

Conflict Weekly

A brief review of conflict and peace processes across the world

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The voting results of the United Nations General Assembly on a resolution for a "humanitarian truce" are displayed. (Image Source: [Bebeto Matthews, AP Photo](#))

The Worsening Situation in Gaza Rapprochement between Venezuela and the US The Philippine-China Maritime Dispute

An initiative by NIAS-IPRI and KAS India Office

Gender | Environment | Ethnic Violence

External Interventions | Armed Conflicts | Peace Processes



Into the Third Week: The Worsening Situation in Gaza

D Suba Chandran

In the news

On 27 October, the United National General Assembly adopted a resolution calling for an “immediate, durable and sustained humanitarian truce leading to a cessation of hostilities.” The resolution had 120 votes in its favour, while 14 were against and 45 abstained. Israel’s Ambassador to the UN, Gilad Erdan, in response to the resolution, stated: “This is a dark day for the UN and mankind. Israel will defend itself and will do what must be done to eradicate Hamas’ capabilities and bring the hostages home.” He asked: “The only way to destroy Hamas is to root them out. Why are you not holding Hamas accountable?”

On 27 October, according to the Washington Post, “Israel knocked out the internet and communications in the Gaza Strip in stepped-up bombardment Friday night, largely cutting off its 2.3 million people from contact with each other and the outside world and creating a near-blackout of information.” The paper quoted Paltel, the Palestinian telecom provider, referring to a disruption in mobile phone, landline and internet services due to bombardment.

On 27 October, the AP News, referring to the “Gaza-based Ministry of Health,” said 7000 plus Palestinians have been killed since 7 October. According to the Washington Post, “The overall number of deaths far exceeds the combined toll of all four previous Israel-Hamas wars, estimated at around 4,000.”

On 25 October, the Washington Post referred to the Palestine Red Crescent's statement on the shortage of fuel to keep the ambulances and hospitals functional. It quoted a spokesperson saying: “We used 80 percent of our strategic reserves...Soon we will have nothing. People are going to start dying by themselves because of the shutdown of the health care system.” The Post also quoted the spokesperson of the UNRWA saying: “we are going to have to start choosing where to send the aid, and how often.”

On 25 October, a press release from the UN Security Council said: “The Security Council today failed to adopt either of two competing draft resolutions — one from the United States, the other from the Russian Federation — addressing the raging war and humanitarian crisis in Gaza. In the first vote, the United States’ text failed by a vote of 10 in favour to 3 against (China, Russian Federation, United Arab Emirates), with 2 abstentions (Brazil, Mozambique), owing to the negative vote of a permanent Council member. The Russian Federation’s version was then not carried following a vote of 4 in favour (China, Gabon, Russian Federation, United Arab Emirates) and 2 against (United Kingdom, United States), with 9 abstentions (Albania, Brazil, Ecuador, France, Ghana, Japan, Malta, Mozambique, Switzerland).”

On 24 October, the UN Secretary-General made a statement: “The grievances of the Palestinian people cannot justify the appalling attacks by Hamas...and those appalling attacks cannot justify the collective punishment of the Palestinian people.” However, his reference that the attacks “did not happen in a vacuum” created a stir, with Israel’s ambassador to the UN demanding the former’s resignation.

On 21 October, in a joint statement, five UN agencies (UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, WFP and WHO) said: “Gaza was a desperate humanitarian situation before the most recent hostilities.

It is now catastrophic. The world must do more.” According to the statement: “Flows of humanitarian aid must be at scale and sustained, and allow all Gazans to preserve their dignity.”

Issues at large

First, the trickling aid into Gaza and an impending collapse. Despite the international pressure, Israel was steadfast in limiting the aid to Gaza. While the UN agencies have demanded more aid – including food, water, medical supplies and, more importantly, fuel, Israel has restricted the movement. Ever since the opening of Rafah border crossing, there has been movement of goods, but the numbers are insignificant. In particular, Israel opposes any fuel movement into Gaza, as it fears, the fuel would end with Hamas. Israel also accuses Hamas of having fuel storage but refusing to share it with the population. The primary strategy of Israel seems to be aimed at pressuring Gaza by blocking materials and information.

Second, the delayed ground offensive by Israel and the emphasis on air attacks. Though Israel has brought troops all along the Gaza border, the much-focussed ground offensive by the Israeli troops in Gaza is yet to begin. The military offensive has been projected by Israel as a strategy to clear Hamas from Gaza; however, the delay highlights the complex situation on the ground. The hostage situation, the threat of increased military casualties, and pressure from friendly countries seem to be playing a role in Israel delaying the ground offensive.

Third, the failure in hostage negotiations with Hamas. According to news sources, more than 200 people were taken as hostages by Hamas during the initial attack on 7 October. Select countries in the West and the Middle East have been negotiating with Hamas for their release. Only four people have been released by Hamas until now.

Fourth, the divide at the United Nations, especially the Security Council. Developments during the week highlight the huge divide between the General Assembly and the Security Council and within the Security Council. The statement by the UN Secretary-General and Israel’s response during the week further highlights the issues facing the United Nations, if it has to play any reasonable role in addressing the situation in Gaza, and between Israel and Hamas.

In perspective

First, the worsening situation. The failure to get a ceasefire and get the hostages released highlights the limits of external influence over the two primary actors –Hamas and Israel. With Israel getting ready for a ground offensive, the situation will only get worse in the coming weeks.

Second, the lack of consensus outside Gaza and Israel. The failure at the UN Security Council and the divide in the UN General Assembly resolution highlights how the international community is divided over the conflict. This would imply the limited role of the UN in working with actors to reach a ceasefire in the immediate future and work towards a long-term solution.

Third, the long haul ahead. For Israel, Palestinians, and the immediate neighbourhood, the current violence means a long road for any semblance of peace. The conflict is only likely to worsen.



Latin America: Rapprochement between Venezuela and the US

Dhriti Mukherjee

In the news

On 23 October, presidential candidate María Corina Machado won the Venezuelan presidential primary securing 93 per cent votes. Machado was selected by the opposition party, Voluntad Popular, to face Venezuela's left-wing President Nicolás Maduro. The primary was carried out in the wake of a deal signed between Maduro and the US-backed opposition on 17 October where Maduro committed to hold competitive and fair elections in 2024.

On 18 October, US President Joe Biden announced that his government would lift oil and gas sanctions on Venezuela for the next six months. The conditional lift requires Venezuela to “define a specific timeline and process for the expedited reinstatement of all candidates” by the end of November. Additionally, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken stated that “all wrongfully detained US nationals and Venezuelan political prisoners” are to be released.

Although Machado has won the primary, she is barred from contesting in the elections for supporting the US sanctions.

Separately, on 18 October, the US resumed its deportation flights to Venezuela with the first flight carrying over 100 people. Maduro stated: “I am glad that today, in compliance with the agreements discussed and signed between the authorities of Venezuela and the government of the United States, the first group of Venezuelans who have been repatriated have returned.”

Issues at large

First, a history of contested elections. The issue of contested elections become acute under Maduro. He has been accused of rigging elections and repressing dissent to maintain his grip on power. The 2018 elections were the most disputed where Maduro was re-elected president in an election that was boycotted by the opposition. He was accused of gerrymandering electoral districts, purging voter rolls and intimidating voters.

Second, Venezuela's multidimensional crisis under the controversial leadership of Maduro. Venezuela's decade-long multidimensional crisis has deepened under the leadership of Maduro. Maduro is accused of using bans on opposition candidates unlawfully to prevent them from competing in elections and hence to remain in power. Besides, he has been accused of human rights abuses, arbitrary detentions, torture and extrajudicial killings. According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Venezuela's economy has shrunk by over 70 per cent since Maduro took office and the inflation rate is over 100,000 per cent.

Third, the role of the US in backing Voluntad Popular. The US has provided financial and political support to the opposition through various channels including the National Endowment for Democracy (NED). The US sanctions have made it more difficult for the Maduro government to operate and allowed the opposition to unite. The US also supported opposition leader Juan Guaidó to oust Maduro. This move failed and as a result, the Maduro government accused the US of trying to overthrow it.

Fourth, the US-Venezuela strained relations. US-Venezuela relations have been strained due to mutual distrust, political hatred and economic issues. The US government has been a vocal critic of the Maduro regime accusing it of human rights abuses and terrorist activities. The US imposed sanctions on Venezuela's oil sector on 28 January 2019. The sanctions prohibited US citizens from engaging in any transactions with the Government of Venezuela including the purchase or sale of Venezuelan oil. This was an effort to pressure the Maduro regime to step down as the US was concerned about the Maduro regime's human rights record and its ties with Russia and other countries that the US considers to be adversaries. The sanctions have had a negative impact on the Venezuelan economy which is heavily dependent on oil exports. Venezuela sees the US as an imperialistic force meddling in its domestic affairs. The history of US involvement in Latin America including the backing of coups and economic sanctions has fuelled this perception.

In perspective

First, the potential nature of Venezuela's elections. There are concerns that the 2024 elections will not be free and fair as the Human Rights Watch pointed out that “the Maduro regime has a history of rigging elections and repressing dissent.” However, potentially the 2024 elections could be a turning point as the opposition is more united than it has been in years.

Second, divided public response to US rapprochement. The Venezuelan public is divided on the matter of US rapprochement. Some Venezuelans support it believing that it is the best way to improve the country's economy and living standards. They also argue that the rapprochement could put pressure on the Maduro regime to improve its human rights record. Others oppose the rapprochement as it would “only reward” Maduro for his “bad behaviour.” There is also a fear that it could legitimise the Maduro regime and undermine efforts to promote democracy and human rights.

Southeast Asia: The Philippine-China Maritime Dispute

Rishika Yadav

In the news

On 22 October, the Philippines' Department of Foreign Affairs accused Chinese Coast Guard vessels of intentionally colliding with their ships during a resupply mission in the South China Sea. The Chinese Coast Guard blamed the Philippines for violating international maritime law and threatening the navigation safety of Chinese ships.

On 23 October, Deputy Chief of Mission of the Chinese embassy in Manila, Zhou Zhiyong, expressed China's strong dissatisfaction over Philippine vessels' presence in Ren'ai Jia also known as Second Thomas Shoal. He insisted that the region is part of China's territory.

The same day, the US Department of State stated: “The United States stands with our Philippine allies in the face of the People's Republic of China coast guard and maritime militia's dangerous and unlawful actions obstructing an October 22 Philippine resupply mission to Second Thomas Shoal.” Moreover, US national security adviser Jake Sullivan called China's maritime actions “dangerous and unlawful.”



Issues at large

First, the flare-up in a long-standing territorial dispute. The dispute over the Spratly Islands has been ongoing since the Second World War. Currently, Vietnam, China, Taiwan, Malaysia, Brunei and the Philippines have conflicting claims to the Spratly Island based on historical sovereignty, geography and economic interests. China claims the entire sea, rejecting international rulings. In 2016, the UN-backed Permanent Court of Arbitration ruled that Chinese claims are groundless, favouring the Philippines' claims. The tensions surged recently with China's increased aggression in the region. In November 2021, Chinese vessels hindered Philippine boats supplying the grounded BRP Sierra Madre, a warship placed since 1999 that serves as an outpost for the Philippines Navy in the Second Thomas Shoal. Additionally, on 8 August 2023, the Chinese Coast Guard was accused of attempting to obstruct a supply mission to the outpost of the BRP Sierra Madre using water cannons.

Second, claims and counterclaims by China and the Philippines. The recent incident involves the dispute over claims between China and the Philippines. China asserts ownership of the Second Thomas Shoal and most of the South China Sea via its nine-dash line, a map used by China to assert territorial claims in the South China Sea. BRP Sierra Madre has allegedly become a symbol of the Philippines' assertion of sovereignty. China accuses the Philippine government of breaking its commitment to remove the BRP Sierra Madre. While UNCLOS dictates that uninhabited islands cannot establish Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ), China's straight baseline claims challenge this. Moreover, China's reliance on "historic rights" and its Law on the Exclusive Economic Zones and Continental Shelf Act of 1998 contradicts UNCLOS' Article 47 (1). The Philippines, in line with UNCLOS, asserts its EEZ over the Shoal.

Third, the ineffectiveness of the resolutions. Efforts to resolve disputes in the region face challenges due to issues with implementing UNCLOS and negotiating a binding Code of Conduct (COC). UNCLOS falls short in addressing territorial sovereignty and enforcement. The lack of a central authority hinders dispute resolution. Progress on replacing the non-binding Declaration on the Conduct of Parties (DOC) with the COC is delayed due to China's reluctance.

Fourth, the role of international actors. The US supports its allies in the region including the Philippines and challenges China's maritime claims through patrols and operations. Japan asserts sovereignty over the East China Sea's Senkaku islands which is contested by China and Taiwan. Australia, with no territorial claims, opposes China's South China Sea assertions, provides security assistance to claimants including the Philippines and advocates for peaceful conflict resolution. These international involvements influence regional stability and the broader geopolitical landscape. It makes the South China Sea a nexus of global strategic interests and contestation.

In perspective

First, continuing the locus of contention. China's persistent use of gray zone tactics in the South China Sea raises questions about their effectiveness and the region's future. These tactics, short of direct military conflict, are linked to China's quest to rectify what it sees as a "century of humiliation." While they symbolise China's political power and enhance its intelligence capabilities, their impact remains uncertain. The dispute will likely continue as long as China sees it as a way to assert national pride.

Second, overarching threats to the region. These incidents pose economic threats and risk regional conflict. China's militarization, island-building and US Freedom of Navigation Operations (FONOP) can escalate the danger of a larger conflict. Historical narratives and resource desires drive this dispute stemming from broader geopolitical tensions in the Asia-Pacific. This affects volatile regional stability and the strategic interests of regional actors.

Issues in Peace and Conflict This Week: Regional Roundups

Rishika Yadav, Anu Maria Joseph, Femy Francis, Padmashree Anandhan, Dhriti Mukherjee, Shamini Velayutham, Vetriselvi Baskaran, and Navinan GV

East and Southeast Asia

China: Xi Jinping's readiness to engage with the US in the "right way"

On 25 October, Chinese President Xi Jinping delivered a letter to the National Committee on US-China Relations headquartered in New York expressing his readiness to engage and cooperate with the US against global challenges. Xi stated that both sides should manage their differences to take care of the global challenges by establishing a "right" way of cooperation based on "mutual respect, peaceful coexistence and win-win cooperation" is vital for the world order. The letter comes ahead of the high-profile visit by the Chinese Minister of Foreign Affairs Wang Yi to Washington next week. Additionally, Chinese President Xi Jinping is expected to meet US President Joe Biden in San Francisco at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in November.

China: Ministry of National Defence opposes Pentagon report

On 25 October, the Chinese Ministry of National Defence refuted the Pentagon report on the intentional rise of Chinese nuclear capabilities. China opposed the claims stating that it distorts their national security policy and military strategy. The Pentagon report, released on 19 October, claimed that in the coming decade, China will focus on rapidly modernising and diversifying its nuclear capacity. It also noted that China has over 500 nuclear warheads and by 2030 it will procure over 1000. Chinese Ministry of National Defence spokesperson Wu Qian stated: "We express our strong dissatisfaction and resolute opposition to this report" and that it "exaggerates and hypes the non-existent Chinese military threat."

China: Flotilla presence in the Middle East is part of their routine escort mission

On 22 October, Global Times reported that Chinese deployment of warships in the Middle East in the Middle East is part of their routine escort mission and not an interference in the Israel-Palestine conflict. A spokesperson for the embassy of the People's Republic of China in Washington, Liu Pengyu, called on to halt the groundless hyping of Chinese warship deployment in the Middle East. According to the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA), the 44th Chinese naval escort taskforce which included the guided missile destroyer Zibo, the guided missile frigate Jingzhou and the comprehensive replenishment ship Qiandaohu arrived in Kuwait on October 18 for a five-day goodwill visit.



South Korea: Restrictions on child sex offenders' residences

On 24 October, the South Korean Ministry of Justice revealed plans to curtail the rights of convicted child sex offenders to choose their residence upon release. The bill limits the civil rights of those who are sentenced to ten years or more over child sexual abuse or multiple similar offences. The government aims to designate specific areas for them with court-imposed restrictions. Chemical castration for serious offenders is also on the agenda. The move, driven by public concerns, seeks to become the South Korean version of “Jessica’s Law” of Florida. Under Jessica’s Law in Florida, a child sex offender faces at least 25 years in prison, is required to wear electronic tracking devices after their release and is prohibited from living within 610 metres of schools and playgrounds. The bill will need Cabinet and National Assembly approval to become law.

South Korea: First joint aerial exercise with Japan and the US

On 22 October, the US, South Korea and Japan conducted their first joint aerial exercise. A US B-52 bomber joined South Korean and Japanese fighter jets near the Korean Peninsula. According to the US ambassador to Seoul, Philip Goldberg, this move marked a “new era” in defence ties. Despite historical disputes between Japan and South Korea, being the close allies of the US, the three countries agreed in August to enhance defence cooperation against North Korea’s threats. North Korea condemned the exercise as an “intentional nuclear war” provocation.

South Asia

Afghanistan: Women's call for access to schools and universities

On 24 October, Afghanistan-based TOLO News reported that the women in Afghanistan were emphasising on their need to be allowed to study. Since the Taliban took over, several restrictions have been imposed on women going to school above sixth grade. The Taliban-appointed Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sher Mohammad Abbas Stanikzai, stated: “Education is something that no one can take away from you. A good education can change anyone, and a good teacher can change everything.” In October, the EU passed a resolution criticising the “gender apartheid policy of the Taliban,” and demanding the Taliban to withdraw the severe restrictions on women and girls' rights in line with Afghanistan’s international commitments.

Pakistan: Imran Khan indicted

On 23 October, Pakistan’s former Prime Minister, Imran Khan, was indicted in a case related to the leaking of official documents, along with the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf’s (PTI) Vice Chairman Shah Mahmood Qureshi. Khan and Qureshi were suspected of leaking the cable which was sent to Islamabad by the Pakistan Ambassador to Washington. Khan “willfully communicated” the private information to unauthorised individuals, thereby acting against the “interest of the State of Pakistan.” Qureshi has been held liable as he “aided and abetted” Khan. The lawyers for Khan stated that the maximum jail period for this case would be 14 years.

Central Asia, the Middle East, and Africa

Armenia: France sends weapon to Armenia amid concerns of Azerbaijan conflict

On 23 October, Politico reported on France sending military equipment including air defence systems to Armenia. The move came amid fears that Azerbaijan might launch further attacks after its victory in Nagorno-Karabakh. Armenia aims to reduce its reliance on Russia for protection as the latter has ignored Armenia’s calls for assistance. French Minister of Armed

Forces Sébastien Lecornu expressed France's commitment to Armenia's defence. Armenia has signed contracts with Thales and Safran, French multinational companies that manufacture defence-related equipment, and expressed its gratitude for France's support. Tensions persist as Azerbaijan began its military exercises near Iran's border along with Turkey.

Syria: Israel targets Damascus and Aleppo airports again amid Gaza bombing

On 22 October, the Syrian state media, Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA), reported on Israeli attacks on the airports in Aleppo and Damascus, forcing them to close for the second time within two weeks. According to the report, Israeli airstrikes on the two main airports resulted in "the death of a civilian worker at Damascus airport and wounding another." Meanwhile, the Syrian Ministry of Transport commented that the flights have been rerouted to the airport in the port city of Latakia. This is the second time that the facilities have been struck simultaneously since the start of the Israeli bombardment of Gaza following Hamas's 7 October attacks on Israel that claimed over 1,400 lives. Shortly after the war began, Israel launched the first airstrikes on Syria's two main airports out of worry that new fronts would be established in the deadly fight.

Iraq: Drones and Rocket attacks on US military bases

On 25 October, the Pentagon reported that at least 21 US soldiers were injured in drone and rocket attacks at two US military bases in Iraq and Syria. Pentagon spokesman Brigadier General Patrick Ryder stated: "Between Oct. 17-18 (ET), 21 US personnel received minor injuries due to drone attacks at Al Assad air base, Iraq and Al-Tanf Garrison, Syria." According to the Pentagon, this is the most recent in a string of assaults carried out by Iraqi proxy militia groups after they cautioned Washington against backing Israel in its fight against Hamas in Gaza. Meanwhile, on 24 October, the US accused Iran of "actively facilitating" rocket and drone attacks carried out by Iranian-backed proxy groups in Syria and Iraq on its military bases. The White House national security spokesperson John Kirby asserted that the US does not allow threats to "go unchallenged." He stated: "Iran continues to support Hamas and Hezbollah and we know that Iran is closely monitoring these events and in some cases, actively facilitating these attacks and spurring on others who may want to exploit the conflict for their good or for that of Iran."

Somaliland: Tensions with Somalia

On 20 October, Somaliland condemned the move by the Somali government announcing that it would work with self-declared administration in the disputed regions of Somaliland including Sool, Sanaag and Ayn (together known as SSC-Khatumo). Somaliland claimed that the move was a "deliberate attack on Somaliland's statehood and territorial integrity." Although the Somali government did not recognise the self-declared regions, it welcomed the formation of the SSC-Khatumo. Somaliland authority stated: "The government of Somaliland firmly asserts that neither Somalia nor the clan militia have jurisdiction or claim over Las Anod." In 1991, Somaliland unilaterally claimed autonomy from Somalia and has since been seeking international recognition.



Democratic Republic of Congo: ADF attack, M23 resurgence and tensions with East African force

On 24 October, BBC Africa reported that at least 23 civilians were killed in a rebel attack in the town of Oicha in the Beni region of eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. The Congolese government attributed the attack to the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), a Uganda-based rebel group linked to Islamic State active in the region. Meanwhile, on 23 October, BBC Africa reported on a new wave of fighting in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo between the government forces and March23 (M23) rebels. According to the report, the rebels have captured the town of Kitshanga in the province of North Kivu. An unnamed security source informed AFP news agency: "The rebels are in Kitshanga and we are trying to find a way to retake the town." The previous week, the Congolese government had asked the East African force to leave the country by December owing to its failure to address the M23 unrest. However, the rebel campaign has worsened in the provinces of Ituri and North Kivu with the Rwandan government allegedly supporting the rebels. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), more than 6.2 million people have been displaced due to the insurgency in the region.

Europe and the Americas

Turkey: Bill to ratify Sweden's accession to NATO

On 23 October, Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan submitted Sweden's NATO accession bid to its parliament for ratification. Sweden's Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson welcomed the move stating: "Now it remains for the parliament to deal with the question." Turkey had previously blocked Sweden's bid due to security concerns over Turkey's Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) which is deemed a "terrorist organisation" by Turkey, the EU and the US. Turkey had agreed to send the bid to parliament in July, however, there have been recent calls for anti-terrorism measures in Sweden. The timeline for Turkey's parliamentary approval remains uncertain. The deal comes following Turkey's deal with the US to acquire 40 F-16s and the revival of Sweden's support for Turkey's accession into the EU.

Iceland: Women protest for gender pay gap

On 23 October, BBC reported that Iceland's women including Prime Minister Katrin Jakobsdottir are staging a "Women's Day Off" on 24 October in protest of the gender pay gap and gender-based violence. The strike will impact the sectors where women constitute the majority including healthcare and education. It is Iceland's first full-day women's strike since 1975. On 24 October 1975, around 90 per cent of the female workforce protested gender inequality that persisted in the country. According to the World Economic Forum (WEF), Iceland is recognized as one of the world's most gender-equal countries. However, according to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the gender wage gap in the country is higher than in several of its neighbouring countries including Belgium and Italy.

Belgium: New security measure after the Brussels attack

On 20 October, Belgium's Minister of Justice Vincent van Quickenborne announced his resignation following the attacks in Brussels. The resignation comes after pressure on his management of the Tunisian gunman case. On 16 October, two Swedish citizens were shot by Tunisian, Abdesalem Lassoued, who was already subject to be extradited in 2022. On 22 October, Prime Minister Alexander De Croo introduced five short-term security measures to enhance its response to potential threats. The measures include additional magistrates in Brussels, reinforcing the federal judicial police and bolstering railway police.

Argentina: “Anarcho-capitalist” Milei falls behind Massa in presidential polls

On 23 October, Argentina’s Minister of Economy Sergio Massa, leader of the ruling Peronist coalition, took an unprecedented lead over the far-right candidate and leader of Liberty Advances party, Javier Milei, in the country’s presidential elections. The outcome is a surprise as the current poor economic condition of Argentina under Massa is characterised by a 140 per cent inflation rate and a 40 per cent poverty rate. Besides earlier speculation that Massa would receive fewer votes due to the state of the economy, voters explained that “he [Milei] was the only candidate” with a “serious project for the country.” As a follow-up, there will be a second round of voting on 19 November.

Mexico: “Extraordinary” violent clashes in Mexico kills 22 people

On 23 October, Al Jazeera reported that at least 22 people including a dozen police officials were killed in instances of violence in the Mexican states of Guerrero and Michoacan. While both states are known for being a primary location of drug cartels and being susceptible to clashes between drug traffickers and police, the exact motive is still unknown. Al Jazeera quoted an analyst at International Crisis Group, Falko Ernst: “Guerrero has long seen one of Mexico’s most complicated armed conflicts, but the current, pre-electoral levels of violence are extraordinary.” Mexico’s President, Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, stated that the attack was “practically an ambush.”

Haiti: High court in Kenya blocks police force deployment to Haiti

On 24 October, a Kenyan High Court extended orders effectively blocking the Kenyan police force from being deployed to Haiti. Kenya was set to lead a UN Security Council mission to combat gang violence. The development comes after former presidential candidate Eкуру Akot filed a petition on 9 October stating that Kenyan President William Ruto’s decision to send the police force would be unconstitutional. He also condemned Ruto for taking such a decision given Kenya’s ongoing security issues from militant attacks. The High Court is set to rule on the case on 9 November.

The US: Mike Johnson elected as speaker of the House after three weeks of deadlock

On 25 October, Republican Mike Johnson was elected as speaker of the House of Representatives after three weeks of deadlock and debate. Johnson, who is an ally of former US President Donald Trump, is the least experienced speaker that the House has had in years. Post his victory, Johnson stated: “We want our allies around the world to know that this body of lawmakers is reporting again to our duty stations.” His first act was calling up legislation to signal the US support for Israel and has been urged by Biden to put in “mutual effort” to find “common ground” about the USD 106 billion in aid to Israel. Johnson has also stated that he would prioritise border security and set up a bipartisan commission to tackle the USD 33 trillion national debt.

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About the authors

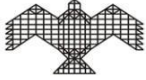
Anu Maria Joseph, Femy Francis and Rishika Yadav are Research Assistants at NIAS. Dhriti Mukherjee and Shamini Velayudham are Research Assistants at NIAS. Padmashree Anandhan is a Research Associate at NIAS. Vetriselvi Baskaran and Navinan GV are postgraduate scholars from the Department of Defence and Strategic Studies at the University of Madras, Chennai.





About NIAS-International Peace Research Initiative(IPRI)

National Institute of
Advanced Studies



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

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

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About Conflict Weekly



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Editor: D. Suba Chandran

Assistant Editors: Anu Maria Joseph and Dhriti Mukherjee

Editorial Team: Femy Francis, Rishika Yadav, Rohini Reenum, Shamini Velayutham and Padmashree Anandan