

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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UNHRC proceedings on Xinjiang and the Oxfam report on reducing inequality

Avishka Ashok and Madhura Mahesh



(The 51st session of the UNHRC rejected the draft resolution on holding a debate on the human rights situation in China's Xinjiang Autonomous Region. Image Source: VCG/Global Times)

SPECIAL

Report Review

The Commitment to Reducing Inequality Index 2022

China: UNHRC proceeding on Xinjiang

In the news

On 6 October, the 51st session of the United Nations Human Rights Council rejected the draft resolution on holding a debate on the human rights situation in China's Xinjiang Autonomous Region. In the 47-member council, 19 members voted against the motion while 17 voted for the debate. Over 11 countries, including India, Brazil, Mexico, Armenia, Malaysia, and Ukraine, chose to abstain from voting. Pakistan, Qatar, UAE, and Indonesia along with Bolivia, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Cuba, Cuba, Eritrea, Gabon, Kazakhstan, Mauritania, Senegal, Sudan, Uzbekistan, and Venezuela voted against the motion.

Several human rights groups expressed their disappointment at the rejection of the proposal. Amnesty International's Secretary General Agnes Callamard said: "For Council member states to vote against even discussing a situation where the UN itself says crimes against humanity may have occurred makes a mockery of everything the Human Rights Council is supposed to stand for."

Issues at large

First, the resolution on Xinjiang. The motion to hold the debate was initiated by the US, the UK, Denmark, Iceland, Finland, Norway, Sweden, and Canada and co-sponsored by Turkey after the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) released a report on the human rights situation in Xinjiang in August 2022. The report was based on the former High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet's visit to Xinjiang in May 2022. The resolution aimed to put Xinjiang (China) on the agenda for the next regular session scheduled to take place in March 2023. The debate was aimed at pushing for an investigation into China's treatment of the Uighurs in the Xinjiang region. In the 16-year history of the Council, the proposed debate on Xinjiang was the second motion to be rejected. If passed, it would have been the first time that a permanent member of the UN Security Council was put on the council's agenda for debate.

Second, setback for the West. Since 2017, the UN, the US, the UK, the EU, Canada, Australia, and other global think tanks have published numerous reports on China's aggressive policies against the Uighurs. Japan and the EU have passed resolutions condemning forced labour in Xinjiang and the exploitation of minorities in China. The US has also passed the Uyghur Forced Labour Prevention Act in December 2021 and banned the sale of products from Xinjiang. Human rights defenders have expressed their concerns over the rejection of the resolution and believe that the move will fail the efforts of the West to hold China accountable for its actions. They fear that it may also act as a precedent for other countries to get away with crimes against humanity.

Third, silence of the Islamic countries. The President of the World Uighur Council, Dolkun Isa, expressed his disappointment over the rejection of the resolution as many Islamic countries also voted against the motion. The Uighurs, being a Muslim minority in China, had expected Islamic countries to extend their support. However, amongst the OIC members, 12 countries voted against the resolution while all African countries followed China to reject the resolution. In both cases, Somalia was the only exception who voted for the debate. Turkey is one of the few Muslim countries that has spoken against the treatment of Uighurs. Islamic countries have often condemned acts against Muslims in foreign countries but stayed silent on Xinjiang. The reasons may be two-fold: first, the Uighurs are a Turkic ethnic group which follows Sunni Islamic traditions but originate from Central Asia. Second, most OIC countries have strong relations with China and are dependent on Beijing for a number of infrastructural

and trade projects. China was also a part of OIC's 48th session of the Foreign Ministers' meeting in Pakistan in March 2022.

Fourth, Africa, Southeast Asia, and Latin America's growing support for China. The rejection of the resolution brought forth strong support for China from Africa, Southeast Asia, and Latin America. For decades, Western countries have speculated about China's intentions behind the unconditional loans and infrastructural assistance provided to countries from these continents. It was assumed that blind support for China in international institutions was one of Beijing's objectives. It appears that China has created an irreplaceable identity for itself in Africa through the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), in Latin America through the China-Latin America Cooperation, and in Southeast Asia through the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

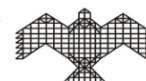
Fifth, China's responses regarding Xinjiang. China had publicly denounced the OHCHR's report on Xinjiang, terming it an orchestrated patchwork of disinformation aimed at containing the country. The Chinese Foreign Ministry rejected the report and declared it to be illegal and invalid. It also released a 131-page-long refutation of the report within minutes of the OHCHR's report. China also gathered the support of 20 other countries and jointly rejected the report. Beijing also warned that it would withdraw support from the UNHRC body for publishing the report.

In perspective

The failure of the UNHRC to obtain a simple majority to initiate the debate on alleged human rights violations in Xinjiang shows China's increasing influence on the international order and the changing political landscape. The present support for China from across the world is indicative of its rising power. The results of the current resolution also demonstrate that countries are increasingly succumbing to China's financial strategy.

China seems to be winning the war on Xinjiang as the issue follows a similar pattern as others such as the forced rule in Tibet, Inner Mongolia, and Hong Kong. Although the global community revolted, expressed concern, imposed sanctions, and attempted to prevent China from taking over these regions, China has successfully integrated them into the country.

The rejection of the resolution is a huge setback for the Uighurs who have been fighting against the system for decades. Additionally, given previous responses from China's to similar reports and resolutions, it is unlikely that Beijing would have act upon a Council debate and changed its strategies in the Xinjiang Autonomous Region.



Also, from around the world

Avishka Ashok, Joel Jacob, Abigail Fernandez, Apoorva Sudhakar, Anu Maria Joseph, Ankit Singh, Padmashree Anandan, Rishma Banerjee, Madura Mahesh, Bhoomika Sesharaj, Sejal Sharma and Vijay Anand Panigrahi

East and Southeast Asia

Taiwan: Defence Ministry seeks to purchase new frigates as China increases patrols

On 10 October, Taiwan's Defence Ministry reported that China's increased patrolling near the country's territory strained the frigate fleet struggling to maintain combat readiness. Taiwan's frigates are now decades-old and pose a challenge to its aim to become militarily self-sufficient against a possible invasion in the straits. Taipei has increasingly focused upon purchasing new warships, submarines, missiles, fighter jets and other defence equipment. The Defence Ministry presented a report to the Parliament seeking an approval for the renewal of a new class frigate as four to five Chinese ships patrol the region daily. The ministry statement said: "The navy must send corresponding forces to monitor every day, and send additional forces to respond depending on the threat level, which is causing a heavy burden on some older ships."

China: US warns against Hong Kong becoming a haven for sanctioned Russians

On 10 October, The Straits Times reported on the US State Department's warning to Hong Kong against protecting sanctioned Russian citizens in the city. The warning comes as a Russian tycoon Alexey Mordashov's USD 5000 million worth yacht was spotted in the city. Mordashov has been sanctioned by the US, the EU and Britain for being a close ally of Russian President Vladimir Putin. The US State Department's spokesperson said: "The possible use of Hong Kong as a safe haven by individuals evading sanctions from multiple jurisdictions further calls into question the transparency of the business environment." The Hong Kong Marine Department responded to the warning and said it does not adhere to unilateral sanctions and would not restrict individuals from entering the city.

China: Foreign Minister's spokesperson appreciates Elon Musk's suggestion on Taiwan dispute

On 9 October, China's Foreign Minister Spokesperson Mao Ning referred to Elon Musk's recommendation on Taiwan and said that the island can exercise a high degree of autonomy as a special administrative region ensuring national sovereignty, security, and development interests. Elon had told the Financial Times: "My recommendation... would be to figure out a special administrative zone for Taiwan that is reasonably palatable, probably won't make everyone happy." In response, Mao claimed that the Democratic Progressive Party "seeking Independence" and help from external forces caused tension and unrest across the Taiwan Strait. Mao said: "Only by resolutely containing the 'Taiwan independence' secessionists and opposing external interference can maintain peace and stability across the Taiwan Straits." She added the only peaceful way to settle this dispute is "one country, two systems."

China: Hong Kong Court detains four minors under the National Security Law

On 8 October, the Hong Kong court sentenced four teenagers to detention for their involvement in a pro-independence group called "Returning Valiant" and propagating social media posts against China. This is the first time China's National Security Law has punished minors for protesting against the State. The detained teenagers include a 16-year-old girl and three other 17-year-olds. The judge convicted the minors of "conspiracy to incite subversion" and said their calls to overthrow China's rule in Hong Kong must not be taken lightly.

Thailand: Eight killed in floods caused by Typhoon Noru

On 6 October, several provinces along the path of Noru remained flooded and weather forecasters warned of rain until 9 October. The floods killed eight people and impacted nearly 45,000 households. The disaster prevention and mitigation department reported that 17 of the provinces are under flood-prone areas and that military evacuation and flood delivery had begun. The floods are claimed to be the worst in the last 20 years in Thailand.

Thailand: 30 killed in childcare center by an ex-police officer

On 7 October, a former police officer stormed a nursery killing 30, most of who are children, before killing his family and himself. The attacker armed with a shotgun knife and a pistol opened fire before fleeing the scene. Following this, he went home, killed his wife and child, and himself. He was a dismissed police officer for involvement in drug peddling.

South Asia

India: Pakistan accepts invite to attend JATE exercise on closing ceremony day

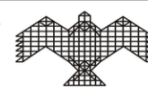
On 10 October, The Hindu quoted diplomatic sources and reported that Pakistan would participate in the ongoing Joint Anti-Terror Exercise (JATE) in India. The exercise is being conducted under Shanghai Cooperation Organisation's regional anti-terrorist structure (SCO RATS), where Pakistan accepted the invitation to attend its closing ceremony on 13 October. JATE 'Manesar Anti-Terror 2022' is the latest of the annual counter-terrorist training organized under the ambit of SCO RATS. The exercise aims to enhance counter-terrorism skills and practices and boost cooperation on the same between the SCO RATS members. India attended and participated in last year's JATE exercise held in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.

Pakistan: Swat protesters end 40-hour sit-in after talks with the administration

On 11 October, protesters in Swat ended their 40-hour sit-in over the recent killing of a school van driver after the administration promised to arrest culprits and take custody of the deceased's children. Earlier on 10 October, a van driver was killed, and two students were injured after unidentified assailants opened fire on a school van in Charbagh tehsil. The attack came amid the recent surge of violent incidents in the valley. The locals blamed Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan for the attack; however, no group has claimed responsibility so far. Additionally, the incident brought back memories of the attack on Malala Yousafzai in 2012, who is coincidentally visiting Pakistan after four years.

Pakistan: UNGA adopts resolution support rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts in Pakistan

On 7 October, the UN General Assembly (UNGA) unanimously adopted a resolution calling on donor nations and institutions to extend full support to rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts in Pakistan. The resolution, co-sponsored by 159 countries, urged the international community, "in particular donor countries, international financial institutions and relevant international organisations, as well as the private sector and civil society, to extend full support and assistance to Pakistan in its efforts to mitigate the adverse impacts of the floods and to meet the medium- and long-term rehabilitation and reconstruction needs." Further, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said: "The scaling calamities in Pakistan can linger for years. Massive guidance and support to the government of Pakistan are absolutely essential." He added: "Countries, like Pakistan, which confront such climate-induced disasters, should not be left to fend for themselves... We must construct global mechanisms that can enable climate-struck countries to access resources to mitigate the impacts of the ever more frequent and more intense climate disasters and to recover quickly from such disasters."



Bangladesh: Thousands of opposition activists slammed with fake charges

On 10 October, the opposition parties claimed that around 4000 opposition activists were wrongfully charged with violence by the state authorities. The demonstrations have primarily been about the increased power cuts and the demand to conduct upcoming 2023 elections under an impartial caretaker government. However, the demonstrations witnessed violence on several occasions.

Nepal: Victims of conflict worried as the transitional justice commissions expires

On 8 October, The Kathmandu Post reported that the Terms of Truth and Reconciliation and Enforced Disappeared Persons commissions expire on October 17. The development comes after the government had extended the terms of two transitional justice commissions by three months in July, aiming to amend the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Act 2014. However, with the House of Representatives' expiry on 20 September, the future of the complaints registered under this commission is unclear. The Kathmandu Post quoted a victim: "The victims want continuation of the commissions."

Bangladesh: Bangladesh secures UNHRC seat; Foreign Minister hails efforts

On 12 October, Bangladesh was elected as a member of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) securing 160 votes out of 186. The Foreign Affairs Minister said that the country secured the seat in a "very competitive election," and had stepped to its fifth consecutive term because Bangladesh, under the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, served the UNHRC with much sincerity. He said that the international community recognizes Bangladesh's experiences with human rights issues and that the membership is a "responsibility."

Central Asia, Middle East, and Africa

Armenia-Azerbaijan: Baku accuses Yerevan of shelling in Kalbajar and Lachin

On 9 October, Azerbaijani Defence Ministry stated that Armenian armed forces had shelled positions of the Azerbaijani army in the Kalbajar and Lachin districts. The ministry said: "Armenian armed forces units from the positions in the direction of the Yukhari Shorzha settlement of the Basarkechar region and the Khanazakh settlement of the Gorus region using various caliber weapons subjected to fire the Azerbaijan Army positions, stationed in the direction of the Yellija settlement of the Kalbajar region."

Yemen: UN says civilian casualties "substantially" decreased during the truce

On 10 October, the UN said the civilian casualties from the war in Yemen had "substantially" decreased over the past six months of the UN-brokered truce. It said the number of casualties or injured has been cut by half reaching 936, including 288 deaths between 2 April and 21 September, as compared to 2,051 casualties including 630 deaths between October 2021 and March 2022. The report comes as the Yemeni government said that dozens of families fled Houthi-controlled areas, taking advantage of the cessation of hostilities. On 2 October, the UN-brokered truce expired after Houthis refused to extend it.

Lebanon: President says country will begin returning Syrian refugees

On 12 October, President Michel Aoun said that Lebanon will start sending Syrian refugees back to their home country the following week. An official source referred to by the Arab News, added that only people who volunteer would be sent back to Syria and the rest would not be forced to leave. The government estimates that 1.5 million people out of six million total population of the country are refugees from neighboring Syria.

Israel-Palestine: Shufuat camp residents stage general strike

On 12 October, Al Jazeera reported that Palestinians in East Jerusalem's Shuafat refugee camp had launched a general strike against a siege by Israeli forces; a similar strike was observed in West Bank's Nablus city as well, wherein stores and schools remained closed. The development comes after the only two entry and exit points of the Shuafat camp, home to 130,000 Palestinians, have been blocked by Israeli forces since 8 October after an Israeli soldier was killed in a shooting incident at the camp's key checkpoint.

Tanzania: Government urges international community to back Burundi repatriations

On 11 October, in a UN refugee agency meeting in Switzerland, Tanzania's internal affairs minister said Burundi needed support to encourage and facilitate voluntary repatriation of nearly 120,000 refugees. He said: "In order for this plan to be successful, all has to be restored in Burundi. The most important thing is to support Burundi and make it a favourite for those who seek refuge in Tanzania." The refugees currently live in two camps in Tanzania's western Kigoma region near the Burundi border. Humanitarian groups claim that Burundian refugees have suffered abuses, including arbitrary arrests by Tanzanian officers in cooperation with Burundian authorities.

Djibouti: At least seven soldiers killed in a rebel attack

On 8 October, Djibouti's military said at least seven soldiers were killed in a clash with an armed group, with the Defence Ministry blaming the Armed FRUD, a splinter group of the Front for the Restoration and Democracy for the attack. The ministry stated: "Despite the fact that our soldiers defended themselves valiantly, this attack caused the death of seven of our soldiers, wounded four and left six missing." The FRUD, a rebel group, largely recruited from the northern Afar community, said it wanted to defend Afar's interests against the Issas, another dominant ethnic group in the country.

Chad: Opposition criticises Deby's appointment as President

On 10 October, General Mahamat Deby was sworn in as the president after a new 24-month transition period was approved in a national dialogue with various rebel groups. Deby would remain in power until October 2024 and will also contest the next elections. The dialogue faced several challenges, including boycott by opposition parties and rebels. The deputy leader of opposition party Les Transformateurs, threatening to establish a parallel government, said Deby's role as president was a case of democratic regression. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Albert Pahimi Padacke resigned from his position as Deby is expected to appoint someone new for the position.

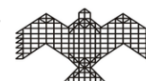
Africa: Decades of efforts to reduce hunger being undone, says FAO official

On 10 October, the FAO assistant director general, also the regional representative for Africa, said impacts of climate change, conflict and the global economic slowdown were reversing decades-long efforts to reduce hunger in Africa. The official opined that Africa lacked resilience and mechanisms to address the shocks of climate change, COVID-19 pandemic or the surge of fuel prices due to the war in Ukraine. The African Union Commissioner for Agriculture suggested that Africa should build a sustainable and resilient food system to protect itself against external shocks.

Europe and the Americas

Belarus and Russia Joint military task force

On 10 October, Belarus President Alexander Lukashenko accused Kyiv of trying to open an alternative war front with Minsk. He accused the Belarusian military and Russian forces of



engaging in the “formation of a joint unit.” The details of the military partnership are still unknown. With the collaboration, there are possibilities of attacks from the Belarus front.

Europe: NATO-UK conduct Joint Warrior maritime exercise in North Sea

On 7 October, NATO reported on the “Joint Warrior” bi-annual exercise held along with the UK in the North Sea. The exercise is scheduled from 1 to 12 October using 45 ships, 30 aircrafts, submarines, crew and naval forces. European member-states including Denmark, France’s FS Somme, German Navy FGS Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Italy, Latvia, Royal Netherlands Navy flagship HNLMS Tromp, Norway’s HNoMS Roald Amundsen and auxiliary vessel HNoMS Maud, Poland, and the US from the trans-Atlantic took part in the exercise. The exercise mainly aims at improving the maritime capabilities in a multi-threat scenario, protection against ground and air attacks, and involved experimentation of unmanned systems.

The UK: Continuing transport worker strike stalls local travel

On 8 October, BBC reported on the ongoing workers strike in the UK where close to 40,000 rail, maritime, and transport employees' of 15 unions have stepped up demands on increase of pay and job conditions. With only five train services running, the government has instructed the people to stop travel and has announced that when the workers return, the services will resume. Similar strikes were held under the RMT, TSSA and drivers' unions which closed 90 per cent of services in the previous week.

Bosnia Herzegovina: Milorad Dodik denies election-rigging claims amidst protest after general elections

On 10 October, thousands of people aligned with the opposition parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina’s Serb-dominated Republika Srpska, and protested against pro-Russian Bosnian Serb leader Milorad Dodik, alleging that the recent election results were rigged. The opposition parties, the Party of Democratic Progress and Serbian Democratic Party, are demanding a recount of ballots in 1000 polling stations claiming that their candidate, Jelena Trivic has been robbed of her victory. Dodik, one of the key figures behind the separatist movement asking for the entity of Republika Srpska and the leader of the largest Serb party SNSD, has denied the allegation.

Ukraine-Russia: Kerch Bridge explosion escalates attacks in Ukraine

On 8 October, an explosion on the Kerch Bridge connecting Crimea and Russia damaged rail lines and parts of roads of the bridge. Russia’s Federal Security Service (FSB) alleged that the Ukraine’s Defence Ministry was behind the attack and around 22,000 kilograms of explosives were detonated in a truck causing it to blow up. So far, the FSB has arrested five Russians, three Ukrainians, and Armenians in connection to the explosion. However, on 10 and 11 October, in a possible response to the damages to the bridge, Russia launched a series of missile attacks on Kyiv and 12 other regions in Ukraine. The attacks targeted critical civilian infrastructure and have drawn severe criticism from Ukraine and the international community.

Turkey: Council of Europe’s advisory body warns against Turkey’s “disinformation” law

On 9 October, the Venice Commission, an advisory body of the Council of Europe, warned that Turkey’s proposed “disinformation” bill could further threaten free speech in the country. The Commission highlighted Article 29 of the proposed bill calling for up to three years of prison sentences for anyone who was found publicly disseminating “false or misleading information” could intensify the crackdown on Turkey’s independent journalism. The Commission also added that previously, similar measures had been used to curb any

form of dissent by journalists or rights defenders. It said: “The Commission is particularly concerned with the potential consequences of such provision, namely, the chilling effect and increased self-censorship, not least in view of the upcoming elections in June 2023.”

Mexico: Mayor killed in town hall attack

On 6 October, Mayor Conrado Mendoza Almeda of San Miguel Totolapan was killed in a shooting incident at the townhall. Several gunmen stormed the townhall, killing at least 17 others including police officers and council workers. Former Mayor Acosta, Almeda’s father, was also killed in his home by the gunmen on the same day. The attack is suspected to be orchestrated by the Los Tequileros gang who have links with a powerful drug cartel. Members of the gang blocked the highway before carrying out the massacre and announced their return to the region. Army and navy units have been deployed to locate the assailants.

Venezuela: At Least 22 people killed due to landslides

On 10 October, the Las Tejerias region experienced a devastating landslide due to flooding of five streams, owing to days of heavy torrential rains. Several people went missing, and 20 bodies were recovered from the debris, bringing the death count to 22. The flooding has destroyed several homes and offices in the 21 sectors of the agro-industrial town, affecting more than 54,000 residents. Rescue operations are underway, along with efforts to reinstate power and services in the area.

Central America: Tropical storm Julia leaves several dead across the region

On 11 October, heavy rains and landslides caused by Hurricane Julia moving across Guatemala and El Salvador, killed at least 28 people. Five Salvadoran soldiers died, with another injured. El Salvador declared a state of emergency and opened 80 storm shelters in response to the events. Five people in Guatemala died due to landslides, while nine people died in Mexico, including a rescue worker. According to the US National Hurricane Centre, the storm is expected to continue causing floods and mudslides across Central America and Southern Mexico.

Haiti: PM requests foreign military assistance to address gang violence

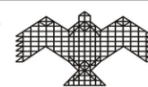
On 8 October, Prime Minister Ariel Henry asked the world for military assistance to curb gang violence, which is rampant in Haiti. The UN noted the request and submitted a proposal to the UNSC for a rapid action task force. The US and the UN are looking into opening a humanitarian corridor to help the people and prevent a larger crisis. On 10 October, public anger materialized as protests where massive rallies were held in the capital city of Port-au-Prince against foreign military interference in the country.

Dominican Republic: Tightens border with Haiti amid internal strife

On 11 October, the Dominican Republic ramped up its border security amid internal chaos in Haiti. Recently, in response to the Haitian government’s plea made to the international community, the Dominican government bought military equipment. Dominican President Luis Abinader told the press, “We would close and block the border. ... It’s very dangerous for the integrity of the Dominican Republic to receive asylum seekers in the country.”

Mexico: Government files lawsuit against US arms sellers

On 11 October, the government filed a lawsuit in Arizona’s federal district court against arms dealers located near the US-Mexico border. This is the second lawsuit being filed by Mexico, where the first one was dismissed earlier in 2022. Foreign Affairs Secretary Marcelo Ebrard said: “We are suing them because clearly there is a pattern, we contend that it is obvious that there is weapons trafficking and that it is known that these guns are going to our country.”



Chile: Environmental regulator presses charges against Lundin Copper for giant sinkhole

On 10 October, Chile's environmental regulator Superintendency of the Environment (SMA) announced that it had filed four charges against Canadian-owned Lundin copper mine for a sinkhole that appeared in July in the Tierra Amarilla area. Two major charges were over extraction of ore in Mina Alcaparrosa, which is verified in the non-compliance with the production rate during 2019, and modification of the underground drainage system close to the water table of the Copiapó River aquifer. The latter charge would generate irreparable environmental damage to the aquifer.

The US: Biden warns of 'nuclear Armageddon'

On 6 October, speaking to the democratic party donors, President Joe Biden, claiming that the Russian military was underperforming, warned that the Russian president was not joking on the potential use of tactical nuclear weapons or biological or chemical weapons. Biden stressed on the possibility of usage of tactical nuclear weapons in its invasion of Ukraine.

The US: Special Forces raids ISIL hideout in government-controlled territory

On 6 October, US Special Forces from US Central Command released a statement acknowledging a military raid to kill Rakkan Wahid L- Shammri, an ISIL official involved in the facilitation of smuggling of weapons and fighters to support ISIL. This was the first raid by the US in a Syrian government-controlled area.

The US: Supreme court dismisses petition to decide rights of fetuses

On 11 October, The US Supreme Court dismissed an appeal demanding overruling of the judgement in Roe versus Wade decision, 1973 which legalized abortion in the USA. The appeal comes as some states in the US have enacted and implemented personhood laws, which grants fetuses a variety of legal rights and considers termination of pregnancy a murder.

The US: Biden announces settlement of Israel-Lebanon maritime border dispute

On 12 October, the US President Joe Biden announced the historic deal signed between Israel and Lebanon to settle down the maritime border dispute. As per the agreement, the disputed area covering 860 squares kilometres including the Karish gas field in the Mediterranean Sea, will fall under Israel's control, and will not be partly shared with Lebanon. A small area known as Qana which is seen as a potential gas field, would remain under Lebanon's control. Lebanon would be allowed to extract gas from the Israeli-controlled area, but on payment of royalties. According to Israel's Prime Minister Yair Lapid, "This is a historic achievement that will strengthen Israel's security, inject billions into Israel's economy, and ensure the stability of our northern border."

The US: Biden issues new guidance curtailing the use of armed drones

On 7 October, President Joe Biden issued new guidance curtailing the use of armed drones outside of war zones as part of a new counterterrorism strategy. As per the new strategy, presidential approval is mandatory before a suspected terrorist is added to the US government's target list for potential lethal action, including drone strikes and special operations raids. Previously, the US Department of Defense and the CIA permitted drone attacks in non-combat zones.

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Reducing Inequality Index 2022: Three Takeaways

On 11 October, OXFAM and Development Finance International (DFI) published “The Commitment to Reducing Inequality Index 2022” report. It ranks 161 countries in their efforts to reduce inequality. According to the report, Norway tops the list followed by Germany and Australia. The bottom three countries are Nigeria, Liberia, and South Sudan. The report recognizes the top 10 countries as the well-off OECD countries that spend more on public services and social protection. However, they rank lower on individual indices. For example, Norway ranks 12th on public services as it spends very little on education and healthcare. The bottom-ranking countries are low-income countries that cannot afford to spend on public services amid their political and internal crises.

Three takeaways

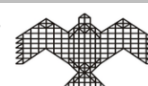
First, three essentials to address inequality. The report highlights three pillars essential to reducing inequality: public services, tax progressivity, and labour rights and wages. Public services refer to social protection, education, and health. Tax progressiveness refers to the implementation of policies and their impact on inequality. Labour rights and wages include the laws and policies concerning labourers and the minimum wage to be given to them. These also include the right to form unions and be offered social protection by law.

Second, the impact of COVID-19 on inequality. The pandemic affected the lower strata of society adversely. Significant money was diverted from social measures to fight the pandemic, and many countries decreased their spending on health to address other issues. During the pandemic, the rich nearly doubled their wealth. Many countries did not increase the tax rates for the rich. There was also a drop in the amount of tax collected. Countries failed to increase the minimum wage in line with rising inflation and GDP. All of this led to an increase in inequality and a reduction in the measures to fight inequality by governments.

Third, recommendations by Oxfam to reduce inequality. The recommendations are broadly divided into two categories: for the government and the international community. This mixed set of recommendations covers all three pillars. They are radical as they aim to drastically reduce inequality to prevent things from getting worse due to the new crisis. All the recommendations can be applied; however, it would not be easy due to different countries having different economies and incomes. Some of the recommendations include increasing income tax on the rich, accelerating spending on public health care and free education, and ensuring that all national policies focus on reducing inequality through the IMF.

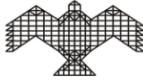
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National Institute of
Advanced Studies



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

KAS has organized its program priorities in India into five working areas: Foreign and Security Policy; Economic, Climate, and Energy Policy; Rule of Law; Political Dialogue focused on Social and Political Change; and Media and Youth. The India Office of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation takes great pride in its cooperation with Indian partner institutions that implement jointly curated projects and programmes.

About Conflict Weekly

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

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