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IN FOCUS

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COMMENTARY

Sudan-Ethiopia border tensions: Horn of Africa at the edge

The Horn of Africa is under immense political tensions. Both Ethiopia and Sudan are embroiled in domestic political rifts. However, tensions may subside temporarily as the region is a fine example of soft border and will remain prone until hard and clear-cut borders are demarcated.

Mohamad Aseel Ummer



Image Source: Monicah Mwangi/Reuters/Al Jazeera

The surge of armed clashes between Sudanese and Ethiopian forces over the disputed Al Fashaqa region is a concern for the Horn of Africa. Sudanese forces have been active in Al Fashaqa since the outbreak of the Tigray conflict under the pretext of being invited by Ethiopia to prevent the Tigrayan forces from receiving support from across the border. Later, it was reported that the Sudanese army forcefully displaced Amhara farmers from the region, renewing tensions between both countries.

On 20 May, Ethiopia's foreign minister Demoke Mekonnen accused Sudan of occupying Ethiopian lands in the region while the Ethiopian federal forces were "preoccupied" in the Tigray conflict. He commented: "It is very unfortunate that Sudan violated the demarcation of the border when we were busy with law enforcement in the northern part of the country," accusing Khartoum of causing civilian displacement and destruction of Ethiopian properties.

In June, Sudan accused Ethiopian forces of taking seven Sudanese soldiers and a civilian captive and executing them. The allegations were denied by the Ethiopia, deflecting the blame to local militiamen. The tensions between both the countries gained international attention and regional blocs such as African Union and European Union called for dialogue. Khartoum summoned its Ethiopian ambassador, expressed their discontent and a complaint was moved to the UNSC. Ethiopia responded by suggesting a joint investigation into the allegations.

On 5 July, Sudan's military leader General Abdel Fatah-al-Burhan and Ethiopia's Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed met in Nairobi at the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) summit and announced they had reached an agreement to implement diplomatic measures to resolve the ongoing tensions. The communique suggested that the resolution will be Sudan-led but mediated by the IGAD and AU.

Understanding the tensions

The Horn of Africa is caught under a churn of political tensions and instability. Both Ethiopia and Sudan are embroiled in domestic political rifts. The border between the countries has been a bone of contention since the colonial period. The roots to the current tensions can be traced to 1902, when the British-controlled Sudan entered into a treaty with the Kingdom of Ethiopia demarcating the border. Later in 1907, another treaty was agreed upon that recognized the region to be part of the

Sudanese territory, but had Ethiopian settlements in Al-Fashaqa that paid taxes to Ethiopian authorities. The region has always been a point of sporadic clashes and in 2008 a compromise was struck between Ethiopia's Meles Zenawi and Sudan's Omar Al-Bashir that recognized the fertile region of Al-Fashaqa as part of Sudanese territory, but would allow the settlements of Ethiopian farmers from the Amhara community and from the Tigray region. This brought relative peace which lasted until 2018 when the Tigray Peoples Liberation Front was usurped from power. Since then the TPLF has been claiming the 2008 agreement to be a betrayal towards the Tigrayan people.

In November 2020, upon the beginning of the Tigray War, the Ethiopian government requested for the deployment of Sudanese forces in its borders near Tigray region to prevent the TPLF receiving any support or aid. And this was used as an advantage by the Sudanese forces as the local Amhara militias and the federal forces under the command of Addis Ababa was predisposed in the fight against TPLF. With Ethiopian settlements left unprotected Sudanese forces captured large Ethiopian territories without any resistance. This was seen as a direct violation of the 2008 agreement between both countries, and to worsen the tensions, Khartoum was accused of aiding the TPLF in its fight. The tensions between both the countries took a second seat as Ethiopia was caught up under the pressure of a civil war while Sudan witnessed a military coup that overthrew the transitional government. The rifts flared up once again in June 2022, when Sudan blamed Ethiopian forces for the abduction and execution of its soldiers and a civilian; the allegations were later denied by the Abiy Ahmed administration.

Domestic Politics

Al-Fashaqa is a highly fertile region, inhabited by Amhara Ethiopians along with Sudanese agriculturalists. Amhara

community is the second major vote bank for Abiy Ahmed's Prosperity party, so it has become an integral part of the Ethiopian administration to embolden the Amhara claims to the land. The Ethiopian administration was strong in its rhetoric against the Sudanese aggression and suggested that Addis Ababa was willing to resist Khartoum militarily. However, this was seen as a mere political ploy to regain influence at the domestic level. Abiy Ahmed's popularity took a deep blow when his own Oromo community turned against his party and withdrew its support and is currently engaged in an armed conflict against the federation.

The military administration in Khartoum that has come to power under the leadership of General Burhan, by disposing of the civilian administration, has been struggling to gain popular support. The country has been witnessing massive popular uprisings with hundreds being killed. This has prompted an international outcry and Khartoum is blamed for human rights violations. So, the current decision to resolve tensions through diplomacy showcases the military leadership of the country as capable diplomats who can deal with conflicts in a peaceful manner.

The Nile and the GERD factor

Ethiopia and its strong neighbours have been caught under a storm of tensions lately regarding the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam that has been built on the river Nile. Sudan and Egypt are situated downstream of the river and both countries are heavily reliant on the river for irrigational and industrial purposes. Construction of the dam was disputed at the UN assembly and protested against it by the Sudanese and Egyptian representatives. The matter has been on the UNSC table for months now as Ethiopia has commenced the dam activities by allowing the reservoir to fill. Moreover, Sudan and Egypt have evolved to become close military partners with multiple

defense deals already in motion. Given this closeness between Cairo and Khartoum, Ethiopia holds very little chance in a militaristic endeavor despite having Eritrea on its side.

The sudden outbreak of the dormant Al-Fashaqa tension must be read along with ongoing GERD-related diplomatic bouts. Abiy Ahmed has a loose federation in hand which is still under the threat of another full-scale civil war; it can be anticipated that the outcome of the peace talks between Sudan and Ethiopia regarding the disputed land will have some impact on the GERD issue as well.

What next?

Based on the communique from the IGAD summit, the peace process is expected to be spearheaded by Sudan, and this will give the country an upper hand in the whole process. It can be anticipated Sudan

would withdraw from land occupied by Ethiopians and the tensions may subside temporarily as the region is a fine example of a soft border and will remain prone until hard and clear-cut borders are demarcated. A militaristic intervention from either side is highly unlikely as both countries are pressurized internally and this has weakened their defense forces. Moreover, the current tensions won't last more than this monsoon according to some as the region is set for harvest and this flare-up could possibly be part of Sudan's and Egypt's collective plan to tame Ethiopia in its strife over the GERD issue. Any further escalation in the issue is feared by analysts as the region is at the verge of a serious case of human catastrophe fueled by famine, food insecurity and civilian displacement that can put the whole region in a quagmire of tensions and conflicts.

COMMENTARY

Blaise Compaoré: Five things to know

The conviction of Compaoré was popularly considered as a momentous victory of justice in Burkina Faso. However, reactions upon his return say he still retains a considerable influence in the country.

Anu Maria Joseph



Image Source: BBC

On 7 July, Burkina Faso's ex-president Blaise Compaoré returned to the country to meet with interim president Paul Henri Damiba and other ex-presidents. He was invited by the January coup leader Damiba to join in a reconciliation summit to be held on 8 July, amid the rising Jihadist instabilities in the northern region.

Compaoré, the ex-leader, was in exile since 2014 after being toppled through a civil uprising. In April, he was given a life sentence for the murder of his predecessor Thomas Sankara. Popular opinion over his return is divided. One of his supporters gathered at Ouagadougou's international airport upon his arrival said: "We have come to welcome him and show him our respect; it's a great day for us, it's a new story that is being written from today". At the same time, voices were raised demanding his arrest. One of the Sankara family's lawyers said: "it would be a travesty if Blaise Compaoré came to Burkina Faso and left happily. It would mean that in our country, there is no longer any justice or law."

An introduction to Compaoré Blaise Compaoré, 71, born in Ouagadougou belonged to a family of Mossi ethnic group, one of the prominent ethnic groups in Upper Volta, French West Africa(now

Burkina Faso). He attended military college in Yaounde, Cameroon and received para-commando training in Rabat, Morocco. He held the positions of section head, and later as company commander between 1978 and 1981, in an Upper Volta para commando unit at Po. In 1987, after coming to power through a military coup, he ruled Burkina Faso for the next 27 years.

Involvement in Thomas Sankara's assassination

In 1981, Compaoré was assigned as the command of the national commando training facility at Po. By 1982, he was involved in national politics along with his friend and coworker Capt. Thomas Sankara, after both resigning from government positions in protest of certain government policies. Later, on 4 August, 1983, Compaoré rallied the support of the commando unit at Po and with assistance from Ghana and Libya organized a coup. Subsequently, Sankara was made the head of the state. Till 1987, Compaoré served as minister of state at the presidency, the second in command of the regime and later also as minister of state for justice. However, by 1987, tensions between Sankara and Compaoré grew over leadership, security and strategic matters. On October 15, 1987, Compaoré along with Comdt. Jean Baptiste Lingani and Capt. Henri Zongo led another coup. During the takeover, Thomas Sankara and 12 other officials were assassinated and Compaoré was designated the new leader.

Leadership and achievements

Compaoré's regime gained popularity for its economic liberalization. Between 1981

and 1991, the World Bank ranked the country among six African countries having advanced macroeconomic reforms. Thereby, Compaoré gained support from many western countries including the US and France. He emerged as a well-liked regional figure who frequently served as a mediator in conflicts involving other west African nations. In addition, he held leadership positions in a number of regional organizations, including the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Organization of African Unity (now African Union) and the West African Economic and Monetary Union. He earned international attention with the adoption of the new constitution in 1991, bringing a multiparty system, followed by presidential, legislative and municipal elections.

The rise and fall of a political career

In 1991, Compaoré was elected to serve a seven-year term as president after quitting the military to run as a civilian. However, he won the elections with no opposition as the candidates boycotted the elections for Compaoré's refusal to hold a national conference on political reform. He was reelected in 1998, 2005 and 2010. However, since 1991, Compaoré faced multiple controversies and civil unrest. The semi-authoritarian regime was criticized for human rights violations and atrocities. It was challenging to protect his reputation as the assassin of Sankara, for having widespread support throughout western Africa. In the 1990s, Compaoré was accused for his involvement in the civil wars of Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Angola.

In 2005, the opposition parties claimed Compaoré ineligible to run in the election, citing the constitutional amendment in April 2000 that shortened the tenure of a president to five years, which could be extended only once. However, the country's Constitutional Council agreed with Compaoré's argument that the law

cannot be enforced retroactively. The death of Norbert Zongo, a journalist known for being seditious against Compaoré's leadership triggered the public outbreak. Besides, unpopular political and economic policies led to recurring protests in 2006, 2008 and 2011. In October 2014, by altering the constitution, it was declared that there will be no presidential term limitations, allowing Compaoré to possibly run for another term. It ultimately led to Burkinabes protesting in the streets against the amendment.

Exile and conviction

In late October 2014, demonstrations turned violent as protesters set fire to several public buildings, including the National Assembly house. In response, Compaoré dissolved the cabinet, announced a state of emergency and promised to hold discussions with the opposition. However, the measures had little effect. The day the protests escalated, the military head announced the dissolution of the government and the National Assembly, and declared the establishment of a transitional government. On 31 October 2014, Compaoré was forced to resign and went into exile to Ivory Coast.

In April 2021, a military court in Burkina Faso indicted 14 individuals, including Compaoré, for their involvement in Sankara's murder. Compaoré was accused of attacking state security, participating in a murder, and hiding a corpse. The trial was conducted without his presence as he refused to take part. On 6 April 2022, Compaoré was declared guilty, and was given a life term in jail.

The conviction of Compaoré was popularly considered as a momentous victory of justice in Burkina Faso. However, reactions upon his return say he still retains a considerable influence in the country.

AFRICA IN BRIEF

29 June – 12 July

By Apoorva Sudhakar

TUNISIA

Proposed constitution increases presidential powers

On 30 June, president Kais Saied published the proposed new constitution that will be voted on in a referendum on 25 July. The draft constitution proposes that the government be answerable to the president and not the parliament; however, the parliament can withdraw support to the government with a two-thirds majority. The president will also have the power to present draft laws, be the sole power to propose treaties, draft state budgets, appoint or remove ministers and judges. The president can also extend the two-term tenure if the president felt an unavoidable threat to the country. Various other measures increasing the president's powers are also listed in the draft. (Tarek Amara and Angus McDowall, "[Tunisian president takes most powers in proposed constitution](#)," *Reuters*, 30 June 2022)

Opposition parties call for boycott of referendum on constitution

On 7 July, hundreds of protesters attempted to gather at the electoral commission office to demonstrate against the upcoming referendum on a new constitution proposed by president Kais Saied. The protests were led by the Free Constitutional Party; however, police and security forces pushed back the protesters. On 8 July, BBC reported that the Ennahda Party had also called on its members to boycott the referendum and the party spokesperson said the vote was not in Tunisians' interests. ("[Tunisians protest against referendum for controversial new constitution](#)," *Reuters*, 8 July 2022; Mike Thomson, "[Tunisia's Islamist party urges referendum boycott](#)," *BBC*, 8 July 2022)

LIBYA

Guterres calls for calm as protests turn violent

On 3 July, The Guardian reported UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres statement on Libya wherein he called for calm amid the demonstrations across different cities against regular power cuts and the failure to conduct national elections. On 1 July, protesters demanding an end to the political deadlock had stormed the parliament in Tobruk and reportedly burnt a part of the building. On 2 July, the UN envoy to Libya said though people's right to peaceful protests should be respected, riots and acts of vandalism are unacceptable. ("[Libya's rival leaders under pressure as protests grow](#)," *The Guardian*, 2 July 2022; Patrick Wintour, "[UN secretary general urges calm in Libya as protests spread](#)," *The Guardian*, 3 July 2022)

SUDAN

Nine dead as anti-military protests turn violent

On 1 July, the death toll from protests against military rule in Sudan rose to nine. On 30 June, Sudan witnessed the largest protests since the military coup in October. Doctors said several victims had been shot while security forces tackled protesters. A BBC news report quoted doctors as saying the security forces tried storming into hospitals while protesters were being treated. Police also used live ammunition, tear gas and water cannons against the protesters. Internet and telephone services were also blocked. ("[Nine people killed in mass protests against army rule in Sudan](#)," *RFI*, 1 July 2022)

Military to make way for civilian government, says Gen Burhan

On 4 July, military leader General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan said the military will not involve itself in any national talks and thereby, will pave the way for a civilian government. Burhan said political parties and revolutionary groups should lead the way to install civilian rule. Burhan announced that the current Sovereign Council, consisting of military and civilian leaders, will be dissolved once an executive government is formed. Instead, a Supreme Council of armed forces will be installed. The development comes after thousands of Sudanese held protests across the country; as of 1 July, nine protesters had lost their lives. However, the protesters refused to believe Burhan's announcement. ("[Sudan's Burhan says army will make way for civilian government](#)," *France24*, 4 July 2022)

ETHIOPIA

Government claims successful military operation against rebels

On 30 June, prime minister Abiy Ahmed's spokesperson said successful military operations were conducted against rebels in the Benishangul-Gumuz, Oromia and Amhara regions. The spokesperson said the rebels' training bases had been destroyed and weapons were confiscated. The development comes after the government said 338 civilians, mostly of Amharic origin, had reportedly been killed by the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA). The UN-appointed Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia says the increasing violence is an "an early warning indicator of further atrocities." ("[Ethiopia claims success in anti-rebel offensive](#)," *BBC*, 1 July 2022)

EHRC accuses Oromo Liberation Army of mass killings

On 5 July, The Guardian reported the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission's

(EHRC) observations that an unknown number of people had been killed in two villages in the Oromia region. The targets were the Amharas, the ethnic minority in Oromia. The EHRC and prime minister Abiy Ahmed accused the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) of carrying out the attacks. However, an OLA spokesperson denied the accusations and blamed "government-allied militias" for the same. Reuters quoted the spokesperson: "The prime minister's accusation is an attempt by the regime to deflect from the fact that it is struggling to maintain order in its own forces." (Emmanuel Akinwotu, "[Villagers massacred in western Ethiopia, says state-appointed body](#)," *The Guardian*, 5 July 2022)

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

UN peacekeepers attacked by rockets

On 1 July, the UN said peacekeepers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo had come under rocket attacks by rebels in North Kivu province. The M23 rebel group has been blamed for the attack. The development comes after the UN Security Council was told, on 29 June, that the M23 operations seemed to be one of a conventional army with military capacities to overrun the UN forces. (Emmanuel Igunza, "[Rebels fire rockets at UN peacekeepers in DR Congo](#)," *BBC*, 1 July 2022)

Clashes intensify in the east

On 7 July, clashes between the Democratic Republic of the Congo's army and M23 rebels intensified in the east. The development comes a day after presidents of DRC and Rwanda, Felix Tshisekedi and Paul Kagame agreed to de-escalate tensions. The M23 spokesperson termed the agreement irrelevant and said: "We are Congolese, not Rwandan. If there's a cease-fire, it can only be between us and

the Congolese government.” ([“M23 rejects ceasefire deal signed between Congo and Rwanda,”](#) *Deutsche Welle*, 7 July 2022)

MALI

ECOWAS lifts economic sanctions

On 3 July, the heads of state of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) announced an immediate lifting of the economic and financial sanctions on Mali. The decision came after Mali released an election timetable to hold presidential elections in February 2023, against the initial plan to conduct the polls in 2026. The presidential elections will be preceded by a referendum on a revised constitution in June 2023, followed by local and legislative elections in October and November 2023. (Annie Risemberg, [“ECOWAS Lifts Sanctions Against Mali,”](#) *Voice of America*, 4 July 2022)

Two UN peacekeepers killed in explosion

On 5 July, two UN peacekeepers were killed and five injured in an IED explosion in northern Mali, between Tessalit village and Gao city. Since 2013, the UN mission in Mali has lost 174 peacekeepers and 420 have been injured. ([“Explosive kills at least two U.N. peacekeepers in north Mali,”](#) *Reuters*, 5 July 2022)

22 die in boat tragedy in the Mediterranean Sea

On 5 July, the ministry of Malians abroad said 22 people from Mali died in a boat tragedy off the coast of Libya; the casualties included three children. The boat carrying 83 passengers, mostly Malians, had been stranded since 22 June. The International Organization for Migration said that on 2 July, 61 people were rescued and taken to a detention centre in Libya. ([“22 Malians, including children, die in boat disaster off Libya,”](#) *Al Jazeera*, 6 July 2022)

NIGERIA

Several killed, four Chinese nationals kidnapped in gunmen attack

On 30 June, the State Commissioner for Internal Security said many people, including soldiers, police officers and local vigilante members were killed and four Chinese nationals were kidnapped by gunmen in an attack on a mining site in Niger State on 29 June. On 1 July, president Muhammadu Buhari said atrocities by terrorists strengthen Nigeria’s fight against them. Buhari said: “We say it again that we have reduced Boko Haram to a shell of its former self. But terrorists are parasites. They thrive when the world is suffering. ([“Gunmen kidnap four Chinese workers in central Nigeria,”](#) *Al Jazeera*, 30 June 2022)

Islamic State frees hundreds of prisoners

On 6 July, nearly 900 of 994 prisoners in Kuje prison were freed in an attack by gunmen and one guard was killed. The spokesperson for the Nigerian Correctional Service said of the 879 who escaped, at least 443 were still missing. Islamic State claimed responsibility for the attack. On the same day, president Muhammadu Buhari said he was disappointed with the country’s intelligence system. Buhari asked: “How can terrorists organise, have weapons, attack a security installation and get away with it?” (Emmanuel Akinwotu, [“Suspected Islamist attack frees hundreds of prisoners in Nigeria,”](#) *The Guardian*, 6 July 2022)

TOGO

Seven children die in blast in Tone Prefecture

On 10 July, seven children were killed in a blast in Togo’s northernmost region, Tone Prefecture. The army said two more were injured. This is the second major attack since the first one in May wherein eight soldiers were killed in an attack on a security outpost near the border with Burkina Faso. Stating the insecurity from

“terrorist attacks,” on 13 June, the president signed a decree to declare a state of emergency in the northern region. ([“Seven children killed in an explosion in northern Togo,”](#) *Al Jazeera*, 11 July 2022)

BURKINA FASO

Several killed in separate attacks over the weekend

On 4 July, the number of people killed in separate attacks across villages on 2 and 3 July, in northern Burkina Faso, stood at 34. On 3 July, 22 people were killed in the Kossi province; some were shot dead and some were killed after armed men opened fire on the people. On 2 July, 12 people were killed in Yatenga province. ([“Dozens killed in two suspected jihadist attacks in Burkina Faso,”](#) *France24*, 5 July 2022)

SOUTH AFRICA

19 killed in two separate shooting incidents

On 9 July, 19 people were killed in two different mass shootings in Soweto township and KwaZulu-Natal province. In the first incident, four people were killed and eight injured in a shooting at a bar in KwaZulu-Natal province. The local police said two suspects entered the bar and started shooting randomly. Later, 15 people were shot dead and eight wounded at a tavern in Soweto township near Johannesburg. ([“South Africa bar shootings: four killed in KwaZulu-Natal on same night as 15 die in Soweto,”](#) *The Guardian*, 11 July 2022)

REGIONAL

First Kiswahili Language Day celebrated

On 7 July, Africa celebrated its first Kiswahili Language Day. Celebrations were held across Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda where the language is widely used. With this, Kiswahili is now included in the official languages of the African Union. The other languages are English,

French, Spanish, Arabic and Portuguese. In November 2021, UNESCO had declared 7 July as Kiswahili Day. Across Africa and the Middle East, an estimated 200 million people speak Kiswahili which ranks among the 10 most spoken languages globally. (Andrew Wasike, [“Africa celebrates 1st World Kiswahili Language Day,”](#) *Anadolu Agency*, 7 July 2022)

Sudan-Ethiopia: AU calls for restraint amid diplomatic tensions

On 29 June, the Africa Union called on Sudan and Ethiopia to refrain from military action amid border clashes. The AU statement came after Sudan reportedly fired artillery on the Al Fashaqa region along its border with Ethiopia and captured the Jabal Kala al-Laban area on 28 June. On 26 June, Sudan’s foreign ministry said it would recall its ambassador to Ethiopia and also summon Addis Ababa’s ambassador over the alleged killing of seven Sudanese soldiers by the latter’s military. Ethiopia denied these allegations. (Henry Wilkins, [“African Union Urges Restraint after Ethiopia-Sudan Border Clashes,”](#) *Voice of America*, 29 June 2022)

20 people found dead along Niger’s border with Libya

On 30 June, Niger’s defence ministry said 10 migrants were found dead in the Niger state, along the border with Libya. The bodies were found summarily buried in Dirkou city and an investigation has been launched. The news report explains that Dirkou is a common route for smugglers carrying migrants weapons, and drugs to Libya and later, Egypt. On 29 June, 20 people who died of thirst were found in Libya along the border with Chad. ([“Ten people found dead in Niger near Libya border,”](#) *News24*, 30 June 2022)

INTERNATIONAL

OPEC secretary general passes at 63 in Nigeria

On 6 July, the state oil company NNPC announced the death of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) secretary-general Muhammad Barkindo (63) in capital city Abuja. The OPEC tweeted that “his passing is a profound loss to the entire OPEC Family, the oil industry and the international community.” Barkindo was in Nigeria for his farewell as his six-year tenure was coming to an end in July. The cause of death remains unclear. (Ishaq Khalid, “[Opec chief Muhammad Barkindo dies in Nigeria](#),” *BBC*, 6 July 2022)

Algeria’s President hosts Palestinian leaders

On 6 July, Algeria’s president Abdelmadjid Tebboune hosted the president of the Palestinian Authority Mahmoud Abbas and the chief of the Hamas politburo Ismail Haniya. This marked the first meeting of Abbas and Haniya in 15 years. It was unclear whether the two leaders held separate talks but the meeting witnessed the two Palestinian leaders shaking hands and an embrace between Abbas and the Hamas delegation. (Youssef Taha, “[Algerian president hosts rival Palestine leaders](#),” *BBC*, 6 July 2022)

24,000 grave violations against children recorded in 2021, says UN report

On 11 July, the UN released its report on “Children and Armed Conflict” focusing on the impact of conflict escalation and protraction, military coups, and violation of international law. The report says there were 24,000 grave violations against children in 2021; the violations include killing and maiming of children, recruitment into armed forces and armed groups, and restrictions on humanitarian access. In 2021, children from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Israel and parts of Palestine, Somalia, Syria and Yemen faced the highest number of grave violations. However, 2021 also witnessed some progress; 12,214 children were rescued from armed forces and armed groups in Myanmar, Syria, Colombia, the Central African Republic and the DRC. (“[Thousands of children endure ‘horrific conditions’ in conflict zones: UN report](#),” *UN News*, 11 July 2022)

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About NIAS Africa Studies

As a part of the area studies initiatives, the Institute started a focussed study on Pakistan in 2020. In 2021, it expanded the area studies to include Europe Studies, China Reader, and Maritime Studies. In 2022, the Science, Technology and International Relations (STIR) programme at the Institute is further expanding its area studies, to include Africa.

The primary focus of NIAS Africa studies would be on the following five verticals: contemporary political issues, colonial legacies, problems of governance, civil-military equations, and the rise of radical Islamic groups. The primary objective is to study Africa from an internal prism. ,

NIAS Africa Studies would include a series of expert lectures, workshops, publications and a weekly exclusively focussed on Africa. The initiative also aims to create a network of young scholars studying Africa and also African scholars studying in various Indian institutions.

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