

Conflict Weekly

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A brief review of conflict and peace processes across the world

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The Armenia-Azerbaijan Stalemate

Abigail Miriam Fernandez



(Azerbaijani soldier fixing the flag of Azerbaijan near the town of Lachin. Image Source: Azerbaijan, Karen Minasyan, AFP)

SPECIAL COMMENTARY

Violence in India's State of Manipur: Clash of Perceptions of Marginalization and Victimhood

Nagorno-Karabakh: The Armenia-Azerbaijan negotiations in the US fail to reach a consensus

Abigail Miriam Fernandez

In the news

On 3 May, Armenia and Azerbaijan concluded the four-day US-negotiated peace talks in Washington. The foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan, Ararat Mirzoyan and Jeyhun Bayramov respectively, took part in the negotiations that were mediated by the US Secretary of State, Antony Blinken. A joint press release followed by the meeting stated: “Ministers and their teams have made progress in mutual understanding on some articles of the draft bilateral agreement 'On peace and the establishment of interstate relations,' while positions on some key issues still diverge.”

On 3 May, Blinken stated that Armenia and Azerbaijan have made “tangible progress” during the talks and urged the two ministers to return to their capitals “to share with their governments the perspective that, with additional goodwill, flexibility, and compromise, an agreement is within reach.” He also claimed that a deal could be “within sight, within reach” and commended Armenia and Azerbaijan for coming together to help reach a consensus. He also expressed Washington's willingness to assist the two countries in reaching a peace agreement.

Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev stated that direct negotiation between the two countries was the best way to achieve a peace agreement. He said: “I believe that direct negotiations between the two countries will be more useful and necessary. I think we should continue to move in this direction if, of course, Armenia is also ready for this.” Conversely, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinian stated that he still sees a “huge difference” that needs to be overcome regarding a draft peace agreement for Armenia and Azerbaijan despite the claims of progress at the talks. He also claimed that the main differences were not limited to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict but also about territorial and security guarantees as well.

The Kremlin responded to the talks as well, claiming that any effort to resolve the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan is welcome. However, it also reiterated that any long-term solution should be based on the Russian-brokered peace agreement of 2020.

Issues at large

First, the volatile agreement despite multiple rounds of negotiations. The conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh dates back to 1994. After Soviet disintegration, Nagorno-Karabakh, which has a majority Armenian population opted to join Armenia, igniting a conflict that ended with a ceasefire in 1994. Nagorno-Karabakh has remained a part of Azerbaijan since then, but is governed by separatist ethnic Armenians backed by the Armenian government. Armenia and Azerbaijan have held several rounds of negotiations in the recent past. The two countries have initiated these talks at a bilateral level and also through other international actors. Previously, in October 2022, the two sides agreed to a civilian EU mission alongside their common border. Later in February 2023, the leaders of the two countries revealed that some progress had been made towards a peace agreement. Despite these attempts, the two sides are yet to reach a peace agreement that would settle the issues regarding Nagorno-Karabakh, the demarcation of borders, and the return of prisoners.

Additionally, these negotiations have failed to curb the sporadic skirmishes along the borders.

Second, the increasing role of the US. The US has taken a proactive role in resolving the dispute and achieving lasting peace in the South Caucasus. Blinken has been at the forefront of these diplomatic engagements that have involved meetings and telephonic conversations with the two leaders. Blinken met with the two leaders during the Munich Security Conference in February and has also initiated meetings with several other ministers in the recent past. Additionally, several American diplomats engaged in a shuttle diplomacy between Baku and Yerevan in late April 2023. However, the current US engagement comes as Russia chooses to keep a limited role in the region, despite the ongoing Ukraine war.

Third, the dwindling role of Russia. Since Russia has been preoccupied with the ongoing Ukraine war, its role in this region has been minimal. Russia has maintained that its peacekeeping forces will continue to remain in the region. Moscow has also attempted to initiate negotiations when Russian President Vladimir Putin hosted both countries' leaders in Sochi in 2022. However, Russia's unwillingness to address the concerns of Armenia, its ally, has caused strains in the relations. This, coupled with Azerbaijan gaining political importance in the region, complicates the matter.

In perspective

First, the framework for a peace agreement. Armenia and Azerbaijan have not been able to reach a consensus on each other's concerns despite the numerous rounds of negotiations. These issues are not limited to the dispute over Nagorno-Karabakh but to several other enclaves, exclaves, transport routes, and border demarcations. A peace agreement would have to include a solution to all these concerns for which both sides would need continued cooperation and negotiations.

Second, the prospect of a new mediator. A vacuum has been created with Russia being preoccupied with the Ukraine war. This open space pushes Armenia and Azerbaijan to look to the West as an alternative to Russian mediation. The US and the EU have shown their willingness to support resolving the dispute in the region. However, as of now neither the US nor the EU have shown actual efforts in the region. Whether they choose to play a larger role of a mediator in the region remains to be seen.

Third, Russia's continued role. Although preoccupied with the Ukraine war, Russia is not stepping back from the region. Its role as a mediator between Armenia and Azerbaijan is likely to be reduced because of their larger interest. However, a peace negotiation without Russia is highly unlikely.

SPECIAL COMMENTARY

Violence in India's State of Manipur: Clash of Perceptions of Marginalization and Victimhood

by Bibhu Prasad Routray

Background

Manipur, a landlocked state in India, has always been marked by enormous complexities. Much of it is rooted in the state's peculiar geography and demography. The divide between



the hills and the valley in Manipur sustains a perpetual acrimony between the state's majority Meitei community, who inhabits the Imphal and Jiribam valleys, and the tribes, who live in the hill districts of Senapati, Ukhrul, Kangpokpi, Tamenglong, Churachandpur, Chandel, and Tengnoupal. In recent times, especially since 2015, this has been further aggravated by the state government's alleged promotion of majoritarian Meitei interests, thereby heightening tribal insecurities. In such a scenario, the ethnic riots that engulfed the state between 3 and 8 May 2023, killing 62 people, injuring 230 more, and the displacement of 35000 further civilians was only a matter of time.

Manipur is home to 33 different tribes of principally two ethnicities - the Kuki-Zomi and the Naga - on one hand and the majority, the Meiteis, on the other hand. Given their contrasting worldviews, conflicting claims over resources, and perceptions of marginalization amid the constantly evolving socio-economic realities, the state remains an administrative challenge. Manipur also has a rather long history of insurgency, ethnic riots, and inter- and intra-tribal rivalry; these factors make the state extremely violence-prone. The Meitei community suffers from the frustration of being confined to the valley areas, which form about 10 percent of the state's territory of 22,327 square kilometres, and are barred from acquiring land in the hills. On the other hand, the tribes feel that they remain marginalized, as the state government remains primarily Meitei dominated and caters to the interests of the majority community. Meiteis feel that the limited area in the valley is being further pressured by illegal migration of the Myanmar, Bangladeshi, and people from other Indian states. The Meiteis account for around 53 percent of the total state population which is estimated to be between 32 to 35 lakhs. Tribals, on the other hand, make up more than 40 percent of the population. The Meiteis are divided into three prominent categories. A majority follows Hinduism, while more than 8 percent follow Islam (locally known as Pangals) and three per cent belong to the category 'Scheduled Class (SC)'. Tribals such as the Kuki and Nagas are predominantly Christian.

On 27 March, one of the many faultlines that divide the people of the state came out to the open. A judge of the Manipur High Court, after hearing a plea filed by eight petitioners including an organization named "Meetei (Meitei) Tribe Union," directed the Manipur State government to submit recommendations to the union government for the inclusion of Meitei in the Scheduled Tribe (ST) list. Back in May 2013, the union ministry of tribal affairs had asked the state government to submit a formal recommendation along with the latest socio-economic survey and ethnographic report. However, the Manipur government, perhaps considering the sensitivity of the issues, had failed to do so, which was criticised by the High Court. The court's ruling opened up Pandora's box and is one of the factors responsible for the ethnic clashes.

Principal Actors

Scheduled Tribe Demand Committee Manipur (STDCM):

The STDCM was formed in 2012 by a few individuals around the demand for the inclusion of the Meitei/Meetei community in the ST list. A 1956 constitutional order included 29 STs in Manipur, leaving the Meiteis out of the list. In 1991, they were designated as an 'Other Backward Class' (OBC). The STDCM know that although most Meiteis are Hindus, they still follow the old tribal system.

The STDCM claims that until 1935, the Meiteis were registered in the census of India as ST. From 1949-1950, when the Constitution was drafted, this was changed. The STDCM claims

that the former Assam Chief Minister Gopinath Bordoloi and a political reformer from Meghalaya, JJ Mohan Nichols Roy recommended the ending of ST status for the Meiteis after consulting only ‘three people’, which included two Brahmins and a Sanskritised Meitei.

All Tribal Students’ Union of Manipur (ATSUM) and others:

Among several organisations representing tribal interests in the State, the ATSUM is probably the most vocal and prominent, with a presence in all the hill districts of the State. It claims to represent Manipur’s 33 tribes. It opposes the advances to grant the Meiteis ST status, as it will ‘defeat the very purpose of protecting the tribal people through the reservation’. It considers the demand illegitimate and a ‘direct threat to the existence of the already marginalised, suppressed, and minority tribals of Manipur.’ ATSUM organized a ‘solidarity rally’ on 3 May in all the hill districts of the state under the theme ‘Come now let’s reason together.’ This received support from several other tribal organisations such as the Sadar Hills Tribals Union on Land and Forest (SHITULF), Kuki Inpi Manipur, Tribal Churches Leaders Forum (TCLF), Anal Lenruwl Tangpi/Anal Naga Students' Union (ALT) and Churachandpur District Private Schools & Colleges Association (CDPSCA), the Indigenous Tribal Leaders Forum (ITLF), the Joint Coordination Committee on Tribal Rights, Manipur (JCCOTR-M).

Thousands turned up for the rally. At Churachandpur, the second largest town in the state, people defied prohibitory orders and gathered at the public ground and took out a rally to show their support to ATSUM. They defied the existing prohibitory orders which had been clamped for an indefinite period in the town since the beginning of the violence on 27 April. A venue where Chief Minister N Biren Singh was scheduled to deliver a speech had been vandalised, following which additional security forces were rushed to the town from other parts of Manipur. The otherwise peaceful rally turned violent after conflicting incidents. The violence spread into the other hill districts, the Imphal and Jiribam valleys, with tribal Kuki protesters targeting the Meiteis and the latter targeting the Kukis. Leaving temples, churches, residences, and business establishments of both communities destroyed.

The State Government:

The State government headed by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), headed by N Biren Singh, which won 32 seats of the total 60 in the 2022 state Legislative Assembly elections, has lost much of its credibility in the eyes of the tribes. Of the 60 MLAs, 40 are Meiteis. While the State government’s position on the demand for ST status is not known, the tribals have interpreted a series of steps initiated by the government since 2015 as furthering the Meitei interests and curtailing the land rights of other tribes. Worsening the perceptions of the tribals were statements of a number of Meitei lawmakers of the valley areas who openly endorsed the ST status demand for the Meiteis. These include National People’s Party (NPP) MLA Khuraijam Loken who asserted that the ST tag for the Meitei/Meetei needs to be fulfilled before ‘the arrival of the train in Imphal’. The Chief Minister himself has been accused by a BJP MLA Paolienlal Haokip of being ‘anti-Kuki’ and ‘prejudiced’, having called them ‘foreigners’ and ‘illegal migrants’.

Social media warriors/ Opinion makers:

Prior to the riots and amid the violence, civil society groups, both in the hills and valley, became more vocal and aggressive in pushing their radicalised communal agenda, contributing to the scale of the conflict. Social media relayed the hardened and often inimical



stances before the official clampdown on the internet. In addition to the state and regional media, ill-informed national TV channels branded the Kukis as “illegal immigrants” and “encroachers” and portrayed the violence as Hindu versus Christian. Such media debates aroused communal passions. All this, along with the tweets, Facebook posts, and WhatsApp forwards, turned into an institutional ecosystem of hatred that provoked and sustained riots.

Issues at play

Revivalism:

The demand for ST status for the Meiteis needs to be seen in the context of a thriving, although not yet a revivalism among the Meiteis, who hark back to their Mongoloid, pre-Hindu past. This is rooted in the ‘Sanamahi’ culture and rejects the ‘Hindu cultural hegemony’ and ‘disinformation of history’. These are implicit in the attempts to use the old name of ‘Kangleipak’ for Manipur, to revive old festivals, the old calendar, and the old script. This ‘search for roots’, however, does not have many supporters especially among many Meiteis who feel that their achievement as a general category people in the field of sports, politics, and military underline their evolution towards an influential political as well as economic class. Not surprisingly, a pro-ST status movement ahead of the state legislative assembly elections in 2022 had found no success in the manifestos of either the national or the regional parties. The demand was also rejected by individuals like Rajkumar Meghen, former chief of the United National Liberation Front (UNLF), who felt the ST status would loosen the rich martial history of the community.

The battle over land resources:

The fact that Meiteis are barred from buying land in the hills, whereas the ‘open to buying’-land resources in the valley are becoming more and more scarce in the Imphal and Jiribam valleys, seems to be a major issue. As mentioned before, the STDCM’s demand has only partial support among the Meiteis. Instead, for the majority of the Meiteis, revoking the Manipur Land Revenue and Land Reforms Act, 1961 (MLR&LR Act), enabling Meiteis to purchase land in the hills, can provide a way out. However, past attempts to do so by the state government have elicited a violent response from the tribals and certainly provides no solution. In 2015, the state government’s introduction of a controversial bill to amend the MLR&LR Act to the hill areas led to the eruption of violence in the Kuki areas leading to the death of nine tribal protestors and a protest lasting over 632 days. Without taking inputs from the district councils and the Hill Areas Committee (HAC), large swathes of land in Kuki-Zomi-Hmar inhabited areas in the hill regions were declared as Reserved Forest (RF), Protected Forest (PF), Wildlife Sanctuary (WS), and Wetlands. This was followed by eviction drives against Kuki as “illegal encroachers.” This has resulted in agitations by the Kukis, the most recent being on 10 March. Furthermore, Kukis allege that three churches in Imphal were razed to the ground after being termed illegal structures.

Myanmarese illegal migrants and poppy cultivation:

The Chief Minister has accused the Kukis of sheltering Myanmarese nationals who have allegedly entered the state since the February 2021 military coup. The state’s intelligence department as well as right wing organisations allege that Myanmarese nationals as well as the Kuki militants, have participated in the agitations and the violence. The state government has also claimed that the hill areas are being used for poppy cultivation which is often used for opium production by the Kukis. The latter reject all these allegations. In addition, Manipur’s drug problem is principally sourced from the neighbouring Golden Triangle region comprising Myanmar, Laos, and Thailand. While the verification of these charges remains a

challenge, it is a fact that Manipur's government's March 2023 decision to rescind the truce with the Kuki National Army (KNA) and the Zomi Revolutionary Army (ZRA) has not gone down well with the Kukis. The Kukis allege that the poppy is grown in the Naga areas, which is difficult to verify, given the land in the tribal areas is owned by village chiefs and is not demarcated. From 2016 to 2021 the extent of land utilized to grow poppy has increased more than three times from 1,853 to 6,742.8 acres. Of this, only 3,200 acres of poppy cultivation were destroyed in 2022. No one has ever been arrested or prosecuted for growing poppy.

Future Trajectory

Violence has subsided in Manipur. However, there is no solution in sight to the wide-ranging issues that fueled the riots. Moreover, the violence has further deepened the divides between the Meiteis and the Kukis. Since the state government and the police forces are seen as being biased towards the Meiteis, their ability to establish peace and oversee its management by initiating dialogue between the two communities is limited.

Manipur needs a neutral and impartial intervention, which is lacking at the moment. Thus, all that is achievable currently through the deployment of central security forces is negative peace, i.e. absence of any large-scale violence. Positive peace that requires the accommodation of genuine aspirations by using constitutional provisions could therefore remain challenged in the coming months.

Issues in Peace and Conflict This Week: Regional Roundups

Rishika Yadav, Nithyashree RB, Subiksha S, Taffy Tonia A, Immaculine Joy Paul, Jerry Franklin, Varsha K and Sreeja JS

East and Southeast Asia

China: Canadian diplomat expelled in retaliation

On 10 May, the BBC reported on Beijing expelling Canada's consul in Shanghai in response to Ottawa's expulsion of a Chinese diplomat accused of trying to intimidate a Canadian MP. There were allegations of Chinese political interference in Canada, including targeting an opposition lawmaker and his family. Diplomatic relations between the two countries remain strained since the detention of Huawei Executive Meng Wanzhou in 2018 and Beijing's subsequent arrest of two Canadians on spying charges.

Japan and South Korea: Real-time sharing of North Korean missile data

On 9 May, the Strait Times reported on a potential agreement between Japan and South Korea to link their radars via a US system to share real-time information on North Korea's ballistic missiles. The defence ministers of Japan, South Korea, and the US are expected to reach this agreement on the sidelines of an ASEAN defence summit, The IISS Asia Security Summit: Shangri-La Dialogue, to be held in Singapore in June 2023. The Defence ministers from Japan and South Korea are also likely to meet on the sideline of the Shangri-La Dialogue to be held in Singapore in June 2023. Japan and South Korea are currently linked to the US radar system but not to each other. The three countries agreed in November 2020 to speed up the sharing of information as North Korea launched ballistic missiles at an unprecedented pace.



China: Foreign ministry denies accusations of maritime militia disrupting the ASEAN-India naval exercise

On 8 May, China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs denied allegations of its maritime militia, that it claims doesn't exist, intentionally entering the South China Sea, where India and the ASEAN countries, including Vietnam, Thailand, Philippines, Indonesia, and Brunei, participated in a maritime exercise. Meanwhile, the Indian authorities confirmed the presence of at least five Chinese militia boats followed by a Chinese research vessel which interrupted the exercise and claimed that their drill pattern was broken. The two-day sea phase, hosted by the Indian and Singaporean navies, marks the first ASEAN-India Maritime Exercise.

Myanmar: Crisis worsens as military carries out attacks

On 6 May, in Myinmu township, at least 530 houses were set on fire, displacing many residents in the Sagaing region. Troops raided Htoke Taw village, killing one person and injuring two others. The troops shelled the village as locals were trying to extinguish the flames. The military regime has imposed strict restrictions on foreigners travelling to specific towns in Myanmar as criminal gangs based in China and Thailand have swamped the country's border towns. Despite international pressure, the junta continues violent attacks against civilians and resistance groups.

South Asia

India: Five soldiers killed in J&K

On 5 April, five soldiers were killed in an explosion during a battle with militants in the Rajouri-Poonch area of the Jammu division in J&K. The incident happened when security personnel were searching for the attackers who ambushed and killed five soldiers on 20 April. The People's Anti-Fascist Front (PAFF) had previously claimed responsibility.

Pakistan: Trilateral meeting in Islamabad with China and Afghanistan

On 7 May, China, Afghanistan, and Pakistan agreed to strengthen trilateral cooperation on security and counterterrorism during a meeting of foreign ministers in Islamabad. The Taliban called for Chinese investments in return for its mineral reserves, including copper and lithium. The Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed its interest in investing in Afghanistan. Additionally, the three countries pledged to strengthen counterterrorism cooperation. China and Pakistan are supporting the Taliban-led Afghan government to enhance capacity building to deal with "terrorist" actors.

Pakistan: Imran Khan's arrest sparks protests

On 9 May, Pakistan's former Prime Minister Imran Khan was arrested in a corruption case. His arrest followed months of political crisis and came hours after the country's powerful military rebuked him for alleging a senior officer of involvement in a plot to kill him. The arrest sparked protests across several cities in the country, including Islamabad, Karachi, Lahore and Peshawar. Police used water cannons and tear gas to disperse protesters.

Central Asia, The Middle East, and Africa

Yemen: Clashes between government forces and Houthi rebels

On 6 May, Arab News reported on the clashes between Yemen's government forces and Houthi rebels resulting in casualties on both sides. Despite the UN involvement, the Houthi rebels continue to attack civilians. Meanwhile, Sami Hemaïd, the Yemeni head of the Saudi-funded Masam demining programme in Hodeidah, reported that Houthis have laid

mines extensively in the western province of Hodeidah. The attack was the latest in a series of attacks in Taiz, which could further hinder the ongoing international attempts to resolve the conflict.

Israel: Air strikes on Gaza and retaliation

On 10 May, Al Jazeera reported on Israeli air strikes on Gaza for the second consecutive day. The strikes targeted multiple spots of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) movement, killing at least six Palestinians. Gaza responded to the attack by rocket fire, killing at least 15 people. Israeli forces claimed the attack was to assassinate three PIJ commanders.

Yemen: Floods cause multiple fatalities

On 9 May, the Yemen National Meteorological Centre (YNMC) warned of severe rainfall and flooding across the central and northern highlands. The Arab News reported that 24 people died in the floods. Local media outlets reported multiple casualties and significant property damages. Previously, the agrometeorological early warning bulletin of the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) had warned about threats to mountainous and coastal areas.

Sudan: 10,000 flee to neighbouring Central African Republic amidst clashes

On 7 May, UN officials stated that around 9,700 people from Sudan had moved to the Central African Republic owing to the conflict between the Rapid Support Force (RSF) and the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF). According to the officials, the numbers are expected to increase, and more than half the population needs humanitarian assistance and protection. Meanwhile, on 5 May, the US President, Joe Biden, imposed sanctions against Sudan, calling the savagery a tragedy and a betrayal of its people. Biden stated that the brutality was an "unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the US."

Sudan: 16 dead in ethnic clashes followed by imposition of curfew

On 9 May, Africanews quoted Sudan's Suna news agency's report on the death of at least 16 people in the ethnic clashes that broke out on 8 May between the two groups, Hausa and Nuba. The Governor declared a curfew in the White Nile state. The clashes are not related to the ongoing power tussle; it's rather a regular conflict between farmers and herders over access to water and land. The Hausa group claims they were discriminated against based on an ancestral law prohibiting them from owning lands. Access to land is a crucial issue as agriculture and livestock account for 43 per cent of jobs and 30 per cent of GDP. With a shrunken security apparatus since the coup in 2021, there are recurring instances of inter-ethnic and inter-tribal conflicts in the country.

Rwanda: Floods and landslides kill more than 130 people

On 4 May, BBC reported that at least 130 people died in heavy floods and landslides in Rwanda's northern and western provinces. The report quoted Rwanda's public broadcaster, RBA, which stated that the casualties are expected to rise owing to the intensity of the rising flood waters. The neighbouring Uganda also had casualties followed by landslides. The Rwandan government has started relief measures, including aiding the burial of the dead and providing supplies to devastated victims. Rwandan weather authorities attributed climate change to the unusual rains and flooding in recent years. According to the authorities, the downpour will likely extend throughout the month.

Nigeria: 25 people kidnapped from church in north-west part of the country

On 9 May, the Bege Baptist church in Chikun, located in north-west Nigeria's Kaduna state,



was attacked by gunmen and at least 25 members were abducted. According to an official from the Christian Association of Nigeria, at least 40 people were kidnapped, among which 15 managed to escape. Although mass kidnappings by criminal gangs have been found to be rampant in the last two years, these events are not connected to the Islamist militants who operate actively in parts of northern Nigeria.

Democratic Republic of Congo: Devastating flood affects dozens

On 9 May, Africanews reported the ongoing search for countless people missing in the floods caused by heavy downpours in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. The villages are destroyed, and bodies are being retrieved. A Congolese government spokesperson, Patrick Muyaya, said that the latest death toll in the affected villages had reached 401. Greenpeace Africa, an environment protection organization, emphasized "the necessity for the authorities to work on a national development plan focusing strongly on the risk of flooding in certain areas of the country." On 6 May, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres noted the grave implications of climate change and its impact on countries with little contribution to global warming.

Europe and the Americas

Germany: Federal government debates funding for the support of refugees

On 9 May, Deutsche Welle reported on a debate in Germany between the federal and state governments on increasing the financial support for asylum seekers and refugees. Germany reported an increase in asylum seekers of 78 per cent as the war in Ukraine persists. Finance Minister Christian Lindner calculated that the federal government contributed EUR 29.84 billion in 2022, and EUR 26.65 billion has been earmarked for this year. It is also paying EUR five billion in social benefits for people who have fled from other countries. German Chancellor Olaf Scholz has suggested pushing refugees back to Moldova and Georgia by declaring them safe for refugees.

Russia: New wave of drone and missile strikes against Ukraine

On 8 May, Russia launched a fresh wave of 60 drones along with missile strikes. It marked the fourth attack in eight days on Kyiv. It comes just before Russia celebrates its Victory Day, a major public holiday commemorating the defeat of Nazi Germany in 1945. The latest Russian raids lasted more than four hours and witnessed Iranian-made Shahed drones circulate across the country. Kyiv's Mayor Vitaliy Klitschko stated that nearly 36 drones were destroyed. In the Black Sea port city of Odessa a warehouse with humanitarian aid was destroyed by missile attacks.

Russia: Putin addresses Russian troops on the Victory Day

On 9 May, Russian President Vladimir Putin addressed the Russian troops fighting in Ukraine during the Victory Day parade. The parade had 3,000 soldiers and less military hardware than in the past. He justified the invasion of Ukraine and accused "Western Globalist Elites" of provoking conflicts. Putin said Russia's future rests on soldiers fighting in Ukraine, calling it a "real war" unleashed against Russia by the West.

Canada: Wildfires threatens the livelihood

On 7 May, the National Public Radio (NPR) reported that the fire and rescue service battled wildfires in Edmonton, Alberta. A state of emergency was declared after more than 110 wildfires forced 24,000 people to leave the province. In neighbouring northeastern British Columbia, two quickly spreading wildfires forced multiple residents to evacuate their homes

The chairman of the Peace River Regional District, Leonard Hiebert, warned that the high winds would increase the blaze and urged people to evacuate the area immediately. A third wildfire in British Columbia in the Teare Creek region forced residents near the village of McBride to evacuate the place.

The US: Migration chaos following the end of Title 42

On 8 May, USNews reported that the recent rise of migrants at the US-Mexico border in Brownsville, Texas, highlights immigration issues as the US prepares to terminate its Title 42 policy (A policy that deterred migrants seeking asylum on public-health grounds). US Customs and Border Protection officials have been facilitating the expulsion of 30,000 migrants, mainly from Venezuela, in the past few weeks. In a visit to southern Texas, Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas said: "We've been preparing for quite some time and we are ready. What we are expecting is indeed a surge. And what we are doing is planning for different levels of a surge; the situation at the border is extremely challenging." The administration of US President Joe Biden has also been increasing Immigration and customs enforcement flights to expel people from the country. In response, the federal government has given funds to communities to help them deal with the increase in migrants.

US: The looming threat of default

On 9 May, the Hill reported that the US economy is heading towards a looming threat of default, as the country passed its borrowing limit earlier this year. The Treasury Department has now stated that it could run out of ways to stave off a default by 1 June and that the lawmakers and the White House are struggling to decide how to lift the USD 31.4 trillion debt ceiling and skirt default. Republicans want to hike the debt limit and implement spending cuts, while the White House has pushed for a "clean" increase. One recommended solution is to use a clause in the 14th Amendment of the US Constitution which some legal scholars believe could be interpreted as unconstitutional. This would allow President Joe Biden to direct the Treasury to continue issuing debts to meet the expenditures without an increase or suspension of the ceiling. However, the move would likely spark a legal challenge. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen has warned that using the 14th Amendment would trigger a "constitutional crisis" and stressed that the Congress should take action before such a move.

About the authors

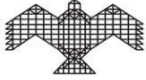
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About NIAS-International Peace Research Initiative(IPRI)

National Institute of
Advanced Studies



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 researches 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



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