

"Discovering International Relations and Contemporary Global Issues"

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News and Background

August 2014





About CRP News & Background

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Ceasefire cannot be achieved in Luhansk

“Our consolidating interest is united European Ukraine.”



Location of Luhansk in Ukraine. Map: Wikimedia Commons

Ukraine has been struggling with uprisings and unrest since November 2013 when President Yanukovich refused to sign the trade agreement with the European Union and showed that his interest is directed towards Moscow. Student protests intensified throughout the months until Yanukovich was forced to resign. New elections were called for 25th May, where Petro Poroshenko won the presidential runoff, while Crimea joined Russia as a result of referendum. New President Poroshenko decided on a hard line policy towards separatists in the Eastern Ukrainian territories; Luhansk and Donetsk and began offensive immediately. Fighting intensified as most probably the pro-Russian groups

shot down Malaysian Airlines MH17, killing all 298 people on board. Since Malaysian Airlines MH17 crashed into east Ukrainian territory in July 17th fighting in the territories intensified. It was confirmed that the airplane was shot down with a BUK-M1 surface-to-air missile most probably launched from pro-Russian controlled territories. Separatist groups blame Ukrainian troops with firing the missile. There are concerns whether MH17 should have been flying through eastern Ukrainian airspace as prior to the incident 10 aircrafts have been shot down. Although eastern Ukrainian airspace was off limits up until 32,000 feet, the Malaysian airplane was flying above that therefore making the crew believe that no shooting would take place. The shooting of the plane resulted in the introduction of no fly zone by several states, such as the US, who together with other western powers called upon Russia and the pro-Russian troops to allow experts to the field where airplane MH17 crashed to start to analyse the evidence. Instead fights between Ukrainian and separatist forces intensified urging the escape of experts from the war zone. Pro-government troops were even forced to cross the



border into Russia while fleeing from the pro-Russian groups. Kiev on the other hand inspected the violation of airspace, which is raising high concerns. The heavy fighting shows its consequences in numbers as well; 20 Ukrainian army officers were killed during the last couple of weeks.

Due to the intensified fighting the search for belongings and remains of victims was suspended as the life of experts was at stake. Ukraine, the Netherlands and Australia came to an agreement to protect the staff working at the scene of MH17 crash until the security concerns will fade away. The Dutch prime minister announced the halt for search while emphasizing that this is only a temporary setback and the staff will resume the investigation. Australia, Malaysia and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation are in consent. At the same time Australia is in preparation for 7th August a national day to mourn all those

lost in the incident. As the Dutch halt the experiments the Donetsk rebels want to do the same with fighting. Ukrainian army captured a crucial city; Krasnyi Luch, which is of main importance as it connects Luhansk and Donetsk, by railroads and routes hence it is possibly the route where pro-Russian groups are receiving Russian military equipment and supplies. Igor Girkin; the rebel commander called for a ceasefire following their encirclement. In a statement the rebel leader; Aleksandr Zakharchenko declared that "We are prepared to stop firing to bar the spread of the scale of the humanitarian catastrophe." The statement enjoys the support of Russia, while the West is suspicious that Russia will use this as a pretext of sending troops in Ukraine. Barack Obama and Angela Merkel have the biggest concern on Russian invasion and breaching international law therefore



MH17 memorial at Amsterdam International Airport. Photo: JurgenNL [Wikimedia Commons]



premising further tougher sanctions towards Moscow. Although the fear of the West is justified so is Russia's support to prevent a humanitarian crisis. Not only might all encircled rebels be killed if fighting follows but there has already been a major issue concerning living conditions in both Luhansk and Donetsk. People are desperately trying to flee the cities as shortage of food is growing, as well as electricity and clean water. Despite the horrible living conditions and the call for ceasefire, Ukrainian army dismisses the proposal until pro-Russian separatist surrender completely. This of course was unacceptable for the rebels, who replied that Ukraine has to stop military action if they want to achieve ceasefire. Therefore fighting continues and the army tightens the circle around rebels.

Ukraine agreed to allow Russian humanitarian aid to Luhansk through separatist border checkpoint if transported by the International Committee of the Red Cross but instead Russian trucks cross borders illegally. Kiev fears that Russia will not only bring in humanitarian but also military aid to the pro-Russian groups. An increasing number of Russian vehicles is said to have crossed Ukrainian borders, while separatist powers seem to be on an increase. Military equipment was reported to be seen in the Russian trucks as well. Hence instead of easing humanitarian issues more fighting may be expected. There is a need for humanitarian assistance as the estimate for the number of people killed in eastern Ukraine doubled since the end of July to 2,086 according to United

Nation's estimate. Russia ordered trucks to enter into Ukraine without the inspection of International Committee of Red Cross, which is regarded as a direct violation to the agreement with Ukraine. Still no action is taken to avoid confrontation. NATO Secretary General; Anders Fogh Rasmussen admitted that trucks brought in military equipment for separatist troops besides humanitarian aid and looks at Russia's act with suspicion. In parallel with 20 Russian trucks entering Luhansk, Lithuania's honorary consul; Mykola Zelenec was kidnapped and brutally murdered by pro-Russian rebels, intensifying the conflict between Russia and the West.

As the Malaysian Airline MH17 was shot down, experts had to be removed from the sight of the crash, Russia violated her agreement with Ukraine, posing threat to international law and giving a reason to the West to impose possible sanctions the events of August had an international effect and received worldwide attention and often reaction. Therefore the call for ceasefire was not enough to put an end to the Ukrainian crisis.



Anders Fogh Rasmussen. Photo: Estonian Foreign Ministry



Russia reacts with sanctions war against EU

Will the food ban result in Russian starvation?

On 1 August the United States of America, European Union and Norway decided to accept tougher sanctions against Russia due to her role in the Ukrainian conflict. Sanctions concerned the financial sector, trading restrictions on energy, defence equipment and the prohibition of taking long- and mid-term loans by state-owned banks. As a consequence Russia reacted with sanctions war against the West; banning fruits, vegetables, meat, fish and dairy for an entire year. While Serbia is distancing herself from the issue, EU countries already feel the cost of the lost market.

Just a day after the EU and US accepted economic sanctions against Russia, Moscow announced that infection was found in Polish food products and banned the import of all fruits and vegetables with the possibility of more goods to be prohibited. While Polish agricultural minister claims compensation for their loss of market, Serbia declares her unwillingness to join the restrictions. Prime Minister Aleksandar Vučić explained in a report to CNN that Serbia is the key to stability in the Balkan region, hence refuses to take any actions creating more tensions and

endangering her economic situation. On the other hand Vučić was careful enough to emphasize the importance of European values and the acknowledgement and respect toward Ukraine's territorial integrity together with Crimea.

On 6 August Russia broadened the ban on air flights through its airspace and food products to the west including EU, US, Australia, Canada and Norway resulting in serious consequences for importing nations. Although it is admitted that the sanctions might cause inflation in the short term, officials see no mid- or long-term consequence as they expect to turn to new importing countries such as New Zealand and Brazil. At the same time trade



Dmitry Medvedev in a food shop in Orenburg Oblast. Photo: Kremlin.ru

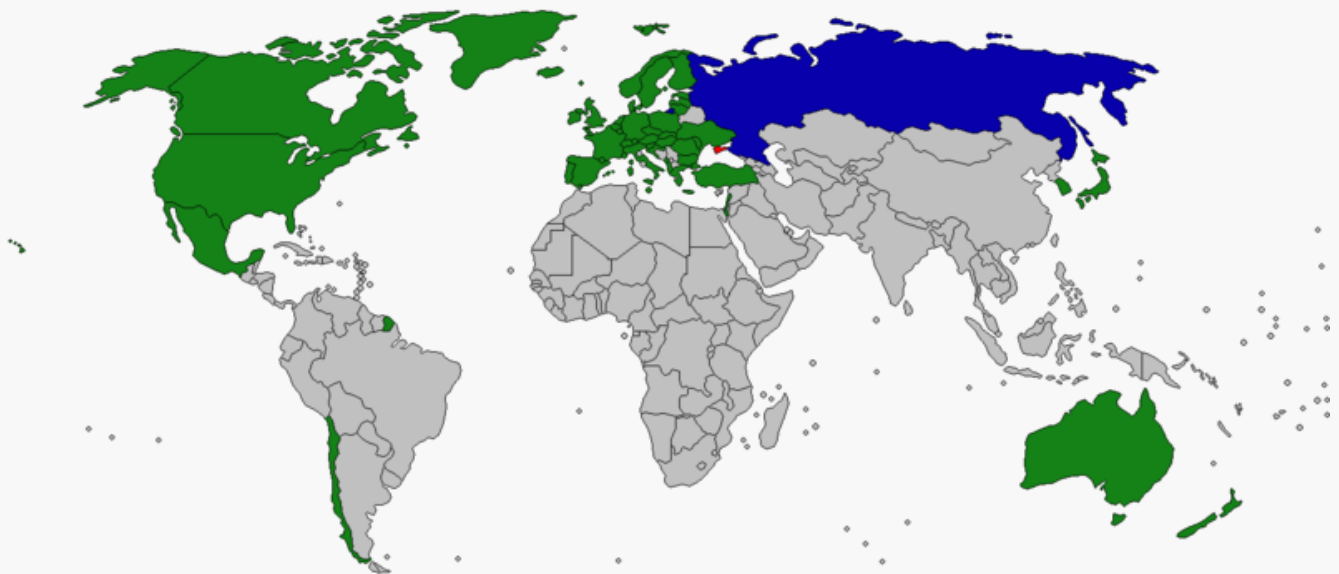


talks were initiated between Russian President Vladimir Putin and Kazakh and Belarusian Presidents. Russia is seeking to find new economic and trading partners apart from the west therefore exploring her situation in the Eurasian Economic Union (EAO) and the BRICS group. Although Belarus already widened the range of exports to Russia, Moscow declared her willingness to revise the restrictions if cooperation is achievable with the west.

EU tries to limit damage caused by the ban and plan a coordinated strategy for each product while Russia will still be worse off if

all costs are counted. Russia helps with subsidies to keep the shops full of products but in the long run to maintain food necessities hundreds of billions of rubles will have to be invested by Russia. The European Commission is financing farmers while opinions differ on the amount it will take to compensate agriculture and its workers. The economic sanctions imposed on Russia result in a higher cost for Moscow than the west consequently Dmitry Medvedev already reduced the list of banned products weakening food prohibition.

“Russia helps with subsidies to keep the shops full of products but in the long run to maintain food necessities hundreds of billions of rubles will have to be invested by Russia”



Map of countries which implemented sanctions against Russia following the annexation of Crimea. Map: Wikimedia Commons



Netanyahu to face massive criticism



Prime Minister of Israel Benjamin Netanyahu. Photo: Kremlin.ru

August 26 marked an ambiguous day for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu despite his optimism regarding present Israeli-Palestinian relations. With the entry into force of the indefinite ceasefire agreement between Israel and Gaza-strip based organization Hamas; and the final blows of the 50-days-long Operation Protective Edge Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas has come to a point to “give Hamas a divorce” as Netanyahu said earlier. The premier pointed out in an interview on Channel 10 that he is willing to “cooperate with Abu Mazen (Abbas’ nom de guerre) in the diplomatic process as well”. Despite the Prime Minister’s enthusiasm concerning the issue, his

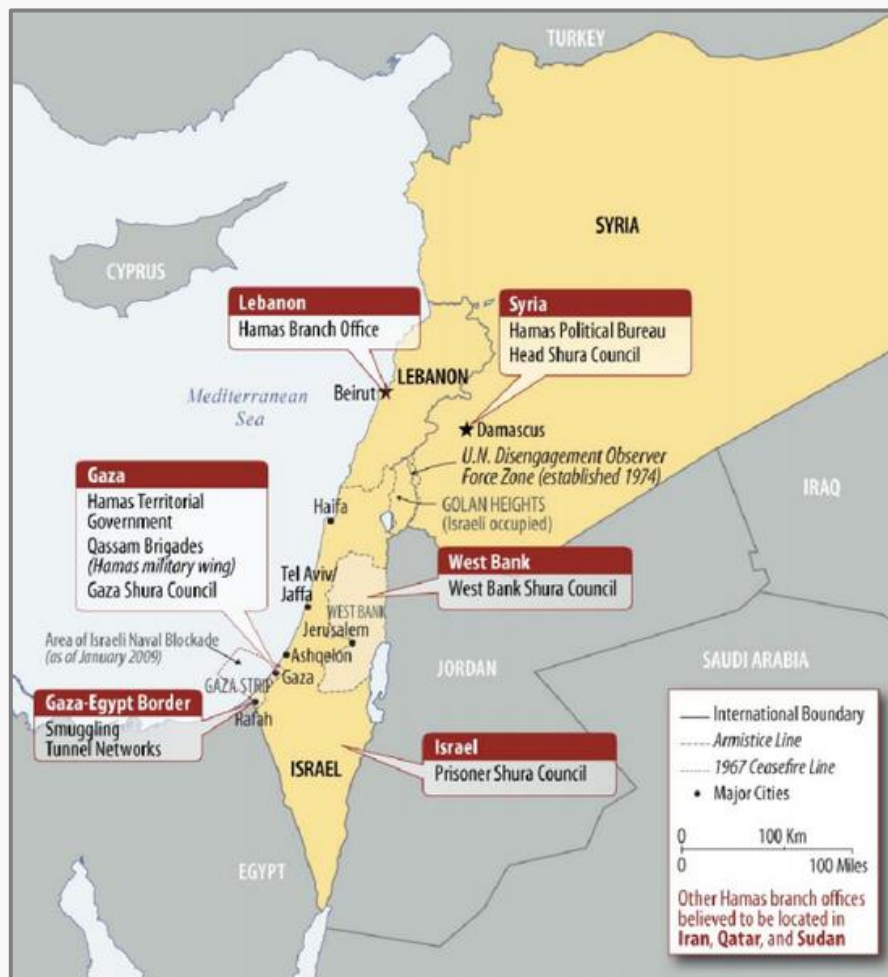
decision-making process has been opposed by the majority of the political spectrum. On the one hand, Netanyahu was accused of being naive for treating Hamas as a trustworthy partner as Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman put it, “as long as Hamas rules in Gaza we cannot guarantee security for the citizens of Israel and we cannot reach a diplomatic agreement”. Lieberman further asserted, that the ceasefire might provide an opportunity for the Palestinian terrorist group to strengthen and initiate “another war against Israel whenever it is convenient to it”. The fact that Hamas political chief Khaled Mashal ambitiously emphasized that “this was not the last campaign to liberate Palestine – it was an important stop on the road to victory” may provide some legitimacy for the Foreign Minister’s fears. On the other hand, Member of Knesset of the Labour party Nachman Shai complained about the government’s lack of public communication. “Twenty hours have passed since the ceasefire took effect and the citizens of Israel have not received any official announcement regarding the ceasefire and the negotiations with Hamas”, he commented.



In order to reinforce the Prime Minister's position many of his close allies stood up and gave the premier a helping hand including Deputy Foreign Minister Tzahi HaNegbi and Secretary of State John Kerry. " Hamas, whose main objective was to force us to lift the blockade on Gaza, failed

and all its demands were rejected", pointed out the former on public radio while Kerry highlighted the fact, that the ceasefire agreement is a result of intensive discussions and the US perceives it as an opportunity to achieve long-term solutions.

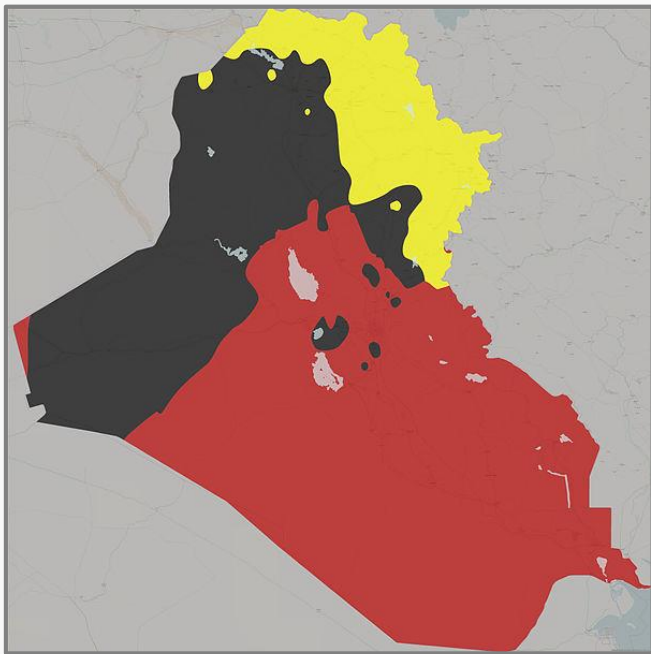
“ Hamas didn't achieve any of its goals
- PM Benjamin Netanyahu ”



Map of key Hamas leadership nodes. Map: Congressional Research Service



ISIS committing ethnic cleansing



Parts of Iraq controlled by the ISIS by 9 August 2014 (marked with black).
Map:Wikimedia Commons

August saw the advance of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) to the north of the region. During the first week of the month, the biggest Christian town of Iraq – Qaraqosh – was captured and thousands of “infidels” – Christians together with Shiites and Yazidis (Kurdish ethno-religious community) – were forced to flee from the areas captured by extremists. Expulsion of minorities is not the only practice exercised by extremists – it is reported that thousands of people have been killed while others are

held captive or conscripted into the army. At the beginning of August, the prime minister of Iraq, Nouri Al-Maliki, ordered air support for Kurdish Peshmerga forces fighting against the militants of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). Earlier, Kurdish authorities announced their intention to counterattack the “Islamic State” as Sinjar and Zumar in the north of Iraq as well as Iraq's biggest dam were seized by Sunni extremists.

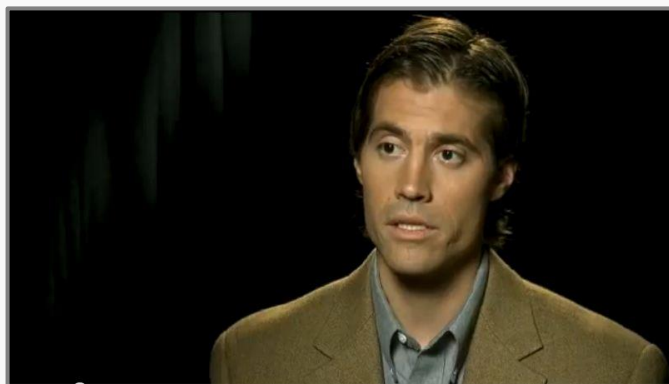
To prevent the genocide of religious minorities and to protect American personnel in Iraq, the president of the United States, Barack Obama, has authorized the air strikes in the northern regions of Iraq against the militants of the “Islamic state”. American troops have already dropped a humanitarian aid to civilians in the territories captured by self-proclaimed Islamic State.

As a response to American air strikes, on August 20th the ISIS released a video of American journalist James Foley being beheaded. Before being killed, the journalist called his friends and family to “rise up against [his] real killers, the US government”. Another captive – American journalist Steven Sotloff, who was



kidnapped in Syria in 2013, was shown in the video and promised to be beheaded as well if the US government continues air strikes in Iraq. Such an intensified seizure of northern parts of Iraq and ethnic cleansing induced the Government of Iraq to seek the help of international community in combating the “Islamic state”.

The foreign minister of Iraq and Syria, Hoshyar Zebari, particularly stressed that ISIS is a threat to the whole world and not only to Iraqi minorities. Indeed, increasing number of ISIS fighters gained a capacity to move beyond the area of the Middle East. Analysts report that ISIS's force ranges between 10,000 and 20,000 fighters while the amount of revenue ISIS receives per day ranges from \$1M to \$4M. According to experts, financing mainly comes from robberies and ransom payments received after the hostage-taking. In particular, the Iraqi central bank in Mosul was robbed by the ISIS in June and, according to various estimates, at least \$425M were stolen. In addition, the ISIS is believed to receive funds from private investors from the Gulf



Deceased photojournalist James Foley. Photo: CNN

region, especially Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, supporting the fight against the regime of Bashar al-Assad. It is reported that about 3000 Westerners fight on the side of the ISIS and, thus, recruitment of fighters is not anymore limited to the region. ISIS started recruiting through modern media like Twitter as well as its own media centre Al Hayat reaching young westerners in Europe, Canada, and the United States. Known today as “mujatweets”, or short promotional videos, they show a softer side of jihad and try to strike a chord of the audience through such messages as “I am your brother in Islam here in Syria. We have safety here for your family and children”.

“The foreign minister of Iraq and Syria, Hoshyar Zebari, particularly stressed that ISIS is a threat to the whole world and not only to Iraqi minorities”

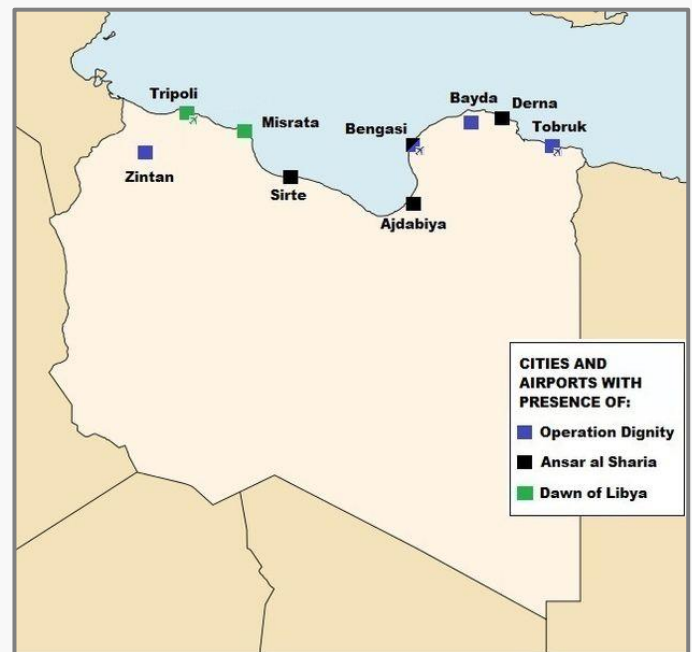


Arab Nations Strike in Libya

On August 25th, several strikes hit Tripoli, Libya. As it was reported by American Intelligence Service, the UAE and Egypt secretly launched air strikes against Islamists in Tripoli. Although both sides denied their involvement in air attacks, it is indeed perceived as an attempt of Arab nations to overthrow the old regime through fighting Islamic movements within the region, such as the Muslim Brotherhood.

Right now the conflict of two sides of interest is clearly observable in Libya. On the one side are Turkey and Qatar backing Islamists, while on the other are Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE backing Libya officials. Political analysts named it a “rare schism” among Arab nations as Qatar, in contrast to its neighbours, supports the Muslim Brotherhood and accepted Islamist expatriates in Doha, the capital of the country, and also provided weapons to Islamists inside Libya.

The UN and Western countries condemned the airstrikes and called them a direct intervention which would intensify the conflict instead of solving it. Michelle Dunne, a former Middle East specialist at the State Department, called regional polarization as the reason that “has proved to be a gigantic impediment to international efforts to resolve any of these (Syria, Iraq, Gaza, Libya) crisis”. A day after



The Libyan situation in big cities in 2014. Map: Wikimedia Commons

secret airstrikes in Tripoli, the UN Security Council passed Libya resolution on immediate ceasefire and sanction against involved in violence sides. The US Government appeals to resolve the conflict “peacefully, and through good governance and politics” and call upon other countries to restrain violent actions.

However, as conflict in Tripoli and Benghazi intensified, the members of the Parliament approved the call for international humanitarian aid. Libya continues to remain unstable after already 3 years after the overthrow of its former leader Moammar Gadhafi.



South Sudan to face sanctions

In August, South Sudan entered its ninth month of civil war. Despite calls for arms embargo and promised “consequences” from the US and the UN, warring sides are not ready to lay down arms.

The war already caused thousands of deaths while over 1.5 million of people were relocated. The situation aggravates in the eastern part of the country as 490 children were found in mass graves in Bor and over 900 reported kidnapped in Jonglei. African Union experts continuously report that South Sudan children are either murdered or taken to fight. During the first week of August only, six aid workers were killed in South Sudan the Upper Nile state and over 200 workers of the UN had to be evacuated as patients were murdered in hospitals.

On August 5th, the president of South Sudan Salva Kiir and the US Secretary of the State John Kerry met in Washington, D.C. where the “final ultimatum” was given to warring sides although arms embargo and targeted sanctions are already imposed on those responsible for violations of international law. At the same time, the US Government expressed their great concern about the threat of famine and humanitarian catastrophe and promised to give South Sudan \$180 million in Emergency food Aid apart from already provided \$456

million. According to UN estimates, 4 million people are threatened by starvation in South Sudan, including 50,000 children.

On August 12, the US Ambassador to the UN Samantha Power visited Malakal, one of the most damaged areas of the civil war, during her stay in South Sudan. She pointed out the “very worrying report” about delivered weapons although “no military solution” would be capable of ending the conflict. Samantha Power again emphasized that “the council [...] is prepared to impose consequences”.

One of the main achievements of the month could be restarted peace talks between the government and rebellions but little if any progress was made. On August 18th, the government's delegation's spokesperson declared that the government would not participate in negotiations unless the rebellions signed an agreement on termination of hostilities. The opposition side, in return, proposed their conditions, among which are the federal system of governance in which the power-sharing ratios shall be 70% for the Sudan Peoples' Liberation Movement (SPLM-In-Opposition) and 20% for the government. Thus, as a result of stalling peace talks in Addis Ababa, continuing violence and food crisis, the condition of South Sudan is extremely urgent.



Nigeria struggles to provide equipment as Boko Haram recruits in Cameroon



Logo of Boko Haram. Picture: Wikimedia Commons

Islamist Boko Haram militants have successfully seized major north-eastern city Gwoza and have declared the creation of an Islamic State in the region. "Thanks be to Allah who gave victory to our brethren in Gwoza and made it part of the Islamic state", Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau pointed out in a 52-minute video. The aforementioned video did also show a group of 20 civilians apparently shot dead. Military spokesperson Chris Olukolade has immediately reacted with a statement that dismisses the declaration, stating that "the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Nigerian state is still intact". Meanwhile, several sources affirmed that the Islamist

group is eager to gain a foothold in the poor, rural parts of Cameroon. "Boko Haram has recruited many young people" a police officer reported to AFP, so it is clear, that the hard-line movement is willing to export its activities to the Far North of Cameroon and maintain Kolofata, a small border town as their headquarters in the region. "Children from Kolofata were conscripted, drugged, manipulated and sent against their own city", the policeman added after an operation of the Islamist group targeting

Deputy Prime Minister Amadou Ali. Despite "the ease with which the perpetrators were moving in the town" the mission did not achieve its main goal due to the fact, that Ali was absent at the time. Later, the Deputy PM warned that he was in possession of a list of 450 people recruited by Boko Haram.

As the jihadist movement seems to flourish on the northeast the Nigerian army struggles to provide sufficient equipment. A group of soldiers requesting anonymity told BBC that they are not willing to continue fighting until they receive better arms. "The Nigerian army is not ready to fight Boko Haram", one of the mutineers further



noted. The terror group's style of warfare may also reveal a problem for Nigerian troops. "Boko Haram are inside the bush, everywhere", a soldier commented.

A general in the army responded to the mutiny by pointing at the role of cowardice in times of war; "any mutineers would be punished", he said.

“Boko Haram are inside the bush, everywhere – a soldier commented”



One-year-old Koursia Mahamadou whose parents lost their living because of Boko Haram's activity. Photo: GSK [Flickr]

Increasing external debt?

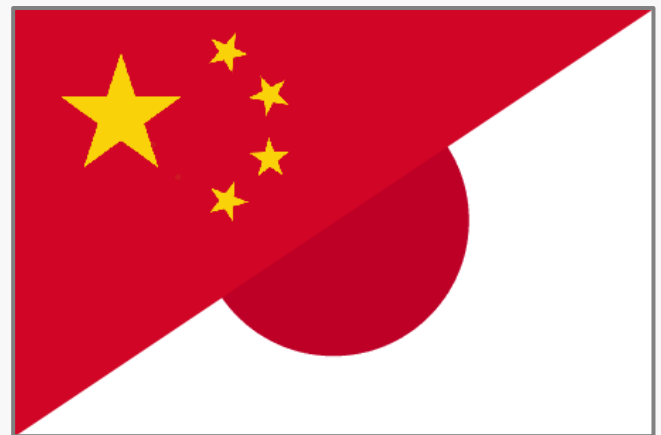
Nigeria's external debt has risen substantially, but Director General of the Debt Management Office, Dr. Abraham Nwankwo noted, that although there has been a massive increase in its amount, it is still sustainable since it has not surpassed the 12.51% of the Gross Domestic Product. "The sovereign debt is doing well", he added. The Director General stated this does not mean that Nigeria can afford to borrow money without caution.



Sino-Japanese conflict: a threat to status quo or just a manifestation of power?

As far as history is concerned, the People's Republic of China has lost the First Sino-Japanese War and therefore accepted the Japanese rule of the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands. More than a century later, as PRC's power potential has significantly increased compared to Japan's the Xi Jinping Administration might seek to take revenge. Due to the location of the archipelago it is clear, that the state in charge of it enjoys economic, trade and naval advantage. The question in the title shall not and cannot be answered without the consultation and analysis of the position of both sides.

In November, 2013 China declared the creation of an Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ) overlapping that of Japan's and covering the disputed islands, which would require all aircraft entering the zone to file a flight plan and submit radio frequency or transponder information. Chinese officials asserted, that they see Tokyo as a troublemaker looking for opportunity and reason to start rearming Japan. While PRC presents various, mainly historical evidence to support their claims for the islands it remains undoubted, that time actually lapses in their favour. Until



Chinese-Japanese mixed flag. Picture: Simeon Scott

their economic, naval and military advantages and development clearly surpass Japan's it is unequivocally not in their interest to find an immediate solution for the problem.

On the other side of the coin, Tokyo massively relies on US support in order to tackle what they perceive as "PRC's wish to revive its hegemonic Middle Kingdom status in the region". The „Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between the United States and Japan" includes the Diaoyu/Senkaku region, which means that the defence of the islands would require the United States to come to Japan's aid. The Foreign Ministry claims the disputed territory to be under Japanese



administration in the means of patrol and law enforcement, taxes and the management as state-owned land; they have also pointed out many historical evidences to assist their position. Despite China's reluctance to resolve the issue, Tokyo has shown to be eager to find a solution in the near future. November's Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) provide an opportunity to settle tensions.

It is a global interest that both parties prioritise diplomatic initiatives over military aggression.

The fragile relationship of the opposing states shall be handled with extreme care. In my personal opinion the eruption of an armed conflict is highly unlikely due to the even increasing attention and presence of the international community.



Location of the disputes Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands. Map: Wikimedia Commons



The Philippines is eager to settle territorial disputes in South China Sea

Territorial disputes in South China Sea have been an ongoing issue for years. Brunei, the People's Republic of China, Taiwan, Malaysia, the Philippines and Vietnam all have both island and maritime claims in the region. States are interested in the area due to its richness in crude oil, natural gas and want to acquire fishing territories. Tension between the countries intensified in the last couple of month resulting in a

she calls on China to end all provocative acts in South China Sea. Wang Yi replied with a statement explaining that there is no problem with the freedom of navigation in and over-flight above the region. As well as declaring her interest in working with ASEAN to resolve subject matters; to safeguard peace and stability. The Philippines is also seeking to end the territorial disputes in South China Sea through peaceful

“China claims more than 90% of the disputed territories although this is against international law”

conference on the topic. May 10th at the Asian Foreign Ministers' Meeting (AAM) members expressed their concerns over the disputes. The ministers are asking for a peaceful solution to the problem while the freedom of navigation in and over-flight above the South China Sea can be solved. The United States also expressed her concern on the issue, but Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi refused US' call on the topic of disputes. The US is following the issue with alarm and issued a call where

methods, as she filed a plea to the United Nations. She declared that China claims more than 90% of the disputed territories although this is against international law. The Philippines came up with a three stage plan to resolve the issues and claims support by ASEAN and member countries. The first stage of the plan involves putting an end to all provocative acts. Secondly an existing mechanism for settling territorial disputes should be implemented and the final approach would involve settling the



territorial disputes by international arbitration. Philippines find arbitration a key element in solving the matter and hope territories will be divided on the basis of equality.

Although ASEAN might support the plan, China rejects it claiming that the Philippines is already jumping to the last step by filing the plea to the UN against China and calls for an immediate withdrawal of it. On the other hand Wang Yi is not against a solution but argue that it has to be a “well-intentioned proposal”.

Instead the Philippines suspect China with directing ships to Reed Bank in order to change the status quo. She reported that 2 survey ships were patrolling in the region, that were not just innocently exercising freedom of navigation. Reed Bank belongs

to the exclusive economic zone of the Philippines and is therefore the reason why they are alarmed about and are protesting against the presence of the ships. Manila describes an emerging pattern in China's presence in the area, which leads to the increase of tensions between the seven involved states.

The Philippines is also observing with alarm the militarization of facilities in Spratly Islands. The country's military forces took aerial pictures of the facilities, which were obtained by NHK. This indicates that China has been modernizing and adding military equipment to Spratly Islands in the last four years as well as building new facilities elsewhere. The Philippines ordered close monitoring of China's activities, hoping this will stop her from provocative acts.



The Spratly islands with the flags of their occupying states. Map: CIA



Teenager shot by police triggers protests in the US

Racial tension rises in Missouri while people protest #DontShoot



A sign during the Ferguson protests. Photo: Wikimedia Commons

On 9 August Michael Brown, an 18 year-old, unarmed teenager was fatally shot in Ferguson, Missouri by a police officer. The circumstances are still unclear but witnesses reported several gunshots were fired at Brown as his hands were raised following a dispute between the two. The incident triggered major protests in the town.

Media is still guessing how the fatal shooting of a young graduate happened while the differing versions of the incident by the police department and witnesses collide. Michael Brown was visiting her grandmother in Ferguson, when the tragedy took place. The circumstances are unclear as Jon Belmar, chief of the St. Louis County Police Department releases few

details trying to prevent prejudice. Many claim that a violent encounter preceded the shooting. Brown was walking on the street with a fellow youngster when one pushed back the officer. Other sources claim that Brown assaulted the policeman during a struggle hence the gunfire started. On the other hand witnesses reported that the boy did not stir up the violence and was placing his hands in the air as a sign of surrender when he was killed.

Only a few hours had to pass until protests started and had been going on for several nights with growing violence, intensity and anger. During the night of 9 August, after the incident few hundred citizens started to assemble in St Louis the predominantly



Mass on the 6th day of the protests. Photo: Wikimedia Commons



black suburb of Ferguson to mourn the death of Brown. By the next day peaceful protests turned violent and following the police chief's decision not to release the name of the police officer fatally injuring the teenager uprisings became brutal. People were chanting "no justice no peace" and Brown's stepfather protesting with a sign "Ferguson police just executed my unarmed son" while extra units of policeman were called to the scene to keep the demonstration under control. Several police cars were damaged, while they were forced to use tear gas and rubber bands against the demonstrators. Although Ferguson is the focal point of tensions deriving from racial situations in the US the death of Brown is not a unique case

in Ferguson or in the United States as a whole. According to statistics published by the Missouri Attorney General's Office Ferguson has always reached poor results on racial profiling. The town used to be populated mostly by white citizens but the ratio changed in the population while in the proportion of police officers it remained the same. 2013 statistics show that during random checks blacks are significantly more often stopped but are also searched and even arrested more times while white people are only stopped if they act suspicious. Ferguson is not a spectacular case in discrimination in the US, but as no database exists on the subject of innocent killings by officers the significance of the issue remains unclear.



Memorial placed during the protests. Photo: Jamelle Bouie



■ News in Brief

Domestic affairs affecting international relations

Spain's public debt rose beyond €1 trillion

■ Austerity measures, taxes spike and wage freezes implemented by the government of Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy were unable to decrease the public debt and overcome the consequences of the economic crisis of 2008. On August 14th, the Bank of Spain reported the debt had passed €1 trillion while the government expects it to reach 100% of GDP in spite of growth at 0.6% and low inflation. The unemployment rate continues to be as high as 25 percent.

German government to fight abuse of state's social system

■ On August 27, the German Government brought up the discussion of "legal issues and challenges" related to social benefits claims by EU immigrants. State Secretaries Committee reported that immigration from other EU member states to Germany has significantly increased during the previous years. And although the "freedom of movement is an essential part of European integration to which we are fully committed, we must not turn a blind eye to the problems it creates," said German Internal Affairs Minister Thomas de Maizière. Additional €25 million are expected to be paid to especially "hard hit" municipalities to raise federal contribution to residential costs; abuses of the freedom of movement are to be thoroughly discussed.

Newly elected Turkish president puts restrictions on media outlets

■ The congress of the ruling Justice and Development Party did not allow 12 media outlets to attend and broadcast their meeting. All of the restricted media outlets are associated with the Hizmet movement based on the teachings of Turkish Islamic scholar Fethullah Gülen. Such a decision was condemned by the Republican People's Party (CHP) Deputy Chairman, Progressive Journalists Association of Turkey (ÇGD), and the head of Reporters Without Borders (RSF) who strongly criticized the restrictions claiming that such actions are violating a constitutional right of freedom of expression; the promised "new Turkey" is not different from the "old" as banning of anti-governmental media is ongoing. Continuous censorship and the conditions for press freedom seem not to be getting any better with the new presidency.



First Muslim Prime Minister announced in the Central African Republic

■ At a time of ongoing efforts to end months-long sectarian violence in the Central African Republic, the country has announced the appointment of a Muslim Prime Minister for the first time since its independence from France in 1960. This is the first step towards a more inclusive government. Mahamat Kamoun is a former special advisor to interim president Catherine Samba-Panza and also served as Director-General of the Treasury under President Francois Bozize from 2003 to March 2013. Today one of his main challenges is to lead a transitional government and follow through such an unstable ceasefire signed in July.

Chinese police opened fire against protesters in Tibet

■ A dozen people were reported injured as Chinese police used force against Tibetans protesting the detention of a village leader Dema Wangdak in Sichuan province. Wangdak was detained after complaining against Chinese officials harassing Tibetan women during a cultural festival in the village. Aroused conflict led to communication lines cut off and the station of security forces within the village. Many people are reported to have run to the mountains. The International Campaign for Tibet describes the political climate within the region as “deeply oppressive” while the Kardze prefecture is known for a strong sense of Tibetan identity and nationalism.

“The International Campaign for Tibet describes the political climate within the region as deeply oppressive”

Brazil's economy falls into recession as elections are approaching

■ Brazil has fallen into recession, just a month before the general election. According to the most recent poll, President Dilma Rousseff would lose to a rival candidate, environmentalist Marina Silva, if October's election went to a second round. Marina Silva is an internationally-acclaimed environmental campaigner named as presidential candidate by the Brazilian Socialist Party.



■ News in Brief

Bilateral relations

Belgrade and Priština will continue the dialogue in September

■ The dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo will continue on September 4 “through informal consultations in the field of energy”. Among other matters of discussion with the working group are the agreement on integrated administrative crossing and poor implementation of the Brussels agreement. Belgrade underlined that the agreement implied the establishment of a community of Serb municipalities while Kosovo rejects the charges due to post-election crisis. Political analysts believe the Priština delegation will not be legitimate to talk in Brussels on September 4 as there are no established institutions that are able to carry on the negotiations.



Serbia and Kosovo. Map: Nicolay Sidorov

“Political analysts believe the Priština delegation will not be legitimate to talk”

China and Mongolia moving towards strategic partnership

■ Chinese President Xi Jinping concluded his visit to Mongolia with plans for closer ties with China's resource-rich neighbour. During Xi's visit, almost 30 trade agreements had been signed that would increase trade revenues to \$10 billion by 2020. Bilateral trade already increased the amount of government income from \$324 million in 2002 to \$6 billion in 2013. In 2012, however, Mongolia constrained requirements for foreign businesses in strategic sectors, such as minerals. The current visit, therefore, is a sign of China's great interest in Mongolia as a “comprehensive strategic partner”.



■ News in Brief

International relations

Kenya to host a summit on terrorism

■ After hosting the East Africa Police Chiefs Co-operation Organisation Annual General Meeting, Nairobi awaits for the Africa Union Peace and Security Council Summit on Terrorism where a number of Heads of State and Government from the continent would discuss security challenges and threat from Somalia's Al-Shabaab terrorist group. Earlier this month, US President Barack Obama also promised assistance in building the capacity of Kenya's security services to fight Al Shabaab as Nairobi and Mombasa become the worst hit by terrorist assaults. Meanwhile, the president of Kenya Uhuru Kenyatta calls upon East African region to work in solidarity to fight the regional terror threat.

Saudi Arabia donated \$100 million to the United Nations

■ The United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre (UNCCT) received a donation from Saudi Arabia to fight terrorism. Saudi Ambassador to the United States Adel al-Jubeir particularly emphasized that "The [UNCCT] is the only centre in the world that has the legitimacy to combat terrorism". Although the centre was established years ago, current donations from the US, Germany, the UK and the Saudi Arabia allow the functioning of it. The donation also was made in the light of the emerging regional threat represented by the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS).

US-Africa Summit to start in Washington, DC.

■ On August 4, the capital of the US welcomes the delegates from African Republic (Eritrea, Zimbabwe, Sudan, Central African Republic, Sierra Leone and Liberia are not participating) to discuss future economic development of the continent and funding for peacekeeping operations as well as reforms in national militaries to combat radical Islamists. "Investing in the Next Generation" Summit is aimed at revealing mutual interests in meeting the needs of young people: health care, education, and work place opportunities. The human rights group "Front Line Defenders" emphasized US determination to human rights and good governance, unlike recent Africa investment summits held by China, India, Japan and Russia.



Denmark and Germany are the winners of European integration

■ The research of the Prognos AG for the Bertelsmann Stiftung identified Germany and Denmark as the most integrated within the EU single market with the highest rates of GDP. While the average annual rise in income is attributed to deeper European integration, Denmark is reported to have the highest average annual rise in income with 500 euro per capita per annum and Germany ranks second with 450. Southern countries, however, show considerably lower rates - 80 euro per capita in Italy and 70 in both Spain and Greece. The study suggested that further measures should be taken to stimulate cross-border communication and service provision within the EU.

EU initiates a new €845 programme to help integrate African countries

■ The European Commission expressed their intention to fund projects in Africa for the amount of €845 to improve trade relations, election observation missions guided by the African Union, academic exchange programmes and projects to improve the control of migration and mobility within Africa and the EU. The major areas of funding are sustainable agriculture, environment, higher education, infrastructure, migration, information technology and research and innovation. The President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso, expressed his hope that the program would make the relations between Europe and Africa stronger.



A family in Calitzdorp, Western Africa. Photo: Herman Pieters

The number of Syrian refugees reached 3 million people

■ The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights reported the number of Syrian refugees reached the highest level – 3 million people left the country while 6.5 million Syrians remain displaced within the country, and more than 191,000 people were killed since the beginning of the civil war in 2011. The north of Syria remains the most emptying out region of the country.





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