

Conflict Weekly

An initiative by NIAS-IPRI and KAS India Office

A brief review of conflict and peace processes across the world

23 February 2022, Vol.2, No.48

Russia's Ukraine salami slicing and Canada's freedom convoy protests

D Suba Chandran & Sarasi Ganguly



Russian President recognizing the two separatist regions of Ukraine on 21 February, is followed by a "Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance" between Russia and the two "new republics" - Luhansk and Donetsk. (Image Source: kremlin.ru)

Russia's Ukraine salami slicing

In the news

On 21 February, Russian President Putin signed an executive order recognizing "Donetsk People's Republic" and "Luhansk People's Republic" – two regions in eastern Ukraine, that were waging a separatist war with Kyiv. Two separatist leaders Denis Pushilin (Donetsk), and Leonid Pasechnik (Luhansk) were with Putin in Moscow for the event. On the same occasion, Putin also signed two separate agreements – "Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance" with the "Donetsk People's Republic" and the "Lugansk People's Republic." The treaty "reaffirms the policy of the Russian Federation to develop comprehensive, forward-looking cooperation" "provides for broad cooperation in the political, economic, social, military and humanitarian areas" with the two regions. On 22 February, the Duma ratified the order.

On 21 February, a White House statement on Biden's discussion with Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy affirmed "the commitment of the United States to Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity." It also said: "President Biden strongly condemned Russian President Putin's decision to purportedly recognize the "independence" of the so-called DNR and LNR regions of Ukraine. He updated President Zelenskyy on the United States' response, including our plan to issue sanctions. President Biden reiterated that the United States would respond swiftly and decisively, in lock-step with its Allies and partners, to further Russian aggression against Ukraine."

On 22 February, UN Secretary General Antonia Guterres on the crisis said: "Let me be clear: the decision of the Russian Federation to recognize the so-called "independence" of certain areas of Donetsk and Luhansk regions is a violation of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine. Such a unilateral measure conflicts directly with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations – and is inconsistent with the so-called Friendly Relations Declaration of the General Assembly which the International Court of Justice has repeatedly cited as representing international law. It is also a death blow to the Minsk Agreements endorsed by the Security Council. The principles of the UN Charter are not an a la carte menu. They cannot be applied selectively."

On 22 February, the White House announced its intentions to "impose significant costs on Russia for Russia's actions." The statement read: "Today, the administration is implementing the first tranche of sanctions that go far beyond 2014, in coordination with allies and partners in the European Union, United Kingdom, Canada, Japan, and Australia. And as President Biden promised, we worked with Germany to ensure the Nord Stream 2 pipeline will not move forward."

On 23 February, a White House release had President Biden's statement, that read: "Since Russia began deploying troops to the Ukrainian border, the United States has worked closely with our Allies and partners to deliver a strong, unified response. As I said when I met with Chancellor Scholz earlier this month, Germany has been a leader in that effort, and we have closely coordinated our efforts to stop the Nord Stream 2 pipeline if Russia further invaded Ukraine. Yesterday, after further close consultations between our two governments, Germany announced that it would halt certification of the pipeline. Today, I have directed my administration to impose sanctions on Nord Stream 2 AG and its corporate officers. These steps are another piece of our initial tranche of sanctions in response to Russia's actions in Ukraine. As I have made clear, we will not hesitate to take further steps if Russia continues to escalate."

Issues at large

First, the Russian salami-slicing in Ukraine. It all started in Crimea in 2014; following an invasion by armed men in February 2014 in the region, the Crimean Supreme Council held a controversial referendum, that saw more than 95 per cent of people voting for acceding to Russia. The accession happened on 18 March 2014. After annexing Crimea, Russia started looking at the two separatist regions – Donetsk and Luhansk, referred to as the Donbas region of Ukraine. Ever since the annexation of Crimea, the pro-Russian separatists in the above two regions within the Donbas were fighting against the Ukraine state. The Minsk Protocol signed in September 2014, which included Russia, Ukraine, and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), called for a ceasefire, decentralization of power, and continued consultations. The separatists from these two regions were supported by Russia; their leaders finally signed the two agreements with Putin on 21 February 2022, after the latter recognized the independence of LPR and DPR.

Second, the failure of the Minsk agreements. The 2014 agreement collapsed subsequently, as violence resumed in the Donbas region. In February 2015, following intense diplomatic efforts led by the leaders of Germany and France and Russia, the Minsk-II agreement was signed. Besides the above three, Ukraine and leaders of the two separatist regions from Luhansk and Donetsk were also a party to the agreement. The slow progress in the Minsk agreements was a part of multiple discussions and meetings between Europe and Russia.

Third, the new security demands by Russia, and the limits of diplomacy. Tensions over Russia's demands on Ukraine's future (vis-à-vis EU and NATO) became a primary concern between Russia and Europe, and also between Russia and the US. Russia wanted certain written guarantees over the same, and is against Ukraine joining the EU and NATO. During the last few weeks, multiple discussions were held at the organizational levels between Russia and the OSCE, and at the leadership levels between Antony Blinken and Sergei Lavrov, between the French President Macron and the Russian President Putin, and between the German Chancellor Olaf Schulz and Putin. The primary difference is over the future of Ukraine. Russia started massing troops along the borders, and conducting military exercises in Belarus, while the West has been threatening with sanctions. Kremlin's decision to recognize the two regions on 21 February should underline the limits of diplomacy, and also the threats of sanctions.

In perspective

First, a resurgent Russia willing to risk sanctions and use force. President Putin is looking forward to asserting Kremlin's claims over the region. Though these have been the Russian concerns since the breakup of the Soviet Union, Putin is now sending a message to Europe and the US that he is willing to achieve those claims through military action if necessary. This is a new assertive Russia, post-1991, the rest of the world has to take notice and get ready to respond. Second, Putin questions not only Ukraine's sovereignty but also the international order, law and norms. As the UN Secretary-General commented regarding the principles of the UN Charter, international law and norms cannot be pursued as an a la carte menu and applied selectively. The global response to Ukraine will be the biggest challenge to the international and European orders since the Cold War. Third, Putin's challenge in Europe will upset the US calculations not only in Europe but also elsewhere; it would undermine Biden's efforts to keep the primary American focus on China and pull him down in Europe. Fourth, China may emerge as the biggest beneficiary; without firing a single shot, it would pin the US back in Europe, as happened during the Cold War era, and have a larger political space elsewhere. This would also prevent the US from having a larger push in the Indo-Pacific.



Canada: Imposition of national emergency, and the future of freedom convoy protests

In the news

On 21 February 2022, Canada's House of Commons voted to support the federal government in extending the Emergency Act. The 185-151 result made it clear that the lawmakers supported the government's attempt to curb the Freedom Convoy protests. The Emergency Act was imposed by Prime Minister Trudeau last week to end the mass protests against Covid-19 and vaccination mandates. It is an unprecedented use of the Act that will give the Prime Minister special powers for 30 days. These powers include a ban on public assembly, travel restrictions, and the use of specific properties.

On 18 February, the emergency was invoked by Trudeau. Referring to the recent measures, Ottawa's Interim Police Chief, Steve Bell, said: "Despite the successes of the past few days, we still require these measures to prevent unlawful protesters from returning." Since last Friday, the streets have been cleared by several federal forces, and police have reported 196 arrests and towing of 115 vehicles.

Issues at large

First, The Freedom Convoy protests. Started as a rally of truckers protesting with their vehicles, the protest swept through Canada in early January following the compulsory vaccination of truck drivers crossing the US-Canada border. What started with truck drivers snowballed into a public outrage of right-wing groups using racist symbols, honking trucks on the road, and attacking small businesses. The city of Ottawa had the highest concentration of protestors resulting in public violence and property damage. The key route of Ambassador bridge was shut down by rigs on 8 February. The protests have continued for over two weeks and spread to all major cities of Canada. It became a reminder of the general frustration regarding pandemic restrictions, not only in Canada but parts of New Zealand, Australia, and Europe.

Second, the State response. The Freedom Convoy protests brought out conflicting reactions from different political and social groups in Canada. The liberal government saw the protests as an attack on democracy and was concerned about public safety. The opposition groups in the Parliament were unsure of invoking an act that was never used to control the situation. They sought solutions through temporary blockades and restrictions. However, when the blocking of the Ambassador bridge posed an immense traffic problem, the opinions changed. The motion of invoking the Emergency Act was passed in the House of Commons that won by a majority. The opposing New Democratic Party leader saw the Emergency Act as a chance to clear out protestors who "undermined democracy."

Third, the emergency act. It was imposed during the First and Second World Wars. It gave the cabinet special powers of restrictions on the grounds of public welfare. In 1970, this Act was used for the last time during the "October Crisis," which gave the police power to suspect, arrest and detain anyone. The Act was repealed in 1988 and replaced by the Emergencies Act. Trudeau defended his decision by saying that the country's situation "is still fragile." At present, the Act can be justified as it has helped clear out protestors from the most important areas of the country.

In perspective

While there is talk of the Freedom Convoy protests coming to an end in Canada, there have been copycat protests in New Zealand and Australia against vaccine mandates. There may be a larger political repercussion regarding public health and mandates that were a common feature of the pandemic. Second, the three-week-long protest exhausted Ottawa police and called the protests a “siege.” It was not an easy task for the police and security forces to address the protests; how to deal with the protestors who are using the strategy as a part of their fundamental right is a big question for liberal democracies.

Also, from around the world

By Padmashree Anandhan, Sejal Sharma and Satyam Dubey

Peace and Conflict from East and Southeast Asia

China: Beijing accuses Canberra of flying aircraft close to Chinese vessels

On 22 February, China denied Australia’s accusation that the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) Navy flotilla had spiked a laser at their patrol aircraft. China reciprocally claimed that the Australian P-8 anti-submarine warfare patrol aircraft flew very close to Chinese vessels and also dropped sonobuoys. China warned Australia that these intentional and provocative moves could lead to a misunderstanding and misjudgment and ultimately threaten both sides. China’s Ministry of National Defence, Senior Colonel Tan Kefei, said: “During the entire course, the Chinese vessels maintained safe, standard and professional actions, which conform to the relevant international law and international practice.”

New Zealand: Clashes between protestors and police intensify

On 22 February, the protests in New Zealand against the COVID-19 vaccine mandate intensified. A protester drove a car towards a police line, narrowly missing officers from crushing, while other protesters sprayed human faeces on New Zealand police against the installation of barriers around the convoy. The protest camps have been present outside Parliament for the past two weeks. Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said: “What’s happening in Wellington is wrong. Protesters had taken things too far and needed to return home.” Police Assistant Commissioner, Richard Chambers, called the behaviours of certain groups disgraceful and said: “Our focus remains on opening the roads up to Wellingtonians and doing our absolute best to restore peaceful protest.”

Myanmar: UNHRC reports secret supply of weapons by Russia and China

On 22 February, the UNHRC reported that Russia and China were found to be supplying fighter jets to the regime that is capable of being used on civilians. It urged the UNSC to help stop the transfer of weapons. Another report from a US Congressman said that Serbia was also amongst those which has been supplying weapons since the military takeover in Myanmar. So far, in Myanmar, the internal situation has been chaotic since the coup, leading to protests and numerous killings of civilians. In response, China’s Foreign Ministry said: “China has always advocated that all parties and factions should proceed in the long-term interests of the country.” According to Serbia’s Foreign Minister: “examined the new situation very carefully and in March last year made a decision not to deliver weapons to this country either under previously concluded agreements or new export requests.”



Peace and Conflict from South Asia

Nepal: Violent protests outside Parliament over the US grant

On 16 February, the protesters in Kathmandu demonstrated against the US-funded infrastructure program in Nepal; they were dispersed by the police through water cannon and tear gas. The US government-led aid agency, the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), agreed to provide assistance of USD 500 million in grants specially focussed on funding some road improvement projects and an electricity transmission line in Nepal. The issue was scheduled to be presented and discussed in Nepal Parliament, but it was postponed just because of discontent among different political parties. On the claims of the programme being Washington's Indo-Pacific strategy, the US officials assured that the grant in assistance was only to bring development to Nepal.

Afghanistan: Taliban deploys special forces in border provinces near Central Asia

On 16 February, the Taliban government has established several military units in Afghanistan in the border provinces in the north, northeast, and west and deployed 4,400 additional troops in the region bordering Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Iran. The Taliban insisted that it deployed the 'special forces' to strengthen domestic security. Zabihullah Mujahid, chief Taliban spokesman and deputy information minister, said: "the deployment of the strong forces is a response to certain [security] needs. It's not a threat to any other country; in fact, it will be to the benefit of security in the region." While Afghan military expert Omar Sapi said: "the Taliban, which recently emerged from many years of war, has no interest in entering another one."

Peace and Conflict from Central Asia, Middle East and Africa

Yemen: Humanitarian crisis sees new lows with the intensifying war

On 22 February, the Saudi-led coalition launched 24 operations targeting the Houthis in Hajjah province. There was substantial damage to the Houthi militia in life, and 11 military vehicles were destroyed. The bombing also led to civilian casualties where ten people, mostly women and children, were wounded while a 12-year-old girl and a 50-year-old woman were killed. Furthermore, a drone launched by the Houthis targeting the King Abdullah airport in the Jizan province was intercepted by the coalition. However, 16 people, which included foreign nationals, were injured by shrapnel during the aerial bombardment. Amidst these escalations, in the region's long-running war, the toll of civilian casualties last month has been the highest in the past three years. The UN has warned of an unprecedented humanitarian crisis in Yemen owing to the increasing funding gaps, which could leave eight million civilians without any aid.

Syria: Funding cuts force charity hospitals to cease operations

On 16 February, in the disputed region of Idlib, living conditions continued to worsen as the region experienced funding shortages for humanitarian assistance. Most of the population in the region consists of internally displaced families relying on charity hospitals for aid. The budget cuts have led to a reduction or complete closure of operations in more than a dozen charity hospitals, hinting toward a medical crisis. This downsizing of international aid comes in the light of the ongoing financial crisis in the region. More hospitals are suspected of shutting down, eventually leaving the civilians in despair.

Syria: Israel launches third missile attack

On 23 February, the Syrian military reported a missile attack near the Quneitra province. The attack was carried out from the Golan Heights and caused some physical damage; however, no casualties were reported. The latest missile attack is the third aerial strike by Israel this month. There was no immediate confirmation report from the Israeli officials.

Burkina Faso: Explosion in gold mining site kills 59 people

On 22 February, the explosion, believed to be caused by the stocking of chemicals used to treat gold at the mining site in southwestern Burkina Faso, has killed around 59 people and left more than 100 others injured. A forest ranger who is the witness of the explosion at the mining site, Sansan Kambou, informed that: “I saw bodies everywhere. It was horrible.” Burkina Faso is the fastest growing gold producer in Africa, and topping the list of exports shows that it is the mainstay of Ouagadougou’s economy.

Nigeria: Military airstrike wounds 12 children

On 20 February, seven children were killed and five wounded in an air attack by the Nigerian military. The Governor of Maradi Chaibou Aboubacar said that the airstrike took place in Nachade village, a few kilometres away from the Nigerian border, which mistakenly resulted in the victimization of 12 children. Nigerian Director of Defence Information Major General Jimmy Akpor said: “As a matter of policy, the Nigerian Air Force does not make any incursions into areas outside Nigeria’s territorial boundaries. That’s our policy.”

Ethiopia: Addis Ababa opens mega-dam despite condemnation

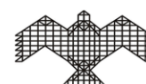
On 20 February, Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmad inaugurated a mega-dam on the river Nile to produce electricity from its Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) Sudan and Egypt, its neighbours, consider as a blockade to cause severe water shortage downstream. Abiy said: “Ethiopia’s main interest is to bring light to 60 per cent of the population who is suffering in darkness, to save the labour of our mothers who are carrying wood on their backs to get energy.” Egypt’s Foreign Minister, Sameh Hassan Shoukry, accused Addis Ababa of ‘persisting in its violations’ of the deal signed between three countries in 2015 prohibiting any of the parties to take unilateral action on the river water use.

Somalia: Suicide bomber killed 13 people on the eve of voting

On 19 February, 13 people were killed after a suicide bomber in central Somalia detonated an explosive in a restaurant full of politicians and local officials. The attack was led by Al-Shabab, an extremist organization that monitors armed groups online, which had claimed its responsibility. The attack took place despite tightened security in Beledweyne on the eve of the completion of a first round of voting for parliamentary seats in the constituency. A Police spokesman said: “the blast caused huge damage as the dead were mostly civilians along with two deputy district commissioners and 20 others were wounded in Beledweyne.”

Mali: Soldiers and rebels killed in clashes near Burkina Faso border

On 19 February, in a clash with the rebel groups in the northeast of the West African nation, eight Malian soldiers lost their lives, and about 14 others got injured, as informed by the Defence Ministry. Also, the Malian Army gunned down 57 rebel fighters who targeted the troops in the tri-border area near Burkina Faso. Mali is considered the epicentre for the Sahel-wide conflict, which has killed until now, thousands of soldiers and around two million civilians displaced from this region. The latest rebel attack comes after Mali’s ruling military government requested France to withdraw their troops from its territory and do it without any delay, which highlights the breakdown in relations between Paris and Bamako.



Peace and Conflict from Europe and the Americas

Europe: CRRT team formed to respond to cyber-attacks launched against Ukraine

On 23 February, a team of European countries has been formed a cyber rapid-response team (CRRT) to defend Ukraine from future cyber-attacks. The group includes Lithuania, Croatia, Poland, Estonia, Romania, and the Netherlands, formed after a series of Russian attacks launched on Ukraine's banking sector. In a recent tweet of the Lithuania Defense Ministry: "In response to Ukraine request, [we] are activating [a] Lithuanian-led cyber rapid-response team, which will help Ukrainian institutions to cope with growing cyber-threats. #StandWithUkraine." The response team will look into various cyber-expertise, forensics, vulnerability assessments to detect and respond to cyber-threats.

Europe: UEFA to reconsider game venue due to Ukraine crisis

On 22 February, the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) has said that the season's Champions League final game will not be held in St Petersburg due to the crisis situation between Ukraine and Russia. It said: "closely monitoring the situation" and "any decision would be made in due course if necessary." At the same, UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson commented that football tournaments have no possibility to conduct games in Russia, which has violated sovereignty. The European football governing body will decide based on the scenario and opt for another venue to hold the league match.

Europe: Petrol prices increase over fears of a shortage of supply due to the Ukraine crisis

On 22 February, with the fear of interruption of oil and gas supplies due to the Ukraine-Russia crisis, the prices of the fuels shot up. Despite the west's attempts to use economic sanctions and create a block for the Russian pipeline. As a result, the prices have then weakened. According to Manulife Investment Management, Sue Trinh: "Measures forcing the country to supply less crude or natural gas would have "substantial implications" on oil prices and the global economy." The warning on the increase of petrol prices was issued earlier, citing the crisis situation.

Germany: Russia's license to operate Nord Stream 2 pipeline suspended

On 23 February, Germany announced to halt the approval of the Nord Stream 2 pipeline after Russian troops moved into Ukraine. Russia, upon recognition of the separatist groups in eastern Ukraine, ordered for its troops to enter Ukraine. The US, the UK, Poland and the rest of the European countries have condemned the move and have levied strict sanctions on Russia. The case of Germany, which has withstood the pipeline going against other western powers, has now taken a decision to suspend the licensing. Thereby, Russia will not be able to operate until the reversal of the decision.

The US: Three white men involved in the killing of Arbery found guilty

On 22 February, three white men, Travis McMichael, Gregory McMichael, and William Roddie Bryan, in the trial for killing a Black man Ahmaud Arbery were found guilty. The judgment came as they were found to be violating the civil rights of Arbery due to his race. The defense attorneys of the accused opposed that the men had not been chased because of his race but out of suspicion of crimes taking place in the neighborhood, which was a mistake. According to the prosecutor Tara Lyons: "All three defendants told you loud and clear, in their own words, how they feel about African Americans." In accordance with the trial, three men stand guilty as per the federal hate crimes and will be sentenced to life in prison.

The US: Navy's 5th fleet plans to launch a joint fleet of unmanned drones

On 22 February, the Bahrain-based US Navy's 5th fleet announced the launch of 100 unmanned drones for close surveillance of the region's volatile waters. The joint fleet of drones, both submersible, and sailing, would intensify the naval capabilities amidst tensions surrounding Iran's nuclear deal. The drone force is expected to be in action by 2023. Furthermore, Israel will likely join the drone task force in the region.

Argentina: Raging wildfire ravages land and wildlife

On 21 February, the largely rural province of Corrientes saw eight separate fires that destroyed at least 800,000 hectares of land. Fires that started in mid-January have destroyed large swathes of farming regions and wetlands abundant in wildlife, incurring a loss of more than USD 260 million. The region has been struggling with high temperatures and drought-like conditions owing to the La Niña climate phenomenon, adding to the untenable wildfires. Efforts to control the situation have continued with the help of volunteers and firefighting units from Argentina, Brazil and Bolivia.

Mexico: Brawl erupted between migrants and immigration authorities

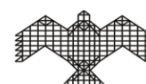
On 23 February, hundreds of migrants got into a row with the Mexican National Guard troops and immigration authorities over the laxity in the visa process. The migrants in Tapachula have been complaining for months about the lack of progress regarding their asylum requests. What initially started as a protest outside the immigration office eventually escalated into protestors burning tires and blocking the road for several hours. Migrants from Haiti, Cuba, and African Nations threw sticks and stones at the authorities. However, no injuries have been reported.

Ecuador: Two bodies found hanging from bridges amidst soaring drug violence

On 14 February, on the outskirts of the port city of Guayaquil, two bodies were discovered hanging from a pedestrian bridge. The victims are suspected of having been killed as a consequence of the rampant drug violence in the region. The families reported the victims to be missing for three days before they were found. The murders are suspected to be linked to the recent seizure of illegal contrabands in Guayaquil or as an intimidating tactic to ward off rival gangs. The suburb Duran, where the bodies were found, has been plagued by violence and shootings between rival cartels since last year.

About the authors

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16 February 2022, Vol.2, No.47

Unfreezing the Afghan assets, Tunisia's judicial crisis and Libya's new political deadlock

Abigail Miriam Fernandez, Poulomi Mondal, and Harshita Rathore



An executive order signed by President Biden on Afghanistan says the US administration "will seek to facilitate access to \$3.5 billion of those assets for the benefit of the Afghan people and Afghanistan's future pending a judicial decision." (Image Source: Reuters-Stringer)

Afghanistan: President Biden signs order to split USD seven billion in frozen Afghan assets

[In the news](#)

On 11 February, President Biden signed an Executive Order to help enable certain US-based assets belonging to Afghanistan's central bank, Da Afghanistan Bank. The order claimed that "this is one step forward in the United States' effort to authorize the transfer of a significant portion of the funds to meet the needs of the Afghan people."




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09 February 2022, Vol.2, No.46

Freedom convoy protests in Canada, and a de-escalation over Ukraine

Sarasi Ganguly and Ashwin Immanuel Dhanabalan



Led by the truck drivers, the anti-COVID measures protest took a new turn in Canada with the use of heavy trucks to block roads and bridges. (Image Source: CNN)


Canada: Freedom convoys and a new wave of protests

[In the news](#)

On 8 February, thousands of truck drivers in Canada, with heavy vehicles and rigs, blocked the Ambassador Bridge, the busiest route connecting Detroit to Windsor, Canada. On 7 February, Ottawa Mayor Jim Watson declared a state of emergency in the city over the protests against vaccine mandates. Mayor Watson suggested that the emergency was needed for police to control the protestors who are being called "volatile." Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said in a statement: "Canadians were shocked and frankly disgusted by the behaviour displayed by some people protesting in our nation's capital."

[Issues at large](#)

First, the state of COVID-19 protests in Canada. The protests started in January when the Canadian government imposed a vaccine mandate, compulsory covid testing and quarantine on truck drivers entering Canada through the US-Canada border. A convoy of truckers protested this move, calling it a violation of rights. Under the banner "Freedom Convoy," a




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02 February 2022, Vol.2, No.45

One year of the coup in Myanmar, Taliban meetings in Oslo, and the Global hunger report

Aparup Bhattacharjee, Abigail Fernandez, and Apoorva Sudhakar





On 1 February, Myanmar completed one year of military rule; despite internal protests and external sanctions, the military regime remains strong. (Image Source: File Photo/REUTERS/Stringer)

Myanmar: One year after the coup

[In the news](#)

On 1 February marked one year of the military coup in Myanmar that triggered a nationwide civil disobedience movement, political arrests, ethnic conflicts, and violence. On the first anniversary, while the protestors observed a "silent strike" for six hours, a few pro-military rallies were organized in Yangon, Mandalay, and Naypyitaw.

On the same day, the EU delegation to the UN in Geneva issued a joint statement expressing concern over the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Myanmar and called for a "cessation of violence."

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26 January 2022, Vol.2, No.44

Coup in Africa, Continuing violence in Yemen, and an ISIS attack in Syria

Mohamad Aseel Ummer, Rashmi BR, and Jeshil Samuel




The people of Burkina Faso celebrating the coup. (Image Source: AFP/BBC)

Burkina Faso: Another coup in Africa

[In the news](#)

On 24 January, in a televised broadcast, a group of soldiers representing the Patriotic Movement for Safeguarding and Restoration (MPSR) informed that they had detained the President, citing the worsening insecurities in the country. The government has been dissolved and the constitution suspended, but the group assured that a constitutional order would be retained in "reasonable time". The whereabouts of the President and other members of the government have not been disclosed yet. The coup unravelled a week after the arrest of 11 soldiers accused of plotting to overthrow the government led by President Roch Marc Christian. The statement released by the coup leaders informs that the putsch had taken place "without any physical violence against those arrested, who are being held in a safe place, with respect for their dignity." The coup comes after days of tensions and public unrest in the capital - Ouagadougou. On 22 January, people gathered in large numbers to protest against the government and its failure to fight the growing threat of Islamist insurgency in the country.




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19 January 2022, Vol.2, No.43

Threat of War over Ukraine, a Syrian trial in Germany, and Protests in France

D Suba Chandran, Ashwin Immanuel Dhanabalan, and Padmashree Anandhan



The US Secretary of State is in Europe and is meeting the Russian foreign minister over the threat of war in Ukraine. (Image Source: The Economist)

Ukraine: Threat of Russian invasion

[In the news](#)

On 19 January, the US Secretary of State Antony Blinken reached Kyiv, as a part of his three-day tour to Kyiv, Berlin and Geneva, to discuss what the US sees as an imminent threat of Russian invasion of Ukraine. He met with Ukraine's President; a US State Department release claimed: "Secretary Blinken emphasized again that if Russia chooses the path of further aggression against Ukraine, the United States, together with our Allies and partners, will impose crippling costs on Russia's economy, reinforce NATO's presence in frontline Allied states, and increase defensive assistance to Ukraine above and beyond what we are already providing."



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12 January 2022, Vol.2, No.42

Unrest and crackdown in Kazakhstan, Another jail term for Aung San Suu Kyi, Two years after Qasem Soleimani, and Canada's reconciliation with the indigenous people

Abigail Miriam Fernandez, Vibha Venugopal, Ankit Singh and Sarasi Ganguly



While the cases from Omicron have been increasing across the world, new reports on the nature of Omicron threat is cautious. (Image Source: WHO)

Kazakhstan: Bloody unrest and a brutal crackdown

[In the news](#)

On 2 January, protests broke out in the western town of Zhanaozen after a sudden spike in fuel prices when the government lifted price caps for LPG. Protests spread to other parts of the country, including Almaty and quickly turned violent, resulting in the death of over 160 people and over 1000 injured. On 4 January, President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev restored the price cap on fuel; however, protests continued. Demonstrators pulled down a statue of former President Nursultan Nazarbayev, burning buildings and vehicles.

On 5 January, Tokayev declared a state of emergency, issued a "shoot-to-kill" order terming the protesters as "bandits and terrorists." He also called for Russian assistance to curb unrest. The following day, the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) deployed over 2500



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23 December 2021, Vol.2, No.38

New reports on the Omicron threat, and lifting sanctions on humanitarian aid to Afghanistan

Akriti Sharma and Ashwin Immanuel Dhanabalan



While the cases from Omicron have been increasing across the world, new reports on the nature of Omicron threat is cautious. (Image Source: WHO)

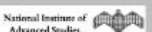
COVID-19: Omicron rapidly spreads across countries

[In the news](#)

On 22 December, the UK reported 1,06,122 cases recording the highest number of daily cases reported. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), Omicron has spread to 106 countries.

On 22 December, according to the New York Times, a South African study highlighted that risk of hospitalization was 70 per cent lesser among people infected with Omicron as compared to other variants. On the same day, according to CNBC, a Scottish study suggested that the Omicron is two-thirds less likely to result in hospitalization in comparison to the Delta. Additionally, a study from England shows that omicron infection was 15 to 20 per cent less likely to lead to hospitalization than Delta.

On 20 December, the WHO said that Omicron cases doubled in one to one-and-a-half days, making it more transmissible than the Delta variant of COVID-19. It added that Omicron is



Conflict Weekly

An initiative by NIAS-IPRI and KAS India Office

A brief review of conflict and peace processes across the world

28 October 2021, Vol.2, No.30

Coup in Sudan, Pressure on Myanmar's military regime, and the Migrant game by Belarus

Mohammad Aseel Ummer, Aparupa Bhattacharjee, and Joana Cera Matthews



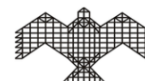
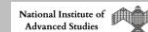
Military dissolves civilian leaderships of the transitional government in Sudan. (Image Source: The Guardian/Mohammed Abu Obaid/EPA)

Sudan: Tensions flare-up as the military dissolves the civilian government

[In the news](#)

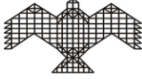
On 25 October, General Abdel Fattah Burhan, head of Sudan's armed forces, in a televised broadcast announced that the civilian leadership of the transitional government has been dissolved due to political infighting which can lead to a civil war. Prior to the announcement, various news sources reported heavy deployment of security forces in the capital - Khartoum and key civilian leaders like Prime Minister Abdella Hamdok being detained from their residences.

Government supporters who had been demonstrating since last week as a response to a call for a military coup took to the streets in Khartoum and other major cities demanding an immediate release of detained leaders and reinstating the civilian government back to power. The armed





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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.



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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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