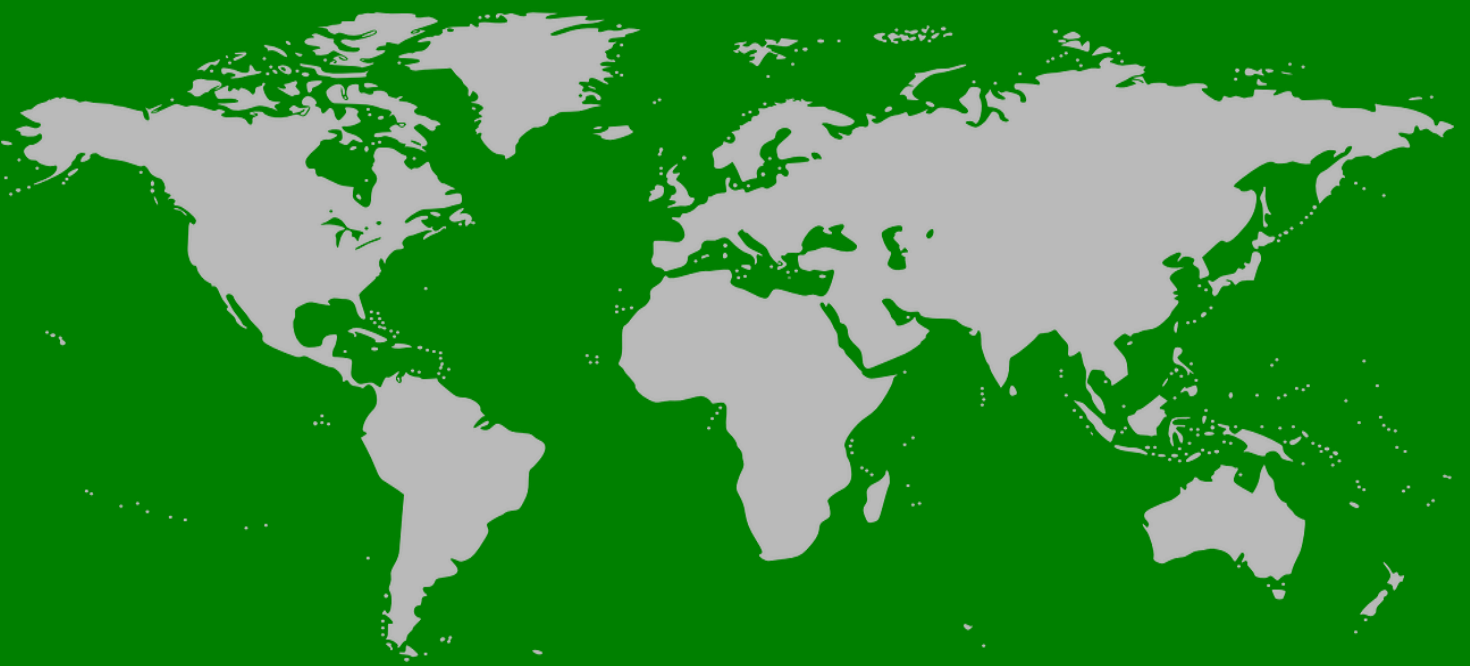


*“Discovering international relations  
and contemporary global issues”*

Cultural Relations Policy  
**News & Background**





## About CRP News & Background

Cultural Relations Policy News & Background is a part of ICRP Monthly Review Series and an initiative of Institute for Cultural Relations Policy Budapest. Launched in 2012, its mission is to provide information and analysis on key international political events. Each issue covers up-to-date events and analysis of current concerns of international relations on a monthly basis.

As an initiative of ICRP, the content of this magazine is written and edited by student authors. The project, as part of the Institute's Internship Programme provides the opportunity to strengthen professional skills.



**ISSUE #57**  **2/2017**  
ICRP Monthly Review Series 2017

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45 Gyongyosi utca, Budapest 1031 – Hungary

**ISSN 2063-8205**

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## G20 foreign ministers meet in Germany

Violetta Vaski ■

■ On 16 February, G20 foreign ministers held their meeting behind closed doors in Bonn, Germany. Officials of leading economies are discussing sustainable development goals, issues regarding the support of Africa, and the future prevention of crises. The Bonn meeting is a pre-discussion before the July summit between heads of states in Hamburg.

During the summit, protests from various movements and NGOs took place in Bonn against the policies of the G20, as many protesters claim that the G20 represents big companies and business interests, instead of people. A Nils Jansen from Bonn Youth Movement said: “They represent big banks and companies... war politics and militaristic politics. And we refuse to be silent any longer.” Other concern of the protesters was the involvement of G20 states in the Middle East conflicts, as China, Iran and Russia are supporting al Assad’s regime in Syria, and other G20 members are backing different Islamist militants like al Qaeda. Hence, the protesters see the Syrian conflicts as a war between superpowers affecting Syrian people in a negative way, demanding G20 “to get their hands off Syria”.



G-20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Bonn. Photo: U.S. Department of State [Flickr]

The meeting was also an opportunity for US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson to meet his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov for the first time. Ahead of the meeting, Moscow was disappointed, due to the resignation of its closest ally in the US, previous national security advisor Mike Flynn. After the meeting, Tillerson declared that “the United States stands ready to cooperate with Russia when it is in American interests”, repeating Trump’s words. During the meeting, Tillerson was attempting to secure a balance between standing strict on issues regarding Ukraine, Iran and nuclear weapons, and intending to build up a counter-terror alliance as well. According to US defence





*U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi listen as German Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel delivers remarks during a meeting at the G-20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Bonn, Germany, on February 16, 2017. Photo: U.S. Department of State [Flickr]*

secretary James Mattis, it would be early to strengthen military cooperation with Russia, sadly for the Moscow, intending to deepen ties with Washington. After the hopes of Putin remained unfulfilled, he urged Russian and American agencies to start working together in order to fight terrorism. Mattis was also asked in Brussels, whether he believes that Russia had interfered in the US elections, and he answered: "Right now, I would just say there's very little doubt that they have either interfered or they have attempted to interfere in a number of elections in the democracies."

Sharing the fear of European leaders regarding the US opening to Russia tearing up the post-war settlement, the protesters also expressed their concerns about the spread of the Trump phenomenon and right-wing populism across

Europe. One of them shouted: "We have to stop a second Trump victory in Germany, and stop the AfD from succeeding". Regarding the upcoming German elections, it is a common fear, that right-wing Alternative for Germany (AfD) has a chance to get in the lower house of parliament. Americans were also taking part in the protest, saying it was another chance to express their dissatisfaction.

In Bonn, Tillerson has also met Gulf leaders and British foreign secretary Boris Johnson, in order to secure issues regarding the civil war in Yemen. Afterwards, the Foreign Office said in a statement: "absolutely no doubt that the US remains as committed as ever to working closely with us, and other like-minded partners, to face up to aggression and tackle tough problems around the world."



*US Secretary Tillerson shakes hands with Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov. Photo: U.S. Department of State [Flickr]*

“many protesters claim that the G20 represents big companies and business interests, instead of people”



## EU's Malta summit

Violetta Vaski ■

■ On 3 February, the EU's summit took place in on the Mediterranean island of Malta, discussing questions such as migration, and the future of EU in the context of Brexit.

Relations with the US also came up, as EU leaders have expressed their concerns towards the Trump administration especially the travel ban on travellers from some Muslim majority countries. According to Austrian chancellor Christian Kern: "We should win these countries as allies in the fight against [radical Islamism, not as adversaries, and we shouldn't corner them." However, European Council leader Donald Tusk has admitted that the cooperation with the UK is indispensable to maintain good relations with the US. European leaders are concerned about the Trump administration, but the level of engagement with the US is needs to be on the same level, as transatlantic relations are required in order to maintain freedom and international order. As Donald Tusk believes, the UK would be a very helpful partner in this, whether it is inside, or outside the EU. On the other hand, the majority believes that a common tactic is required, and the UK is not eligible to represent the EU in the upcoming

meeting of President Donald Trump and Prime Minister Theresa May. According to the French leader Francois Hollande: "Of course it is not about asking one particular country, be it the UK or any other, to represent Europe in its relationship with the United States.

At the summit, Theresa May also brought EU leaders up to date in connection with the preparations towards Brexit and clarified her intentions towards maintaining strong relations regarding trade, security and home affairs. As Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy said, "It was very welcome – as well as important – to have that greater degree of certainty."

Prime Minister Theresa May also used the occasion to announce a new 30 million pounds British aid package, which intends to protect refugees from trafficking and exploitation. According to International Development Secretary Priti Patel, "This latest support from the UK will help those who decide they want to return home to do so safely, protect men, women and children from exploitation, and ensure that those caught in freezing conditions get the basic help they need to survive." The scheme is designed to settle refugees in Latin



America and Asia, instead of Europe. It also aims to provide lifesaving supplies, such as medical care, shelter and warm clothing, to vulnerable refugees in Greece and Eastern Europe. The UNHCR already runs this scheme, but this is the first time Britain strengthens it. The scheme will be carried out by UNHCR, IOM (International Organisation for Migration) and NGO collective Start Network. The programme is dedicated to provide 22,400 life-saving items, and to ensure emergency medical care for more than 60,000 people. It also proposes to give the opportunity for 22,000 people to reunite with their separated family members, and help Asia and Latin America to settle up eligible conditions for refugees to settle in. In Egypt, educational grants would be devoted to students for going back to school, and in Sudan, a migrant centre for “voluntary returns home when safe” would be contemplated.

However, some criticism reached Britain’s support, claiming that UK is unwilling to accept a reasonable number of refugees escaping from war zones, as the UK has already refused to cooperate in the EU-wide programme reacting to the crisis.

### The Malta Declaration

The Malta Declaration is a declaration made on 3 February 2017 during the European migrant crisis by leaders of the European Union in Malta, which holds the six-month rotating presidency of the European Union, that focuses on measures to stem the flow of immigration from Libya to Italy and the EU.

The declaration states that "efforts to stabilize Libya are now more important than ever, and the EU will do its utmost to contribute to that objective" and that "with hundreds having already lost their lives in 2017 and spring approaching, [the EU is] determined to take additional action to significantly reduce migratory flows along the Central Mediterranean route and break the business model of smugglers".

The plan includes increasing training and equipment for the Libyan coastguard, further efforts to block smuggling routes, increasing assisted voluntary return activities, increasing EU involvement with countries near Libya, supporting local communities on migration routes and in coastal areas to improve their socio-economic situation.

The declaration also declares the need to ensure "adequate reception capacities and conditions" in Libya for migrants in cooperation with the UNHCR and IOM.

The European Commission will mobilise an initial €200 million in additional funding for the implementation of the declaration.

“transatlantic relations are required in order to maintain freedom and international order”



## Why Dutch voters are about to set the stage for Europe's elections

Violetta Vaski ■

■ Europe is looking forward to the Dutch elections on 15 March, as it will have an effect on other upcoming Eurozone elections this year, such as the German, and the French one. In France, the far-right, anti-EU supporter Marine Le Pen has a potential chance to win the election, while in Germany, another right-wing party, Alternative for Germany is expected to win seats for the first time. The main issue based on the outcomes, because Netherlands is said to be a bellwether for Europe, deciding whether right-wing populism will spread across Europe, boosting the upcoming French and German elections, risking the future of the EU, or will it continue to strengthen the integrity.

The race is dominated by Prime Minister Mark Rutte's centre-right VVD party and PVV Freedom Party led by Geert Wilders. Wilders is intending to cut relations with EU if he is elected, ban the Quran and close all mosques. He undoubtedly hopes that the success of Donald Trump regarding the US presidency and Brexit are both helping in spreading populism and the anti-establishment of the EU. Rutte is strongly against these ideas, claiming that the Dutch election will be a good chance to "beat the wrong sort of populism". According to analysts a fragmented



Mark Rutte. Photo: [Rijksoverheid.nl](http://Rijksoverheid.nl)

Parliament is likely to be created, leaving Mr Wilders out however he performs, as no major party would like to form a coalition with him, viewing his policies offensive. Even if he was about to form a coalition government, his EU referendum would not pass both houses of parliament with a lack of support. Several smaller parties are labelled as potential power-brokers, as 7 of them have the chance to attain more than 10 seats in the parliament. During his campaign, Wilders expressed anti-Muslim







*Krisztina and Geert Wilders. Photo: Phil Nijhuis [Rijksoverheid]*

sentiments as well, besides being an anti-EU party leader. He claims, that Moroccans and crimes committed by them should be taken more seriously. While visiting Spijkenisse, an ethnically diverse area, he described the place as a “Moroccan slum”: “Not all are scum, but there is a lot of Moroccan scum in Holland who makes the streets unsafe.” However, many of his supporters showing up at Spijkenisse claimed, that they care more in his social policy, as one of them said, he is particularly interested in his promise bringing down the pension age to sixty-five.

Relations with Turkey are described tense, and worsened, since the Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdogan accused the Dutch of failing to protect victims at a 1995 massacre in Bosnia, Srebrenica. The Dutch prime minister described the accuse as “vile falsification”, but after banning two Turkish ministers to enter the country to attend rallies amongst ethnic Turks, the situation worsened more. The aim of the rallies is to expand Turkish president’s powers as a result of a referendum taking place on 16 April. Regarding the ban, the Dutch government refers to the dangers to public security generated by the rallies. Recently, Erdogan has warned the Dutch, that measures could be taken against them, and even described them as “Nazi remnants” due to the massacre, despite of the fact, that the Nazis were, who invaded the Netherlands in 1940 and bombed Rotterdam, occupying the country until the end of World War two. The recent tension with Turkey can also influence the Dutch election, as it focuses on the concerns generated by immigration and Islamic radicalism. The anti-Islam Freedom Party led by Wilders seems to benefit from these sentiments, but also Rutte, after treating Turkish rallies in such a way.

“Netherlands is said to be a bellwether for Europe”



## The EU deal with Libya on migration

Violetta Vaski ■

■ One of the proceedings of the Malta EU summit taking place on 3 February, is a memorandum of understanding between the Italian and the Libyan government headed by Faiez Serraj. Its aim is to close the Central Mediterranean migration route to Europe, as President of the EU Council Donald Tusk promised at the closure of the summit. By giving \$212 million to help the government, it designated to boost Libya's coast guard capabilities, offer training and equipment to block the way of immigrants. However, it is an open question whether it will respect human rights of the refugees, as it is almost certain that their basic rights will be violated, because the memorandum is not relying on international conventions and does not have an independent control mechanism. Hence, the new plan intending to track down migrants leaving Libya in the hope of a better future, is not helpful, instead trapping them in a war zone. As Libya is not part of the Geneva convention, and the laws approved by the former Libya leader Muammar Gaddafi are not distinguishing migrants and asylum-seekers, all humans arriving without authorization are illegal migrants and are immediately jailed. As stated in UNHCR's report,



*Distressed persons are transferred to a Maltese patrol vessel. Photo: US Navy [Elickr]*

45% of those who are using Libya for transit are accepted as refugees under the European standards. Even for economic migrants there are rights and obligations which have to be followed, but are not respected by the Libyan government. Africans arriving in Libyan are treated unlawfully; forced into slavery, raped, killed, even in the detention centres. In recent years, the Africans stay in Libya as little as possible, trying to cross Mediterranean in the desire of respected human rights. However, as the migration flows are bigger, the treatment in Libya is more violent. Different human rights groups are also stating that this is not the right solution to the problem, such as Doctors Without Borders or Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) tweeted during the



summit: “hypothetically, blocking people in Libya would prevent them from drowning. In reality, it would condemn them to slow death.” Angela Merkel has added her concerns regarding the reliability of the Libyan government, as it has little credibility, hardly controlling even its own capital. Currently, there

are two other rival governments in Libya; the House of Representatives in Tobruk and the unrecognized and Islamist-leaning National Salvation Government in Tripoli.

The memorandum consists of three main elements, including the full implementation of the 2008 Friendship Treaty between Italian leader Silvio Berlusconi and Libya, furtherly improves the support towards the Libyan Navy and Coast Guard to save more migrants travelling on boats, and it also supports the rescued migrants by providing healthcare in detention centres. Last year, out of 181,000 people fleeing to Italy, 5,000 drowned in the central Mediterranean. According to Preben Aamann, spokesman for European Council President Donald Tusk: “Our full determination is to close that route or at least very significantly reduce the number of irregular migrants using that route. In terms of resources that we are ready to put into it, it’s quite significant.” In practice, the deal provides an opportunity to outsource pushbacks to the Libyan authorities to rescue migrants and lock them up in detention centres. Hence, the promise of Donald Tusk can be true to his promise to bring flows of migrants as low as possible.



Malta and its surrounding seas. The route of migrants from Libya.  
Map: NormanEinstein [Wikimedia Commons]

“45% of those who are using Libya for transit are accepted as refugees under the European standards”



## Turkey and Greece trade jabs in island dispute

Tamar Buachidze ■

■ A decades-old disagreement over the sovereignty of a pair of uninhabited Aegean islands, known as Imia in Greece and as Kardak in Turkey, has been awakened between two countries. Middle-aged and older Turks unlike younger generation know that Kardak was the last crisis that almost brought Turkey and Greece to the brink of war at the end of January 1996. To Greece, the islets are Greek territory; While Turkish population believes Kardak is part of Turkish territory and thus should be under Turkish sovereignty. The islands are proven to have no strategic value at all having a total of only 10 acres of surface.

On the 21st anniversary of the Kardak standoff, tension over those two small islets was renewed in the first week of February 2017. A Turkish navy missile boat, accompanied by two special forces speedboats, was seen around the islets on January 29. On board was Turkish Chief of Staff Gen. Hulusi Akar. Greek coast guard vessels deployed immediately and, according to the Greek Defence Ministry, the Turkish top commander left within seven minutes. The Turkish version did not mention that Akar was forced to withdraw, but rather implied that, following Greek harassment, he returned to Bodrum. An uproar was created in Greece with

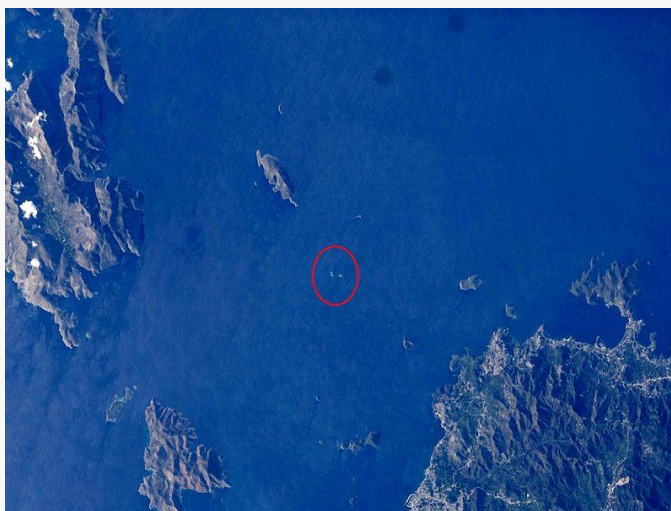


Map of the area around Imia/Kardak.  
Map: Wikimedia Commons

the spread of President Prokopis Pavlopoulos's interpretation of Turkey's act as a violation of Greek territorial waters, European borders and the Lausanne Treaty settling the conflict between the Ottoman Empire and the Allied forces during WW1. The need for "moderation" was underlined by European Commission spokesperson Margaritis Schinas. Nevertheless, Turkey displayed its discontent with Greece's decision of January 26 not to extradite eight Turkish military officials that had sought political



asylum in Greece after the failed coup in Turkey in July 2016. The Kardak issue was triggered about Turkey's reaction to Greece's rejection. Turkey also warned that the dispute risked complicating negotiations over the reunification of Cyprus and claimed, that it could also affect a migration pact between two countries that has helped to stem the flow of migrants between Turkey and Europe significantly.



Location of the Kardak (Imia) islets in the Aegean Sea. Photo: NASA

The Greek defence minister, Panos Kammenos, flew over the two disputed islands on 1 February, according to Greek government, in a pointed response to a visit three days earlier to nearby waters by the commander of the Turkish armed forces, Hulusi Akar. Scholars largely believe, the dispute will not escalate and spiral into military conflict. According Sinan Ulgen, a Turkey scholar at Carnegie Europe other consequences may occur as the dispute came at a very inappropriate time for the Cyprus talks. A spokesman for the Greek Foreign Ministry stated that Greek government did not have ability to deport Turkish military officials against

the wishes of the Greek judiciary. He also argued: "From the very first moment, the Greek government condemned the July coup. We said the people who participated in the coup are not welcomed in our country, but of course the Greek government is different to the independent Greek judiciary." A second request was sent from Turkey for the airmen's extradition according Soner Cagaptay, a head of Turkey research at the Washington Institute, a policy research organization. Cagaptay also referred to further escalation from Erdogan's side regarding the Cyprus talks, the migration pact and military escalation along the Aegean.

### Treaty of Lausanne

The provisions in the Treaty of Lausanne that are relevant to the Imia/Kardak and the related "grey-zones" issue, are the following:

#### Article 12

"[...] Except where a provision to the contrary is contained in the present Treaty, the islands situated at less than three miles from the Asiatic coast remain under Turkish sovereignty."

#### Article 15

"Turkey renounces in favour of Italy all rights and title over the following islands: [here follows an enumeration of the 13 largest islands in the Dodecanese area, by name], and the islets dependent thereon [...]"

#### Article 16

"Turkey hereby renounces all rights and title whatsoever over or respecting the territories situated outside the frontiers laid down in the present Treaty and the islands other than those over which her sovereignty is recognised by the said Treaty, the future of these territories and islands being settled or to be settled by the parties concerned. [...]"



## Ukraine truce renewed at Munich security conference

Violetta Vaski ■

■ On 18 February, foreign ministers of Russia, Ukraine, France and Germany held a meeting in Munich, at which they negotiated a deal regarding the situation in Eastern Ukraine. After the meeting, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has announced that a truce would be renewed with Ukraine to maintain peace in the area. The truce between the Russia-backed separatists and the Ukrainian army will come into force on 20 February, according to the Russian foreign minister.



War in eastern Ukraine.  
Photo: Євген Силкін [Flickr]

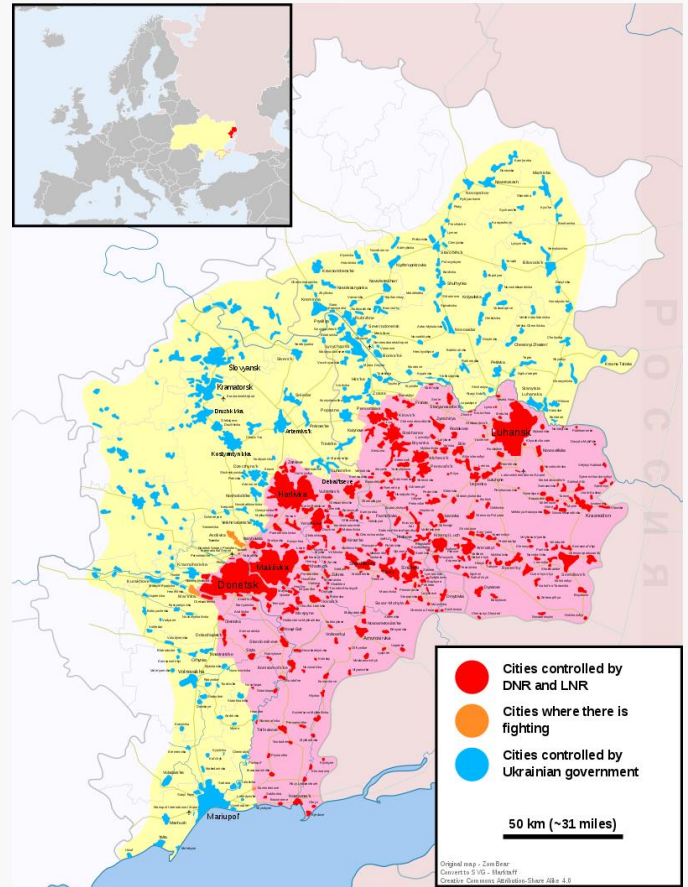
In the three years of the conflict between the pro-Western government and Russia-backed separatists, nearly 10,000 people have been killed already. Although the Minsk agreement

sanctions both sides to stop violence, events of the month demonstrate the contrary. The violence has recently escalated between separatists supported by Russia and Ukrainian armed forces, resulting in the killing of estimated 30 people at the start of February. Since the Minsk agreement, which brought a relative peace to the area, this was the worst clash experienced. Just hours before the conference, a separatist leader was issuing military threats. The recent tension is accounted to the desire to make more efforts concerning a ceasefire, as the previous ones have failed.

The new deal is also overshadowing a recent act in Russia; a new executive order was announced, allowing the recognition of the documents of Ukrainians living in Donetsk and Luhansk. It means that people in these regions are permanently able to go to Russia without the criteria of visa application. According to Ukrainian president Petro Poroshenko, Putin is violating international law and the Minsk peace process with his new order, claiming that “For me, this is another proof of Russian occupation as well as Russian violation of international law”.



The truce coming into force on 20 February is intended to be a more efficient one, according to Russia, also involving the start of the withdrawal of heavy arms. However, Ukraine is not fulfilled with the negotiated deal. The dissatisfaction is proved in the statement of the Ukrainian Foreign Minister Pavlo Klimkin as well: “We need a kind of powerful result, not just a couple of statements”. According to French foreign minister Jean-Marc Ayrault, both sides have no other choice than to abide by the Minsk agreement, as it was never fully implemented, although being negotiated two years ago. Besides withdrawing local troops, the recent truce is also designated to make local elections eligible and full border control supervised by Ukraine. The French foreign minister support a similar view, declaring that it is not the time to be optimistic about this deal yet: “We agree to meet quickly, perhaps in three weeks, to see if we can advance on the ceasefire, withdrawal of heavy weapons and exchange of prisoners. We need a lot of patience, because we can see a lack of will on either side.” According to analysts, the truce is not likely to hold as the causes of the conflict are still not are still not recognised, predicting the deal resulting in a short-lived



Military situation on 2 February 2017: Pink highlights areas held by the DPR/LPR, yellow highlights areas held by the Ukrainian government. Map: [Wikimedia Commons](#)

reduction of violence. Two days ahead the conference, German Chancellor Angela Merkel intended to pressure Moscow, as she called Russia to stick to the previously agreed arrangement in Minsk backed by Germany, to put the conflict to an end.

“in the three years of the conflict between the pro-Western government and Russia-backed separatists, nearly 10,000 people have been killed already”



## Famine declared by UN in South Sudan

**Violetta Vaski** ■

■ Recently, the UN has declared famine in Unity State in the northern-central part of South Sudan, as more than half of its population, 4.9 million people are affected by famine and are in need of aid. According to an Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) released by the South Sudan government and three UN agencies, more than 40% of Sudan's population are in constant need of food, agriculture and nutrition assistance, 100,000 people are currently close to death due starvation, and more than one million children are also suffering from malnutrition. As experts say, the number of people on the edge of starvation can go up to 5.5 million by July. However, this period is not the first time of such conflicts and famine in South Sudan, as it has suffered from famine and violence between southern and northern Sudan in 1998. Referring to World Food Programme director Joyce Luma, "The famine is man-made". Spokesperson of Al Jazeera also claims, that "This famine is not caused by draught, it is not caused by floods. It is basically caused by the

conflict which resulted in a collapsing economy." The crisis is accumulated to the effects of the three year long civil war, since 2013, also resulting in a refugee crisis, following the failure of economy and devastating agriculture, The civil war took place after South Sudan gained its independence in 2011. Following two years of peace, a conflict broke out in 2013 between President Salva Kiir's mainly Dinka army and the Nuer people, after he fired his Nuer deputy Riek Machar. Since July 2016, the violence has escalated tribal, involving other ethnic groups such as Shilluk, besides the Dinka and Nuer communities. One of the conflict's consequences is that food production is devastating in areas like Equatorial region, which tend to be the country's breadbasket, and a reliable area for farmers. The civil war is accounted to be one of Africa's longest running conflicts. The conflict led to the displacement to at least one quarter of South Sudanese people, 1.5 million people had to leave South Sudan, generating Africa's biggest refugee crisis.





Food production was threatened last year as the result of escalating violence and market failure due to 800% inflation. Hence, food market prices became unaffordable for many families.

Eventually, Sudan is not the first country to be declared in such a status, as in Somalia, between 2010 and 2012, more than 2,5 million people have died due to famine. Apparently, three other countries, Yemen, Somalia and Nigeria are also at risk of famine.

According to the UN food program spokesman George Fominyen, the crisis had been accelerating to this state during years, and relief mechanisms have been operating across the country since the beginning of the crisis. However, as the spokesperson says, it is difficult to get access to the hardest hit areas, as a prior agreement is required for a team to enter. According to Al Jazeera's Hiba Morgan, "due to the fighting between government and armed groups, humanitarian organisations do not know who is operating some parts of the country at any given time, they do not know how to communicate with people in charge, and this causes some kind of a barrier for humanitarian aid." Currently, even the resources of humanitarian acts are at risk, as \$205 million more is needed for the next six months. According to UN confidential report, despite of the crises, President Salva Kiir is aiming to strengthen its military forces, using millions of dollars from oil sales. As the report claims, "Revenue from forward oil sales totalled approximately \$243 million between late March and late October 2016".

Although, due to such humanitarian help the risk of famine have been reduced in several counties, including Ghazal state and Northern Bahr. As the "hunger season" (when the last harvest run out but the new hasn't come yet) of the year is about to begin, WPF is already planning to provide more food and nutrition supply and money to help the situation. UNICEF is currently preparing to help 200,000 children suffering from malnutrition this year.

The standpoint of the United States is not clear yet, whereas the previously provided protection of the Obama administration would continue. During the Obama administration, the Security Council made efforts to put an end to the civil war in South Sudan. Even in 2011, the independence was heavily supported by the United States. In March 2015, sanctions were already set up, making 6 generals 3 from each side of the conflict to leave the country. Recently, in 2016 December, a resolution regarding the sanctions and an arms embargo was supported by the United States, but after rejected by the UN Security Council.

On 23 March, a special Security Council meeting is awaiting to be held, chaired by British Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson. The question of arms embargo can once again be revised, as it is tend to be a key source problem regarding one of Africa's worst conflicts in South Sudan.

“the famine is man-made”



## Kasai-Central clashes

Tamar Buachidze ■

■ Kasai-Central clashes are a series of ongoing clashes in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), in the provinces of Kasai-Central, Kasai, Kasai-Oriental and Lomami, between the Kamwina Nsapu militia and state security forces starting, which started in August 2016 after the militia led by Kamwina Nsapu attacking security forces.



UN peacekeepers patrolling Tshimbulu, Kasai-Central on 20 February 2017 to promote dialogue in the region. Photo: Biliaminou Alao [Elickr]

Prior to the first clash in June 2016, Kamwina, a local militia leader who had inherited the chiefdom from his late father, contested the central government's power and began calling for an insurrection and attacked local police. He was killed on August 12, 2016, along with eight other militiamen and 11 policemen in

Tshimbulu. Upon his death, the Congolese Observatory for Human Rights condemned his killing and suggested, that he should have been arrested instead. According to the reports, half the militia is under the age of 14, and on the one hand, Congolese authorities claim they are under the influence of drugs. The New York Times, on the other hand, reports they may believe in "traditional magic", like being shielded by wearing specific leaves. August clashes was followed by Nsapu's militia's capture of an area 180km from Kananga following by the capture of the Kananga Airport before it was retaken by the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in September 2016.

Moving onto the year of 2017, in January four militiamen were killed, while two policemen were wounded. A few days later, they called for the removal of the governor, Alex Kande, and protested against the visit of Prime Minister Samy Badibanga. At the end of January, on 31 January, a Roman Catholic priest from the St. Alphonsus parished in Kananga who tried to stop the militia from taking children out of schools was kidnapped and later released.

It is essential to indicate UN peacekeeping mission's role which with the increase of atrocities started to take up more active role.





UN Deputy Special Representative David Gressly speaks with the press after meeting with MONUSCO and Congolese officials to discuss the conflict.  
Photo: Myriam Asmani / MONUSCO [Wikimedia Commons]

However, the high number of the Kamwina Nsapu militia fighters killed by soldiers, at least 110 people, between February 9 and February 13, including 39 women, questions the feasibility of the mission. Human rights spokeswoman Liz Throssell estimated the case as indiscriminate and commented: “We are deeply concerned at the reported high number of deaths, which if confirmed would suggest excessive and disproportionate use of force by the soldiers.” The violence is also part of a broader surge in instability across Congo in recent weeks after President Joseph Kabila refused to step down when his constitutional mandate expired in December. In recent months in battles between security forces and the militia, who are seeking to avenge the death of their leader Kamwina Nsapu, hundreds have died and tens of thousands have been uprooted in central Congo.

At least 11 people were killed on February 13 in clashes between the army and a group loyal to a traditional chief slain in fighting with police last year, said local activist Jean Rene Tshimanga, president of the Civil Society of Kasai-Central province. According to Tshimanga, the group attacked the men in uniform who repelled them. The Congo’s UN peacekeeping mission claimed that Kamwina Nsapu had committed violent atrocities and used child soldiers, and it also criticised the army for a disproportionate use of force against the militia fighters, who are typically only lightly armed.



Location of Kasai-Central within the Democratic Republic of the Congo.  
Map: Wikimedia Commons

“we are deeply concerned at the reported high number of deaths, which if confirmed would suggest excessive and disproportionate use of force by the soldiers”



## Sehwan suicide bombing

Tamar Buachidze ■

■ Sehwan suicide bombing is one of the major terrorist incidents taking place in 2017 in Pakistan. On February 16, a suicide bombing occurred inside the Shrine of Lal Shahbaz Qalandar in Sehwan, where pilgrims were performing a Sufi ritual after the evening prayers. At least 90 people were killed and over 300 injured. The attack followed suicide bombings of Lahore on February 13 (15 people killed, at least 87 injured, Peshawar and Mohmand attacks on February 15 (7 killed, 7 injured) and Awaran attack on February 16 (3 martyred, 2 injured). Pakistani authorities alleged that the attacks were carried out by jihadists in Afghanistan. However, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan Province claimed responsibility for the bombing in Sehwan. In November 2016, the last attack on a shrine of a Sufi mystic took place ripping through a Muslim shrine in the Khuzdar district of Balochistan, southwestern Pakistan, killing at least 52 people and injuring 102.

The shrine of Lal Shahbaz Qalandar is a place, where usually thousands of devotees from across the country arrive every Thursday practicing Sufism, an ancient mystic branch of Islam. The Shrine is Pakistan's most revered Sufi



*Tomb of Lal Shahbaz Qalandar.*  
Photo: Lakhani.karachi [Wikimedia Commons]

shrine, dedicated to a 13th-century saint in Sehwan Sharif. It is essential to indicate, that the attack followed the Pakistani Taliban and rival Islamist militant groups threat of a new offensive. The bombing indeed shattered a period of improving security, underscoring how militants still undermine stability in the country. The number of victims of the bombing were increasing shortly after they were brought to the hospitals of Hyderabad, Dadu and Janshoro, as the condition of a number of pilgrims were critical. According to a spokesman for medical charity Edhi, the attacker appeared to have targeted the women's wing of the shrine, and around 30 children accompanying their mothers



were dead. Television footage showed army and paramilitary medical teams reaching the site and injured people being taken to nearby hospitals in ambulances and a military helicopter. A wailing woman interview by a television channel outside the shrine with her headscarf streaked in blood said that they were there for the worship of Allah expressing surprise of being hurt while people gathered there for devotion. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif quickly condemned the bombing, decrying the assault on the Sufi religious minority. He promised to fight militants, who target the government, judiciary and anyone who does not adhere to their strict interpretation of Sunni Islam. "The past few days have been hard, and my heart is with the victims," Sharif said. "But we can't let these events divide us, or scare us. We must stand united in this struggle for the Pakistani identity, and universal humanity." Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf Chairman Imran Khan also condemned the suicide blast and said he was shocked and saddened on the terrorist attack which targeted innocent people, including women and children. The attack was followed by Operation Radd-ul-Fasaad on February 22, which considered to be a war on terror operation launched by Pakistan Army to eliminate terrorism across Pakistan in response to recent incidents. The operation was aimed at consolidating the gains of operations made so far with further aim to ensure the security of Pakistan's borders. The Pakistan Air Force, Pakistan Navy, Pakistan Police and other Civil Armed Forces also actively participated in the operation.

### International reactions

**Afghanistan:** President Ashraf Ghani condemned the attack, stating that "terrorists once again, proved that they have no respect for Islamic values".<sup>[32]</sup> Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah also condemned the attack and offered sympathy to the families of victims and people of Pakistan.

**Belarus:** Ambassador Andrei Ermolovich condemned the Sehwan blast while expressing solidarity with Pakistan. He also said that Belarus stands with Pakistan in its efforts for elimination of terrorism.

**China:** President Xi Jinping condemned the attack and offered sympathy to the Pakistani people. He said that China "will stand ready to firmly support Pakistan in its effort to fight terrorism, maintain national stability and safeguard its people". Chinese Premier Li Keqiang also expressed shock and condemned the attack.

**India:** The Indian external affairs ministry strongly condemned the attack on the Lal Qalandar shrine at Sehwan and offered their sympathies to Pakistani people.

**Japan:** A statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that "Japan is shocked and saddened by the suicide attack".

**Kyrgyzstan:** President Almazbek Atambayev expressed sorrow and offered condolences over the terrorist attack.

**Russia:** President Vladimir Putin expressed condolences over the incident, while reaffirming Russia's "readiness to further step up counter-terrorist cooperation" with Pakistan.

**Tajikistan:** President Emomali Rahmon offered condolence adding that the Tajik people "are deeply saddened by the tragic news".

**United States:** Acting State Department deputy spokesman Mark Toner said the U.S. condemned the suicide bombing and offered its "support to the Pakistani government as it works to bring the perpetrators of this crime to justice". He added: "We stand with the people of Pakistan in their fight against terrorism and remain committed to the security of the South Asia region."



## Myanmar military crackdown

Violetta Vaski ■

■ According to Myanmar government officials, the military “clearance operation” against Rohingyas ending the four months lasting violence, which made approximately 69,000 Rohingyas fleeing persecution to escape to Bangladesh and other countries. However, nearby countries, such as Malaysia and Indonesia are mostly unable or unwilling to accept them. As the UN claims, acts made by the government against the Muslim minority can account as crimes against humanity and possible ethnic cleansing.

Rohingyas are a Muslim minority facing discrimination in the Buddhist-majority Myanmar since a long time. They are labelled as illegal immigrants from Bangladesh (despite of the fact that many of them have lived in Myanmar for generations), and refused to be accepted as citizens by the government. Their rights are limited, such as their living conditions lacking education, healthcare and employment. In contrast, the Rohingyas are regarding themselves as pre-colonial residents of Myanmar’s Rakhine state. The conflict can be traced back to 1826, when Britain annexed the

part of the country, where most Rohingyas lived, but due to the applied immigration laws Bengali Muslims had flow to the area, labelled as Rohingyas by the Buddhists. The unacceptable treatment is going on almost 27 years, as in 1991-1992, more than 260,000 Rohingyas already had to fled the country, due to the human rights abuses against them, such as executions, torture, rape, forced labour, seizure of land. Hence, the problem is not new, but heavily escalated since October 2016, when nine policemen were killed near the Bangladesh border. In response, the security operation implemented by the army has made 69,000 people to flee from the region to Bangladesh. Since then, more than 1,000 Rohingyas may have been killed in mass killings, villages were burnt down and gang rapes took place committed by security forces and civilian fighters at the side of the army and police, according to UN officials. A UN report clearly represents the living conditions of the minority, interviewing 204 people who have made their way to Bangladesh. More than half of the asked women claimed that they had been raped or sexually



assaulted, several told the UN that their children were taken from them and killed. However, the government denied all accuses of abuses and claimed that the operation was a lawful counter-insurgency campaign. It was also declared that there were fewer than 100 killings during the clearing operations, and also that security forces did not commit cleansing operations. As the newly appointed national security adviser Thaug Tun claims: “The situation in northern Rakhine has now stabilised. The clearance operations undertaken by the military have ceased, the curfew has been eased and there remains only a police presence to maintain the peace.”

In order to meet UN allegations, President Aung San Kyi have promised to set up a team to investigate crimes against Rohingyas, but the international criticism suggest that he did little to help the situation. Hence, the United Nations human rights body agreed to send an investigation mission to inspect evidence regarding torture by security forces. However Myanmar ambassador Htin Lynn had rejected the move, adding: “Let the Myanmar people choose the best and the most effective course of action to address the challenges in Myanmar.” John Samuel, Executive Director of FORUM-ASIA says: “This resolution is a great opportunity for the government to move in the right direction. It

should cooperate fully with the international fact finding mission” – sharing the view with other countries intending to solve the problem.



Rohingya people in Rakhine (Arakan) State in Myanmar

- - Rohingya majority
- - Rohingya minority

*Rohingya people in Rakhine State. Map: PANONIAN [Wikimedia Commons]*

“Rohingyas are a Muslim minority facing discrimination in the Buddhist-majority Myanmar since a long time”



## ■ News in Brief

### Domestic affairs affecting international relations

#### Marine Le Pen climbs ahead of French election

■ The first round of the French presidential election will take place on April 23. Marine Le Pen, the leader of the far-right National Front Party is currently leading the opinion polls with 27 percent. The Independent candidate Emmanuel Macron is at 21 percent, while the Conservative Francois Fillon is at 19 percent, according to the latest polls. However, the far-right parties are not operating well in other countries, such as in the Netherlands, where Geert Wilders losing his support.

#### Shifa Gardi: Tributes paid to reporter killed in Mosul

■ On February 25, a female reporter working for an Iraqi Kurdish channel was killed in a roadside bomb attack while covering clashes between Iraqi government forces and ISIL in Mosul. Shifa Gardi was a presenter and chief of output at Rudaw, a media group in Iraq's autonomous Kurdistan region funded by the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP). Her cameraman, Younis Mustafa, who was wounded in the attack, was transferred to the capital of Kurdistan region, Erbil. Densely populated Mosul with an estimated 750,000 civilians trapped in area is ISIL's last major urban stronghold in Iraq. A number of journalists have been injured in the Mosul operation from

October 2016, when the military operation to retake the city and ISIL group was officially launched.

#### Hunting down ISIL sleeper cells in Mosul

■ While ISIL group is believed to have left eastern Mosul, its fighters significantly remain on the site shaving their beards, returning to their families and attempting to remain in the city unnoticed. Some fighters have formed sleeper cells organising the attacks on Iraqi forces and civilian targets. Iraq's National Security Service gathers information from a network of local sources and works on tracking down the remaining fighters. Since Iraqi troops retook eastern Mosul separated from ISIL-held west, ISIL fighters have launched a number of attacks targeting civilians and military some of which involve the usage of weaponised drones. Despite of the arrest of hundreds of suspects, a lot has to be done to apprehend the remaining fighters.

#### Mosul offensive: Iraqi forces recapture airport in bid to retake city

■ On February 23, Iraqi security forces recaptured Mosul airport, which represents a key part of the government's offensive to drive ISIL from the western half of the city. After losing the ground to the army, ISIL continued firing





mortars at the airport from further inside the city. Nearby military base was also captured by the jihadists. Thursday's advance brings the army within less than a mile of western Mosul, where militants' attacks are expected to take place. More than 160,000 people have fled their homes, but there are 800,000 people still trapped in the city according Aram Shakaram, the country's deputy director for Save the Children in Iraq.

### **Trump administration widens net for immigrant deportation**

■ Considering an estimated 11 million illegal immigrants in the US, the Trump administration widened the net for their deportation from the country. The memos target undocumented immigrants attested for traffic violations or shop-lifting along with the ones convicting more serious crimes. While the Obama administration focused its policy on immigrants convicted of serious crimes and threats to national security, Trump's immigration policy marks a sharp turn and prioritises the deportation of almost all undocumented immigrants. According to White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer, the new guidelines will not result in mass deportation, but-empower agents to enforce laws already on the books. The two memos released on February 21 by the agency also allows Border Patrol and Immigration and Customs Enforcement to deport immediately people, who are unable to provide proof of their being in the country for more than two years.

### **People who fear deportation under President Trump are fleeing to Canada for asylum**

■ Since the election of Donald Trump, number of refugees have abandoned hope for the US and took a risky crossing into Canada. Some of them were neither granted asylum in America nor expelled from the country. Trump's hard line promises on immigration has increased fear in refugees of being sent to their home countries, which they consider to be a death sentence. Several scenes of people attempting the forbidden road to Canada and entering Hemmingford, Quebec, has been captured.

### **Mexico will stay in NAFTA only if it suits it**

■ On 28 February, while Mexico and the USA was renegotiating the trade deal which Donald Trump wants to recast, Mexico expressed it aims to leave NAFTA if the options are not suitable. Mexico also rejected the implication of any quotas or tariffs, which would serve the interests of the USA. According to Foreign Minister Luis Videgaray, Mexico would not accept restricting changes regarding free trade. Donald Trump has already triggered Mexican criticism concerning trade, as he called firms not to invest in Mexico, and also required the country to finance a border wall. However, Mexico is confident that President Donald Trump will not be able to imply such barriers and also vowed to retaliate in a case of border tax.



## ■ News in Brief

### Bilateral relations

#### Nagorno-Karabakh conflict

■ Armenia-backed separatists gain control over the mainly ethnic-Armenian Nagorno-Karabakh during a war in the 1990s, resulting in 30,000 dead people. Armenian-Azerbaijani clashes have escalated in these years, and diplomatic efforts took little to make progress. Recently, on 25 February, the separatist military controlling the region reported Azerbaijani armed forces attacking along the line contact, resulting in casualties. Several Azerbaijani soldiers were killed during the attack, but there were no casualties on the Armenian side. According to Azerbaijan's Defence Ministry, the attacks were confirmed, but they highlighted, that they were caused to happen by separatist forces.

#### Russian aircraft buzzed US destroyer in Black Sea

■ Russian banned land-based cruise missile has been deployed in the Black Sea dispatching a spy ship up the Atlantic coast and buzzing an American warship. During the first week of February a Russian Su-24 flew within 200 yards of the USS Porter according a defence official. Two other Russian Su-24s came within 300 yards of the ship in a separate incident in addition with an IL-38 fling at unusually low altitude. The action is believed to be testing the new administration, how Trump will resort to

confrontational responses. US officials reported that all four Russian planes were flying without their transponders on, which increased the risk of an accident or miscalculation.

#### Syria: Turkey-backed rebels' control of al-Bal

■ Turkish-backed rebels battling Islamic State control most part of north Syrian town, al-Bal. Al-Bal, just 25km south of the Turkish border, has been the target of an over three-month assault by Turkey and rebel forces which were resisted by ISIL fighters, who had captured the Aleppo province town in early 2014. The operation also involves Turkish troops, Kurdish fighters, the Syrian army and Russian planes. According to Turkish News Agency Anadolu, fighters from the Free Syrian Army (FSA) group were clearing mines and explosives devices laid by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) group after capturing the centre of the flashpoint town. The advance in the city is believed to be slowed down because of ISIL's traps and suicide bombings, some of which had been carried out by 13 years old children. However, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a UK-based monitoring group which tracks developments in Syria's conflict claimed that ISIL still controls more than half of al-Bal.



### **USA and China discuss beneficial economic relations**

■ On 28 February, since the election of Donald Trump, a meeting between the world's two largest economies took place for the first time. US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and Chinese State Councillor Yang Jiechi held a meeting in Washington. Regarding beneficial economic relationship, they emphasized the relevance of high-level engagement and also reviewed North-Korea's nuclear program. After the meeting, China's state news agency affirmed closer economic ties with deeper communication and coordination, which mutually serves each other's interests.

### **North Korean state media accuses China dancing to US tune**

■ North Korea criticised in a statement its only ally China, claiming that the country serves American demands. Recently, China presented its aim to ban coal imports during 2017, as a result of North Korea's continuing missile tests. For North Korea, coal trade is inevitable, as it relies on China in this case. The ban came a week after North Korea tested an intermediate-range ballistic missile. A day after already China ignored a coal shipment coming from North Korea. Although China backs North Korea, it has supported UN sanctions against it, and criticised its nuclear activity.

### **Cuba says United States has deported 117 Cuban migrants since policy shift**

■ On February 18 Cuba argued that the United States had deported 117 migrants since shifting the policy of granting automatic residency to almost every Cuban who reached the US as part of the normalisation of relations. According Cuba's ruling Communist Party newspaper Granma, two Cuban citizens were deported on the first flight chartered specifically for the deportation of Cuban migrants as the result of policy ending. Former US President Barack Obama repealed this special immigration policy for Cubans days before leaving his post. It did not come as a surprise for Cuban authorities as they have had long sought its end, arguing that the promise of U.S. residency was fuelling people-trafficking and encouraging dangerous journeys. However, the policy shift disappointed many and put their hope of fulfilling American Dream to the end. Deportation did not take place only from the US, as 680 Cuban "irregular migrants" have been deported in total from various countries, including more than 400 from Mexico, 117 from the Bahamas and 39 from the Cayman Islands.



### Venezuela's bad relationship with the USA got worse

■ Venezuela's relationship with the USA has never been the best, since communist authoritarian Hugo Chavez became president in the late 1990s. Recently, On 13 February, The Treasury Department blacklisted the Venezuelan Vice President Tareck El Aissami. He has been accused of overseeing narcotics shipments of more than 1,000 kilograms from Venezuela, heading to Mexico and the USA. The sanction came in the worst period of time, as Venezuela is suffering from an economic crisis and shortage of basic goods and medicines. The current situation also implies that Brazil and Columbia, close allies of the USA, should implement higher levels of security at their borders with Venezuela.

### Peru offers visas for Venezuela

■ Peru aims to create a migratory policy which aims to build bridges instead of walls, offering thousands of visas for Venezuelans. The visa enables them to work, study and receive health care in Peru for a year. Recently, socialist-led Venezuela is in a deep economic crisis, which resulted in food and medicine shortages, in contrast if Peru, where economic growth is on the rise. Peru President Pedro Pablo Kuczynski declared that he is aiming to follow a different route than the USA, despite of the fact of being allies. Instead of building walls, such as President Donald Trump plans, Peru would like to step on a different route concerning migration.

### Fox show apologises to Kenya for the sue of Westgate attack footage

■ Fox News has apologised to Kenya for using footage of the Westgate mall terror attack, killing at least 69 and many others injured, in one of its shows. The footage was included in the popular "24 Legacy" series capturing how the terrorists shot and killed civilians at the mall in September 2013. A woman was seen showing the video to three men sitting around a table and the actors with proper English said the location was Alexandria in Egypt, not Nairobi. On February 23, a Fox Studios spokesperson confirmed they have used the footage of the mall attack and expressed sincere apology for depicting "a fictional act of terror on the show". The Kenya Film Classification Board demanded pulling down the footage as the movie violated Kenya's ethical standards for the practice of journalism.



Onlookers flee at the sound of renewed gunfire during Westgate mall terror attack.  
Photo: Anne Knight [Wikimedia Commons]



## ■ News in Brief

### International relations

#### Russian military admits significant cyber-war effort

■ Significant cyber-war effort has been admitted by the Russian military for the first time, saying it was significantly expanded post-Cold War. Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu agreed on Russian “information troops” involvement in “intelligent, effective propaganda”, but details about the team or its target was not revealed. With NATO reported to be a top target, the admission followed continuous allegations of cyber-attacks against Western nations by Russia. Russia rejects Western narratives about its “disinformation” and accuses NATO of aggressive expansion and support for anti-Russian nationalists in Ukraine. According to Keil Giles, an expert on the Russian military at the Chatham House think-tank, the Russian military decided to prioritise information warfare after the 2008 Russia-Georgia conflict, when “the country’s security apparatus drew lessons from its “inability to dominate public opinion about the rights and wrongs of the war.”



#### Merkel call for joint efforts with Russia to battle Islamist terrorism

■ Angela Merkel has called on Europe and its allies to cooperate with Russia in the fight against Islamist terrorism despite tensions over Syria, Ukraine, propagation of “fake news” and alleged cyber-attacks. On February 18 during the annual Munich Security Conference German Chancellor claimed: “The joint fight against Islamic terrorism is one area where we have the same interests and we can work together.” Merkel was one of the critics of Donald Trump’s attempt to ban immigration from seven predominantly Muslim countries, referring to Islam itself not being a source of terrorism and underlining necessity of including targeted countries in the fight against extremism. The US Vice President was among world leaders in the audience for the speech, which continued with disputes over allegations that the Kremlin backed cyber-attacks attempting to influence the US and German election as well as controversy over “fake news” spread by state-funded outlets such as Russia Today and Sputnik. German Chancellor also underlined readiness for doing “everything possible” to meet a NATO target for spending 2 percent of economic output on defence by 2024.



### Visa-free travel approved for Georgia

■ The European Parliament has voted to enable visa-free travel for Georgia, the South Caucasus country. The vote supported overwhelmingly visa liberalization, by 553 to 66, with 28 abstentions. According to diplomats, it is desirable that Georgians will be able to travel in the Schengen-zone from the end of March without the requirement of the visa passport. This step moves the country closer to the EU, decreasing Russian influence, which already emerged into a war in 2008.

### New UN team to collect evidence for war crimes in Syria

■ According to UN officials, a new team will be set up in Geneva to collect evidence of war crimes in the Syrian war. The unit will detect the worst abuses, and can be identified as crimes against humanity. Although the unit cannot deliver prosecutions, it will prepare files which can be used in the future prosecutions by states or by the international criminal court based in The Hague. Earlier, the Syrian government executed up to 13,000 prisoners and carried out torture at a military jail, but denied the accusations. Collecting evidence is the only way to make sure that criminals cannot get away from situations like this.

### Bill Gates warns of bio-terrorism

■ Microsoft founder and philanthropist Bill Gates warned of the consequences of bio-

terrorism at Munich security conference. He adjusted that it is time to prepare for such threat, by separating money spent on weapons and developing biotechnology in order to deal with the issue. He claimed, that it is likely to happen in the next 10-15 years, that a pandemic triggered by a terrorist would break out, which could even leave more than 30 million dead people behind. According to UK and US intelligence agencies, the Islamic State has been indeed trying to develop biological weapons in its bases. He emphasized, that if we invest a part of money spent on defence and new weapons into epidemic readiness, we could prevent the epidemics spreading out of control.

### Sri Lanka “hunting” refugees who sheltered Snowden in Hong Kong

■ Sri Lankan asylum seekers living in Hong Kong are afraid of being pursued by police after sheltering Edward Snowden for two weeks in June 2013, when he fled the country after leaking thousands of documents belonging to the US National Security Agency (NSA). According to Robert Tibbo, the lawyer representing refugees, criminal investigators from Sri Lanka have visited Hong Kong looking for them in December 2016. Tibbo argued that the evidence came from Sri Lankans living in Hong Kong who had been approached on the street by people carrying official identification. He revealed the names of the asylum seekers before the September premiere of the film Snowden as it would be difficult to keep their identities secret after the film's release.





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