

Conflict Weekly

An initiative by NIAS-IPRI and KAS India Office

A brief review of conflict and peace processes across the world

15 September 2021, Vol.2, No.24

Protests in Europe and Brazil, and an impending humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan

Joeana Cera Matthews, Lokendra Sharma, and Abigail Miriam Fernandez



Brazil has been witnessing pro and anti-Bolsanaro protests during the recent weeks. (Image Source: EPA-EFE-SCMP)

Europe: Protests triggered by COVID-19, climate change and homophobia

In the news

On 11 September, a multitude of protests and marches took place across Europe. Polish healthcare workers marched in Warsaw demanding better pay and work conditions. In response, Health Minister Adam Niedzielski said: "...if at this moment we have a budget for health that is 120 or 130 billion zlotys and there is a demand to increase that by 100 billion... it goes completely beyond the bounds of good sense and reason."

On the same day, thousands marched in Serbia urging the government to increase efforts to prevent industrial pollution. Responding to the march, Serbian Prime Minister Ana Brnabic said: "only since 2014, Serbia, despite all the problems and difficulties, has found time for such an important topic." Hundreds of people also gathered in Madrid calling for better protection of LGBT rights.

Issues at large

First, climate change and pandemic as primary triggers. One of the major triggers is climate change. Many countries in Europe are either preparing for elections (like Germany) while others have just finished with their elections (like Norway); in both countries, climate change is a major election issue. The Serbian protesters, while expressing discontent in the governmental efforts, also denounced plans of developing a lithium mine. In Germany, a group of youngsters who are on the third week of their hunger strike claim that German political parties aren't conscious enough of the environmental crisis. Adoption of new measures by countries across Europe to reduce the pandemic's spread is another major trigger to the protests. Such protests made thousands gather in the Netherlands, Greece, Poland, and Turkey. While Greek protesters clashed with police forces over their demonstration against mandatory vaccinations, the Dutch protesters rallied under the slogan "Unmute Us" dissenting against the pandemic-induced nightlife ban. The French health pass protests, however, saw a reduced turnout on its ninth consecutive weekend.

Second, other protest issues. Another widespread trigger is that of gender. The past months have seen a series of homophobic attacks in Spain, while other regions of Europe remain concerned about gender rights. Spain also witnessed a separatist march on La Diada (National Day of Catalonia), wherein thousands of Catalans rallied for their independence from Spain. The surging prices of electricity across Europe have also led to several protests in the region.

Third, the background. The increasing heatwaves, floods, and other natural disasters have hit the conscience of both the people and the governments. Focus continues on climate change, as well as efforts to reduce its impact. Gender and gender rights are also coming to the forefront all over Europe.

Fourth, governmental responses. In a step addressing the Spanish homophobic attacks, Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez chaired a meeting to discuss reducing hate crimes which have grown by 9 per cent a year since 2014. The Dutch government, after deliberations on easing COVID-19 restrictions, announced on 14 September that most social-distancing requirements would be dropped by 25 September. With regard to the raging electricity prices, the Spanish government adopted emergency measures that would channel profits from energy companies to consumers and help cap increasing gas prices. Poland's Health Minister, however, dismissed the health workers' claims, saying their demands were expensive and unrealistic. In Serbia, the lithium mine development – considered environmentally damaging by Serbs – is an economic booster to the government.

In perspective

The continuing protests indicate that Europeans are yet to come to terms with the pandemic restrictions and new governmental measures. The issue of climate is an immediate one in Europe. Green parties across the region have been pressurizing governments to take initiatives towards achieving the region's prescribed climate goals.

The triggers to the protest are issues that need long-term solutions and will affect the quality of life. It is important that the EU and the regional governments address these issues with the utmost gravity.

Brazil: Protestors call for the impeachment of Bolsonaro

In the news

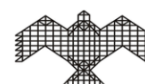
On 12 September, hundreds marched in various Brazilian cities, including Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo, to protest against President Bolsonaro. Organized by the Free Brazil Movement (MBL) and other conservative groups, protestors demanded the impeachment of Bolsonaro over his regime's disastrous response to the pandemic and attempts to subvert the country's democratic institutions.

Issues at large

First, Bolsonaro's unpopular policies and decisions. Even since assuming office in January 2019, President Bolsonaro has been embroiled in various controversies. These includes targeting indigenous peoples, deforestation and wildfires in the Amazon rainforest, disastrous handling of COVID-19 pandemic, which killed lakhs, efforts at undermining the country's democratic institutions and processes, and the faltering economy. The brewing discontent against him has been reflecting in his approval ratings, which have consistently fallen over the last few months.

Second, the polarisation in society. Aware of the rising sentiment against him, Bolsonaro led massive rallies on Brazil's Independence Day on 7 September in an attempt to drum up support among his right-wing constituency. On the same day, anti-Bolsonaro protests were also organized across the country. Elaborate security arrangements had to be placed to ensure both camps do not cross paths only reflect society's level of polarisation.

Third, Bolsonaro's tiff with the democratic institutions — judiciary, Parliament, and the electoral machinery. While Bolsonaro has shared an uneasy relationship with the judiciary since he assumed office, his attacks on the judiciary have become more intense this year. He has called on the Senate to impeach Supreme Court Justice Alexandre de Moraes, who has opened multiple investigations against him. He is also unhappy with the judiciary for exonerating former President Lula da Silva, making the latter eligible for the 2022 polls. This unhappiness was publicly displayed on 7 September when Bolsonaro and his supporters made attempts to intimidate the judiciary. Bolsonaro has also targeted the Superior Electoral Court (TSE), which is responsible for overseeing the upcoming Presidential elections in 2022, as well as the Congress. His call for a return to paper ballots from the currently used electronic voting



system has been rejected by Brazil's Congress, while the TSE has launched a probe over Bolsonaro's allegations of election fraud.

Fourth, the upcoming 2022 elections. Speaking to his supporters on 7 September in reference to the 2022 polls, Bolsonaro asserted: "Only God can remove me. I'm only coming out of this jailed, dead or victorious." While his approval ratings have fallen, his main contender, former President Lula da Silva from the leftist Worker's Party (PT), has topped pre-election survey polls. The 12 September protests have complicated this two-way contest by advocating a third way embodied in the slogan: "Neither Bolsonaro nor Lula".

In perspective

First, while the recent protests by conservative groups and their position on a third way bereft of Bolsonaro or Lula da Silva have added a new dimension to the 2022 elections, it is likely that the presidential race will largely remain a two-way contest. The 7 September protests drew a less than expected crowd due to the absence of Lula's PT is an early sign. Whether or not MBL will join forces with PT in the run-up to the 2022 elections is to be seen.

Second, Bolsonaro appears to have learnt a lesson or two from former US President Donald Trump, who lost the 2020 elections to Joe Biden. While Trump had intensified his 'elections were stolen' campaign only after his loss became evident, Bolsonaro has started preparing almost a year before elections take place in Brazil. It is likely that he may impede a peaceful transfer of power if he loses.

Third, Brazil has entered into a very tumultuous period with stark domestic polarization, intensifying rivalry between the executive and other institutions of democracy, devastating pandemic, faltering economy, environmental destruction and wildfires in the Amazon. The domestic situation is only going to get worse as the 2022 elections get closer.

Afghanistan: UN warns of a mass humanitarian crisis, while donors pledge USD one billion in aid

In the news

On 13 September, the United Nations warned that millions of Afghans could run out of food before the arrival of winter, and one million children are at risk of starvation and death if their immediate needs are not met. While speaking at a high-level UN conference convened to address the crisis, Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said: "The people of Afghanistan need a lifeline." He added: "Let us be clear: This conference is not simply about what we will give to the people of Afghanistan. It is about what we owe." At the end of the meeting, UN humanitarian chief Martin Griffiths announced that donor countries pledged a total of USD 1.2 billion in aid for Afghanistan's humanitarian crisis. Meanwhile, the World Food Programme (WFP) said: "A humanitarian crisis of incredible proportions is unfolding before our eyes. Conflict combined with drought and covid-19 is pushing the people of Afghanistan into a humanitarian catastrophe."

On 14 September, Taliban's acting foreign minister Amir Khan Muttaqi welcomed the international community's humanitarian aid pledge for Afghanistan, stating: "We ensure that the aid will be distributed transparently to the people," and called on other countries and institutions to support Afghanistan in the development sector, in education and other areas.

On 8 September, China announced that it was offering USD 31 million worth of food and health supplies, including coronavirus vaccines, to Afghanistan. Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said that Afghanistan is "standing at the crossroads," as it faces a humanitarian crisis, including the COVID-19 pandemic. On 12 September, Pakistan delivered another consignment of relief goods, including food and medical supplies, the fourth consignment of the relief goods to Afghanistan since the Taliban took over. Additionally, on 13 September, the United States announced nearly USD 64 million in additional humanitarian assistance for the people of Afghanistan, funded by the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and the US Department of State.

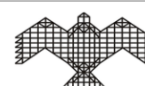
Issues at large

First, the impending humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan. Even before the Taliban takeover, Afghanistan has been impacted by multiple calamities, including severe drought and famine affecting a third of the country. The World Food Programme has warned that food supplies could start running out, pushing the 14 million food-insecure Afghans to the brink of starvation. Additionally, since 2021, more than 550,000 people have been displaced from their homes as the country's economy and health, education, and other services remain in shambles.

Second, the reluctance to provide humanitarian assistance. Afghanistan is one of the world's most aid-dependent countries, where donor countries have invested USD 65 billion in grants since 2002. The Taliban's return to power has triggering diplomatic isolation and cut off the international aid that drove a large portion of the Afghan economy. Although the Taliban has tried to portray a reasonable outlook to the international community, the political uncertainty and suspicions over how the Taliban's rule have only complicated the matters, with the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and other countries cut off Afghanistan's access to international funds.

Third, the logistic of aid distribution. The amount raised will go directly to or routed through the United Nations and non-governmental partner organizations still operating in the country and not to the Taliban. It is unclear how aid agencies and their workers will operate in the Taliban-ruled Afghanistan, given that the Taliban could monitor and exert influence over aid agencies and humanitarian workers.

Fourth, aid as a political tool. Apart from maintaining diplomatic ties with the Taliban, countries like China and Pakistan are using financial aid to legitimize and strengthen the regime and using it as a means of legitimizing the Taliban's rule in Afghanistan.



In perspective

First, the expected humanitarian crisis. The impending humanitarian crisis is an inevitable situation, given that Afghanistan has been ravaged by decades-long wars. Thus, despite the politics around aid, Afghanistan was bound to face a massive humanitarian crisis. The international community cannot turn a blind eye to another war-induced humanitarian catastrophe.

Second, the Taliban's capacity to address the crisis. Despite the Taliban being more self-financed and is fed with assistance from countries like China and Pakistan, the group will not be able to manage the situation without foreign assistance. Additionally, those who will be affected continue to be the Afghans who are already in a dire state.

Also, from around the world

By Apoorva Sudhakar and Abigail Miriam Fernandez

Peace and Conflict from East and Southeast Asia

China: Court dismisses case which had triggered #MeToo movement

On 14 September, a district court in Beijing dismissed a sexual harassment case against TV host Zhu Jun. The complainant, Zhou Xiaoxuan had accused Zhu in 2018, alleging that he had assaulted her in 2014 while she was interning; this had been a trigger for the beginning of a #MeToo movement in China. However, the court dismissed the case saying the evidence against Zhu was insufficient; following this Zhou reacted saying: "I feel I cannot do anything anymore... these last three years of my life have been so tough, I can't do another three years." Meanwhile, Zhu had previously filed a case against Zhou for allegedly spoiling his reputation and mental health; the case is pending.

China: The UK bans Chinese ambassador from Parliament

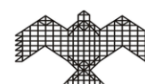
On 15 September, Chinese ambassador Zheng Zeguang who was due to be present at a Commons session in the UK Parliament was barred saying he cannot enter the Parliament as long as sanctions on several British MPs are intact. The Chinese embassy termed the decision "despicable and cowardly." This is the latest development as both countries have been imposing sanctions back and forth since the UK placed some Chinese officials under sanctions for the rights abuses in Xinjiang.

Hong Kong: Police suggest adding new offences under national security law

On 14 September, the security secretary said the Hong Kong police was deliberating on including new offences under the national security law. The secretary told a weekly publication that the officials were considering including espionage as an offence as enough attention had not been given to it. The secretary outlined that the proposed changes are expected to be finished by the next term of the legislature.

North Korea: Pyongyang fires ballistic missiles into the East Sea

On 15 September, the South Korean Joint Chiefs of Staff said that North Korea had fired two ballistic missiles into the East Sea. The specifications of the missiles have not been identified. The development comes after North Korea, on 13 September, claimed to have tested a new long-range cruise missile. Meanwhile, the South Korean, Japanese and US nuclear envoys were scheduled to meet following the missile test. The envoys were expected to discuss possible resumption of talks with North Korea.



Myanmar: NUG loses faith in the international community for democracy in the country

On 14 September, The Irrawaddy reported that the National Unity Government (NUG) had said that the international community cannot be relied on to support a democracy in Myanmar. On 13 September, the NUG released a statement: "With the failure of various political and diplomatic efforts to stop the military's brutality in the past eight months, local communities are forced to form defense forces and to defend themselves from continuous military atrocities." Separately, the NUG said 1,710 junta troops were killed and 630 injured in the past three months in clashes with armed wings of ethnic communities, and civilian resistance fighters. Meanwhile, on 14 September, Aung San Suu Kyi attended her hearing; the verdict is expected in the coming week.

The Philippines: 17 killed in Typhoon Conson

On 12 September, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council said 17 people had died and seven were missing as Typhoon Conson passed over The Philippines. News reports suggest that over 313,000 people had been affected in the disaster and nearly 9,000 buildings were damaged.

Peace and Conflict from South Asia

India: Haryana government talks to farmers over NH-44 blockade

On 14 September, the Haryana government formed a special committee to initiate talks with farmers on opening passage to the Delhi border after a meeting was chaired by the Chief Minister. This move came just six days before the Supreme Court is scheduled to hear a petition regarding the ongoing farmers' blockade of NH-44. Meanwhile, the Sonipat district administration held a meeting with a section of farmer union leaders, urging them to vacate the portion of NH-44 on the Singhu-Kundli border.

India: Top Maoist leader arrested in Odisha

On 14 September, a top Maoist leader was arrested in Odisha's Koraput district during a search operation by security forces. According to the police, the arrest of such a high-ranked Maoist cadre is a first in the last 20 years. Dubashi Sankar, a leader of the state military commission (SMC) of the outlawed CPI (Maoist), was wanted by the police in Odisha, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana due to his alleged involvement in crimes related to murder and conspiracy to wage war against India.

India: Jammu and Kashmir to implement the Forest Rights Act, 2006

On 13 September, the government in Jammu and Kashmir decided to implement the Forest Rights Act, 2006. Through this measure, the socio-economic status of the tribal and nomadic communities, including Gujjar-Bakerwals and Gaddi-Sippis, in the Union Territory will be elevated. J&K Lieutenant-Governor Manoj Sinha said: "After a wait of more than 14 years, due rights have been conferred upon the tribal community by implementing the Forest Rights Act, 2006, keeping in mind the basic spirit of social equality and harmony as guided by the Constitution of our country and Parliament."

India: Central government and NSCN(K) Niki group enter a one-year ceasefire agreement

On 8 September, the Central government entered into a one-year ceasefire agreement with the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (K) Niki Group. According to the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), the agreement would boost the Naga peace process, under the guidance of the Union Home Minister, to accomplish Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of an insurgency-free and prosperous northeast. Previously, the central government signed a framework agreement with the NSCN-IM and ceasefire agreements with other Naga groups, the NSCN (NK), NSCN(R) and NSCN(K)-Khango.

Pakistan: Islamabad released dossier accusing India of training terrorists

On 12 September, Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi said that Pakistan had prepared a dossier on alleged "human rights violations in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK)." The Minister said the dossier includes 32 reports by human rights organizations and 14 reports prepared by Pakistan. The dossier contains chapters on the alleged war crimes by the Indian army and its genocidal actions, the disappointment of Kashmiris and how a local resistance and on how UN Security Council resolutions, international laws and humanitarian laws were being violated through efforts to bring about alleged demographic change in the valley. Further, the dossier accuses India of training ISIS fighters in five alleged training camps in Gulmarg, Raipur, Jodhpur, Chakrata, Anupgarh and Bikaner.

Sri Lanka: New Zealand grants refugee status to Sri Lankan over Easter bombings funding accusations

On 14 September, Radio New Zealand reported that a man who may have unknowingly helped funnel money to terrorists behind the Easter bombings in Sri Lanka has been granted refugee status in New Zealand. This decision came after the Immigration and Protection Tribunal found that the man was not involved in supporting terrorist goals and was unaware of who the money went to or came from. Additionally, the tribunal ruled their evidence as "credible, consistent and compelling."

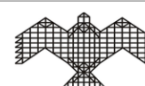
Peace and Conflict from Central Asia, Middle East and Africa

Kazakhstan: Police dismantle protesters' tents outside Chinese consulate

On 14 September, several protesters gathered outside the Chinese consulate for the 20th night, demanding the release of their relatives who had reportedly been taken to the alleged re-education camps in China's Xinjiang province. However, the police dismantled the protester's tents, maintaining that they were set up despite police orders prohibiting the erection of tents outside the consulate. Such protests have become common in Kazakhstan as the protesters call on the authorities for an intervention into the problems faced by Xinjiang's ethnic Kazakh populations.

Israel-Palestine: Over Palestinian 1,000 prisoners to go on hunger strike

On 14 September, the Palestinian Authority said that as many as 1,400 Palestinian prisoners in Israeli prisons would go on a hunger strike against the conditions of their detention. The threat came after six prisoners escaped from a high-security Israeli prison on 6 September;



following this, angry prisoners set fire in some jails and several were transferred and had their belongings confiscated. The hunger strike is expected to begin on 17 September.

Yemen: 43 Houthis killed in airstrike led by Saudi Arabia

On 14 September, a source from the Media Center of the Armed Forces in Marib said that 43 Houthi rebels had been Saudi Arabia-led airstrikes in Marib province. The source said nine weapons-mounted vehicles of the Houthis had also been destroyed in the airstrikes. In another development, on 11 September, the Foreign Ministry said humanitarian aid warehouses had been destroyed after the Houthis fired a ballistic missile targeting the Red Sea port. Meanwhile, the Houthis have not yet claimed any attack.

Nigeria: Students freed after two weeks in captivity

On 13 September, Zamfara State Governor said that nearly 70 students who had been abducted by bandits on 1 September, had been released on 12 September. The Governor said gunmen who had repented had assisted in the rescue mission. ABC News cites UNICEF which says that 1,436 students had been abducted in over 10 abductions in the last one year; 16 have died in the attack by the gunmen and 200 are still in captivity.

Niger: Amnesty International report highlights plight of children in the conflict-affected region in the country

On 13 September, Amnesty International released a report outlining the security situation in Niger. The report highlighted the increasing number of children being kidnapped in the Tillaberi region, which borders Mali and Burkina Faso as well. The report held the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) and the Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM) responsible for the abduction and other impacts on children in the region. It further states that in 2021, around 60 children had been killed near the border between the three countries. The report said: "Niger is at a precipice. In parts of the country an entire generation is growing up surrounded by death and destruction."

Somalia: Nine killed in a suspected suicide bombing

On 14 September, at least nine people were killed and 11 injured in a suspected suicide bombing in Mogadishu. The deceased include six security personnel and three civilians. According to a police officer, the suicide bomber blew himself near a shop close to a military post. Meanwhile, Al-Shabaab claimed the attack. The Prime Minister said: "This barbaric act shows how Al-Shabaab terrorists are thirsty for the indiscriminate bloodshed of the Somali people, forcing us to cooperate in fighting terrorism."

Peace and Conflict from Europe and the Americas

BREXIT: Britain delays post-Brexit import trade controls

On 14 September, Britain stated that it would push back its implementation of full post-Brexit borders checks on goods from the European Union for the second time. BREXIT Minister David Frost stated: "We want businesses to focus on their recovery from the pandemic rather than have to deal with new requirements at the border, which is why we've set out a pragmatic new timetable for introducing full border controls," adding, "Businesses will now have more time to prepare for these controls which will be phased in throughout 2022."

Denmark: Killing of around 1400 dolphins' sparks outrage

On 14 September, the government of the Faroe Islands came under criticism over the culling of more than 1,400 white-sided dolphins in a day, the single biggest hunt in the northern archipelago. In response to the outcry, the government said: "There is no doubt that the Faroese whale hunts are a dramatic sight to people unfamiliar to the hunts and slaughter of mammals," claiming that "the hunts are, nevertheless, well organized and fully regulated." The practice, "grindadrap" is the hunting of sea mammals, primarily whales, a tradition that has been practised for hundreds of years on the Faroe Islands.

Russia: Mercenary deal in Mali triggers France

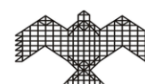
On 14 September, French Defence Minister Florence Parly warned Mali against a deal with Russian private security group Wagner over claims the country's military government is close to hiring 1,000 Russian mercenaries. He said: "If the Malian authorities entered into a contract with Wagner, it would be extremely worrying and contradictory, incoherent with everything that we have done for years and we intend to do to support the countries of the Sahel region." Meanwhile, spokesperson for the Malian defence ministry stated: "Mali intends to diversify its relationships in the medium term to ensure the security of the country," adding, "We haven't signed anything with Wagner, but we are talking with everyone."

Cuba: A panel of scientists dismiss allegations of 'Havana Syndrome'

On 13 September, a technical report prepared by a group of experts from the Cuban Academy of Sciences (ACC) denied the existence of the so-called "Havana Syndrome." The report stated: "the evidence used to support the 'mystery syndrome' narrative is not scientifically acceptable in any of its components" and that said narrative "has survived thanks to a biased use of science, in which dissenting points of view have been suppressed." The "Havana Syndrome" was first reported in 2016 and 2017 after US and Canadian officials complained about suspected electronic weapons causing nausea and headaches while also reportedly causing brain damage.

Guatemala: Femicides increase by 31 per cent in 2021, according to GAM

On 14 September, Grupo de Apoyo Mutuo (GAM), a humanitarian entity reported that femicides registered in Guatemala increased by 31 per cent between January and August 2021, compared to the same period last year. The report adds that in the eight months of 2021, 396 women were murdered in Guatemala, while 43 femicides were registered in August alone. According to a humanitarian leader, the increase of crimes in Guatemala has as its origin "the



little attention that the authorities give to the threats and intimidations against women, which lead to homicides against them."

Haiti: PM Henry charged with Moise's killing

On 14 September, Prime Minister Ariel Henry has been charged for his alleged involvement in the assassination of President Jovenel Moise. PM Henry has been accused of communicating with a key suspect in the case on the night Moise was killed. Prior to the charges, PM Henry sent a letter seeking the removal of chief Prosecutor Bed-Ford Claude, accusing him of a "serious administrative offence," however, no such move has been made with Claude remaining in his post as he ordered a judge investigating the case to charge the prime minister over his "suspected" involvement in the case.

Colombia: Record number of environmental activists killed in 2020, according to Global Witness report

On 13 September, a report published on Monday by Global Witness, an international human rights group stated that Colombia is the world's most dangerous country for environmental defenders. The report stated that for the second year in a row, Colombia saw the highest number of killings in 2020, with 65 land and environmental defenders murdered, it added, "Global Witness recorded more killings of land and environmental defenders in Colombia in 2020 than anywhere else in the world for the second year in a row. Killings rose sharply from 2017 and 2018, and the country accounted for 29 per cent of all documented killings in 2020."

Peru: Shining Path leader dies in prison, uncertainty about disposing of the body

On 13 September, Peruvian officials were scheduled to discuss what to do with the body of Abimael Guzman, the founder of the Shining Path rebel group, who died in prison on 11 September. This came amid fears that if he were to be buried, his gravesite could become a rallying point for extremists. Meanwhile, Peru's justice minister stated that he hoped to see the body cremated, stating: "The most appropriate thing would be a cremation so there's no place at which certain Peruvians can pay tribute to this person." However, Prime Minister Guido Bellido stated that the decision was left to the public prosecutor's office and that the government would respect its decision.

The US: Blinken defends the Afghan withdrawal

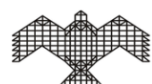
On 13 September, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken defended the Biden administration's decision to withdraw from Afghanistan. During a House hearing that highlighted partisan divisions over America's longest war, Blinken said had President Biden decided to extend the United States' two-decade-long war, it "would have required sending substantially more US forces into Afghanistan to defend ourselves and prevent a Taliban takeover, taking casualties — and with at best the prospect of restoring a stalemate and remaining stuck in Afghanistan, under fire, indefinitely," he added, "There's no evidence that staying longer would have made the Afghan security forces or the Afghan government any more resilient or self-sustaining."

Environment: Almost 90 per cent of the USD 540 billion in global subsidies given to farmers every year are "harmful," says UN

On 14 September, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) called on world governments to reconsider and reorganize their support for their farming sectors. In a report, the UN stated that USD 470 billion of the USD 540 billion (90 per cent) spent on agriculture subsidies globally would need to be changed to be environmentally sustainable and fair. The report states that this agricultural support damages people's health, fuels the climate crisis, destroys nature and drives inequality by excluding smallholder farmers, many of whom are women.

About the authors

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1 September 2021, Vol.2, No.22

The US exit from Afghanistan, the Houthi violence in Yemen, and Hurricane Ida in the US

Abigail Miriam Fernandez, Rashmi BR and Akriti Sharma



The last American soldier leaving the Kabul airport, completing a chaotic American evacuation in Kabul, and leaving Afghanistan to the Taliban after twenty years of fighting. (Image Source: US Central Command/AP/NY Times)

Afghanistan: The US completes its evacuation amid drone and terrorist attacks

[In the news](#)

On 30 August, Gen. Kenneth F. McKenzie Jr., the head of the military's Central Command announced that the US has completed its military withdrawal and evacuation from Afghanistan. He said: "Tonight's withdrawal signifies both the end of the military component of the evacuation, but also the end of the nearly 20-year mission that began in Afghanistan shortly after 11 September 2001."

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A brief review of conflict and peace processes across the world

25 August 2021, Vol.2, No.21

Chaotic evacuation in Kabul, Crimea Summit over seven years of Russian occupation, anti-lockdown protests in Australia, and continuing kidnappings in Africa

Abigail Miriam Fernandez, Sourina Bej, Avishka Ashok and Apoorva Sudhakar



Amidst the threat of terrorist attack, chaos continues outside Kabul Airport as thousands attempt to leave amid the evacuation process. However, Biden has announced sticking to the 31 August deadline for evacuation. (Image Source: Reuters)

Afghanistan: Chaos continues in Kabul airport over evacuation, with threats of terror attacks

[In the news](#)

On 23 August, the US Defence officials stated that the US military evacuated about 11,000 people from the Kabul airport in 24 hours, bringing the total to 37,000 since 14 August. On 24 August, a spokesperson for the European Commission stated: "All the staff who needed to be evacuated have been evacuated." Similarly, other countries, including the UK, Canada, Japan, India, Turkey, Australia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Poland, and Switzerland have evacuated their nationals and Afghans who worked with them.

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11 August 2021, Vol.2, No.19

Protests return to Thailand, Taliban gains more in Afghanistan, Pandemic action triggers protests in Europe, and new Climate Change report warns Code-Red

Aparupa Bhattacharjee, Abigail Miriam Fernandez, Joana Cera Matthews and Rashmi BR



Protests revive in Thailand, triggered by government's inability to handle the pandemic and its impact on the economy (Image Source: Genumu Amarasinghe/Associated Press/NYT)

Thailand: Protests return to the streets, this time triggered by the pandemic

[In the news](#)

On 7 August, thousands of anti-government protesters clashed with the police in Bangkok. They were rallying against the government's failure to handle Covid-19 outbreaks and its impact on the economy. Some protesters were marching, and others formed a convoy of bikes

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18 August 2021, Vol.2, No.20

Return of the Taliban and the fall of Afghanistan

D Suba Chandran



Within a week, the Taliban managed to capture the major provincial capitals of Afghanistan, and take over Kabul and its Presidential Palace. (Image Source: NYT-ZabaKarimi-AP)

Afghanistan: After two decades, the Taliban returns with ease, as the political, military and militia leaderships melt without resistance

[In the news](#)

On 15 August 2021, the Taliban captured Kabul, entered the Presidential Palace. Ashraf Ghani, who was then the President of Afghanistan, fled the country earlier. He was quoted to have said in a social media posting: "The Taliban have won with the judgement of their swords and guns, and are now responsible for the honour, property and self-preservation of their countrymen... They are now facing a new historical test. Either they will preserve the name and honour of Afghanistan, or they will give priority to other places and networks."

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An initiative by NIAS-IPRI and KAS India Office

A brief review of conflict and peace processes across the world

04 August 2021, Vol.2, No.18

Taliban offensive, New Zealand's apology over the Pacific communities, Peru's new problem, and an inter-State clash in India's Northeast

Abigail Miriam Fernandez, Avishka Ashok, Vishnu Prasad, and Wonchibeni Tsopoe

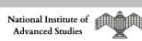


The house of the Afghan defence minister was attacked by the Taliban in Kabul on 3 July. Taliban has been on an offensive in three provinces (Image Source: AP Photo/Rahmat Gul)

Afghanistan: Taliban's offensive reaches Afghanistan's major cities

[In the news](#)

On 1 August, the Taliban escalated its countrywide offensive by continuing assaults in three provincial capitals: Herat, Lashkar Gah and Kandahar. Several commandos were deployed to the western city of Herat, while authorities in the southern city of Lashkar Gah called for more troops to counter the fierce fighting. On the same day, the Taliban also struck the Kandahar airport in southern Afghanistan with at least three rockets. A Taliban spokesperson said: "Kandahar airport was targeted by us because the enemy were using it as a centre to conduct



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28 July 2021, Vol.2, No.17

France's anti-extremism bill, Canada's burning churches, and Tunisia's new political crisis

Sourina Bej, Wonchibeni Tsopoe and Anu Maria Joseph

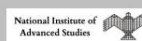


Memorial at a former Kamloops Indian Residential School in Canada where the remains of 215 children were discovered. (Image Source: NYT/Dennis Owen/Reuters)

France: Parliament passes bill aimed at checking Islamic extremism

[In the news](#)

On 23 July, the French Parliament passed the bill strengthening the government's role to check mosques and other religious organizations as part of its fight to prevent Islamic radicalism and defend the republic. The 'Law Reinforcing Respect of the Principles of the Republic' was passed by the National Assembly with 49 votes in favour, against 19. Also known as the anti-separatism bill, it was first approved by the lower house on 16 February 2021.



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21 July 2021, Vol.2, No.16

Floods in Germany, Wildfires in Siberia and the Pegasus Spyware

Sourina Bej, Akriti Sharma and Harini Madhusudan



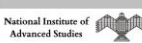
The flood in Germany is its worst natural disaster in more than half a century and comes at a time when the world reels under impacts of extreme weather events. (Image Source: BBC)

Germany: Climate change in focus after floods kill more than 100

[In the news](#)

On 18 July, the German Chancellor Angela Merkel during her visit to Schuld, one of the two regions hardest hit by extreme rainfall in Western Germany, said, the number of such extreme weather events had increased in recent years, adding, "we have to up the pace in the fight against climate change."

On 14 July, in the Ahrweiler district, Rhineland-Palatinate, at least 117 people died after torrents of rainwater collected in the surrounding Eifel mountains and then a flash flood gutted through several villages. About 30,000 are currently without power, drinking water and gas. Along with Germany, Belgium also recorded a death toll of 27, according to the national crisis centre.



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14 July 2021, Vol.2, No.15

Anti-government protests in Cuba, Pro-Zuma protests in South Africa, and remembering the Srebrenica massacre

Lokendra Sharma, Anu Maria Joseph and Harini Madhusudan

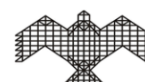
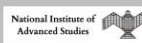


The arrest of former president Jacob Zuma has triggered violence and looting across South Africa. (Image Source: EPA/BBC)

Cuba: Anti-government protests, triggered by COVID economy and structural issues

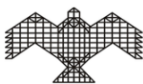
[In the news](#)

On 11 July, thousands of Cubans marched in Havana and Santiago against the communist government led by President Diaz-Canel. The protestors called on Diaz-Canel to step down and also chanted "freedom." Protests were largely peaceful, with some instances of violence and police detentions. On the same day, in a broadcasted address, Diaz-Canel asked: "all the revolutionaries in the country, all the Communists, to hit the streets wherever there is an effort to produce these provocations." Further, the Cuban government blamed the US for fomenting protests in the country.





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About NIAS-International Peace Research Initiative (IPRI)

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

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



About Konrad Adenauer Stiftung

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

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



About Conflict Weekly

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

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