

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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Anti-Bolsonaro protests in Brazil, UK-France fishing row, Talks with the TTP in Pakistan, and Anti-abortion law protests in the US

Porkkodi Ganeshpandian, Sourina Bej, D Suba Chandran, and Sambavi Parthasarathy



Protests against President Bolsonaro in Brazil. (Image Source: Reuters-BBC)

Brazil: Anti-Bolsonaro protests across the country

In the news

On 2 October, thousands of Brazilians gathered across Brazil to protest against President Bolsonaro. The protests were peaceful, displaying messages on posters and inflatable gas canisters. The protests spanned across more than two hundred Brazilian cities, including São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. The protesters highlighted their unhappiness over the handling of the pandemic, dwindling economic opportunities and called for the impeachment of President Bolsonaro.

Issues at large

First, the pandemic mishandling. Brazil has lost over 600,000 lives during the pandemic, the second-highest death toll after the US. Bolsonaro has been accused of promoting crowds at the

height of the pandemic's destructive waves, discouraging the use of masks and other COVID-appropriate behaviour, and not taking adequate steps to ramp up the health sector.

Second, Brazil's spiralling economic woes. The pandemic disrupted the economy; high inflation has made the situation worse. It has impacted the prices of essential goods such as food, electricity and fuel. Unemployment has drastically increased, thus leading to massive poverty and starvation.

Third, the fallouts of pro-Bolsonaro rallies. On Brazil's independence day, pro-Bolsonaro rallies were organized to mobilize supporters. Recent polls indicate Bolsonaro trailing his leftist opponent Luiz Inacio Lula Da Silva. The ongoing anti-Bolsonaro protests are a direct response to the rallies held a month back, expressing the general discontent and opposition of the citizens.

Fourth, the growing discontent against Bolsonaro outside the streets. He has been candid about his disregard for other political institutions of the State, particularly the judiciary. Recently, the Brazilian supreme court has approved several investigations against Bolsonaro. More than a hundred requests have been lodged with the Brazilian Chamber of Deputies to impeach the President.

In perspective

The protests against Bolsonaro are gathering momentum. This could force the right-wing lawmakers in the lower house to support the impeachment of Bolsonaro. However, the opposition is not united. There is a marked hesitancy in the right-wing parties joining the ongoing protests and in the predominantly leftist protesters accepting them into their united front. There is also a silence from the Movimento Brasil Livre (MBL, Free Brazil Movement), which was advocating a third way from Bolsonaro and Lula Da Silva in the protests held in September. Second, the protests indicate a possible change in the upcoming presidential elections in Brazil in 2022. The protests could also unite the heterogeneous population of Brazil such as the indigenous communities and ordinary citizens.

BREXIT: France threatens to curb energy supplies to the UK over restricted fishing rights

In the news

On 6 October, the French fishing fleet owners threatened the Jersey administration, in addition to the UK government, with a two-week deadline to grant them licences to catch in the UK waters. Upon the end of the deadline, the French fleets could block the Channel Tunnel and the ferry port of Calais, preventing imports from entering Britain, before the holidays began. The potential blockade follows after Jersey refused to grant fishing licences to 75 French fishing vessels to access its waters from 30 October.

On 6 October, the French Prime Minister Jean Castex told the Parliament that the UK is not honouring the fishing rights agreement under the Brexit deal. The Prime Minister said: "Britain does not respect its own signature. Month after month, the UK presents new conditions and delays giving definitive licenses ... this cannot be tolerated." Furthermore, France talked tough while hinting at curbing the energy imports through Britain.

Issues at large

First, row intensifies amid fuel shortages. The tension over fishing rights comes in the immediate backdrop of fuels shortage, increasing gas prices, and hoarding of daily essentials in the UK. The escalation followed signs of stockpiling of Christmas products such as frozen turkeys due to fears of empty shelves in Britain. Aldi, one of the biggest daily purchases supply chains in the UK, said it is selling 1,500 frozen turkey crowns a day. The panic buying is followed by two weeks of chaos at the petrol pumps after forecourts ran dry of petrol and diesel because of a shortage of tanker drivers. Amid this, the threat from France to curb energy imports adds to conflict escalation.

Second, the geo-economic tussle over the Channel. France and the UK have been at loggerheads for several months over fishing permits in the Channel Islands. The French fishers have been protesting against the UK system, which requires the EU fishermen to prove prior fishing activities to gain fishing permits. Britain had countered these protests on the ground that the terms agreed in Brexit trade talks support the limited access to the Channel. In this, the Jersey port had become the recent flashpoint when the post-BREXIT regulations were implemented. According to the rules, 41 permits have been issued based on fishing history between 2017 and 2020 to French fishing vessels to operate in Jersey's waters. France responded, saying no such consultation about any new conditions affecting all boats has been agreed upon during Brexit transition talks.

Third, energy blockade as negotiating tool in post-BREXIT reality. As the UK limits the fishing rights in the Channel, France has resorted to threatening with an energy blockade. According to the latest UK government statistics, France exported a net 8,700 gigawatt-hours of energy to Britain in 2020. The warning by France comes as Britain is set to enter a "difficult winter." But any action on energy may come with practical issues for France as Britain is also a transit point for electricity export. However, the threat to block is a new form of negotiating tactics to pressure the UK to hold their end of the Brexit-deal bargain.

Fourth, structural faults and a bureaucratic quagmire for inward-looking Britain. No one in the UK had voted for lower standards, Brexit red tape and documentation obstacles. Fishing communities throughout the UK had voted to leave the EU, only to find that additional costs have left them struggling to export their catches to Europe. In the current tension where there is also a lack of lorry drivers, there is a fear that red tape would kill 80 per cent of the industry when fish caught in the Channel are not exported, the vast majority of it to France.

In perspective

The intensification of the fishing row could probably expand into a bilateral conflict over marine resources. The Channel had been historically at the heart of power tussle in Europe, but Britain's attempt at political isolation has costed its efforts at economic globalization. In addition, France's aggressive posture over fishing rights also signifies a nationalist attempt by Paris in drawing and sharpening its political boundaries with the UK.

Pakistan: Imran Khan announces talks with the TTP factions

In the news

On 1 October, in an interview with a Turkish TV - TRT World, Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan announced that his government is in talks with some of the TTP groups. He said: "Some of the Pakistani Taliban groups actually want to talk to our government...for some peace and reconciliation. And we are in talks with some of the groups...There are different groups which form the TTP and some of them want to talk to our government for peace. So, we are in talks with them. It's a reconciliation process."

To a question, whether the Afghan Taliban is helping on the above process, Imran Khan said: "Since the talks were taking place in Afghanistan, so in that sense, yes." To the question that the Pakistani Taliban would lay down the arms, Imran Khan said: "Yes. And then, we forgive them. They become normal citizens." He also said: "I do not believe in military solution. I'm anti-military solution. I always believe, as a politician, political dialogue is the way ahead." To the question why is the TTP targeting security forces, if they are negotiating for a political settlement, Imran said: "I think, that is just a spate of attacks. We are talking. We might not reach a conclusion or settlement at the end. But, we are talking."

Issues at large

First, the TTP terror in Pakistan. The Tehrik-i-Taliban-Pakistan (TTP), was founded post-American invasion of Afghanistan after the 9/11 attacks in the US. Initially, formed as different tribal groups in the erstwhile Federally Administered Tribal Agencies (FATA) of Pakistan, they came to unite under the TTP banner in 2007. Baitullah Mehsud became the first major leader of the TTP, though different tribal groups had their own leaders fighting the US forces and Pakistan (then under Gen Musharraf's regime). The TTP ran/runs a terror campaign within Pakistan; numerous political leaders from political parties were assassinated by it; a series of massive suicide attacks were launched across the country – from Khyber to Karachi.

Second, the divide within the TTP. The Pakistani Taliban was not a monolithic group. During the initial years, the TTP was led by the Mehsud and Wazir tribes in North and South Waziristan agencies. Qari Hussain Mehsud, Hakimullah Mehsud, Wali ur Rehman, Hafiz Gul Bahadur, and Maulvi Nazir were some of the leaders of these two tribes. Though they fought under the TTP banner, there were differences within, and at times also fought against each other. Later it expanded to include other tribal agencies of the FATA. For example, the TNSM (Tehreek-e-Nafaz-e-Shariat-e-Mohammadi) from the Swat valley became a part of the TTP.

Third, the dialogue with the TTP. Though Imran Khan has been consistent on the idea of negotiating with the TTP, there is no consensus on the subject within Pakistan – either within or outside the Parliament. The Establishment considers the TTP as a major threat; the TTP had carried out major attacks against the security forces. And even during the recent weeks, when it is believed to be in talks with the government, there has been a series of attacks.

In perspective

The decision to talk with the TTP seems to be based on a personal conviction of Imran Khan, than a part of a well-planned process. He is also not clear about the endgame, as reflected by his statement that he "might not reach some sort of conclusion or settlement in the end." Second, the expectation that the TTP would lay down arms and "become normal citizens" is more of a hope, than based on an assessment at the ground level. Is the TTP, or sections of it, talking to the Imran government, without asking for anything in return? And where does the Establishment stand on this? These are two crucial questions that would decide the outcome of Imran's talks with the TTP.

The US: Protests against the Texas anti-abortion law

In the news

On 1 October, the most restrictive abortion law, which had come into effect since 1 September 2021 that prohibits women from terminating fetuses only after six weeks of pregnancy was evaluated again through a virtual hearing before Judge Robert Pitman of the US District Court. The federal judge questioned the State of Texas on why they had to go to such great lengths with this bill if they believed in constitutionality as they claimed. However, a nationwide women's march from 600 cities in a total of 50 states was witnessed the very next day implored more than ten thousand people to participate in the clamorous rally for abortion justice.

Issues at large

First, the difficulties in challenging the bill. Activists and lawyers in opposition to this bill have been finding the long-drafted law difficult to challenge, especially because of the way it is written and its immunity to be challenged as 'unconstitutional' since its enforcement is vested upon people and not officials of its State. The problematic law makes a rather narrow exception by only allowing termination of those pregnancies that endanger the mother's life while leaving those resulting from rape or incest to seek abortion elsewhere.

Second, the refusal of the Supreme Court. The stunning silence, followed by the refusal of the very Court that had legalized abortion with its landmark judgement in Roe Vs Wade case, has led to numerous protestors voicing out for their rights. Around a thousand protestors walked in a clamorous procession to the Supreme Court, imploring Americans to engage in a nationwide protest, not only in Washington but also in Chicago, San Francisco, New York and other forty-six states.

Third, the virtual hearing. The Justice Department had sued the State for its restrictive law, also known as SB 8, the hearing of which took place on 1 October between The State of Texas represented by Will Thompson and The Justice department by Brian Netter. Robert Pitman, the federal judge, deliberately weighed both sides of the argument. The Justice Department emphasized the extent of difficulties and forced motherhood the bill promotes. He also criticized the enforcement scheme as an unconstitutional sidestep that impairs the fundamental rights of women and prevents them from challenging it. The State, however, argued that the entire law was constitutional and the department lacked the legal threshold for an injunction and that its lawsuit lacks merit. Pitman, however, has offered no timetable for the decision but assured the inclusion of their arguments.

In perspective

First, the probable imitation of SB 8. The 1973 landmark judgement did reshape American politics into those in favour of it and those against it. The Republicans pushed for the Texas abortion law does not to ban the practice itself but to bring out an imperative control of the State with its cleverly schemed 'constitutionality' factor; the implementation of which encourages other states to go ahead with strict measures. While the significant judgement of 1973 had made abortion every woman's right, the six-week ban refuses to see the fact that the realization of pregnancy itself might take six weeks. Second, the impact on women. This bill largely affects coloured, poor and even minors who might not have enough financial aid to apply for abortion since it's not covered as a part of health insurance making the women's march a significant event in exercising their willingness. Victims of rape or incest who are not exempted from this law might be forced to carry the child to term. It poses an imperative to the very guaranteed fundamental right imploring women around the globe to voice out their support.

Also, from around the world

By Apoorva Sudhakar and Abigail Miriam Fernandez

Peace and Conflict from East and Southeast Asia

North Korea: Pyongyang continues to expand nuclear and ballistic missile programme, says report

On 4 October, a panel of experts monitoring sanctions on North Korea sent a report to the UN Security Council; the report outlined that Pyongyang continued improving its nuclear and ballistic missile programme despite the country's economic deterioration. The report said that North Korea used cyberattacks to fund its programme and sought material and technological assistance overseas, including from Iran. The report highlights that from 2019 to November 2020, North Korea has conducted virtual thefts worth USD 316.4 million. The targets of the cyberattacks include financial institutions and virtual currency exchange houses.

Malaysia: Foreign Ministry summons Chinese envoy to protest the presence of Chinese vessels in EEZ

On 4 October, the Foreign Ministry said it had summoned the Chinese ambassador and expressed disapproval over China's alleged encroachment into the waters of Malaysia. The Ministry's statement cited the "presence and activities" of Chinese vessels in the Malaysian Exclusive Economic Zone. The statement said: "Malaysia's consistent position and actions are based on international law, in defence of our sovereignty and sovereign rights in our waters."

Myanmar: Violence continues across the country; ASEAN doubtful of junta's commitment to the peace plan

On 5 October, more than 40 junta soldiers were killed and 30 injured when civilian resistance fighters of the Yaw Defense Force (YDF) ambushed a convoy of 50 vehicles in the Gangaw Township in Magwe Region. The YDF said all its fighters had managed to escape. In another development on the same day, five policemen were injured in a blast at the Myanmar Police Force's Criminal Investigation Department (CID). This is the third blast in Naypyitaw in a week. In yet another development, ministers in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) raised doubts over Myanmar's commitment to a peace plan. The Indonesian Foreign Minister said: "There's been no significant progress in Myanmar. The military has not given a positive response to what has been attempted by the special envoy." The Singapore Foreign Minister said unless there is progress in Myanmar, "it would be difficult" to host the Chairman of the State Administrative Council (junta) at the upcoming ASEAN summit.

Peace and Conflict from South Asia

India: Supreme Court questions farmers right to protest

On 4 October, the Supreme Court once again questioned the farmers for their agitation stating: "Against whom are you protesting? How can the executive allow these protests? What is the validity of these protests?" adding, "There is nothing to be implemented. What are the farmers protesting about? No one other than the court can decide the validity of the farm laws. When that is so and when farmers are in court challenging the laws, why the protest on streets." Previously, on 30 September, the court said: "there is no question of holding the protests when you have come to the courts. You have strangulated the entire city, and now you want to enter the city and hold protests."

Bangladesh: HRW calls for urgent measures to protect Rohingya refugees

On 6 October, Human Rights Watch urged the Bangladesh authorities and United Nations officials to take immediate measures to protect Rohingya refugees facing threats and violence in the Cox's Bazar camps. The South Asia director at Human Rights Watch said: "Mohib Ullah's flight from mass atrocities in Myanmar to then be killed in his place of refuge speaks volumes about the risks that Rohingya activists face every day," adding, "Bangladesh authorities should take urgent measures, with international assistance, to protect Rohingya activists who are defending the rights of refugees."

Sri Lanka: Eight Tamil prisoners file a petition seeking relief after a 'gun-wielding' incident; Prosecutor's office charges the main mastermind behind the Easter Sunday attacks

On 30 September, eight Tamil prisoners in Sri Lanka's Anuradhapura prison filed a petition in the Supreme Court seeking relief after a gun-wielding Prisons Minister reportedly 'threatened them at gunpoint.' In their petition, the prisoners accused Minister Lohan Ratwatte of threatening the detainees and allegedly asked them to stand in a semi-circle and "ordered them to kneel before him." Further, the prisoners stated that they fear for their lives, asking to be transferred to a prison in the Tamil-majority Northern Province.

On 4 October, Sri Lankan prosecutors indicted the alleged mastermind of the 2019 Easter Sunday suicide bombings. The office also charged 24 men who they say were co-conspirators in the attacks. The prosecutors have brought more than 20,000 charges against the suspects. Additionally, the prosecutors told the court that US and Australian forensic experts assisted the investigators in tracking down the supporters of the eight-member suicide squad responsible for the attacks.

Afghanistan: UNHCR calls for the implementation of solutions to curb the Afghan Crisis; Two million Afghan children are at risk of malnutrition

On 4 October, officials from the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) stated that "unconditional" humanitarian assistance must be mobilized in Afghanistan. Filippo Grandi, UN High Commissioner for Refugees, stated that some solutions need to be found to prevent an implosion of public services in Afghanistan, adding, "Millions of Afghans have been uprooted for more than 40 years, and recent developments have created new challenges. Failure to urgently implement a solution will aggravate the crisis."

On 5 October, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) stated that nearly two million Afghan children are at risk of malnutrition as the population struggles with severe poverty amid an unprecedented spike in the price of food materials. The children's fund stated that over 1.5 million children have already been affected by malnutrition in Afghanistan warning of the re-emergence of the problem. A communication specialist for UNICEF in Afghanistan said: "Across Afghanistan today, millions of children are in desperate need for health and nutrition services ... around 14 million people in Afghanistan are food insecure today, among them around 3.5 million children, whom, we expect will suffer from acute malnutrition, within them around one million children."

Peace and Conflict from Central Asia, Middle East and Africa

Oman-Iran: More than a dozen dead after cyclone Shaheen makes landfall

On 4 October, BBC reported that several people had died after tropical cyclone Shaheen made a landfall on 3 October, impacting Oman and Iran. In Oman four people were killed in landslides or by drowning on 3 October; officials reported seven more casualties later. In Iran, state media reported that two fishermen had died and three were missing near the border with Pakistan. Prior to this, the Iranian deputy parliamentary speaker had announced the death of six people.

Lebanon: UN coordinator raises alarm over living conditions in the country

On 1 October, the United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Lebanon said the country's deteriorating economic condition is leading to "unspeakable suffering and distress for the most vulnerable" in the country. The coordinator said starvation is now a reality for thousands and that more than one million people are in need of assistance for basic necessities including food. The coordinator also highlighted a medical crisis, terming it a "death sentence," as medicines including those for cancer treatment were being sold at inflated rates in black markets.

Iraq: Hundreds mark two years of protests of 2019

On 1 October, Baghdad witnessed hundreds of protesters commemorating two years of the October 2019 protests when people demanded elections and change in the style of governance. The protests ran well into early 2020 and over 600 people were killed when security forces attempted to quell the demonstrations with live ammunition and tear gas. Arab News quoted a protester from the Nasiriyah city: "It's a historic moment to remember the demonstrations and the confrontation with the forces of corruption, to remember the deaths and the criminal behaviour, and the silence of the government about all of it."

Libya: Independent report outlines war crimes and crimes against humanity since 2016

On 4 October, The Guardian reported on the findings of an independent fact-finding mission in Libya, commissioned by the UN. The mission's investigation outlined the widespread prevalence of war crimes and crimes against humanity in the country since 2016 when the civil war broke out. These included murder, enslavement, rape, torture and extrajudicial killings; the report said migrants and detainees were especially subjected to the above atrocities. It also

highlighted the role of external actors and maintained "reasonable grounds to believe" that the Wagner Group, which is a Russian private military company, "may have committed the crime of murder." The report also criticized the Libyan coastguard, which had reportedly been trained by the European Union to deter migrants from entering the continent, for mistreatment of those trying to escape the Libyan war.

Tunisia: Thousands march in support of President Saied

On 3 October, around 5,000 people rallied across the country in support of President Kais Saied after he granted himself the power to rule by decree in September. Calling Saied as the "official spokesman of the people," his supporters called for a revision of the Constitution. The development comes after thousands protested on 26 September against Saied and called his move for rule by decree, a "coup d'etat."

Somalia: ASWJ takes control of two towns in central Somalia

On 1 October, Reuters reported that the Ahlu Sunnah Wal Jama'a (ASWJ) militia had captured two towns in central Somalia, maintaining that the federal forces had failed to end the insurgency led by Al Shabaab. The ASWJ spokesperson said the group had no plans to fight the government, adding, "We are ready to eliminate Al Shabaab. Al Shabaab is our common enemy." The development comes after federal troops attacked the ASWJ militia in Galmudug, which later led to the defeat of the federal forces in the Mataban and Guriceel towns.

Sudan-South Sudan: Seasonal flooding places half a million people at risk

On 2 October, Voice of America quoted the spokesman of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs who said that nearly half a million people in Sudan and South Sudan were suffering due to the seasonal flooding. The flooding took place after rains came early in April, instead of June, leading to a buildup in the Nile and Lol rivers and the Sudd marshlands, thereby causing an overflow across territories. The spokesman said: "Some of the flood-affected counties are also affected by ongoing violence, which creates significant challenges for the people affected and the humanitarians who try to respond to their needs."

Nigeria: 32 killed and several abducted in series of attacks in Niger and Sokoto

On 30 September, Associated Press quoted residents and local officials who said that at least 32 people had been killed in the country's Niger and Sokoto states. The killings have been linked to bandits operating in Nigeria's northwestern and central regions. In Niger State, the chairman of the local government area (LGA) said bandits had killed 14 people and abducted seven women. The bandits then reportedly killed 16 more residents from two communities nearby and killed two more on the way. Meanwhile, in Sokoto State, a lawmaker said 17 people had been abducted by bandits.

Mozambique: SADC to continue military operation; UNICEF raises alarm on recruitment of child soldiers

On 5 October, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) decided to extend its military operations in Mozambique to fight the insurgency in the country's north. The Defense Post quoted from the SADC statement which said the operations, which began on 15 July, were extended "to continue with offensive operations against terrorists and violent extremists to consolidate stability of security." On the same day, UNICEF said children had been recruited by a local militant group, known as Al Shabab, in Mozambique's northeast. This comes days after the Human Rights Watch had said that hundreds of boys were recruited as child soldiers by the group.

Peace and Conflict from Europe and the Americas

France: 216,000 children were victims of sexual by clergy

On 5 October, a major investigation released found that around 216,000 children have been sexually abused by clergy in the French Catholic Church since 1950. The 2500-page report said the "vast majority" of victims were boys, many of them aged between 10 and 13. Additionally, the head of the inquiry said there were at least 2,900-3,200 abusers, and accused the Church of showing a "cruel indifference towards the victims." Following the report, a statement from the Vatican read that the Pope learnt about the report after he met visiting French bishops in the last few days, adding, "His first thoughts are for the victims, with a deep sadness for their wounds and gratitude for their courage in coming forward," adding, "His thoughts also turn to the Church in France, and that, in recognizing these terrible events and united by the suffering of the Lord for his most vulnerable children, it can take the path of redemption."

Belarus: EU to demand international prosecution against Lukashenko

On 5 October, members of the European Parliament called on the house for the international prosecution of Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko on charges of involvement in mass torture and repressions. Lithuanian Member of European Parliament Andrius Kubilius told the European Parliament that "Lukashenko must be taken to the International Court of Justice." Similarly, German Green MEP Sergey Lagodinsky said: "legal proceedings for torture must be started against Lukashenko himself." Additionally, Eamon Gilmore, the EU's Special Representative for Human Rights stated that setting up an international tribunal to investigate crimes in Belarus would be possible, "where the state itself is either unwilling or unable to act and to bring these people to justice."

Russia: Ukraine calls for sanctions over Hungary gas deal

On 1 October, Ukraine called on Germany and the United States to impose sanctions on Russia's gas exporter Gazprom because of its deal with Hungary. According to the contract 4.5 billion cubic meters of Russian natural gas will be supplied to Hungary every year until 2036 through non-Ukrainian transit routes. Yuriy Vitrenko, the head of Ukraine's Naftogaz, the largest national oil and gas company of Ukraine said: "The Kremlin is doing this on purpose. It's not even sabre rattling, it's the obvious use of gas as a weapon," adding, "A joint statement from the United States and Germany said that if the Kremlin used gas as a weapon, there would

be an appropriate response. We are now waiting for the imposition of sanctions on a 100% subsidiary of Gazprom, the operator of Nord Stream 2."

Colombia: ELN vows revenge after top commander killed by government bombing

On 30 September, National Liberation Army (ELN), Colombia's largest remaining armed group warned of "reprisals" after a government bombing killed one of its top commanders. The group stated that they were "authorized" to "disproportionately use force and explosives" in response to the attack that took place in ELN's Western Front in Choco province. President Ivan Duque terming the killing one of the "most important operations against the ELN in recent years" stated that the country would not be intimidated by threats from armed groups, adding, "As the supreme commander of the armed forces ... I want to tell you that we will never give in to any threat from armed groups. We are fighting them and we will continue to fight them with all our determination."

Venezuela: Every three out of four extremely poor, says report; Borders with Colombia reopen after years of closure

On 30 September, researchers at Andres Bello Catholic University (UCAB) release the 2020-2021 National Survey of Living Conditions (ENCOVI) reported that three-fourths of Venezuelans live in extreme poverty. The report showed that 76.6 per cent of the population live in extreme poverty, up from 67.7 per cent in the previous year. The report attributed the increase to the COVID-19 pandemic and chronic fuel shortages.

On 5 October, Venezuela reopened its border with Colombia after nearly three-year of closure due to political tensions. The Vice President of Venezuela Delcy Rodriguez said: "Thinking of our people, in the brotherhood and cooperation between the people of Colombia and Venezuela, [Maduro] has taken the decision to open the crossing for commerce." Meanwhile, the President of Colombia Iván Duque announced that it was willing to reopen consular services in Venezuela, as long as it is done safely. He said: "We are open to the fact that if there are conditions and if there are guarantees, that consular service can be reestablished, but, obviously, on the premise that there are all guarantees in terms of security."

Peru: Indigenous protestors occupy pipeline station of Petroperu

On 5 October, over 200 indigenous Peruvians, as part of a protest by Amazon native groups demanding better economic and social support, took over the facilities of a pipeline station of Petroperu, the state-owned company. According to Petroperu, residents in the Manseriche district of northern Peru's Loreto region invaded station five of the North Peruvian pipeline causing the company to stop pumping oil. Further, the company said that protesters "have been irresponsibly installing tents and other items without taking security conditions into account."

Bolivia: Coca producers clash with police, take control of the La Paz market

On 4 October, thousands of coca leaf producers from Bolivia's Yungas region took control of a coca market in La Paz, the country's main coca market, after violent street clashes with the police that left several injured. The coca producers in opposition to the government have been protesting for over a week, with the main dispute centred around who should control the market.

Brazil: After 50 years, Krenak people get justice as a federal court asks the government to apologize and give reparations

On 1 October, Mongabay reported that 50 years later, a federal court has condemned Brazil's federal government, the Minas Gerais state government and the country's indigenous affairs agency, Funai, for human rights violations against the Krenak Indigenous people committed under the military dictatorship from 1964 to 1985. The court ordered the federal government to organize an official ceremony for a public apology and deliver reparations. On the judgement, Indigenous chief Geovani Krenak said: "Justice, however slow, is being served," adding, "The spirit of our assassinated warriors, like my grandfather, welcomes this decision."

About the authors

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A brief review of conflict and peace processes across the world

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

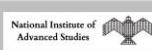


The last American soldier leaving the Kabul airport, completing a chaotic American evacuation in Kabul, and leaving Afghanistan to the Taliban after twenty years of fighting. (Image Source: US Central Command/AP/NY Times)

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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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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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 Cern Matthews and Rashmi BR

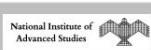


Protests revive in Thailand, triggered by government's inability to handle the pandemic and its impact on the economy (Image Source: Gemunu Amarasinghe/Associated Press/NYT)

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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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-Zabu Karimi/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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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

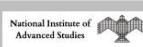


The house of the Afghan defence minister was attacked by the Taliban in Kabul on 3 July. Taliban has been on an offensive in three provinces. (Image Source: AP Photo/Rahmat Gul)

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

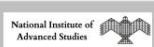


Memorial at a former Kamloops Indian Residential School in Canada where the remains of 215 children were discovered. (Image Source: NYT/Dennis Owen/Reuters)

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

Lokendra Sharma, Anu Maria Joseph and Harini Madhusudan

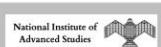


The arrest of former president Jacob Zuma has triggered violence and looting across South Africa. (Image Source: EPA/BBC)

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

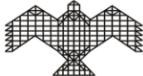
In the news

On 11 July, thousands of Cubans marched in Havana and Santiago against the communist government led by President Diaz-Canel. The protesters 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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