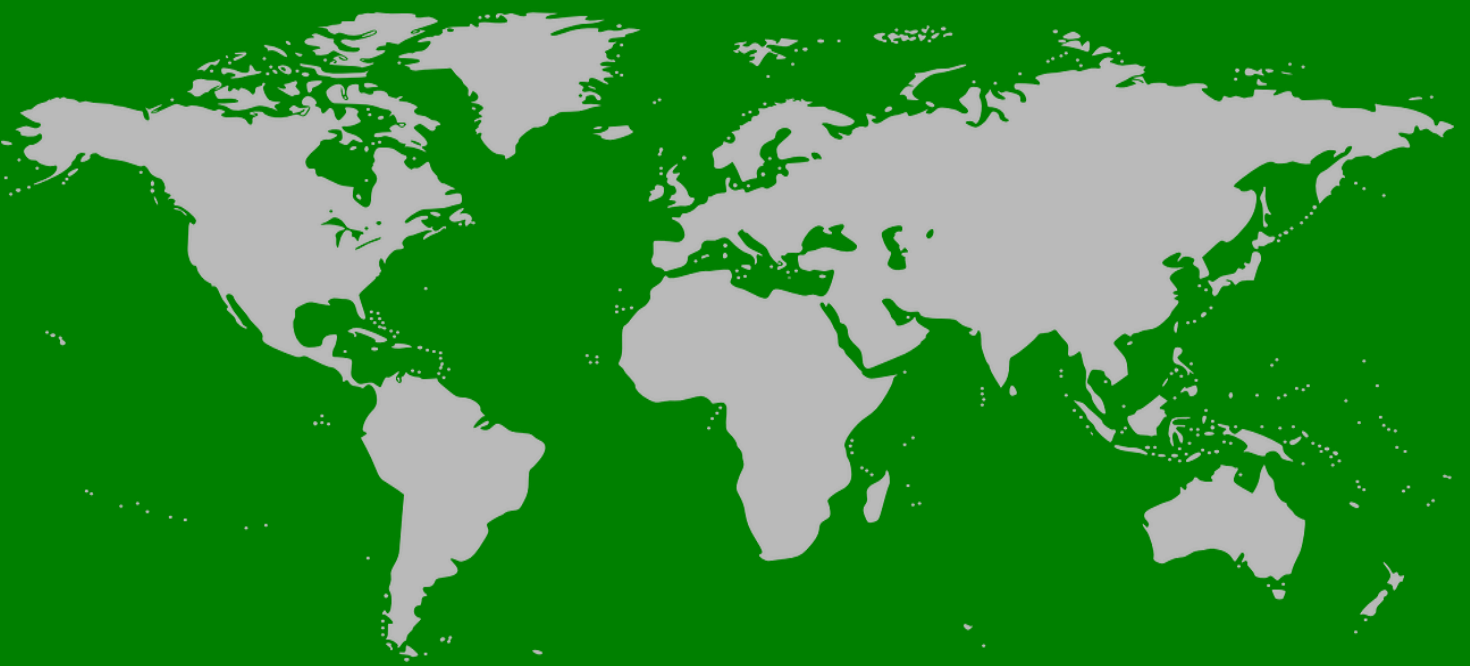


*“Discovering international relations
and contemporary global issues”*

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Antonio Guterres solidifies lead in race to become UN Secretary General

Dóra Vető ■

■ The members of the United Nations Security Council have voted for the third time on 29 August to choose the successor of UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon of South Korea. Antonio Guterres, the former Prime Minister of Portugal and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees still holds the lead out of the 11 contenders to take on the prestigious job.

In every round of casting their votes the 15-membered Security Council have three options to choose from when expressing their decision by secret ballot: to encourage, to discourage or to express no opinion on a candidate. The first round of the voting was held on 21 July, when Guterres received 12 encourage and three no opinion votes. At the second round, which was on 5 August, Guterres lost one of his encourage and one of his no opinion votes and gained two ballots expressing discourage. According to diplomats, Guterres received almost the same amount of votes in the third round, but the discouraging number rose by one, making it a total of three discouraging votes. A diplomat even emphasised that the former Portugal PM has stabilised his lead, adding that it is most likely that either Russia or one of its allies in the council has switched from a “no opinion” to an “anti-Guterres” one, since Russia has openly argued that the United Nations’ top job should go to an Eastern European country.

After the third round of voting Slovak Foreign Minister Miroslav Lajcak stands in second place with nine encourage, five discourage and one no opinion vote. In third place former Serbian Foreign Minister Vuk Jeremic and former Bulgarian Foreign Minister and Director-General of UNESCO, Irina Bokova are standing with seven encourage, five discourage and three no opinion votes. Civil society groups and nearly a third of the 193 United Nations member states have been favouring Bokova, since she would be the first woman taking on as the UN Secretary General. But after the results of the third round of voting the idea of a woman leading the international organisation seems to be fading. British UN Ambassador Matthew Rycroft has emphasised that “some favourites are emerging”, adding that he would encourage some of the candidates of dropping out since “the whole point of the straw polls is to gradually winnow down the field”.

A fourth vote is expected to take place in September in hope that a consensus forms around a winner by October. But since Russia’s disagreement and due to the power of veto of the 5 permanent members of the Security Council, it is likely that we will have to wait a bit longer for a decision on the successor of Ban Ki-moon who will be ending his second five-year term at the end of 2016.



Theresa May's first cabinet meeting on Brexit: economy and immigration control

Aldoreza Prandana ■

■ Britain was hit by a political earthquake this summer after they had a referendum to leave the European Union and received a majority vote in favour of the Leave campaigners. Soon after the referendum, David Cameron resigned from his position as the Prime Minister and the position then filled by Theresa May. The Brexit vote impacted Britain's economy right after the vote was casted. A survey data shows that the service sector, which accounts for 80% of the British economy, went significantly down after the referendum which reached its lowest level since 2009. As the pounds' rate is weakening as well, many business owners will have to raise prices in the upcoming months if the government cannot cushion the economy to make it more stable. The impact can also be seen within the manufacture and construction industries.

Despite the controversy of the vote and many people who voted to stay in the European Union showed their concerns, May respects the final result to leave the union and will start the exiting process as soon as possible, but not this year. She invited her cabinet for a cabinet meeting to discuss issues, such as economy and immigration control. May and her cabinet are

trying to find a way to "get the best deal for people at home and get the right deal for Brits abroad". A spokeswoman for May says that in order to get those deals, Britain may have to control the numbers of people who come to Britain from Europe but at the same time benefit the trade process of goods and services. Economists show their concerns about the long-term impact of Brexit for Britain. Nevertheless, Britain's economy has arisen since the post-Brexit shock last summer. The GDP has grown 0,6 % in the second quarter, despite the Brexit referendum during that time. This may not say a lot on how the Brexit impacts the economy in Britain, however the government has assured to be discipline in terms of fiscal and to cushion the impact, when it happens. Despite the growth of GDP during the second quarter, the economists' concerns are still present.

There are many positive and negative outcomes which will come Britain's way after the Brexit vote. However, May shows her commitment to respect the vote and tells the cabinet meeting that Britain will neither hold a second referendum nor attempting to sort of stay in the European Union "by the back door".



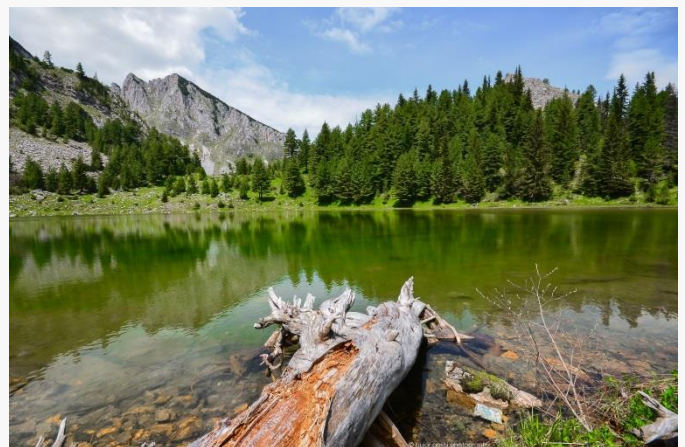
Kosovo-Montenegro border: the deal of contention

Roberta Maddalena ■

■ The time for Kosovo to get over its Yugoslavian past has not arrived yet. After the independence from Serbia in 2008, in these days the new Balkan country is facing a major crisis regarding its border with Montenegro.

After three years of negotiations, in August 2015 in Vienna Montenegro and Kosovo signed the border demarcation deal, agreeing to confirm the border set by the Yugoslav Constitution in 1974. The agreement will become effectively only after both countries have ratified it; but only Montenegro did it, while Kosovo is trying to as the deal is stirring protests. Two parties, Alliance for the Future of Kosovo and Vetevendosje, are opposing to this draft law because they believe that it is disadvantageous for Kosovo's people, especially for those living in the border's region. As a matter of fact, the concerned region is a mountain region, around 2000 metres above sea level, with woods, pasture lands and water, whose 8200 hectares will be lost by Kosovo if the law will be put into force. Since August 2015 up to now there were many protests, with grenade attacks as well, which have been increasing in the past weeks as the Parliament assemblies to vote.

Finally, on the 31st of August, Kosovo's Parliament decided to postpone the vote for the ratification of the border agreement (on the 1st of September) because the opposition parties said they will not take part in the vote. The Government also claimed that the agreement will be ratified when the time will be more appropriate. It seems that Kosovo's Government is not willing to renegotiate the agreement, because passing the law is also important in order to gain visa-free travel to European Union. Will Kosovo's people care about visa-free EU travel if they may lose their own land obtained after many years of war?



*Bjeshkët e Nemuna National Park near the Montenegrin border.
Photo: Gashi Bujar [Wikimedia Commons]*



Terrorist attacks in Turkey

Abdulhamid Gunda ■

■ The turmoil in Turkey continues as series of deadly bombings blasted different areas of the nation. The deadliest among them all occurred in a wedding ceremony in the province of Gaziantep, a city of more than 1.5 million in the south-eastern part of Turkey, near the Syrian border. As a major city at 60km off the Syrian border, it has been a hub for people running away from the war-torn Syria and of people fleeing the clash between the Turkey's government forces and the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK).

The wedding attack which has killed 51 and injured 69, of which 17 were in a critical condition, was believed to have been organised by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist group using a child of at least 12 to 14 years old. The Turkish authorities have investigated the incident and tried to clarify whether the suicide bomber detonated the suicide vest himself or was it detonated by someone else hiding in a distant.

The explosion happened at the near-end of the wedding party when attendees were on their feet for the fun-filled wedding dance. Of the total number of deaths, at least 22 were under

the age of 14 as per the confirmation of a Turkish official. The groom and the bride survived the attacks after suffering minor injuries.



*Kurdish YPG & PKK Fighters in Makhmour in 2014.
Photo: Kurdishstruggle [Flickr]*

Allegedly, the attack was targeted to the Kurdish people in attendance. If it is true that ISIS is behind it, this gives impression that they are avenging the central role played by the Kurdish militia in the recent ISIS defeats in northern Syria. There has been also opinion of an attempt



to trigger ethnic tensions in the city, being a home to many Syrian refugees.

This wedding attack has surpassed the number of casualties in the Istanbul's Ataturk Airport in June.



Rally against Turkish attacks against Kurds fighting Islamic State.
Photo: Takver [Elickr]

Moreover, there were also similar attacks in other parts of the country. In the city of Cizre also near Syrian border, at least 11 police officers were killed while about 80 were wounded in an 'explosive-laden truck' attack to a police checkpoint that is 50 meters away from the police station. Other incidents were reported in tow other cities. A bomb explosion near a police station in the city of Van has killed three people and wounded 73 including 20 officers. While in the city of Elazig, a huge car bombed a police headquarter which resulted to more than 200 people's injuries.

Authorities blamed these series of attacks to police stations to the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK).

The clash between the Turkey's security forces and the members of the PKK rebel group resumed last year after the end of a two-year ceasefire. Since then, more than 600 Turkish security personnel and thousands of militants have been reportedly killed. Several Human Rights groups added that hundreds of civilians have also been killed.

“the explosion happened at the near-end of the wedding party when attendees were on their feet for the fun-filled wedding dance”



Turkey invades Northern Syria

Nicolas Mählmann ■

■ The 24th of August may possibly have marked a turning point in the Syrian conflict as Turkish artillery, tanks and F16's started striking targets around Jarabulus in Northern Syria. Although the Turkish side claimed to taking action against ISIS, it is also being speculated the invasion is supposed to fight "terror groups" like the Kurdish rebel forces (YPG, PYD and PKK) and prohibit their struggle for independence.

At first the operation – dubbed Euphrates Shield, was driven by revenge against ISIS, which Ankara believes was behind the attack last weekend on a wedding in Gaziantep which killed over 50 people and Already a few hours after the start of the operation the Turkish army and pro-Turkish rebels proclaimed to have recaptured the town Jarabulus, the last major community ISIS had held on the Syrian-Turkish border with help of US air support. But Turkey's main concern was with the Kurds. By this operation Turkey was able to pursue its primary goal of stopping the advance of the Kurds, who are seeking to establish a contiguous territory stretching across all of northern Syria. Already by the first weekend after the invasion began, Turkish and allied rebel forces captured a rash of villages and towns that before were controlled by Kurdish militias and their allies, killing dozens of fighters

and civilians. Ankara seems to be eager to prevent an establishment of a Kurdish state in northern Syria by all costs. The events are consistent with the pattern that seems to govern the involvement of most powers active in Syria. Each party is fighting its own war: the Turks are interested in battling the Kurds. The Americans are only interested in defeating Islamic State. The Kurds are seeking to establish their own state. And the Russians are primarily intent on demonstrating to the world that they are once again a global power by arming Assad's forces. This new invasion in partnership with Syrian rebels is just the latest of the rapidly shifting alliances of convenience used by all to pursue their interests. Taken together, they have transformed this horrific war into a completely unpredictable battlefield. The proceeding of the NATO-state Turkey is indeed touchy as the USA are supporting the military alliance that is led by the Kurdish YPG in their struggle against ISIS. The latest developments have also facilitated rapprochement between the Turkish and Russian governments on the Syrian question as Russia seems to have abandoned the Kurds and because of the ice age between Erdogan and the West. In those regards the cards in the Syrian crisis have been reshuffled.



Counterterrorism operations against ISIS

Dóra Vető ■



ISIS member with flag. Photo: VOA [\[Wikimedia Commons\]](#)

■ The fight against the so-called Islamic State seems to be reaching a turning point as efforts made by the Western-led coalition and recent events show successful results. The Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, or ISIS (also known as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, or ISIL and Daesh) is believed to have emerged as a splinter group of the Afghan Al-Qaeda, but it was not until the events of the year of 2011, when the US troops officially withdrew from Iraq and when the Arab Spring has swept through the Middle East that it was able to strengthen in the region. The militant Sunni movement first appeared in Iraq, making its way to Syria and then to Libya, taking advantage of the political

mayhem, which has established a number of weak states all around the area. The self-proclaimed Islamic State, operating with a main aim of forming an autonomous caliphate has slowly made its way to overseas, carrying out attacks mostly in France, Belgium and Turkey, challenging international security and the position of some of the most powerful actors of the international system. Efforts by the US-led coalition and Russia did not seem to bring significant results in the fight against the terrorist group, but recent events show hope in overthrowing the so-called Islamic State.

It was reported on 30 August that the “most prominent and longest-serving leader” of ISIS, Abu Muhammad al-Adnani was successfully eliminated in Syria during an air strike attack carried out by the United States. It is believed that the air strikes were targeting a vehicle in which al-Adnani was traveling in the Syrian town of al-Bab, but it is unsure whether he was killed then or later. Al-Adnani was one of the last living senior members and the only other public face of the terrorist group besides the self-proclaimed caliph, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. Being the Islamic State’s spokesman and the head of



external operations, al-Adnani was both “the most visible member” of the group and the person in charge of overseas attacks. He was responsible for releasing propaganda videos and calling on “lone-wolves” to carry out attacks during Ramadan, while he was also linked to the Orlando nightclub shootings, the truck incident in Nice and the massive suicide bombing in Baghdad. According to Peter Cook, the Pentagon’s spokesman, al-Adnani was the “principal architect of ISIL’s external operations”. Cook also stated that the results of the air strikes are still being assessed, but highlighted that “al-Adnani’s removal from the battlefield would mark another significant blow to ISIL”.



*Abu Mohammed al-Adnani, Chief Spokesperson for the Islamic State.
Photo: Wikimedia Commons*

The death of Abu Muhammad al-Adnani was revealed the same day as United States Secretary of State John Kerry announced that the US will initiate talks with India and Afghanistan in the following month. The launch of the trilateral talks is scheduled to take place in September at the United Nations’ meetings in New York. Kerry emphasised that measures against the so-called Islamic State needs further improvement, and to do so he also urged Pakistan to “join the other nations in tackling terrorism”.

The day before Kerry’s announcement and the news about al-Adnani’s death, Libyan forces stated they successfully recaptured a residential neighbourhood from the Islamic State in central Sirte. After the United States began an air campaign on 1 August, Libyan forces gained some advantage against the terrorist group which they have been battling for the past three months. Following the victorious attempt aimed to liberate Sirte only one district stays under IS occupation in the South African country. Even though efforts made a successful turn in Libya, it is unsure whether it can be considered as a long-term victory. According to Mohamed Gnaidy, a military intelligence official in Misrata, important leaders managed to escape from Sirte and they are believed to be hiding in the desert. Official Gnaidy also said that it is feared that those who have successfully fled will probably try to regroup and continue operating on the margins of the same ideology as they did before. Just like the victory in Libya, Syria is also on good tracks to stabilise its situation, since it is believed a ceasefire will be achieved soon. As the United



States and Russia held talks in the last week of August a truce is likely to happen, but a final deal has yet to be reached. It is unsure what the final decision would be though, since the two countries are supporting opposite sides: Russia backing Bassar al-Assad, while the United States helps Syria's main opposition alliance and some of the rebels.

Counterterrorism operations also seem to be effective in the Iraqi city of Mosul. According to a statement given by the head of the US military's Central Command on 30 August "Iraq is on track to meet its objective of retaking the city of Mosul from IS later this year, should Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi choose to go forward as planned". Overtaking Mosul from the so-called Islamic State would mean a great achievement in the fight against the terrorist organisation, especially because the city can be seen as a symbol of the terrorist group, since its Grand Mosque functioned as the location from where Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi declared a "caliphate" in 2014. Despite overtaking Mosul is considered as a great success a number of uncertainty would follow, mainly concerning the issue of migration. According to the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) more than 200,000 Iraqis fled their homes since March. The Iraqi representative of UNHCR, Bruno Geddo forecasted that up to a million more people



*US Army soldiers patrol the streets of Mosul, January 2005.
Photo: Specialist Adam Sanders, United States Army [Wikimedia Commons]*

could be driven from their homes. He pointed out that the displacement rate would reach a high that has not been seen globally for many years. To prepare for such high rate there are initiatives aimed at "building new camps and pre-positioning emergency relief kits" so people would get the quickest and most effective assistance if needed. But it is very much feared that despite of such measures not all families will receive help due to the lack of time to prepare. According to officials the final assault on Mosul is weeks away. Even the Prime Minister of Iraq stated that "Mosul will be liberated in 2016" and the fall of the city would mark the effective defeat of the so-called Islamic State in Iraq.

“the self-proclaimed Islamic State, operating with a main aim of forming an autonomous caliphate has slowly made its way to overseas”



US pushes for new Yemen peace initiative

Vera Tóth ■

■ The Arab world's poorest country, Yemen is facing a civil war since 2015, which turned into an international war and a catastrophic humanitarian crisis. The conflict broke out between a group of Shia Houthi rebels and the government under President Abdel Rabbo Mansour Hadi. The Houthi rebels, in an alliance with troops loyal to former President Ali Abdullah Saleh overtook the capital, Sanaa and other parts of the country in September 2014. Saudi Arabia-led coalition began carrying out an air campaign against the rebels in March 2015, in order to defeat the rebels and defend the internationally recognised government of President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi. Since then, more than 10,000 people have been killed. According to the United Nations more than 80% of the population needs humanitarian aid, while around 3 million of people were obliged to leave their homes.

In August a huge demonstration took place in the capital Sanaa in order to support the Houthi rebels and their allies, who are currently controlling the city. Political analyst Hisham al-Omeisy reported to the BBC that around 100,000 people participated in the rally. Not long after, the Saudi Arabia-led coalition's planes dropped bombs to scare the crowd, but the people started shooting into the sky. The presidential palace and other areas were hit by

the coalition airstrike's, but the number of victims is unknown. The attack on Saudi territory re began in August and according to Saudi authorities, 29 civilians were killed, and around 300 people were injured in Najran, a city in southwestern Saudi Arabia near the border with Yemen. However, these numbers are a lot smaller than the number of civilian killed by the coalition air strikes; therefore indeed the Saudi-led collation is often criticised. It is important to mention that in August Doctors Without Borders started to withdraw staff one of its buildings was attacked by coalition airstrike, leaving 19 dead. At the beginning of August the UN mediated peace talks in Kuwait were suspended due to the lack of progress. The UN human rights chief, Zeid Ra'ad al-Hussein's Geneva office released a report on abuses of both sides in the conflict. He called for an international investigation of rights



Yemeni capital Sanaa after airstrikes, 9 October 2015.
Photo: Almgadad Mojalli/VOA [Wikimedia Commons]



abuses and violence. Zeid's office said he "called on the international community to establish an international, independent body to carry out comprehensive investigations in Yemen".

In the second part of August US Secretary of State John Kerry, the UN and the Gulf Arab states agreed on a plan to restart the peace talks. They agreed to offer Houthi rebels participation in a unity government to end 18-month conflict. However, John Kerry said that Houthis must leave the capital and they must

order to move forward the renewed peace talks. Overall, the Yemen conflict is very complex as not only local, but regional and international powers are confronted. Yemen's war is also considered to be a proxy war between Sunni Saudi Arabia and Shia Iran. Also, Al-Qaeda and ISIL were able to expand in the country as a result of the chaos. ISIL achieved its first attack in Yemen in March 2015, when more than 140 people were killed in suicide bombings in two Sanaa mosques. The humanitarian crisis must be



An airstrike in Sana'a on 11 May 2015. Photo: Ibrahim Qasim [Wikimedia Commons]

transfer their heavy weapons to a third party. Kerry also announced that the restoration of stability in Yemen is necessary to reduce the suffering of civilians and to avoid that armed groups such as al-Qaeda and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) take advantage of the civil war. Kerry also said that the UN Special Envoy for Yemen, Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed would begin the consultation with the sides in

resolved; even though due to major obstacles, it is very difficult for aid organisations distribute food and medicine, therefore the restoration of stability in Yemen is essential. Security would be better served in Yemen if the key players, such as the US, the UN and the Gulf Arab states would cooperate with the Yemeni concerned parties and work hand in hand in solving problems.



Nigeria claims Boko Haram leader “fatally wounded” in air raid

Dóra Vető ■

■ It was announced on 23 August that the Nigerian military carried out an air raid in the Sambisa Forest near the Cameroon border on 19 August while militants of Boko Haram were performing Friday prayers. According to the military “a number of senior leaders of the ruthless Boko Haram terrorist group” have been successfully eliminated, including three commanders, Abubakar Mubi, Malam Nuhu and Malam Hammam. The Nigerian government stated that the air raid was “unprecedented and spectacular” in which not only the mentioned commanders were killed, but several others wounded as well. It was also stated by Colonel Sani Kukasheka Usman, the Nigerian military’s spokesman that the group’s well-known leader, so-called “Abubakar Shekau” has been “fatally wounded”, although this still needs confirmation, especially because news concerning his death has been previously announced on several occasions.

Shekau has led Boko Haram since 2009, although the terrorist group has been recently linked to the so-called Islamic State, which has named an “alternative leader for a Boko Haram splinter group”, fracturing Shekau’s influence and the group as a whole. Boko Haram is based in the north-eastern state of Borno, where it has conducted a series of violent terror attacks in which thousands have lost their lives and

millions were forced to flee their homes. The group made international headlines two years ago when it kidnapped more than two hundred girls from a school in Chibok, which is considered “the most high-profile hostage taking to date by the group”. The Chibok incident launched a worldwide campaign on social media with #BringBackOurGirls. According to a statement released by Boko Haram earlier in August, some of the girls had been injured due to air strikes carried out by government forces and some others were forced to marry the fighters of the group. So far only one of the more than two hundred girls has been rescued from the grip of Boko Haram.

The announcement of the air raid came the same day as United States Secretary of State John Kerry arrived in Nigeria. Kerry met with President Muhammadu Buhari to discuss many issues, including counterterrorism efforts, the Nigerian economy and the fight against corruption and human rights issues. Kerry did not address the air strike reports though, but “did applaud Nigeria’s efforts and successes in reclaiming some of its territory” which has been held by Boko Haram. Kerry has also urged the government of Nigeria to “prioritise employment and education for young people” so they would not join groups such as Boko Haram.



Feyisa Lilesa: the hero of Rio 2016 and of Oromo people

Roberta Maddalena ■

■ It is known that Olympics Games are the games of peace, and so neither protests nor political statements are welcomed. Especially the last games held in Rio were even more impressive as a refugee team were admitted to race. However, this rule was not respected by Feyisa Lilesa, an Ethiopian runner who made a sign of protest at the arrival of men's marathon. The 26-years old runner, who won the silver medal, at the arrival was holding his arms over his head and wrist crossed in sign of protest. The



Feyisa Lilesa in Rio 2016.
Photo: Jeso Carneiro [Flickr]

gesture was in supporting the Oromo tribe, which he is part of, the biggest minority group in Ethiopia which is facing attacks by the Government. The aim of the athlete was to let the world know what it is happening between Oromo people and the Ethiopian Government, and to obtain some help. As a matter of fact, Lilesa in an interview after the end of the marathon claimed: "Oromo is my tribe... Oromo people now protest for what is right, for peace, for a place. Maybe I move to another country... you get the freedom if you support only the government. You cannot work without that". The Olympics' regulation demands sanctions to those athletes making politic statements during the games, but in Lilesa's case there were no sanctions requested by sport authorities as he could not face them, moreover he also asked for asylum.

Ethiopia is one of the poorest countries in the world, the Government asked food aid for 15 million people after 2015 drought. Meanwhile, it



is also a country with an intensive ongoing process of industrialisation, for this reason the Government in 2014 set out the Addis Ababa Integrated Master Plan. The Plan will incorporate towns, cities and farm villages of Oromia Region into the federal capital Addis Ababa in order to sale the land to domestic and foreign investors for economic development. As a consequences, many farmers of Oromia Region will lose their land and they will be displaced. Hence, since May 2014 Oromo's people began to peacefully protest against this scheme by demanding to halt the implementation of the plan, but Government's response has been brutal and barbaric, so that many are referring to these actions as genocide against Oromos. According to the latest figures published by some Human Rights Associations, 125 Oromo civilians were killed, more than 4500 were imprisoned, 1500 wounded and 800 were simply disappeared.

Oromo people's manifestations are not new, in fact in the past years they did many non-violent demonstrations for their rights, such as that of university students in 2014 against the plan or in 2001 for academic freedom. As rallies are non-violent, as well as the Government's reaction has been brutal. According to Amnesty International, between 2011 and 2014 at least 5000 Oromos have been arrested, detained without charge or trial and they were mistreated in prison; many others, instead, were directly killed during demonstrations. The irony is that in Ethiopia's Constitution there is the right to protest and also the right to express their own culture for minorities. As a matter of fact, it

seems that the state repression is not only to put into action the Master Plan, but against Oromo minority in general as it is seen as a possible opponent to the Government. Even expression of their culture and heritage has been read as a form of dissidence, and Oromo singers, writers and poets were arrested on charges of criticising the government. The latter, on its side, seems to be very good in averting complaining and any damages to itself, with or without using force - as it is one of the most reliable partner of western countries. The images of Lilesa's gesture, in fact, were not broadcasted in the country.

Even if the event of Olympic games tries to pretend that for about twenty days all world is in peace and everybody are brothers and sisters, sometimes public events are the only chance to open people's eyes to let them know that not everyone lives in peace and can enjoy watching the Olympics. Feyisa Lylesa got this chance. The hope is that he will not be remembered as the hero of Rio 2016 to watch again and again on YouTube, but the hero who helped its population to get the freedom.



Oromo Liberation Front rebels in 2006. Photo: Jonathan Alpeyrie [Wikimedia Commons]



North Korean top official executed, two other were punished

Abdulhamid Gunda ■

■ An execution of a top North Korean official has surfaced on some media outlets. Kim Yong Jin, a top education official was reportedly put to death by a firing squad. The news was confirmed by the Unification Ministry spokesman of South Korea, Jeong Joon Hee, in a press conference.

The vice premier of education was allegedly executed based on grounds as “anti-party, anti-revolutionary agitator”. He was also reported to have been noted of behaving disrespectfully in a session of North Korea’s parliament. Officials have claimed that he has underwent ‘interrogation’ which revealed his other “crimes” that eventually resulted to his execution to death.

Other “unverified reports” say that other two top officials has escaped execution but were banished to serve respective punishments for their committing offensive acts against the dictator regime.

The head of North Korea’s United Front Department (UFD), Kim Yong Chol, was forcefully sent to a “revolutionary punishment” at a rural

farm between mid-July and mid-August. The 71 year old Kim was accused of abuse of power added to his offense of “an overbearing manner and forceful force to strengthening authority into the party’s United Front Department” a South Korean official reported. The UFD is the government which tackles policies and dialogues with South Korea.

Another senior official, Choe Hwi of the Propaganda and Agitation Department of the Worker’s Party has been reportedly undergoing “revolutionary re-education” in a remote countryside since late May.

These reports are unofficial as confirming officials’ removal from their respective posts can only be possible usually when a new name for the same post is announced in the state media. However, officials from South Korean claimed that the current leader of North Korea is more authoritative compared to his predecessors. Hence, execution of top officials who appeared as threats to his hold on power is expected of the authoritarian leader.



The Philippines' war on drugs

Abdulhamid Gunda ■

■ The Philippine government is currently in a big battle against illegal drugs, particularly methamphetamine, popularly known in the country as “Shabu”. The campaign started right after President Rodrigo Duterte, who promised to eradicate illegal drugs in the country within six-month period during his presidential campaigns, was sworn to power on June 30, 2016.

There were at least 2,446 total number of deaths related to drug-killings as per record tallied on the last day of August. Of this total number of deaths, only 929 were killed in government or police operations while an alarming number of 1,507 deaths were allegedly done by unknown attackers according to the police. Speaking before a congressional hearing budget committee, Philippine police chief Ronald “Bato” de la Rosa reported that at least 627 cases related to the unknown attacks have been filed by authorities.

It seems like the President is being true to his words and is seizing the momentum as he

proudly confirmed that around 700,000 of the three million drug dependents in the country have already surrendered to authorities.

However, several human rights groups that monitor the ongoing war on drugs have drawn sharp criticisms and accused the president of the Philippines of “steamrolling the rule of law”. In response to the “Extrajudicial Killings” allegation, the Philippine police chief said that drug suspects were killed because of resisting arrest. Furthermore, expressing his strong support to the government’s policy, the Philippine Justice Secretary Vitaliano Aguirre was quoted saying, “If you’re in the Philippines, you will choose to kill these drug lords,” and he added that, “Desperate times call for desperate measures. So this is what the president is doing, and we support it.”

The Philippine senate has already started the investigation of the rising deaths toll of the drug-related killings. The investigation is led by Sen. Leila de Lima, the head of the Senate Justice Committee. In the initial hearing, witnesses who



were brought to the hearing narrated and testified about how the police arrested and gunned down their loved ones.

In her opening statement, the lady senator voiced out her concern about the number of killings which seemed to have been carried out by vigilantes instead of the legal means by the Philippine police. “We want to know the truth behind the killings and violence. What really happened and why does this continue to happen?” de Lima said in Filipino. “I’m not saying the killings and the use of lethal force have no legal basis, but too many have been killed for us to not be suspicious and to not question whether the rules of engagement are being followed.”

De Lima continued saying that she does not imply that the death squads act under the Duterte administration. She rather reiterated that an investigation is aimed to determine whether the vigilante killings are organised by groups from or outside the government. “As I have said, my concern does not only revolve around the growing tally of killings reported by the Philippine National Police,” de Lima said. “What is particularly worrisome is that the campaign against drugs seems to be an excuse for some — may I just emphasise, some — law enforcers and other vigilantes to commit murder with impunity.”

To several of her colleagues in the senate who pushed back, claiming the investigation as premature, Sen. Delima has replied: “What’s the threshold? Shall we wait for a thousand to be killed, or 10,000 or 100,000, before doing something?”

But, how bad is the Philippine drug problem? Based on the UNODC data, the highest recorded figure of amphetamine use, expressed as a percentage of the aged 15 to 64 population, in the Philippines is 2.35. It may be high but its US equivalent which is 2.20, and the world’s real amphetamine crisis is accordingly among Australian males with the prevalence figure of 2.90. As for opioid use, the Philippine prevalence rate is just 0.05 as compared to 3.30 and 5.41 in Australia and the US respectively. For cocaine, the Philippine figure is only 0.03 while Australia has 2.40 and both the UK and the US have 2.10 prevalence figure.



*Duterte presents a chart illustrating the drug trade network of high level drug syndicates in the Philippines during a press conference at the Malacañang Palace on July 7, 2016.
Photo: King Rodriguez [Wikimedia Commons]*

Whether the Philippine government will be successful against its fight against illegal drugs or not is a matter of uncertainty. What is certain is that based on his statements, fight on drugs will continue until the last day of his term. “We will not stop until the last drug lord ... and the last pusher have surrendered or are put either behind bars or below the ground, if they so wish,” and “This fight against drugs will continue to the last day of my term,” said Duterte.



Indonesians with Philippine passports caught in Manila

Abdulhamid Gunda ■

■ More than 170 hajj-bound Indonesians got apprehended before they could board their flight to Saudi Arabia.

They were supposed to join this year's pilgrimage in Mecca using Philippine passports. However, the Philippine Immigration Authority found out their real identities based on their inability to speak any Philippine language or dialect. They then admitted their real nationality adding that they have arrived in the country separately as tourists from Indonesia. The five Filipinos who were escorting these Indonesians were also apprehended.

Though they were illegally obtained, the passports are real and were allegedly provided by their Filipino escorts. The report shows that these Indonesians were charged \$6,000 to \$10,000 each for a slot under the quota intended by the Saudi government for the Filipino pilgrims.

Indonesian officials claimed that the hajj-bound Indonesians are "victims of a syndicate of irresponsible agents." Accordingly, this desperate move is a manifestation of the severity of the problem incurred upon the "limited haj quota and long queues."

With its population, Indonesia is among those countries that post high demands for haj travels and the queues take years. Moreover, the Saudi government had to cut haj quotas for each

country to give way for the renovation of Masjidil al-Haram. Hence, the quota for Indonesians was reduced "by 20 percent from 214,000 to 168,000 pilgrims" a year. However, Ledia Hanifa, a member of the Indonesian House of Representative, said the condition is still not an excuse to commit such crime.

The commissioner of Philippine Immigration Bureau has ordered filing of immigration charges against the Indonesians. The bureau has also coordinated with the Indonesian embassy to establish the suspects' identities before deportation and with the Department of Foreign Affairs and other agencies for the investigation of the fraudulent issuance of Philippine passports.

The incident has resulted to the suspension of the issuance of Hajj Passport, a special travel document issued to pilgrims to Mecca with the barest minimum requirements for identification—the required proofs of Philippine citizenship, to Filipino pilgrims. Secretary Perfecto Yasay Jr of the Foreign Affairs said that the use of this travel document has been abused. Thus, he is seeking the suspension of the said passport "on a permanent basis" through legislation.

Hajj, an Islamic pilgrimage to Mecca, is the fifth of the five-pillars of Islam. It is mandatory to all Muslims who possess all the required pre-requisites to performing the pilgrimage.



Australia to close refugee detention centre

Dóra Vető ■

■ It was announced on 17 August by the government of Papua New Guinea that the controversial offshore detention centre for migrants on Manus Island will be shut down after previous efforts made in April when the Supreme Court ruled it as unconstitutional. According to a statement posted on Facebook by Papua New Guinea Prime Minister Peter O’Neill “both PNG and Australia are in agreement” that the centre needs to be closed, though a timeline has not yet been set.

The Manus Detention Centre is on PNG’s fifth largest island and it is Australia’s first detention centre for asylum seekers which was built in 2001. Its other operational offshore camps are based in Nauru and the Christmas Islands. The camp has temporarily closed in 2008, but the offshore processing resumed in 2012. It has been housing asylum seekers ever since. According to Australian law, refugees arriving to the country by boat will be sent to one of the offshore centres in small Pacific island nations such as Nauru or Manus. The refugees would never be eligible to settle in Australia, therefore the closing of the detention centre on Manus would leave the fate of 800 refugees unclear.

The camps have been highly criticised by the United Nations and a number of human rights groups, such as Amnesty International. In the beginning of August, The Guardian newspaper released thousands of leaked documents, which

are detailing reports of sexual assaults, child abuse and self-harm attempts at the Nauru centre. After the documents were leaked Amnesty International accused Australia of a “mass cover up”. Despite the reports Australia’s leaders still defend the policy as “a humanitarian way to stop people drowning at sea”. According to the Australian government’s statistics “at least 1200 people lost their lives between 2007 and 2013 trying to make the journey over water”.

The announcement of closing the centre on Manus Island came less than a day after more than a hundred former and current staff members at Australia’s offshore detention camps called for all refugees to be moved immediately, saying “children’s lives are being destroyed”. But Australian Immigration Minister Peter Dutton said refugees still would not be settled in Australia, since “it has been a longstanding position of the government with PNG to close Manus and support those people as they transition into PNG or return to their country of origin.” The initiative to shut down the detention centre on Manus Island can be considered as a positive step towards solving the case of the endangered children and adults living there, but measures still must be taken in the case of the Nauru centre since it still remains open and there is no scheduled talks between Australia and PNG to discuss the fate of those who are forced to stay there.



First commercial flight between United States and Cuba

Annalisa Baldassarri ■

■ After a long period of secret negotiations, on December 2014 the announcement of the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between the two historical enemies of the Cold War, United States and Cuba, was formalised. Within this framework, another meaningful step toward the normalisation of relations has been recently taken with the first commercial flight between US and Cuba since 1961, which took off from Florida on August 31, 2016. The re-opening of airlines between the countries follows the one of

cruise ships, inaugurated during last spring with the departure for a journey from Miami to Havana, as well as, Barak Obama's arrival to Cuba as the first American president to visit the isolated island since 1928.

JetBlue flight 387 from Fort Lauderdale to Santa Clara makes the start of a process of establishing regular flights in the longer term. Nine other US airlines will soon follow with their own routes and the process should lead to up to 110 flights per day from throughout the US to Cuban cities, including capital city Havana. As reported by American daily newspaper USA Today, JetBlue CEO Robin Hayes has expressed the intention of growing their service in Cuba in the years to come, saying that this is just the beginning. From the other part, José Ramón Cabañas, the Cuban ambassador to the US, has recalled the long months of negotiations, between US transportation and security officials and their Cuban counterparts, that the circumstances have required in order to achieve the outcome.



Barack Obama and Raúl Castro uring the Summit of the Americas in 2015.
Photo: Pete Souza [White House]



Hence, he highlighted the day as “another historic day”.

The establishment of regular flights will, finally, give Cuban exiles the opportunity to travel back to their origin land. Different tales have been gathered, among passengers of JetBlue flight 387, of people grabbing the chance to return to their homeland. There are those who decided to travel to meet relatives after several years, those who felt the need to rediscover origins and to rebound with their culture, or even those with the will to fulfil the dream to get married in the little church, they remember as close to their home city.

Despite Obama’s commitment in renewing diplomatic relations and the purpose of putting an end to decades of isolation between communist Cuba and the United States, the economic embargo still remains to be lifted, because of the opposition of Republicans, who hold the majority in the Congress. A circumstance which implies the maintenance of restrictions on American citizens for whom it will be still forbidden visiting Cuba as tourists. This means that old provisions still need to be fulfilled; American citizens booking tickets to travel to the Caribbean island have to fit one of



A JetBlue Airbus A320, “Whole Lotta Blue” (N594JB) at Salt Lake City International Airport.
Photo: Aaron Gustafson [Wikimedia Commons]

the 12 categories approved by the US government, including travel for religious, cultural, educational or business reasons.

In an interview with The Guardian, US Transport Secretary, Anthony Foxx spoke about Obama’s administration by witnessing its continuous commitment in working hard pursuing the aim of bringing down all the barriers remained left. He addressed: “today is one of the most tangible examples of the president’s vision for restored diplomatic relations with Cuba. This is part of a larger objective we have right now to really nudge Cuba towards progress in the 21st century, economically, politically and on so many other fronts.”

“the process should lead to up to 110 flights per day from throughout the US to Cuban cities”



Britain's new approach over Falklands' issue

Annalisa Baldassarri ■

■ British Prime Minister Theresa May has made a first step towards a long-awaited normalisation of relations between the UK and Argentina. In her first contact with Argentinian President Mauricio Macri she expressed the intent to settle in order to find a solution for past issue over Falkland Islands. In this regard May's hope is to finally enter into a dialogue with Argentina which could result in a relaxation of tensions in an "atmosphere of mutual respect."

London and Buenos Aires' relations have been critical during the past decades, since Argentina claims sovereignty over the South Atlantic Islands, which refers to with the name of Las Malvinas. In 1982, the Argentinian invasion of the Falkland territories lead to the outbreak of a military conflict between the two countries, as an attempt to establish that sovereignty Argentina is still claiming. Britain won the war.

Theresa May has written a letter to President Macri through which she calls for negotiations. Part of the proposed dialogue will include new flights between the Falkland Islands and third countries in the region. Currently, we see a situation in which most air links to the Falkland are being banned by Argentina and the only Chilean company Latam operates a flight from Santiago to the Atlantic Islands one day per week, via Punta Arenas in southern Chile. The same flight, once a month, stops in Rio Gallegos in Argentina. Increasing the number of flights to the British-run territory is not the only proposal put forward

by Prime Minister May in the above-mentioned letter. Another aim would be the removal of restrictions on hydrocarbon exploitation, which Argentina's former leftwing government has imposed in the waters around Falklands. The UK has continually asked for those measures to be lift. May's prevision on the resolution of the matters speaks about more "fruitful" relations between the UK and Argentina as a result.

Argentina's foreign minister, Susana Malcorra responded to Theresa May's letter, stating that British proposals would be examined and taken into consideration by President Macri. In the aside reported by Spanish daily newspaper El País, Malcorra firmly said: "We believe it is very important to reestablish dialogue at the highest level between our two countries, as President Macri and Prime Minister David Cameron did, because we continue to believe, as we have said all along, that the links between Argentina and the United Kingdom are an important part of our presence in the world. We have an issue with the United Kingdom over the Falkland Islands, so without denying its existence, we can work on many other things while we gradually advance toward a resolution of this issue." Since he came into office in December, Mauricio Macri has expressed his will to strengthen and improve Argentina's ties with Britain and his commitment in ending the confrontational approach which used to characterise former Cristina Fernández's administration.



FARC and Bogota announced peace deal

Roberta Maddalena ■

■ After decades of war, the peace between FRC and Colombian Government is becoming true.

On the 24th of August 2016 in Havana (Cuba) the Colombian rebel group, FARC, and the Government signed a peace deal. It is the final deal after four years of negotiations started by the Colombian President Santos, which was preceded by ceasefire agreement last June and it will be finalised by a referendum in October. It is the “beginning of the end of the suffering, pain and tragedy of war”, as the president said, after more than 50 years of war in which about 220 thousand people died, about 25 thousand displaced and more than 10 thousand were victims of land-mines.

FARC is the Spanish acronym for Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia which is a Marxist guerrilla group born in 1966 to fight against Government in demanding more rights and especially the redistribution of the land to farmers. To achieve their goals FARC has been making kidnapping, armed attacks, hiding in the

forest, sexual harassment, and recently it has been dealing with drug trade as well. The response of Bogota during these years of terror was exclusively combating them through soldiers. However, when President Santos was elected he immediately claimed his intention of reaching a peace deal with FARC to end the war and work together for the sake of Colombia and its people. Therefore, in 2012 in Cuba negotiations were started until the recent official announcement. The rebel group, for the first time, recognised some of their violations against human rights and they declared to be ready to cooperate with the Government to bring peace and a new era of development.

The path toward the peace is still long. It took 52 years to get this historical agreement and it still have to be accepted by the people with a referendum in October; in the meantime many contradictions have to be tackled in the country and the consequences of the war are too recent to not influence the new process of peace.



■ News in Brief

Domestic affairs affecting international relations

Nicolas Sarkozy will have a rematch with Francois Hollande in the upcoming presidential election

■ Former President of France, Nicolas Sarkozy, announces that he will run again as a presidential candidate for the 2017's election. In 2012 he left the office after a five-year term with a taste of unpopularity. As his plan to run for president starts, he highlights major challenges for France in the upcoming years, including strengthening respect for "French identity", restoring lost competitiveness and enforcing state authority. In his attempt to once again occupy the leadership position in France, Sarkozy may face a rematch with the current President of France, Francois Hollande, who is running for his second term. However, polls show that many French people do not want neither men to lead the country for the second time. The unpopularity problem will be the biggest problem for both Sarkozy and Hollande in the upcoming election.

Burkini: a new threat to France's security?

■ The country of principles of liberté, égalité, fraternité seems to have forgotten what freedom and equality means because of fear of ISIS attacks. Since the first attack in Paris in November 2015 France has always been criticised for its emergency state's laws, and the last one has come out this August. The cities of

Cannes, Villeneuve-Loubet, Nice on the southern coast and Sisco in Corsica banned the use of burkini, the swimsuit dressed by Muslim women, because it covers the entire body and it may be a threat to security. The only thing to be threatened here seems to be the freedom of these women to enjoy summer, sandy beaches and sea in respect of their religious principles (regardless the ethical question about the role of women in Islam). As a matter of fact, the UN rights office called France for repealing the ban, which was suspended by the France's highest administrative court on the 26th of August because it breached fundamental freedoms. The coexistence of bikini and burkini is also a way to fight ISIS.

Risk of facing a third election, Spain is still without a stable government

■ Despite having the economy back on track, arising numbers in tourism, and declining in unemployment rate, Spain is still struggling to form a stable government. After having two elections which resulted into a country with no government for around a year, Spain is facing its third election this year to try creating a government once again. The two parties with the biggest share of vote have been discussing to form a government since seven months ago with no result. Mariano Rajoy, the current temporary President of Spain who was invited by



the King of Spain to build a minority government, have been in an endless discussion with the Socialist Party leader, Pedro Sanchez to create a grand coalition. However, if the coalition is not happening, the chance of having a third election by the end of this year seems plausible. In response to that, many Spaniards hope not to have to go through another election and have the political parties to form a coalition and form a government as soon as possible.

Hungary will build a second border-wall as a preventive action

■ After building a 500km long wire fence in the borders with Serbia and Croatia, Hungary is planning to add more fence within the borders with Serbia. The government says that it is a preventive way from any major new wave of refugees that may come in the future. The Hungarian government foresee another massive wave of refugees in the future if the deal between the European Union and Turkey is not going as planned. This plan to build a second border-wall is also related to the quota system planned by the European Union to distribute the numbers of refugees into all member countries. Hungary has been questioning the quota system for a while and supposedly will have a referendum in October 2016 regarding the quota system. The Prime Minister of Hungary Viktor Orban, alongside other Visegrad countries' prime ministers, will meet with the German Chancellor Angela Merkel in Poland to discuss about the issues of migration and also Brexit, before having the referendum in October.

Violence after the election in Gabon

■ President Ali Bongo got re-elected in Gabon for the second time and it spurred violence and riot as the opposition believed the result was rigged. Three people were killed and over 1100 people were arrested during the second day of riot against the election result. Opposition challenger Jean Ping accused the elections commission of electoral fraud by inflating Bongo's score to let him win. The purpose of this is believed to allow Bongo and his family to extend their ruling in the oil-producing industry for another seven years. International assistance was requested. France, the United States and the European Union urged the authorities to release polling station results for greater transparency. However, the request was rejected by Bongo's spokesman. Bongo and his family have been benefitted from ruling the country since his father ruled Gabon for 42 years before he stepped in in 2009. However, the benefit only suffices to the member of Bongo's family and not to the people of Gabon.



Ali Bongo, President of Gabon in 2012. Photo: Foreign and Commonwealth Office [Flickr]



Riots erupted in Milwaukee

■ Following the killing of a 23-year old crime suspect, riots erupted in the city of Milwaukee Wisconsin for three consecutive nights between August 13th and 15th, resulting in several street blockades, gunfights, assaults and arsons with more than 40 arrests and leaving more than 10 persons, mostly officials, injured. The victim Sylville Smith, who already had a high criminal record, fled from a traffic control running on foot and armed with a stolen handgun. According to Sheriff David Clarke and the video of the officer's bodycam that showed that Smith had turned with a gun in his hand toward the



A Black Lives Matter protest. Photo: Nicholas Upton [Wikimedia Commons]

officer right before the officer shot him, the policeman acted correctly and conformable to law. Although both men, the victim as well as the shooter were African-American, hundreds of protesters, amongst others from the 'Black Lives Matter' movement and the 'Revolutionary Communist Party' yet felt entitled to gather in parts of the city, throwing stones and other objects on police forces, assaulting reporters and torching and looting civil and police cars, more than 6 businesses, numerous dumpsters as well as a gas station. The protesters even prevented firefighters and police officers from working by gunfire which caused the governor Scott Walker to activate the National Guard on standby. The Milwaukee riots together with numerous other recent incidents for example in Ferguson, Baltimore, Dallas and Baton Rouge are a sign for a massive decrease in race relations during the Obama administration.

Venezuela arrests opposition activists accused of plotting violence

■ Several opposition activists have been arrested in Venezuela for the accusation of plotting violence during an anti-government rally. The President of Venezuela Nicolas Maduro calls the rally as a plot to stir up violence and to stage a coup. However, the opposition leaders call the arrests as an intimidation tactic from the government and ask for the opposition sympathisers to march in the centre of Caracas to push for a referendum against Maduro. The tension between the Maduro's government and the opposition has lasted for months, aggravated by high inflation, product shortages and a severe



economic recession. The Popular Will opposition group's members have been arrested by the government before for the charges related to plotting violence against the government. However, the government argues that they are not political prisoners but dangerous criminals.

Bolivian minister killed

■ On 25 August, the Deputy Interior Minister of Bolivia, Rodolfo Illanes, was kidnapped by miners in Panduro, south of La Paz, and he was beaten to death. The murder is a desperate act of Bolivian miners which are striking after negotiations to change the legislation failed. Protesting miners, which now work in cooperatives, have been demanding a bigger union representation, less environmental restrictions, more mining concessions and the right to work for private companies. President Evo Morales thinks that the murder is a political conspiracy against his Government, leading by the right-wing opposition. However, accused politicians denied any involvement in the episode, and more than 100 arrests have already been made.



Miners at work in Bolivia. Photo: Christophe Meneboeuf [Wikimedia Commons]

Dilma Rousseff is impeached, puts an end to the left-wing leadership in Brazil



Dilma Rousseff. Photo: Kremlin

■ The suspended President of Brazil, Dilma Rousseff, who is facing charges of breaking budget laws, has been impeached from her position. Taking her place is the Vice President Michel Temer who will rule the country until 1 January 2019. The impeachment is a long-awaited process as many politicians who are opposed to her have been trying to force her out of the office. Her impeachment is also putting an end to the 13 years in power of the left-wing Workers' Party. Rousseff denies the corruption accusation and sees this as a coup against her. Nevertheless, Rousseff wins a separate Senate vote to ban her from the public office for eight years. She is confident that this will not be the end of her political career. Many anti-Temer activists take place to protest against the impeachment result. The dismissal of Rousseff has also triggered a rift between Brazil and three left-wing South American governments, Venezuela, Bolivia, and Ecuador, who criticise the impeachment.



■ News in Brief

Bilateral and international relations

First informal EU's summit of the 27 Heads of State and Government to take place in Bratislava

■ Slovakia, the country which will hold the EU's rotating chairmanship until December 31, will host the first summit on EU's future in its capital city Bratislava, in September. European Council's president Donald Tusk has defined the upcoming summit as "informal", since Britain's leader will not be present, even though the UK has not officially left the Union yet. The 27 Heads of State and Government claimed to feel sorry for the outcome of Britain's referendum, but declared to be willing and prepared to face every complication arising from the actual situation. As it has been clarified, the summit will not be about the UK's divorce with the European bloc, but instead will be focused on EU's future. The displayed purposes will deal with the increase of cooperation in order to combat current threats to Europe, including Islamic terrorism, the war in Syria and the migration crises, in a perspective which aims to deal with a modern era, in which nationalism appears to prevail over common action.

Canada-China relations

■ The governments of Canada and China are currently in a trade dispute over canola shipments of billions of dollars annual worth, which turned out as one of the biggest foreign

policy tests for Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau during his first official visit in Beijing by End of August. The concerns on the Chinese side are based on the amount of foreign material — such as other crops and weeds — found in Canadian canola exports and on Canada's inflexibility since the beginning of the trade talks seven years ago. During Trudeau's visit also other issues have been discussed, such as a deepening of the economic relations and a possible future agreement on a free trade treaty between the two countries. While Chinese tourism to Canada has increased 24% in the first 6 months of the year, both sides agreed on establishing 7 additional visa offices in China. Besides that the case of Canadian citizen Kevin Garratt, who was indicted on charges of spying and stealing state secrets earlier this year has been discussed but yet remained unsolved.

Suicide bomber attacks Chinese embassy in Kyrgyzstan

■ The Chinese Embassy in the Kyrgyz capital Bishkek was targeted by what was being reported as the first suicide bombing that has happened in the country in the early morning of the 30th of August. The explosive device killed the attacker and wounded at least three other people, Kyrgyz nationals, who are believed to be gardeners on the area. The attack yet arose a lot of concern and a large security operation.





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