building safety regulations in the country.

Mali: Over 500 civilians killed in three months, says UN report; Mali rejects allegations

On 30 May, the UN’s Mali mission (MINUSMA) released a report outlining that between January and March 2022 more than 500 civilians were killed in attacks by armed forces and Islamist groups. This indicated a 324 per cent rise in casualties compared to the same quarter in 2021. The MINUSMA report said the armed forces’ operations, sometimes supported by foreign elements, resulted in “serious allegations of violations of human rights.” The report said rights violations include alleged rape, looting, and arbitrary arrests by armed forces. On 1 June, Mali’s foreign affairs ministry dismissed the report and said the allegations have no tangible evidence. The ministry said the allegations aimed to discredit Mali and its population in front of the international community.

Burkina Faso: Nearly 50 civilians killed in the east

On 26 May, an attack carried out by unidentified assailants against the people of Midjourie commune of the eastern region of Burkina Faso left nearly 50 civilians dead. The victims were travellers to nearby Pama bordering Benin and Togo. Burkina Faso is severely affected by the intensified militancy and the Sahel region is witnessing a significant spillover of attacks of similar nature in Togo and coastal countries like Benin. Burkina Faso is currently under military administration that had overthrown the former civilian leadership of the country citing its failure to curb the increased instability and secure peace.

Sudan: UNSC extends sanctions on South Sudan; Foreign Ministry calls decision unproductive

On 26 May, the UN Security Council implemented a one-year extension on the sanctions regime on South Sudan. The sanctions include a travel ban, arms embargo, financial restrictions and freezing of assets of designated individuals. On 27 May, the South Sudan Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Ministry’s press release said the African Union had termed sanctions and arms embargo unproductive in February. The East African quoted from the

statement which said the dismissal of the AU's stance "shows an old hubris with no value for a world shaken by wars, including Africa and Europe."

Europe and the Americas

EU leaders to block Russian oil imports by 2022

On 1 June, the EU said it would end Russian oil imports by 2022. The reason given for the decision was to punish Russia for invading Ukraine. This comes as a part of the sixth package of sanctions approved by all 27 members. The EU had earlier halted the implementation of its latest round of sanctions due to differences over the ban on Russian oil. European commission president Ursula von der Leyen addressed the differences saying: "Left over is around 10-11% that is covered by the southern Druzhba."

Germany: The finance ministry agrees to sanction USD 110 billion defence fund

On 29 May, Germany's finance ministry stated that Berlin would undergo a constitutional change to accommodate the credit-based special defence fund of EUR 100 billion. The money will eventually increase Germany's defence budget to more than its EUR 50 billion benchmarks. This would further help Germany achieve the NATO targeted spending of two per cent of economic output on defence. Germany's ruling coalition, center-right opposition with center-left Social Democrats (SPD), pro-business Free Democrats (FDP), and Greens said they had reached the required two-thirds majority to exempt the defence fund from a constitutional debt brake.

The US: China conducts military exercises around Taiwan as a warning

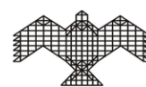
On 25 May, the Chinese People's Liberation Army's Eastern Theatre Command spokesperson Shi Yi stated that it recently conducted an exercise around Taiwan as a "solemn warning" against its "collusion" with the US. Earlier, US President Joe Biden enraged China by appearing to foreshadow a shift in the US policy of "strategic ambiguity" on Taiwan by declaring the US would intervene militarily if China attacked the island. However, he later stated that US policy had not changed. Yi said: "It is hypocritical and futile for the United States to say one thing and do another on the Taiwan issue." While the US maintains a "one China" policy, recognising only Beijing, it has pledged under the Taiwan Relations Act to "to help provide Taiwan the means to defend itself."

The US: Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson responds to Blinken's accusations

On 27 May, the Chinese government accused America's top diplomat of spreading fake news by calling China "the most serious long-term challenge to the international order," and questioned the US' sincerity in trying to avert conflict. Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin also asked the US to let go of its ambition to contain China and to stop saying and doing things that have harmed the two nations' relationship, which is at its lowest. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken had stated that China has undermined the world order that has enabled it to prosper and become the world's second-largest economy, adding that the Biden administration will "shape the strategic environment around Beijing to advance our vision for an open and inclusive international system."

The US: Chinese Foreign Minister advises the US to renounce the Cold War mentality

On 31 May, Chinese State Councillor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi advised the US to renounce the Cold War mentality and properly manage conflicts, saying that China-US relations could no longer deteriorate. Wang made the statements at a Chinese People's Institute of Foreign Affairs online symposium commemorating former US Secretary of State Dr. Henry Kissinger's 99th birthday. Wang emphasised that both China and the United States share responsibility for creating a world that is interconnected, diverse, and inclusive. He said: "If



the United States only defines its relations with China in terms of major-country competition and sets its policy goal with 'win or lose' mentality, it will only push the bilateral relations into confrontation and conflict and the world into division and turmoil."

The US: BTS visits the White House to discuss Asian inclusion

On 02 June, the world-famous K-pop boy band BTS made a visit to the US White House and met with President Joe Biden. They spoke about Asian representation, and inclusion and addressed the recent rise in hate crimes against Asian people in light of the COVID-19 crisis. They also thanked the president for signing the bipartisan COVID-19 Hate Crime Act by an overwhelming 364-62 vote. The seven members of the band lined up behind the White House press secretary, Karine Jean-Pierre and made short statements about the pertinent issues in an overflowing press briefing room. Thousands of their fans also lined up in front of the White House, to get a glimpse of their "idols."

Canada: Prime Minister Trudeau calls for a ban on gun purchase and sale

On 30 May, Canada's prime minister Justin Trudeau said that the country should consider a total ban on the purchase and sale of handguns. His government has proposed a law to that effect, which was introduced in the parliament. As per the bill, it would be illegal to buy, sale of transfer handguns in the country. Trudeau said: "Other than using firearms for sport shooting and hunting, there is no reason anyone in Canada should need guns in their everyday lives." This comes in the context of the very recent incidents of gun violence in the US, especially the latest one at the Texas primary school.

Columbia: Rescue workers working against the clock to evacuate trapped miners

On 2 June, rescue workers in Columbia made further progress in evacuating the miners trapped deep underground. 14 coal miners have trapped after an explosion because of the build up of gases caved part of the tunnel in on 30 May. The relatives of the miners have since then been holding a vigil close to the main entrance of the tunnel and hoping against hope for their safe return. One miner sustained extensive burns and has since succumbed to his injuries. While the regional mining secretary, Jhon Olivares said that they are trapped 650 feet underground, some local media have said that they are trapped under 980 feet. Olivarez also said that while the mine was operating legally, the build up of gases and the continuous rains were making it difficult to carry on the rescue mission.

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Conflict Weekly Special, 01 June 2022

Report Review: *The world's most neglected displacement crisis 2021*

Norwegian Refugee Council Report on World's top ten most neglected displacement crises: Four takeaways

By Avishka Ashok

On 1 June, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) published its annual report on "The world's most neglected displacement crises 2021." The report studied 41 crises and short-listed the top ten crises based on the status of funding, the media attention and the extent of political and diplomatic initiatives towards resolving the issues. According to the report, the conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo is the most neglected displacement crisis of 2021, followed by Burkina Faso on the second rank and Cameroon on the third rank. The DRC has been on the list five times since 2016 and topped the list twice. The list further comprises of South Sudan, Chad, Mali, Sudan, Nigeria, Burundi and Ethiopia.

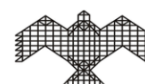
Four takeaways

First, the top ten neglected crises are from Africa. For the first time, all of the top ten neglected displacement crises are from the African continent. The report observed that out of the top ten, seven countries have topped the list repeatedly in recent years. The NRC discerned that once featured in the list, it is difficult for countries to come out of the vicious circle of political neglect, negligible media coverage and decreasing funding issues despite the steep increase in humanitarian needs.

Second, the issue of selective coverage. The report by the NRC observed that, unintentionally African countries continued to suffer from political and diplomatic neglect. In the first three months of the Ukrainian war, there were close to 85,000 articles written in English. However, the crisis in Burkina Faso was covered 27,000 times in English articles in the whole of 2021. The urgency felt by the international communities to resolve the war in Europe has evidently taken more space and priority as compared to African conflicts, Media attention was further diminished because journalists were not allowed to freely cover the disputes and were restricted, at times by the state or by other non-state actors. A majority of the countries in the top ten most neglected displacement crises also featured negatively in the World Press Freedom Index.

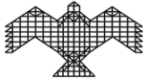
Third, the humanitarian crises, primarily hunger, in African countries have continued to surge. In 2020, conflict was considered to be the cause of food insecurity for 99.1 million individuals in 23 countries. The year 2021 and the first quarter of 2022 have added to existing difficulties of displacement and conflict in African countries as the hunger index escalates alarmingly. The war in Eastern Europe further stressed the already fragile food insecurity due to the rising wheat and fuel prices. Addressing the humanitarian issues in these countries requires much greater funding support. Unfortunately, there is universal donor fatigue across the world. Other than the conflict, climate-induced disasters have added to the humanitarian crises in most of the countries in the list.

Fourth, the COVID-19 impact. When it comes to securing funds, 2021 has been exceptionally challenging for international organisations as a majority of countries curtailed their overseas expenditure, mainly through aid, as they attempted to deal with the economic slowdown caused by the pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic added to the woes of securing aid as funds were diverted to acquiring, supplying and donating COVID-19 vaccines.





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.



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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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