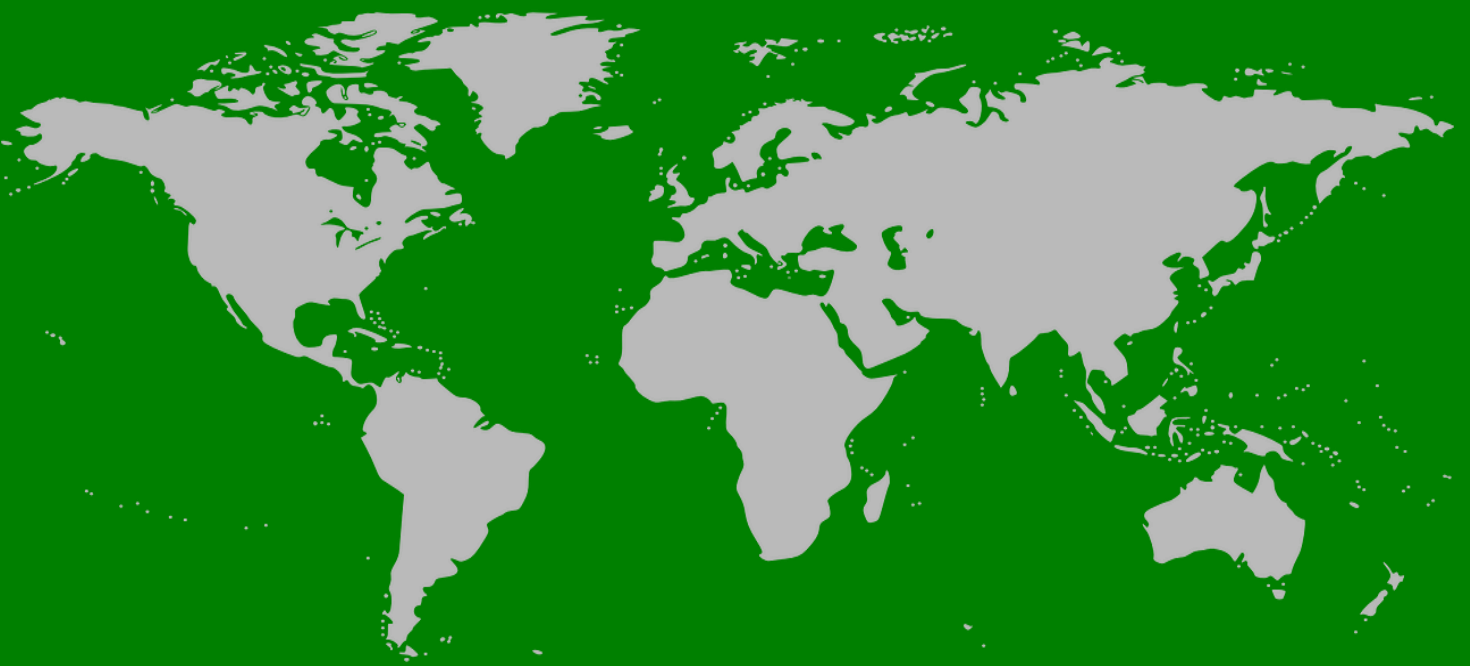


*“Discovering international relations
and contemporary global issues”*

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News & Background



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Editorial Team

Series Editor | Csilla Morauszki

Authors – July 2016 | Dóra Vető, Maria Pervova, Aldoreza Prandana, Annalisa Baldassarri, Roberta Maddalena, Anna Süveges-Szabó, Mirjam Szakács, Abdulhamid Gunda, Frank R. Zarb, Daniella Vecsei, Nicolas Mählmann, Hannah Cartwright

Executive Publisher | Andras Lorincz

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Kulturalis Kapcsolatokert Alapitvany

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Theresa May becomes new British Prime Minister

Dóra Vető ■

■ Shortly after the United Kingdom has voted in a referendum, which favoured the “Leave” option of Brexit by 52% to 48%, British Prime Minister David Cameron announced he will be stepping down from his post by October 2016 the latest. But Cameron did not have to take on the job that much longer as on 11 July Theresa May became the new British PM after her “sole contender”, Andrea Leadsom decided to drop out of the race, making May Britain’s second female Prime Minister after Margaret Thatcher, who held office from 1979 to 1990.



In a speech on 13 July May stated that she will be continuing her predecessor’s “true legacy of social justice”, addressing “the poor, black and white working-class residents as well as women, youth and those with mental health issues”,

saying that her government “will be driven not by the interests of a privileged few”, but theirs. She also stated that the Conservative Party will continue to obtain unionism, “not just among England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, but between all of [UK’s] citizens”, therefore May’s effort will be aimed at those who had voted in favour of the “Remain” option, such as Scotland and Northern Ireland, to maintain the 1-nation unity.

Not long after she was made PM, May made initial steps to set up the new Cabinet, naming six members, who include two of her main rivals, both of whom have been campaigning in favour of a Brexit vote: Members of Parliament Boris Johnson as Foreign Secretary and Liam Fox who will be responsible for International Trade. David Davis was made “Brexit” Secretary, a new post due to the outcome of the referendum, while ex-Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond was made Chancellor and Amber Rudd Home Secretary, both of whom were hoping to remain in the EU.

Even though May is considered to be a “Eurosceptic” she supported the “Remain” campaign. But as made British PM she stated



that “Brexit means Brexit”, therefore she will carry out the withdrawal process without giving another opportunity for the public to vote in a second referendum. Despite of this statement May announced at a joint press conference that “the UK was in no rush to trigger the two-year process of leaving the EU”, since she wanted everyone’s “objectives to be clear”. As a result of the Brexit vote May has also decided that Britain should skip its upcoming turn of the presidency of the Council of the EU, which would take place in the second half of 2017. Even though other EU Member States respect the United Kingdom’s decision, they emphasised that the UK should not have any privileges after the withdrawal process is complete, such as being part of the EU’s single market. The Member Countries, such as Germany, France and Italy have also insisted, that they will not hold informal talks with the UK until it triggers Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty, which allows any member state to withdraw from the European Union. Following the exit vote immediate changes had to be made from the EU’s side as well, therefore European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker appointed the Commission’s former VP, Michel Barnier as the negotiator of Brexit.

Even though it has not been a month since the referendum, the uncertainty that followed the Brexit vote has highlighted the short-term disadvantages of the UK’s decision: according to



Theresa May in 2015.
Photo: UK Home Office [\[Wikimedia Commons\]](#)

a recent report, as an immediate aftermath of the vote the UK’s retailers saw the biggest fall in sales in four years, which rose “doubts about the ability of consumers to stave off a Brexit recession”. It was also reported on 28 July that thousands of jobs were lost at Lloyds Banking Group, one of the country’s biggest banks, and the automobile market is facing difficulties as the pound is constantly losing from its value



Warsaw NATO Summit

Mirjam Szakács ■

■ The 28th Summit of the NATO concluded on 9th June in Warsaw. Even before the meeting, the main strategic directives and priorities had been known for the public.



On the Wales summit a whole series of decisions have been made regarding the adaptive and strengthening decisions. Towards Russia, the principle of the dual track approach continues to prevail: both a deterrent attitude and the tendency for a dialogue are present at the same time. Although for Russia the Crimean peninsula is of paramount geopolitical importance, the annexation of which prompted quick steps from both the NATO and the US part. The Ukrainian crisis has proved that the Russian forces are highly mobile and can be moved very quickly. This posed a new challenge for the NATO through the appearance of the hybrid military actions, and such risks are of a different nature as opposed to the ones disputed at the Wales

Summit. As a consequence the NATO has set the corroboration of its alliance system and the support of the weak member states as a new priority. What is more, the concept of projecting stability has also become an important part in the communication of the NATO. According to the new framework, security has to be improved in countries struggling with severe crisis, but not with kinetic forces. In Iraq and in Jordan a new training mission will be launched soon.

Russia is undoubtedly the most disputed key question. The NATO is bound to up new military units on a rotate basis to the Baltic region and to Poland. These units will stay in a given location for about 6-9 months, then new ones will be established in a different but relatively close area. The main reason for this is that pursuant to an agreement between the NATO and Russia, no troops can be settled down for a longer period of time along the Russian border. But it is good news, that the promotion of dialogue is still the main priority after the Warsaw Summit. The appearance of new threats such as mass migration or terrorism on an unprecedented scale, and the results of geopolitical changes have spurred the NATO to take the necessary strategic steps and to respond to these challenges accordingly. Countries in which the NATO has essential geopolitical interests – such



as Georgia, Afghanistan and Ukraine – were invited to a distinct meeting.

The Alliance will continue to support Afghanistan financially and by means of setting up drilling facilities in order to enhance security in the country. Nevertheless, the intensity of the NATO military presence will not be reduced.

The NATO is about to prompt closer cooperation with Georgia, but at the same time the membership process of the country is not expected to be speeded up. The Alliance has ensured Ukraine its support, but official membership has not been in question until recently. Probably the major beneficiary of a possible Ukrainian membership would be Poland, since in the event of a possible Russian invasion the 5th Article of the NATO Treaty would come into effect immediately. (Pursuant to this article an attack against a member state would be considered an attack against the entire Alliance.) NATO decisions are agreed upon on the basis of unanimity, and since other member states do not have an explicit interest in the membership of Ukraine and there are no considerable chance for a possible Russian invasion, apart from support the organisation cannot really offer more for Ukraine.

Besides, a new agreement has been reached between the NATO and the EU, about which no details have been disclosed so far. It is probable that the agreement focuses on the handling of the migratory crisis.



*NATO Defence Ministers gather at the 2016 Warsaw summit in Poland.
Photo: Tim D. Godbee [Flickr]*

The new Libyan government will be granted NATO support and a navy mission will be soon launched with the goal of fighting human trafficking. The NATO fleet has already been present in the Mediterranean region but until now human trafficking could not be contained. The detected makeshift boats in danger are always saved by the navy or the coast guards, so the migrants are rather stimulated than deterred from setting out, so the rescued refugees always reach the territory of the EU, at least temporarily but in most cases they apply for refugee status at the same time.

To sum it up, the NATO summit has not presented us surprises. It is still of paramount importance to tackle the most recent challenges of new nature and to create such alliances which enhance the strategic positions of the NATO. From now on, it is time to monitor the effectiveness of the decisions and agreements which have been reached and made within the new geopolitical framework.



Refugees like Jewish: using wooden paths to cross over the border

Roberta Maddalena ■

■ It is summer, politicians go on holidays, but the refugees' crisis does not and in this month of July another scenario came out in Italy. As the EU-Turkey agreement is precarious – after the attempted coup in Turkey- and the Balkan route is becoming more and more inaccessible, Italy, thanks to the Mediterranean Sea, seems to be the only hope for refugees now.

However, even in Italy the situation is not positive. It is assumed that migrants arrive in Italy because it is the easiest way, but their dream is to reach the North Europe, where many of them have got relatives and friends. Passing over the border without documents is not simple, and the consequence is that thousands of migrants are stuck in the train stations waiting for any chance to go. As the border between Italy and Austria is totally restricted, as well as those with Slovenia and with France (Ventimiglia), the only possible way remains Switzerland. This was true until few weeks ago, when there was an agreement between Italy and Switzerland according to which every fifteen days one hundred migrants were let to enter to Switzerland, through Chiasso. This mechanism seems to be interrupted by Swiss authorities, indeed only in the first week of July 1300 migrants arrived, and 996 were sent back to Italy.

As a consequence, hundreds of migrants, many of them are children, are in Como or in other villages near Chiasso sleeping outside, drinking and washing their cloths in a fountain, eating meals that Caritas, the Christian humanitarian organisation, provide them. They do not want to move, they are waiting for trying to pass over the border, for many of them will be the first time, for others perhaps the second or the third time they try to. The ancient paths through the woods, used by Jewish during the World War II to flee from Italy, seem to be the only possibility, until when they will also be put under control by authorities, like the train line and the route now.

Keep refugees away from Hungary

Hungary is keeping on shutting its eyes and its ears in the face of refugees' crisis, especially for what concerns its border with Serbia. The United Nations refugee agency deeply expressed concern about the new law put into force on 5th of July, which allows authorities to push back anyone caught inside Hungary, passing over the fence at the border. This regulation has already been provoked 664 individuals sent back, and about 1400 are stuck, hoping to pass over. The push-backs usually happen in the night, also with violence by police, dog-bites or pepper-spray, and the conditions in the camps at the border are miserable. The situation, however, seems will not improve as Hungary is waiting for the Referendum, on 2 October, to oppose refugee's quota, and the last claim made by Orban was that refugee are "poison" for Europe.



Global response to ISIS attacks

Mirjam Szakács, Daniella Vecsei, Nicolas Mählmann ■

■ After the terror attacks in Paris French President Francois Hollande announced that France is at war. But just few hours before the tragic events in Nice he concluded that the extension of the state of emergency in the country is not necessary. In the light of the ensuing events, his presidential competences seem to be questioned. On 14 July, the national day of France, on the Promenade des Anglais in Nice, where tens of thousands of citizens celebrated their identity and values – such as freedom, equality and brotherhood – a truck drove into the crowd. The attacks were carried out by Mohamed Lahouaiej Bouhlel, a 31-year old man, who later turned out to have committed the devastating act on ideological grounds.

Even if the ISIS has claimed responsibility, the Al-Qaeda has already pointed out to its own methods in the self-run Inspire magazine calling on sole, radicalised individuals to commit attacks. But in this case we cannot say that these attacks were committed this way, and as the investigation unfolds we get more and more information about other aides of the perpetrator.

Such application of similar magazines is not unique for terrorist organisations to recruit Terrorist organisations tend to prompt their members or individuals familiar with their

attackers or to provide them with information and tips for the realisation of similar attacks.



ISIS fighters in 2016.
Photo: Dean1122 [Wikimedia Commons]

activities to publish their ideas, tips and all information in order to make other future attacks more devastating.

We can say, that practically a meticulously worked out know-how of terrorist activity has been developed in recent decades. The naming „open source terrorism” is derived from the fact that in most cases all the available information needed for possible attackers is made public.

This most recent attack has drawn attention to the effectiveness of the French secret service activity again. It is commonly emphasised that most of the assassinations nowadays could have been prevented. Alain Juppé presidential candidate has also raised his voice referring to the fact that the attack indeed could have been avoided if all the infrastructure available had



been used. In this context, he meant that the regulation difficulties undoubtedly presented a hinderness for the effective work dedicated to reveal and identify possible suspects.

4 days later a man who was about to apply for refugee status wounded 5 people with a knife and an axe. On 22 July in Munich a German-Iranian citizen shot 9 people dead, while on 24 July a Syrian refugee blew himself up in Ansbach, wounding 15 people. Both cases are considered to be Islamist terror attacks.

On 26 July two men killed an aged priest and took hostages in a Catholic church in Saint-Etienne-du-Rouvray, a suburb of Rouen in Northern France. On the following day religious leaders in France have requested President Francois Hollande to devote much more attention to the security of religious institutions and facilities through effectively working authorities – Dalil Boubakeur, the current rector of the Great Mosque in Paris has said.

As terrorist activity is more and more palpable in our everyday-life, the situation of Muslim minorities gets more and more debated both in France and in Germany.

To put it simply, we can say that the radicalisation of individuals can be put down to the fact that due to integration and assimilation failures they end up at the periphery of the society or even in prison. It seems that the punitive system allows the extension of extremist ideas, making radicalisation more likely. Besides, individuals who do not feel themselves part of the French society and are members of peripheral communities may find

abundant information on the Internet regarding extremist activity and such organised groups. Nowadays the Islamic State is the framework which allows by far the most information and also incentive for such individuals to be caught up in terrorist activities.

The ISIS deliberately targets frustrated individuals living on the edge of the society by deceiving them into false hopes. But ISIS operates in the same way even within Germany too.

Neither in the case of Francois Hollande nor in that of Angela Merkel can we say that the proper handling of the crisis would be necessarily beneficial for them. The popularity of the French president is plummeting as we get closer to the 2017 elections.

The French government claims that the attacks could not have been prevented, meanwhile the rise of the French opposition is partly due to the fact that they pointed out that by means of the tools at hand the necessary steps could have been made. The right-wing parties in general aim to improve their positions through their communication and to provide a new scenario for frustrated French voters.

Donald Trump US Presidential candidate would place extraordinary importance on the control of immigrants, especially on the ones coming from France and Germany in order to further reduce the possibility of terrorist events in the US. According to Trump, these two countries should blame themselves for the crisis as the domestic regulators let a high number of migrants, predominantly Muslims enter the EU



without any particular restriction. At the same time, he criticised the policy of US President Barack Obama also on grounds of his handling of the recent migratory situation.

All in all we can say that the international community shows solidarity with the affected countries and in their responses they condemn any form of terrorism. I could quote the words of Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev, regarding the Nice attacks: “We must give a common response to all these challenges, we must show solidarity and we have to make use of all the tools at our disposal to fight terrorism.”

Nevertheless, we still cannot say that a clear, consequent and properly worked-out strategy has been worked out so far either in Germany or France.

Not only in Europe, ISIS also kills innocent Muslims in Middle east: latest attack in Kabul

At least 80 innocent people were killed and 230 were injured in Kabul by a Shia minority group. These people were there because they were protesters against the government major power plan. Since 2001 this was the deadliest attack in Kabul. In the hospital a few hours after the attack, the wounded people told an ice cream truck was exploded, and then he exploded himself as well. Amaq the News Agency said that ISIS sent two fighters with suicide belts to Kabul, this attack has 64 people killed. These two attacks were the first times that ISIS directly killed innocent unknown people.

Anti-ISIS meeting in Washington

In answer to the most recent ISIS terrorist activities, US President Barack Obama called his advisors to a National Security Council at the Pentagon on the 4th of August. He referred the current increase of attacks to a strategy shift due to the extensive decline of ISIS forces in Syria and Iraq in the wake of tactical U.S. military operations. At the same time Obama presented himself determined to continue these actions in order to push the Islamic State back even further. Alongside of this, the President also addressed the public and emphasised the risks of framing this as a clash of civilisations between the West and Islam. Obama pointed out, that therefore is important not to agree on several controversial policies discussed during the current presidential campaign such as an immigration ban for Muslims or carpet bombing the Middle East approving civil casualties. Otherwise, the operations would backfire and play into the hands of ISIS, he said.

Peshmerga's fight against ISIS is not official

On July 21 2016 Washington hosted a two days summit with all the foreign ministers of the Global Coalition to Counter ISIS to discuss and review the campaign against ISIS, from all perspectives. All the 46 members of the Coalition were invited to attend the Conference, except for Falah Mustafa, the Minister of Foreign Relations in the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). The minister expressed all



his disappointment by claiming his right to attend the conference, as Peshmerga forces are in frontline against ISIS and the KRG hosts 1.8 million refugees. Mustafa blamed the Iraqi government to not inform KRG about the meeting and including their delegation, as they are a recognise entity in Iraq they should be allowed to attend the conference. In the meantime, the Kurdish president announced to move towards election to get the sovereignty. Can a conference change the destiny of Kurdistan?



ISIS: the birth of a terrorist state, 2015.
Photo: Alatele fr [Flickr]

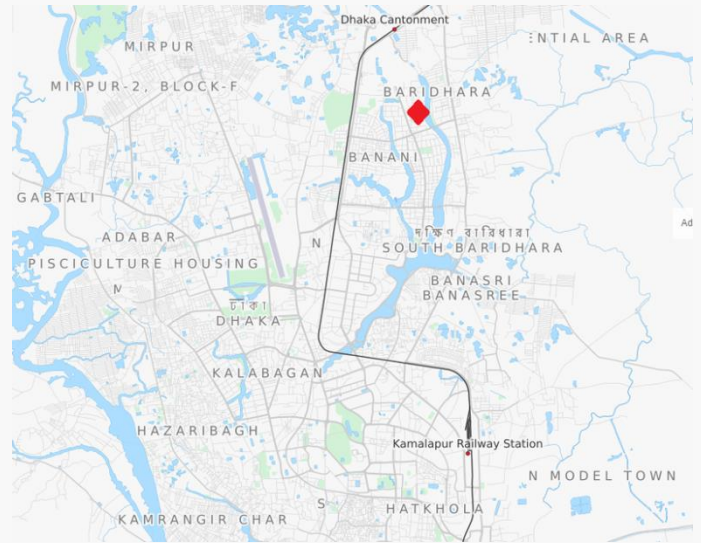
ISIS attack in Bangladesh

On 2 July 2016, a terrorist attack was took place in a popular restaurant, named Holey Artisan Bakery in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The dramatic hostage crisis lasted for 10 hour and ended up with at least 28 dead and several injured people. According to a man who was held as a hostage, the attackers did not harmed Bengalis just foreign people. The victims were being sorted, if

they could recite from the Quran, the Islamic holy book, were spared and got food at night. But those who could not pass the test were tortured and starved. For the ferocious attack the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria or ISIS took liability and declared that the targets were citizens of Crusader countries and also alerted their countries, that the attacks would be continued until their air forces stop to kill Muslims. Among the twenty hostages who were killed during the attack, there were civils from Italy, Japan, Bangladeshis and India. Sumir Barai, the cook of the restaurant, gave an interview, in which he said, when they came out from the bathroom where they were hiding, they saw only two men, dressed average, wearing T-shirts, jeans, furthermore they were also smart and educated as they could speak in cosmopolitan Bengali and in English with the foreigners. Moreover, he also said, that they looked so keen to see their action's response on the social media that after the patrons were murdered, they requested the employees to turn on the wireless network again, so they could share the photos of hostage's dead bodies on the internet by the guest's telephones. Shafqat Munir, a researcher of the Bangladesh Institute of Peace and Security Studies said the followings, "There were all sorts of warnings and signs and everything. But I don't think anyone expected anything as audacious and large-scale as this." and he also stated that they have to take more thoughtful measure of precautions in the future. The survivors remember that night as an uninteresting one, eighteen people were



having dinner, but at 8:45, six people arrived with burdensome bags which contained weapons, grenades and long rifles. The chef of the place who managed to escape to the roof, heard screaming and the attackers as shouting “Allahu akbar”, which means “God is Great”. However he and the kitchen staff could flee from the restaurant, 35 innocent people were trapped inside, whose life were depending on whether they can prove that they are Muslims or not. Finally, the military troops could salvage 13 victims along with two Bangladeshis, Sri Lankans, one Argentine and Japanese. Masud declared, that the troops executed the rescue in the morning after they did not get any answer for question of negotiation from the attackers. At 7:40, the armed forces pierced into the restaurant with automatic weapons, wearing helmets and flank jackets, several gun fires and explosions could be heard on the streets, where armoured cars and ambulances have been already waiting. Chowdhury of the Army Headquarters said, the Special Forces killed six



*The location of the attack in Dhaka.
Photo: Eugen Simion 14 [Wikimedia Commons]*

offender and successfully removed the explosive devices and sharp weapons from the place. As the attackers managed to perform a violent and fatal assault in the middle of a diplomatic quarter of Bangladesh’s capital, it shows, they have to work up a new tactic, as the hostage crisis increased affrights that religious immoderate people are making a foothold in the country.

“innocent people were trapped inside, whose life were depending on whether they can prove that they are Muslims or not”



IOM report: more than 3,000 migrant deaths in Mediterranean in 2016

Daniella Vecsei ■

■ Since the beginning of 2016 an estimated 3034 migrants lost their lives on the sea and approximately 238,220 have managed to get to Europe in safety by July 10. The most prominent starting point of the migration is generally Libya, where human traffickers take advantage of the country's raising lawlessness and therefore could arrange the transport easily. Larger amount of migrants are arriving to Italy in the summer months as the water become more quiet and peaceful, but due to this people-smugglers put far too many people on insecure boats, in which they have to take a 300 km long road to Italy.

According to IOM in 2016, the number of refugees and migrants who were trying to reach Europe, were appreciably higher than in 2015. The International Organisation for Migration declared that approximately 250,000 people have successfully carry out the dangerous and long passage to Europe, meanwhile more than 3,000 migrant lost their life in Mediterranean.

One reason of the tremendous number of deaths could be the series of shipwrecks, since the boats usually transfer more people than it should be. Most of the boats are headed to Italy, and due to this, the local navy is being involved in the rescue actions on a regular basis. Most of the savings happened in the Channel of Sicily, and they generally transferred the refugees to the port of Sicily, Lampedusa Calabria and

Apulia. IOM in Italy grants legal assistance to the migrants who are arriving on boats. However they try to prevent the disasters, for instance with raising the number of the patrols, the number of victims are still increasing.

The wars which motivates people to escape from war zones, like Iraqis, Afghanistan and mostly from Syria, produce the largest group who rather risk their life to make a precarious and unsafe journey, than staying at home. They are fleeing from religious and sectarian conflicts across the Middle-East. Flavio Di Giacomo announced, it is getting more and more difficult to prevent the migrants to cross the sea.

For instance, on 20 July, 22 migrant were rescued from a lifeboat, and however just a week later another accident happened, 87 bodies were founded on beaches of Libya, they are keep going with travelling in the same way. On July first week, a boat sank off near the city of Sabratha, it carried about 28 mostly young adults from Tunisia. Furthermore, on the same week, 107 people were trapped on a sinking boat, the Italian safeguard crew could manage to save them, but unfortunately ten women died and were founded in the bottom of the dinghy.

The secure and shorter passage betwixt Turkey and Greece have roughly vanished, therefore, virtually all the fatal accidents take place on the road between Libya and Italy.



Attempted coup in Turkey

Abdulhamid Gunda ■

■ In a bid to oust the president, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, accusing him of undermining the country's secular traditions, an attempted military coup has apparently been defeated in Turkey. From his holiday place in the resort of Marmaris to Istanbul in the early hours of the morning, Erdogan declared the coup as treason undertaken by a minority within our armed forces. The president urged people to take to the streets in defence of the government, prompting chaotic scenes as thousands protested alongside tanks.

Binali Yildirim, The prime minister, declared the first stage of the coup over and said coup fighters using military helicopters would be shot down. There were mass surrenders in Istanbul, with about 50 soldiers on the Bosphorus Bridge in Istanbul abandoning their tanks with their hands raised.

General Hulusi Akar, The head of the armed forces, who was reportedly taken hostage, has been freed. But it was reported that a pro-coup military faction insisted it would continue its fight and there were ongoing clashes in Ankara, where a building in the parliamentary complex was bombed overnight. According to General Umit Dundar, more than 190 people have been

killed, the acting chief of the general staff, including 41 police officers, two soldiers, 47 civilians and 104 people described as "coup plotters". A further 1,440 people have been wounded.

In clashes at military police command, people involved in the attempted coup were killed, 250 others arrested and separately 13 soldiers who tried to storm the presidential palace in Ankara have been arrested. In total, 2,839 members of the armed forces have been arrested, among them 29 colonels and five generals. Rear Admiral Nejat Atilla Demirhan and General Memduh Hakbilen, the chief of staff of Turkey's command for the Aegean region claimed to be among those detained.

According to Amnesty International, Since the coup on July 15, plotters involved in coup in Turkey are being tortured, beaten, raped and denied food and water. The human rights group declared It had "credible evidence" of the abuse and torture of people detained in sweeping arrests. Additionally, The London-based group claimed some of those being held were being "subjected to beatings and torture, including rape, in official and unofficial detention centres in the country". But, In Turkey, a senior official



denied Amnesty's claims and vowed that Turkey would uphold human rights. Moreover, "the idea that Turkey, a country seeking European Union membership, would not respect the law is absurd. We categorically deny the allegations and encourage advocacy groups to provide an unbiased account of the legal steps that are being taken against people who murdered nearly 250 civilians in cold blood."

Since the failed coup, a total of 13,165 people have been detained, this included 8,838 soldiers, 2,101 judges and prosecutors, 1,485 police officers and 689 civilians stated by the President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

As part of its widespread assault in the wake of a failed coup attempt on July 15, The Turkish government has ordered the closure of dozens of media outlets including news agencies, television channels, radio stations and newspapers. As example, 131 media outlets and publishing houses have been shut down including 3 news agencies, 16 TV channels, 23 radio stations, 45 newspapers, 15 journals, and 29 publishing houses. At least 89 arrest warrants were issued for journalists, and more than 40 have been detained. Another 260 people were killed and more than 2,000 injured amid the failed coup attempt in Istanbul and Ankara according to government accounts. More than 15,000 people have been detained since the failed coup, and moreover than 45,000 people have been suspended or removed from their jobs, including police, judges and prosecutors,

and others; More than 1,000 private schools and educational institutions have been closed and 138,000 school children will have to be transferred to state schools.

International reaction

Several leaders from other countries have expressed support to Turkish government. President Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton of the US and some EU officials have issued statements backing the 'democratically elected' government of Turkey. While Ban Ki-moon, the UN secretary general, said that the military interference in the affairs of any state is unacceptable.

However, with more than 6, 000 people arrested in the ongoing crackdown along with some issues such as human rights and press freedom, world leaders were prompted to warn President Erdoğan to "not to use uprising as excuse for crackdown". He has been warned not to use the failed coup attempt to consolidate power in the government. Some European politicians added that the President must not disregard the rule of law. Respect to the rule of law is also the call of President Barack Obama as pictures manifesting 'rough treatment' of the arrested coup plotters suspects surfaced on social media.

Although they have been denied by the Turkish authorities, International advocates of human rights and press freedom continue to monitor the situation in Turkey as there has been reports of torture, beatings and cases of rape being done to the suspects. Furthermore, an order for the detention of 47 journalists and executives of Zaman newspaper, allegedly associated with Gülen movement; and the closure of some media outlets that includes news agencies, tv channels, radio stations and newspapers are a matter of concern at this time.



State of emergency in France and Turkey

Roberta Maddalena ■

■ In these days many facts threatening the security of citizens in all Europe are occurred, and they are especially affected two countries. At present, both France and Turkey are in a state of emergency and, as a consequence, they claimed the article 15 of European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), which is the derogation of the Convention in time of emergency.

France claimed the first state of emergency after the terroristic attack in Paris last November and it has been extended until the beginning of 2017 after the facts happened in Nice; Turkey, instead, approved the state of emergency after the failed coup attempt on the 16th of July. The measures adopted by the two States are quite different. In France any person suspected to threat the security can be under home arrest, as well as groups can be dissolved, free movement can be restricted, protests and people can be banned, searches on people's houses or belongings can be carried out without judicial warrants. In Turkey the measures are more vague than in France and opened to

interpretation, they include: restriction of censorship, banning the printing, searches of people, closure of restaurants, examining all sorts of written texts, etc. All these measures should be inappropriate without the possibility of the derogation from countries' obligation to secure certain rights and freedoms under the Convention in time of emergency, as claimed in the article 15 of ECHR, which both France and Turkey appealed. However the article also sets some exceptions, which is to say no derogation about the right of life, the prohibition of torture and slavery, the rights for minorities, etc., and the respect of all other international rules. Will France and especially Turkey take this article literally?

Many concerns are rising about these two situations. The fear is that, in order to secure people from terrorism or political threat, freedom rights will be under threat, as Amnesty has already denounced, even though in the article 15 there are exceptions. It is not a surprise, then, that Turkey is even thinking about the reintroduction of the death penalty.



Morocco to rejoin African Union

Roberta Maddalena ■

■ During the recent African Union (AU) summit held in Rwanda from July 17 to 19, Morocco appealed to rejoin the union after it left the bloc 32 years ago. “While we wait for wiser days, we will bid you farewell,” was the statement from the Moroccan representative, when the country’s decision to leave the organization was announced.

Morocco decided to withdraw membership from AU, known before as the Organization for African Unity, in 1984. A move that preceded the decision of the body to recognize and admit the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR), formerly known as Western Sahara, as a member state to the union. Moroccans have for a long time claimed ownership of the Western Sahara by describing it as the country’s “southern provinces”. This claim by Morocco has made it at odds with the Algeria-backed Polisario Front, an independence movement in the Western Sahara, for decades.

After Spain withdrew from former colony, Western Sahara, Morocco annexed ‘two-thirds’ of the region in 1975-1976. However, in the same period of time, the Polisario Front declared the SADR with exiled government in Algeria. Eventually, thousands of Sahrawi people took refuge to western Algeria and set up their camps there. The clash between the two sides continued until the UN declared a ceasefire in 1991.

The time has come for the Moroccans

"For a long time our friends have been asking us to return to them, so that Morocco can take up its natural place within its institutional family. The moment has now come," king Mohammed VI said in a message sent to an AU summit that took place in Kigali. The king went further saying that in their absence for more than three decades, they have never left Africa and his country wants to take part in transcending divisions in the region by working with the AU through this return to the union which he described as a “historic act”.

Morocco’s return to the AU will have to be validated by a vote from the member states and according to analysts, it may not take an easy path for it “is likely to kick-start another round of tense talks” as the seeking for return Morocco still has issues over the legitimacy of the SADR. In his message to the AU summit, he reiterated the issue of recognizing SADR as a member state. “This so-called state is neither part of the United Nations, nor is it a member of the Arab League. But most importantly, at least 34 African countries don’t recognize it,” he said. “Institutional Africa can no longer bear the burden of the historical error and its cumbersome legacy,” he added.



The civil war in South Sudan intensifies

Aldoreza Prandana ■

■ A five-year of independence in South Sudan this year is clouded by the rise of tension between the government and the opposition as the violence intensifies. The civil war in Sudan began in December 2013. Leer, the city in South Sudan, has become the epicentre of violence between two conflicted parties. However, a peace agreement was reached in August last year. Nonetheless, the agreement does not help to reduce the tension between conflicted parties, instead the violence was intensifying afterwards. In October 2015, many humanitarian organisations pulled out from the region due to the looting incidents happened to them repeatedly.

Recently, another armed confrontation comes about in the capital city of Juba between the government and the rebel armies led by the military opposition. It was reported that the number of casualties are high as the confrontation lasted for few days and it went more and more intense each day. It appeared that the fighting is most intense around a United Nations complex in Juba, which holds more than 25,000 South Sudanese seeking protection. United Nations sources reported that soldiers of an unknown affiliation entered at one point into the complex, but they did not do anything and left the premise. On another note, there were

two Chinese UN peacekeepers died during the outbreak.

Many countries have responded to the situation in South Sudan. The idea of arms embargo came up and the representatives of UN in South Sudan and the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon support the idea. On the other hand, the president of Uganda Yoweri Museveni opposes the plan to impose an arms embargo the neighbouring country of South Sudan by arguing that it would weaken its army just as the country is trying to contain a resurgence of violence. Some African Union members also argue that the African Union security force will be more useful to help the situation in South Sudan than the UN peacekeeping force. As the security force already have the experience with the situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo in 2013, the security force has more power to influence the conflict situation.

On a better note, a local ceasefire successfully happened in the city of Leer due to the negotiations between both parties over cows. Cows are seen as an economically valuable being in South Sudan. Due to the conflict, the number of cows have massively reduced from 100,000 to 10,000. The local ceasefire in Leer is possible due to the trust between both parties to negotiate over cattle issues.



Afghan casualties hit record high

Anna Süveges-Szabó ■

■ The UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) every half year since 2009 reports the number of the killed or maimed civilians in Afghanistan. This half year, January-June of 2016 This half year (January-June of 2016) the number scored the highest record: 1,601 civilian deaths and 3,565 injured civilians were documented during this period. According to UNAMA details 1,509 children (388 dead and 1,121 injured) are the victims of the ground fights and suicide bombings, which is an 18% increase. Many times as children play on the streets, they do not notice that they are playing with explosive devices, and they get injured during play.

In this period 60% of civilian casualties were connected to Taliban insurgent group and the Islamic State, but the casualties by the pro-Government forces increased by 47%, which is 23% of the total of this half year. In most cases people were assaulted during work, praying, studying and etc.

Besides many other humanitarian infringements happened since January. The report writes about human rights violation and abuse, sexual violence and use of children for armed conflicts. Tadamichi Yamamoto, the Secretary-General's Special Representative of Afghanistan talked about the need of the humanitarian aid by

international organisations, but in October the hospital of Médecins Sans Frontières was attacked as well. The representative emphasised the need of a “fully independent, impartial, transparent and effective investigation” of this case. The convicts target human rights defenders, journalists and judges directly as well.

During this period 157,987 people had to leave their homes, which is a 10% increase comparing the same period last year. Since 2009 1.2 million Afghans have been displaced.

These results show us a desperate situation of Afghanistan. Yamamoto said “The protracted conflict has meant that access to education and healthcare, to livelihood and shelter, to the freedom of movement and to a whole host of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights has been severely curtailed for millions of Afghans for far too long”. He also mentioned that the collective memory and the history of the Afghan people will have the aftermaths of the recent actions, and there would not be any government, which could be able to solve the economic, political and social problems in the near future.

The total civilian victims recorded by the UN since 1 January 2009 through 30 June 2016 has risen to 63,934, including 22,941 deaths and 40,993 injured.



Beijing rejects tribunal's ruling in South China Sea case

Dóra Vető ■

■ The Permanent Court of Arbitration, an international tribunal appointed by the United Nations to rule in international disputes over maritime territory has taken the Philippines side in the conflict over the South China Sea, when the Court on 12 July declared that “the rock outcrops claimed by China cannot be used as the basis of territorial claims”, adding that the parts of water that are claimed to be under Chinese jurisdiction overstretch to the Philippines’ exclusive economic zone. Therefore China has clearly violated the Philippines’ sovereign rights in those waters by constructing artificial islands in the area, which has become a great obstacle for Filipino fishers and the island country’s petroleum exploration.

Beijing has claims over 90% of the South China Sea, which is believed to hold a “wealth of untapped oil and gas reserves”. But the energy-richness is not the only factor that plays a huge role in the dispute: the South China Sea is considered to be one of the world’s most important trading paths with major shipping lanes, “in which more than 5 trillion dollars (3.8 trillion pounds) of trade passes every year”. Because of these factors not only the Philippines, but other countries, such as Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan are also struggling to come to terms with China’s claims,

who explains those from a historical perspective, stating that the “nine-dash line”, which was drawn by Beijing in 1947 following the surrender of Japan, has been included in “subsequent maps issued under Communist rule”.

After the tribunal’s ruling was made available for the Chinese public a great number of people expressed their anger, saying that both the government of China and its citizens will not acknowledge, nor accept the Court’s decision. Chinese President Xi Jinping believes that the country’s “territorial sovereignty and marine rights in the seas would not be affected by the ruling”. He also emphasised that China will show further commitment in the resolving of the dispute with its neighbours, especially the Philippines who has unilaterally taken the case to the Hague-based tribunal in 2013.

The Court’s ruling has also exacerbated tensions between the ten members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). The members of ASEAN are constantly standing at crossroads, since they wish to act as sovereign actors, while aiming to flourish ties with a constantly strengthening China. But on 25 July China has “scored a diplomatic victory”, when the Association failed to agree on the conflict on 24 July after Cambodia, China’s closest ASEAN ally has blocked even the mention of the Court’s ruling.



According to Paul Reichler, a member of the law firm called Foley Hoag LLP and the coordinator of the Philippines' legal team stated that not only the Philippines will benefit from the ruling, but also other states that are bordering the South China Sea, such as Indonesia, Malaysia and Vietnam, who, as mentioned before are also contesting China's claims.

But tensions have escalated when a notice was made public on 18 July saying that China will be closing down part of the South China Sea to carry out military drills in the shot down area, the south-east of China's southern island province of Hainan. It is unknown what kind of manoeuvres will be carried out, but the time interval did say it would be going on until 21 July.

As a reply, on 26 July US Chief of Naval Operations Admiral John Richardson stated that the Obama administration will continue "engaging in flights and naval activities in the disputed waters despite objections from Beijing". US Secretary of State John Kerry has also stated on the same day that it will be



Sunset on the South China Sea. Photo: MikeRussia [Wikimedia Commons]



Territorial claims in the South China Sea. Photo: Voice of America [Wikimedia Commons]

backing the resumption of talks between China and the Philippines, after China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi had asked Kerry "to lend his support for bilateral talks to restart between Manila and Beijing in a meeting between the two in the Laos capital of Vientiane". The request came at an ideal time, since Kerry was already set to travel to Laos 25-26 July. Kerry's visit was scheduled due to the need of a series of regular regional meetings, and more importantly because the US Secretary of State wanted to meet Filipino President Rodrigo Duterte "to engage in dialogue and negotiations with China". The meeting has made the US administration the first one to officially meet the newly elected Filipino president, who has officially sworn in on 1 July.



Chinese Government is tightening its grip on journalists and news reporting websites

Annalisa Baldassarri ■

■ Chinese president Xi Jinping does not intend to give up his policy of ideological control through which the government carries out a grip toward those journalists who do not align themselves to the official line of the main party.



Portrait of Xi in Beijing.

Photo: Voice of America [Wikimedia Commons]

1475 websites and more than 12 thousand “illegal contents” have been found and deleted by the Chinese administration that controls the net, during 2016. Furthermore, if we pay attention on the last few weeks we observe that the grip is getting tighter. As reported by many news organisations, the Cyberspace Administration of China ordered the websites of different companies, including Sina, NetEase,

Phoenix and Sohu, to cease to operate or remove their online news features. According to the Beijing office of China’s internet regulator, the accusation regards the fact that these websites have published news, related to sensible topics such as politics and society, without authorisation.

Xi Jinping has always maintained his firm position about the role of means of information which must be limited to the interests of the PCC. In this perspective journalists must be an active part of the party’s propaganda among the country. Still, in this view a strong power is given to the Cyberspace Administration of China whose activity is to judge and censor online information and reports based on false pieces of news spread through social media platform. In its last announcement the targeted websites have been cited as examples to show why a new regulation is needed. The signal is clear and once again it expresses the will of the PCC to restrict published news within its political line.

In a recent interview, published by The New York Times, David Bandurski, the editor of the



China Media Project website at the University of Hong Kong, highlights the immediate relation between the political control of the media and the aim of ensure regime stability. When the government imposes published news to conform to political norms, the objective standard of the truth in reporting those news falls as a value. Moreover, Bandurski adds a sharp consideration about a discrepancy that rises from president Xi Jinping's demand: "There is nothing at all ambiguous about the language, and it means we have to understand that 'fake news' will be stopped on political grounds, even if it is patently true and professionally verifiable" – he continues – "We might ask whether it is meaningful at all to talk about 'truth,' 'rumour' or 'fake news' in a system where journalists are told by the state that their primary role is to 'emphasise positive news.' So there is a fundamental conflict between the propaganda role of the media, on which Xi Jinping has been



Photo: methodshop .com [Flickr]

far more insistent than his predecessors, and the demand that they be truthful."

Another opinion on the issue has been expressed by dissident author Wang Jinbo, in opposition to the government's policy. From Jinbo's point of view the lack of pluralism of the sources of information represents "the contrary of progress" and he asks and wish for a greater pluralism in the processing of current news and affairs.

“Xi Jinping has always maintained his firm position about the role of means of information which must be limited to the interests of the PCC”



Tension between China and India

Anna Süveges-Szabó ■

■ In July three Chinese journalists of Xinhua were expelled from India accused of being spies. The Indian authorities did not lengthened the visas of Wu Qiang, Xinhua bureau chief in Delhi, Tang Lu, chief correspondent at the Mumbai bureau, and She Yonggang, the agency's reporter in Mumbai, so they had to leave India by the 31st of July. Xinhua is the biggest Chinese news agency, which leader is said to be a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China.

The Chinese Internet users outraged. Firstly, to get a visa to India is more difficult for a Chinese, than get a Chinese visa for an Indian. Secondly, the espionage have not been convinced officially. Chinese people recommended to treat Indian journalists in China as well- but the Chinese ministry of external affairs (MEA) neither commented the issue officially. Experts says that China will not take up the gauntlet, because of India's "suspicious mind". Probably their relations will suffer this case, whether there were any espionage or not.

Experts of international relations see more in this case. Now India tries to applicate to NSG, but China refused the approval, referring to the

NPT, which India refuse to sign. Actually not only China was not persuaded about the Indian application, Brazil and Switzerland also questioned the issue, while the signature of the NPT is essential to the NSG application.

Long Xingchun, Associate Professor at the China West Normal University was asked about this issue, and he says that the China-India relations will be shadowed in near future by this action. He says, that if there was any linkage to the NSG application, the Chinese journalists should not have been effected. Long reflected to the official and the popular reactions as well: "I hear that Chinese people, especially netizens say that China should take similar action by expelling Indian journalists. I firmly disagree with this proposal." He added: "As I understand Chinese government under President Xi Jinping, they will possibly not take any response. We can tolerate India's action".

He also added that the academic cooperation between the two countries should develop, because there are only 5 Indian journalists in China, and at least 10-15 needed to solve the misunderstandings by increasing the people-to-people interaction.



Former Philippine President Arroyo is freed

Abdulhamid Gunda ■

■ After nearly five years in detention, the Supreme Court of the Philippines ordered the immediate release of former President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo on July 19, 2016. The court's decision was made after the justices voted 11-4 to grant the petition of Arroyo's camp seeking for the dismissal of the plunder case filed against her. But her released was delayed for two days because of some procedural reasons.

Arroyo was first arrested on charges of electoral sabotage after she was accused of "conspiring with election officials to rig 2007 senatorial polls". She was bailed from this charge in 2012 after the court ruled that the evidence against her was weak. However, she was again sued of "stealing 366 million pesos (\$8.8 million) in state lottery funds meant for charity programs while she was in office between 2001 and 2010". Due to health reasons, she had been detained in a military hospital.

While the current president, Duterte, has expressed his willingness to pardon Arroyo, the former president Benigno Aquino questioned the court's ruling saying that "she should be held accountable for the mismanagement of funds that were supposed to help reduce the suffering of many Filipinos".

The 69 year old, Arroyo, was succeeded by former president Aquino after her term ended in June 2010. She is a daughter of one of the Philippines' former presidents and was a classmate of former US President Bill Clinton at Georgetown University. She had served as a senator and the vice-president to former President Joseph Estrada, who she had to replace after being ousted in a "people power" due to "large-scale corruption" in 2001. She has then won the 2004 regular elections for presidency. Furthermore, Arroyo has won as a district congresswoman in the past three elections despite being under detention.



Gloria Macapagal Arroyo. Photo: philippinepresidency [Flickr]



Refugees' camp situation in Australia: crimes against humanity

Hannah Cartwright ■

■ When refugees and asylum seekers arrive to Australia without visas they are sent to detention centres on the islands of Manus or Nauru. While there, the detainees face indefinite and arbitrary detentions in poor conditions. The Australian detention centres have long been the centre of bad press surrounding their conditions, but recently the bad press took a further turn as international law experts warned that those running the facilities could be liable for crimes against humanity.

The Spanish based firm Ferrovial bought more than 90% percent of Broadspectrum, the company that runs the detention centres. This move put Ferrovial in charge of the detention centres, a move which international lawyers warn puts the company, and individual employees, at risk of being liable for the crimes against humanity that the centres have been accused of.

Ferrovial is a large and important company in Europe, and is backed by many North American and European banks and investors. International lawyers warned any backers of the company that supporting Ferrovial means that their companies are also complicit in the backing of serious human rights violations. They advised investors to ask Ferrovial to cease its

participation, and to pull out their investments if the company does not concede.

In response to the allegations by the lawyers, Ferrovial claims that the allegations have no factual or juridical validity, partially because they say they do not “run the camps”, but merely provide certain services to the Australian government in conjunction to the camps. The company highlighted the facts that the human rights violations predated their involvement, and even the involvement of Broadspectrum. They also stressed that they are signatory to various human rights commitments as well. They have also stated that they will not be renewing their contract with the Australian government.

The International lawyers responsible for the statements are concerned that other countries, particularly those in Europe, which are facing immigration challenges will follow Australia's example. They wanted to show those countries that Australia's model is not tenable, and has the potential to give culpability in human rights violations to companies and individuals. They are not only hoping to deter Ferrovial and its investors, but also, other countries and companies from engaging in the commercialisation of horrific crimes against humanity and serious human rights abuses.



Conflicting Conventions

Maria Pervova ■

■ The Republican National Convention took place on July 18-21 in Cleveland, Ohio. This convention marked the formal nomination of Donald Trump as the presidential nominee for the Republican Party and Mike Pence as his running mate. Having been the president of a conservative think tank, in the US House for six terms, and the current Governor of Indiana, Mike Pence has a significant deal of political experience. According to the Huffington Post, he is most well-known for his instigation of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act. This law was meant to grant individuals and corporations the right to use religious beliefs as argumentation in the case of a legal investigation. This act was vigorously criticised for paving the road for discrimination against LGBT individuals so, it was revised.

Attendance of previous Republican presidents and presidential nominees was sparse. In fact, Bob Doyle, the nominee in 1996, was the only one who attended. Countless other U.S. Senators, Representatives, and Governors did not make an appearance, “seeking to distance

themselves from Trump” in preparation for their own competitive campaigns (CNN). However, several unsuccessful Republican candidates for the presidential nomination, such as Marco Rubio, Chris Christie, and Ted Cruz, did speak at the convention. The latter delivered a particularly controversial speech wherein he encouraged voters to “vote your conscience, vote for candidates ... who you trust to defend our freedom and to be faithful to the Constitution” (The New York Times). Cruz was accused of being a traitor and of attempting to disunify the party because he broke his pledge to support the Republican nominee. Among other noteworthy speeches is that of Melania Trump. Her speech exceptionally mirrored an address of First Lady Michelle Obama at the Democratic National Convention in 2008. After an in depth analysis, the Washington Post stated that sections of Melania’s speech were “‘very similar’ and other parts were ‘nearly identical’”. Mrs. Trump declared that she has always admired Michelle, but that she simply told her story of immigration and love for the United States.



The Convention was centred around the theme of “law and order”. The nights were labelled as follows: Make America Safe Again, Make America Work Again, Make America First Again, and Make America One Again. The ratified platform has been described as being traditionalist and extremely far right. There have even been cries for a constitutional amendment to override the Supreme Court decision to permit gay marriage. The platform is adamant about the importance of religion in legislation. In addition, the platform was supportive of raising military spending as well as extending the involvement of US armed forces in the Middle East.

On the other hand, the Democratic National Convention was held in Philadelphia from July 25 until July 28. This convention was especially momentous because Hillary Clinton was elected as the presidential candidate for the Democrat party, becoming the first woman in American history to represent a major national party in a presidential race (New York Times). “And because of Hillary Clinton, my daughters and all our sons and daughters now take for granted that a woman can be president of the United States,” stated Michelle Obama (Time). However, her nomination was extremely difficult due to a prominent level of support for Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders. This situation was escalated further with the news of an email leak that exposed biased preference for Clinton by notable DNC staff. It was reported that the DNC

server had been compromised by Russian hackers who leaked the emails and sabotaged opposition research on Trump (Washington Post). Sanders supporters were outraged. In an attempt to reunify the party, the DNC chair Debbie Wasserman Schultz declared her resignation.

Clinton’s running mate is Senator Tim Kaine of Virginia. He is a moderate Democrat of Catholic faith who speaks fluent Spanish. As a left-leaning Democrat, Kaine appeals to Sanders supporters especially with his backing of universal health care. However, Trump has accused him of being owned by the banks because Kaine accepted a legal gift of \$160,000 from political supporters (The Guardian).

Despite the fact that Sanders was not elected as the candidate, he still maintained a significant influence on the direction of the platform. The Washington Post declared it to be “the most progressive in party history”. Among notable ideas are a \$15 federal minimum wage, reform of Wall Street, abolition of the death penalty, and proliferation of Social Security (NBC). The main theme was that of inclusion and optimism. The party aimed to juxtapose itself with their Republican counterpart which preached a more pessimistic view of the United States. This was accomplished through the predominance of Democrat speakers on the first two days and Republicans on the latter two days. Ironically, the DNC demonstrated patriotic characteristics which are usually the norm of the RNC.



Poor hospitality

Maria Pervova ■

■ Who is responsible for aiding the world's exponentially growing amount of refugees? According to the current situation, it seems to be the burden of the poorest countries: Palestine, South Africa, Lebanon, Turkey, Pakistan, and Jordan. These nations support about fifty percent of fleeing refugees despite the fact that, combined, they rake in only about 2% of the world's GDP. On the other hand, Japan, Germany, UK, France, USA, and China which are the six most prosperous countries, receive less than 9% of refugees (according to a recent Oxfam report). In addition, the European Union's deal with Turkey has made matters worse. This deal proposed that Turkey take back all refugees that attempt to leave Turkey in an effort to halt the dangerous expedition to Europe. One legal Syrian refugee would be resettled in Europe for every refugee returned to Turkey. This arrangement was meant to reinforce border controls and clear identification of individuals who could rightly claim asylum or refugee status in Europe. Unfortunately, this

gave the Kenyan government leverage for shutting down the Dadaab refugee camp. Their argument was that if Europe is sending back Syrians, it is perfectly acceptable for them to refuse Somali refugees. The significant difference between Kenya and Europe is of course Europe's enormous financial capacity and abundance of resources.



*Refugee shelters in the Dadaab camp, northern Kenya.
Photo: UK Department for International Development (Flickr)*

Rich Gulf States such as Saudi Arabia and Qatar are also facing harsh criticism for their insufficient, one-sided support of refugees. According to the UNHCR, in 2015, Saudi Arabia



contributed \$90 million dollars, Kuwait \$26 million, and Qatar \$112 million in aid for refugee camps in Jordan, Turkey, and Lebanon. These substantial financial investments provide food, medicine, and clothes. However, despite the fact that these nations are sending financial aid, they are not open for the settlement of refugees in their own territories. The populations of those Gulf States are modest in size and there is great prosperity from oil unlike in Jordan, Turkey, and Lebanon which suffer from a lack of resources, large populations, and a much lower GDP per capita. Also, it is actually easier for refugees to become well integrated into the societies of Saudi Arabia and Qatar because they speak Arabic. “Syrians are generally highly respected for their education and work ethic,” reports Mustafa Qadri, Gulf migrant rights researcher at Amnesty International (National Post). Saudi Arabia and Qatar offer migrant worker visas, but this does not provide the same protection as refugee status and there is no possible future of

citizenship. In fact, they live under the constant risk of being laid off and deported without notice.

The unparalleled volume of refugees in the world continues to swell and is even incomparable to that post World War II. At least 65 million people have become displaced (CNN). Overall, they are sent to and aided by the most marginalised countries: Turkey, Palestine, South Africa, Lebanon, Jordan, and Pakistan.



UNHCR refugee hut.

Photo: MONUSCO / Abel Kavanagh [Wikimedia Commons]

“rich Gulf States such as Saudi Arabia and Qatar are also facing harsh criticism for their insufficient, one-sided support of refugees”



2016 AIDS Conference

Abdulhamid Gunda ■

■ The 21st International Conference on AIDS, also known as AIDS 2016, was held from July 18-22, 2016 in Durban South Africa with the theme “Access equity rights now”. The conference echoed the UNAIDS’s for the provision of a comprehensive HIV services for all was attended by 18,000 delegates from 183 countries.

This year’s edition of the conference highlighted the works to be done on strengthening “the commitment to evidence-informed HIV research, overcoming the marginalisation of vulnerable populations, challenging discriminatory laws and championing a community-centred and rights-based response to HIV” in addition to the usual concerns for treatment, prevention, care and support programs for HIV. To emphasise the need for partnerships, community involvement in keeping their leaders accountable and to make sure HIV as a main concern of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, several experts on HIV has showcased presentations of research finding, developments and recommendable practices in the implementation of the program.

Despite the progress achieved since 2000, experts say that the eradication of the HIV is still a long way to go. Amid the feared increased in

the virus in some countries is the realisation of many Africans dying of AIDS due to inaccessibility to ‘life-saving drugs’. Report suggests that there are now 17 million of people on HIV treatment but this figure is less than the half of the 36.7 million people with HIV. This has prompted the World Health Organisation (WHO) to recommend putting on antiretroviral drugs those diagnosed with HIV as soon as possible for their wellness and to prevent infecting others.

One of the pressing concerns on fight to end HIV is money. Reports say that that funding from governments’ donations fell down last year after five years from \$8.6bn in 2014 to \$7.5bn. The US remains atop in funding proportion with 66.4%. This is followed by the UK (13%), France (3.7%), Germany (2.7%), and the Netherlands (2.3%) provision of funding respectively.

Worried of the decline, the UNAIDS executive director, Luiz Loures said that “Countries still need urgent support over the next few years to fast-track their responses to HIV, enabling them to end the Aids epidemic by 2030 and save millions of lives. Diverting resources from the HIV response now will mean much greater human and financial costs over the long term.”



■ News in Brief

Domestic Affairs affecting international relations

Shooting in Munich: 10 dead and 27 wounded in shopping mall attack

■ On 22 July 2016, Ali Sonboly opened fire in a Munich mall resulting in the deaths of nine people in addition to himself. While initial reports suggested multiple gunman and some speculation of ISIS involvement, later reports confirmed the single shooter's identity and suspected reasons for the attack. The eighteen-year-old gunman of German-Iranian descent who was suffering from mental illness was reportedly obsessed with mass shootings. Authorities believe he derived inspiration from right-wing terrorist, Anders Breivik even choosing the five-year anniversary of the Norway attack to launch his own. Foreigners are believed to have been his intended targets based on eyewitness accounts and evidence found at the home of the shooter. Some of the victims were classmates of Sonboly, who may have been lured to the mall through a fake Facebook account he created. The Facebook account, which appeared to be a young woman promising free McDonalds, was actually the gunman attempting to bring his targets to the desired location.

3 police officers shot in Baton Rouge

■ Three law enforcement officers were fatally shot and other three were seriously injured by

an African-American gunman on 17 July in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. According to the US military, the attacker, called Gavin Long have served as a Marine in Iraq, but "was discharged at the rank of sergeant in 2010". The shooting occurred after the city has been "on high alert" since a similar attack that was carried out in Dallas on 7 July, in which five police officers have lost their lives. After the recent incident the Louisiana State Police announced that they have been receiving a number of threats which were aimed at the Baton Rouge police station.

El Salvador Supreme Court strikes down amnesty law

■ On the 13th of July El Salvador Supreme Court declared unconstitutional the amnesty law of 1993, which opens the doors to the prosecution of the convicts of the armed conflict between 1980 and 1993. During the conflict 75,000 people were killed, 8,000 disappeared and many victims of human rights abuse and sexual violence remained without jurisdiction and 1 million people had to leave their homes. The UN and many NGOs of human rights welcomed this step of the El Salvador Supreme Court, because this way "the country restores the hope to the victims and trust in the justice system". On the other hand this can be a precedent to those countries in the region, where amnesty law still operative – like Brazil, Argentina, Chile or



Columbia. The international cooperation has already started, the US ready to explore the convicts, as General Eugenio Vides Casanova, former defence minister of El Salvador, for human rights crimes committed during the civil war was successfully deported in 2015. David Mungia, Defence Minister of El Salvador added: "I hope this decision does not turn into a witch hunt".

Olympic Games 2016 and human rights issues in Brazil

■ In preparation to this year's Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, Amnesty International is urging the Brazilian authorities to respect human rights. This statement came from the reports of alleged extra-judicial killings and beatings by security personnel ahead of the Pan-Am Games in 2007, and the use of "unnecessary and excessive force" against protesters leading up to the 2014 FIFA World Cup. Human rights issue in Brazil is not a new thing, but the occurrence of sporting events usually intensify the violations. The Olympic Games will start in August 5 and the concerns about the running of the event will be affected by some issues occurring in Brazil, such as the human rights violations, the Zika virus outbreak, lack of adequate public transit and sanitation, and fears over security in the notoriously crime-ridden city.



Turkey's EU talks to cease if death penalty reintroduced

■ In consequence of the attempted coup on 16 July, the Turkish government considers to reintroduce the death penalty which had officially been abolished in 2004, and thereby arises critics from leading EU-politicians. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan publicly expressed his openness in regard to reacting on pressure coming from the public. He stated that the majority of his nation is longing for a reintroduction of the death penalty and presented himself to be ready in order to making changes in the affected paragraphs of the constitution in case of a positive referendum



poll. Erdogan moreover refused to tolerate any criticism coming from EU circles and insists that the Union should keep itself out of Turkish affairs. Prior to this German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Luxemburg's foreign minister Jean Asselborn categorical disclaimed the newest Turkish intentions, labelling them as not compatible with the values of the EU and the criteria of Copenhagen which have to be fulfilled by all candidate countries. They announced the membership talks with Turkey will be ceased due to violation of human rights terms in case Turkey continues its undertaking in that matter.



UNICEF pushes Government and opposition forces in Syria to respect international humanitarian laws that protect children

■ Following a report which stated that more than 20 children were killed in air strikes in Manbij, and a 12-year-old boy was inhumanely murdered on camera in Aleppo, UNICEF has made a statement which calls for end to the horrific violence that keeps on happening in northern Syria. Hanaa Singer, in quality of UNICEF representative in Syria, took the floor on the matter defining all forms of violence deplorable, claiming that violence against children must come to an end. In addition, UNICEF representative rebuked all the parties to the conflict in Syria, recalling their shared responsibility and the urge for an effort to respect international humanitarian laws that protect children in war. Hundreds of thousands of civilians are feared to become victims as fighting in Syria will not come to an end.

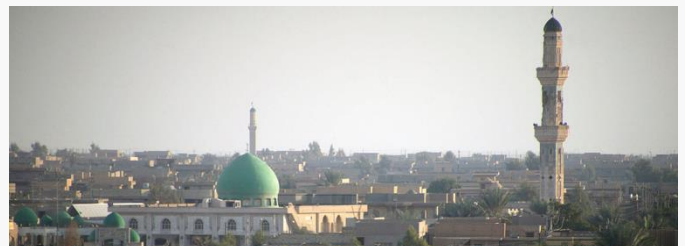
UNESCO names Iraqi Marshlands a World Heritage Site

■ This July Iraq got its fifth entry in UNESCO's list of World Heritages as the so called Marshlands – home to the Marsh Arabs as well as a couple of archaeological sites and known for its biodiversity of fish and birds – have been added to the list. UNESCO regards the Marshlands as unique as they represent one of the world's largest inland delta systems existing in the harsh conditions of heat and aridity. The Marshlands furthermore have survived through an eventful history as they were once set for

destruction by former dictator Saddam Hussein. During the 1990's the Iraqi ruler induced to drain the wetlands in order to wrest bases and coverage away from rebels which subsequently led to a diminishment to only one twelfth of the Marshland's original size and hundreds of thousands of Marsh Arabs leaving the area by force. Since Hussein's overthrow in 2003 the Iraqi Marshlands have been undergoing a major restoration program and with the help of local efforts and environmental agencies, almost half of the wetlands have been revived ensuring a constant return of people and wildlife.

Iraqi Military to dig security trench around Fallujah

■ The Iraqi military is looking to the past to help secure the recently recaptured city of Fallujah, they are digging a trench around it. The trench will run on the northern and southern edges of the city with the Euphrates River buttressing the west and only one entry point on the eastern side. This will allow security forces to control and monitor all who enter and exit the city. While the trench should allow the Iraqi military greater ease in holding and defending the city from ISIS, it does little to bridge the existing sectarian issues. The population of the city of Fallujah being predominantly Sunni, many of whom still feel alienated by the Shia held government.



Kazakhstan anti-terror operation launched after four killed in capital

■ On 18 July an attack was carried out in Kazakhstan's financial capital of Almaty. According to security and hospital sources two suspects were detained by the police after the attack has taken the lives of at least four police officers and one civilian. Kazakhstan's president Nursultan Nazarbayev declared the attack as an act of terrorism and "ordered tighter security in public areas", especially since it has been the second attack against security services in the past two months. According to President Nazarbayev, who has been in power since 1989, security services are working on identifying the attackers, however one security source told Reuters that "it is believed that the attack was carried out by Islamist militants".

Pakistani model killed in honour killing

■ Honour killings are on the rise in Pakistan. The latest occurrence involving a famous Pakistani model and social media star. Qandeel Baloch, known for her controversial, and often sexual, posts was drugged and strangled in her bed by her brother Muhammad Waseem. She was an outspoken advocate for increased rights for women and was known for speaking out against the oppressive patriarchal society that she saw in her country. Her brother killed her after being embarrassed by his friends, who told him that she was a dishonour to the family. Qandeel's parents have expressed shock that she was murdered, calling her an "amazing daughter", and the financial provider for the family.

Bangladesh court jails opposition leader Khaleda Zia's son

■ Tarique Rahman the eldest son of opposition leader and two-times former prime minister of Bangladesh Khaleda Zia was sentenced to 7 years prison, 200 million taka charges (\$2.5million) and banned from politics. "The high court said Tarique Rahman influenced political power to help his close friend Giasuddin Mamun to get and then launder 200 million taka," deputy attorney general Moniruzzaman Kabir told. Beside the fact that he was following his mother in politics and this issue might weaken the opposition, in July terror actions took place in Dhaka's diplomatic zone, where 20 people were killed. A week later the same group attacked the largest praying area of the country—they are presumably connected to the Islamic State. These happenings destabilise Bangladesh, which suffers stressed religion questions as well.



*Khaleda Zia former Prime Minister of Bangladesh.
Photo: FCO [Wikimedia Commons]*



North Korea fires three ballistic missiles

■ After North Korea already arose international attention in June due to its missile tests, Pyongyang again induced the launching of three ballistic missiles in direction of the East Sea on 19 July. The government commented its own actions to be tests for pre-emptive strikes against South Korean ports and airfields used by US military. These actions nourished the reasonable suspicion that the purpose of these tests is rather political than just technical. A week earlier Washington and Seoul announced their decision to deploy the missile defence system THAAD in the South Korean city Seongju, nearly 300 kilometers south of Seoul in order to be able to counter threats from the North. This prompted North Korea to a retaliation act in form of a physical response against the southern neighbour who they are still technically at war with since the Korean War 1950-1953 ended only in an armistice, not a peace treaty.

Three activist teenage students have been found guilty by the Hong Kong authorities for their commitment to the pro-democratic protest

■ Joshua Wong, Alex Chow, Nathan Law, known for their allegiance to the pro-democratic protest linked to Umbrella Movement, are now at risk of up to two years of prison. The main accusation moved against the 19 year-old Wong claims that he unlawfully entered a fenced off area outside Hong Kong's government headquarters and Alex Chow was found guilty of the same offence. The third young activist, Law, was instead convicted of inciting others to join

the illegal assembly. Amnesty International has expressed his position highlighting how the verdicts sent “a chilling warning for freedom of expression and peaceful assembly” in Hong Kong. The three students were released on bail and will be sentenced on 15 August.



Joshua Wong activist in 2012.

China to shut churches in G20 host city on safety grounds

■ The Eastern Chinese city of Hangzhou is this year's host city for the G20 summit. In July, China attempted to prepare the city for the arrival of the foreign heads of state by taking several measures. It declared a week long holiday to correspond to the days of the conference to convince residents to leave town to reduce traffic. The government has sparked anger and confusion by banning religious gatherings and unofficial church meetings before and during the summit. The region is known as the most Christian region in China, and in recent years religious conflict has grown in the region due to the officially Atheist stance of the Chinese communist party. The Chinese government claims the temporary ban on religious activities is supposed to create a safer environment for the summit due to the recent clashes, yet residents and human rights activists remain sceptical.



■ News in Brief

Bilateral relations

US expels two Russian diplomats over Moscow “attack”

■ After a US ambassador was attack in Moscow by a Russian police officer on 6 June, the United States declared the two Russian diplomats as persona non grata, which means they have to leave the country on 17 June. Kirby, American spokesman, announced, that the attack was baseless and unprovoked. But on the other hand, according to Russia, it was the diplomats’ fault, since they were CIA agents who refused to show their ID papers to the officers. Moreover, the Russian foreign ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova also reasoned, that they only wanted to safeguard the US embassy from an unknown man, who could have been a suicide bomber, terrorist or extremist as well. Washington declared, that the relationship between the two nations was not the same after the affair in Ukraine, since US inflicted sanction against the Russian takeover of the Crimean Peninsula. Moreover, there was also reported a housebreaking including a murder of a pet and the former US ambassador, Michael McFaul and his family were being frequently followed and watched by a security service while they were living in Moscow.



Obama will maintain troops in Afghanistan through end of term

■ On 6 July 2016, President Obama declared, that approximately 8,400 armed forces will continue to abide in Afghanistan after his presidential term will ends in January. The aim of changing the troop levels could be seen as an option for Obama’s struggle between the two points. He tried to sustain the stability in the former terrorist shelter and at the same time, made and attempt at comply his vow to end the war until the end of his presidency. But these promises have been proved to be more problematic than he believed. First, he promised that until the election of 2012, all troops will be removed from Afghanistan, but it was postponed to 2014 and then to 2016, when he guaranteed the staying of only 5,500 armed forces until his presidency. According to his statement, the remaining troops would help to continue the training and advising of Afghan paramilitary. Furthermore, the lowered US army also will be able to perform the so-called “unique capabilities”, which contains fast-moving attack warplanes, spy aircraft and medical care.



Venezuelans exodus into Colombia in search of basic goods' provisions

■ Economic crisis in Venezuela is showing dramatic consequences among the population. The country is suffering a severe crisis caused by the falling price of oil which represents the main source of income. Since a few months Venezuela has been forced to deal with a more than 200% inflation. As an immediate solution to the short supply of many basic goods which is affecting the country, Venezuela has temporarily opened the border with Colombia in order to allow people to cross over to buy foods and medicines' provisions. 44 thousand people on the first opening day and 75 thousand people on the second one queued to cross the bridge into Colombia, giving rise to what we may call a population's exodus (with return).



An individual demonstrating in Venezuela in 2014.
Photo: Carlos Díaz [Wikimedia Commons]



François Hollande. Photo: Jean-Marc Ayrault [Flickr]

Three French soldiers die during secret mission in Libya

■ It was announced by French Defence Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian that three French soldiers have died in a helicopter accident close to Libya's second largest city, Benghazi around the third week of July, as they were taking part in a special forces operations. The announcement was confirmed by French President Francois Hollande when he stated in a speech that "at this moment [France] is carrying out dangerous intelligence operations in Libya", revealing that the country has been carrying out secret missions in the South African country. According to officials in Libya the helicopter is believed to be shot down by Islamist militants, but it is uncertain which movement is really accountable for the incident.



■ News in Brief

International relations

NATO warns Turkey could be kicked out as Turkish police raid base used by US Army

■ Days after Turkey's failed coup attempt in early July against Turkish President Erdogan, Turkish police raided a base used by the US Army. The base holds stored nuclear weapons, among other things. The base was raided several hours after a Turkish air force general was arrested from the same base after being accused of helping to plot the coup. It is believed Turkish authorities raided the base due to suspected US involvement or support for the coup, although Washington strongly denies involvement. In the aftermath of the raid and the coup, NATO's Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg has made public statements in support of the Turkish government, he and Secretary of State John Kerry, have warned that this type of behaviour from the Turkish state will not be tolerated in the future. The strong statements have led to rumours that Turkey will potentially be kicked out of NATO.

Obama administration proposes cooperation between Russia and US in Syria

■ The initial plan called for cooperation between the countries military and intelligence agencies on operations in Syria. In addition coordinated air attacks on rebel positions may have also been in play. US Secretary of State

John Kerry visited Moscow and met with President Vladimir Putin on July 14 2016 to discuss potential cooperation between their two states. However, after some discussions they are yet to agree upon a path to a potential partnership. Currently, the potential sticking points are US concerns about Russian commitment to fighting rebel groups and not simply keeping the Assad regime in power. The impasse over the future of President Assad and his government remains and continues to hinder negotiations.

US airstrikes allegedly kill at least 73 civilians in northern Syria

■ On 19 July US airstrikes hit Tokkhar, a Syrian village, where an estimate of two hundred people have gathered in the hope of finding shelter "as the frontline shifted towards their homes". According to activists the attack has left at least 73 civilians dead, mostly women and children. The bombings have been going on for two months now, in the hope to seize the town of Manbij, a strategic centre that is considered to be a key element in gaining strategic advantage against the so-called Islamic State. An official statement released by the United States' Central Command on 20 July stated that the airstrikes carried out the day before have successfully destroyed a number of ISIS' fight positions and vehicles, however, the release did



not mention any of the civilians who lost their lives in the bombing.

Activists have warned the parties of the coalition of the high rate in civilian casualties long before the airstrikes fired, but the latest bombing is believed to be the “deadliest coalition attack on non-combatants since the start of the bombing campaign” against the so-called Islamic State. According to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights strikes carried out by coalition forces killed a total of 104 civilians, but the United States military has only confirmed an overall of 36 civilian deaths from its airstrikes since the summer of 2015.

First ever report on the Implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in Africa at the 27th African Union Summit

■ The 27th African Union Summit this year will be held in Kigali, Rwanda. In light of the event, the African Union Commission published the first ever report on the “Implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in Africa”. The report seeks to form the basis for enhanced dialogue and engagement with the African Union Member States and Regional Economic Communities, civil society, and other key stakeholders on accelerating implementation, as well as better informing the African Union’s engagement with international interlocutors and partners on the Women, Peace and Security agenda in Africa. This report includes legislative and administrative mechanisms as well as progress made on performance to support the advancement of the Women, Peace and Security

agenda in Africa. It is also a sign of the development of the related issues in Africa.

African Union Commission and European Union collaborate on a food secure future



■ The first meeting of the AU-EU Conference of Ministers of Agriculture: Investing in a Food Secure Future took place in the Netherlands from July 4 to 6, 2016. The aim of the conference was to promote increased cooperation between the AUC and the EU in the area of agricultural policy in order to achieve greater food security and nutrition in Africa. The Commissioner of Rural Economy and Agriculture of the African Union Commission, H. E. Tumusiime Rhoda Peace called upon AUC member states to reaffirm their commitment to the Malabo declaration. The declaration asks for a member states to commit 10% of their public budget to agricultural innovation, the elimination of hunger and food insecurity in Africa by 2025. In addition, Rhoda called for enhanced sharing of agricultural technology and innovation between the AU and EU. The Minister of Agriculture for the Netherlands, Martijn van Dam committed to set up 2 to 4 incubators across Africa while further enhancing cooperation with the existing network of African incubators.



The biggest Catholic event in 2016 to take place in Krakow, Poland

■ The World Youth Day is an event created by the Catholic Church every three years which this year is held in Krakow, Poland. The week-long event will be attended by more than two million people from 187 countries. As it is the first visit of the Pope to Poland, the Polish government has strengthened its security and fixed the infrastructures needed to support the event. Many people are also curious to see how the Pope will touch two sensitive subjects in Poland, abortion and refugee, during his visit. The Polish Catholic church and Pope Francis have an intense relationship since the Polish Catholic church sees the Pope as too liberal, since the Polish Catholic church is still very conservative. The current Law and Justice government of Poland also has a strong connection with the Catholic Church.

Pope Francis hopes for unity on the World Youth Day 2016

■ Only days before the World Youth Day starts in Krakow, Poland, Pope Francis gives his comments on the event through a video message. He mentions that this event is made for the young people and he thanks them for their participation. Many young people from 187 countries have registered to attend the event. In the video, he also mentions that this

event will unite young people and be the sign of harmony which is needed in the current state of the world. Many agendas are scheduled to be done during the event, such as music events, morning prayers, and the Pope's visit to Auschwitz-Birkenau, the Nazi concentration camp, where the Pope is scheduled to deliver a speech to honour those who lost their lives during the tragic event. However, the Pope cancels the speech and decides to give his honour by having a silent prayer and it will be attended only by few necessary people.

African American church leaders address climate change issue

■ African American religious leaders have called upon the US politicians to have significant actions on climate change. The African Methodist Episcopal church has passed its first resolution in 200 years to devote more on climate change issues as it is believed that African American people are disproportionately harmed by global warming and fossil fuel pollution. Their demand can also affect the upcoming presidential election as the supporters of this cause will have the ability to question candidates' stance on climate change, as well as to put pressure on the local officials and landlords over the inadequate housing and infrastructure which affect how pollution harm African American people more than others.





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