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Introducing another week of Future Trends — *tracking current global news stories that provide insight into the future.*

Here's what you need to know: Global attitudes towards Russia's invasion of the Ukraine, rebel group re-emerges in DRC after nearly a decade, scientists develop human brain reference charts, Elon Musk signals Tesla may get into lithium mining, Shehbaz Sharif elected as new Prime Minister of Pakistan completing the ousting of predecessor Imran Khan, Saudi Arabia sets limit of 1M Hajj pilgrims this year.

SPECIAL EDITION: UKRAINE

Key events in the Ukraine. [Twelve important updates](#) on the changing Ukrainian conflict, including future Russian actions, current attacks and future sanctions.

Russian ex-foreign minister: Genuine diplomacy is not working in Ukraine. The world has changed and previous ideas about [mutual deterrence](#) no longer apply, said Andrei Fedorov, former Russian Deputy Foreign Minister.

Global attitudes towards Russia's invasion of the Ukraine. By invading Ukraine, Vladimir Putin has [divided the world](#).

CONFLICT

Rebel group re-emerges in DRC after nearly a decade. Tens of thousands of people in the Democratic Republic of the Congo have fled to neighbouring Uganda after the [M23 rebel group](#) attacked the Kinshasa army.

The ICC begins trial for Darfur war crimes. The first trials addressing the [crimes against humanity](#) committed in Sudan have begun in The Hague, with an alleged former Janjaweed leader facing charges.

The US, UK, and AUS partnership look to start hypersonic weapons cooperation. The [security pact](#) will begin with research, including electronic warfare

capabilities. Underpinning the cooperation is a need to counterbalance the military presence of China in the region.

Violent prison riots continue in Ecuador. Twenty people have died in the Cuenca prison in the [fifth deadly prison riot](#) that has taken place since February 2021. The government have increased prison funding, and created a commission to analyse the issue.

Chinese missiles arrive in Serbia. Serbia has received an [anti-aircraft system](#) from China. Unlike most Western nations, Serbia has not rolled out sanctions against Russia or condemned the country for invading Ukraine.

DEVELOPMENT

Scientists develop human brain reference charts. This initiative aims to create standardised charts to [analyse brain development](#) and provide relevant information on medical disorders.

Governments from East and the Horn of Africa sign migration agreements. Eleven governments agree that [migration benefits](#) include development, economic growth, and worker protection. Migration is a key economic benefit as it produces remittances.

Worst drought in 40 years threatens millions in the Horn of Africa. Facing the driest conditions in four decades, people are increasingly relying on humanitarian aid. [Supply chains](#) may deteriorate because of dependencies on imports from Black Sea countries, including Ukraine.

More than half a million children drop out of school in Ethiopia. UNICEF says that more than half a million [children have dropped out of school](#) because of the ongoing conflict, with 400 schools closed and 727 only partially open.

ECONOMICS

Elon Musk signals Tesla may get into lithium mining. Globally there is no shortage of [lithium](#), but the pace of extraction and refinement is slow. The metal's cost has gone up by as much as 480% over the past year.

China EV maker Nio suspends production citing supply chain disruptions. A recent surge in COVID cases and the ensuing lockdowns have [disrupted supply chains](#).

Nigeria's electricity grid collapses for the second time in a month. The [power ministry](#) gave no estimate of when the grid, which serves around 117 million people, would be back in operation.

Canada bans foreign homebuyers for two years to cool market. The government has been under pressure to cool the nation's [overheated market](#). Prices have climbed by more than 50% in the past two years, and rental rates have also been rising.

Five million men are missing from the U.S. workforce. In the 1950s and 1960s, the prime-age male employment rate averaged 93.8%, compared to just 86.1% today. Reasons include [fewer job opportunities](#) for less educated men, and ongoing health issues.

POLITICS

Shehbaz Sharif elected as new Prime Minister of Pakistan. Completing the ousting of predecessor Imran Khan, Pakistan's parliament has elected Shehbaz Sharif as Prime Minister. This follows a week-long [constitutional crisis](#) that climaxed when Imran Khan lost a no-confidence vote.

Macron, Le Pen advance to runoff in French presidential election. Exit polls show President Emmanuel Macron moving to a runoff in his run for [re-election](#), where he will face far-right leader Marine Le Pen. The result sets up a rematch of the 2017 election.

Burkina Faso's tribunal sentences former president to life imprisonment. A military tribunal sentenced former president Blaise Compaore to [life imprisonment](#) for involvement in the murder of his predecessor Thomas Sankara during the 1987 coup.

Nigeria sentences atheist to 24 years for blasphemy. Bala, a former Muslim and the president of the Humanist Association of Nigeria, was arrested for what authorities said were social media posts [blasphemous toward Islam](#).

Turkey suspends Khashoggi trial, transfers it to Saudi Arabia. A Turkish court has [suspended the trial](#) in absentia of 26 Saudis accused in the killing of the Washington Post columnist, which occurred in Istanbul. The case will be transferred to Saudi Arabia.

Sri Lanka's economic crisis leads to political turmoil. Sri Lanka is facing its worst [financial crisis](#) in more than 70 years. Food prices rose by a record 30% in March.

SOCIAL

Saudi Arabia sets limit of 1M Hajj pilgrims this year. Saudi Arabia says Muslims from inside and outside the country will be able to perform the Hajj providing they are [fully vaccinated against COVID-19 and no older than 65](#).

AI method predicts cardiac arrest up to 10 years ahead. Johns Hopkins University researchers developed a [deep-learning model](#) that can predict a person's likelihood of sudden cardiac death up to 10 years in advance. The AI technique relies on contrast-enhanced MRI scans of the heart and a person's medical history to make its predictions.

Are some people resistant to COVID-19? Geneticists want to know why. Thousands of people repeatedly exposed to the virus never got sick - scientists are now hoping their DNA may hold [clues to new kinds of treatments](#).

Former members of Colombia's FARC become entrepreneurs. Former guerrilla fighters have launched products such as coffee, beer, and clothing. Around 13,000 ex-fighters are part of the government's strategy to incorporate them into [civil society](#).

Study shows that fish can learn how to add and subtract. Researchers conducted training and experiments to prove that fish have the [capacity to do basic arithmetic](#). Scientists have performed similar studies with similar results with other animals such as parrots and bees.

Former Ecuador vice president released from prison. Former Ecuadorean vice president Jorge Glas was [released from prison](#), after a judge ruled his physical and psychological well-being were at risk.

PEACEBUILDING

Palestinians living in large cities in the West Bank voted on March 26 to elect municipal councils in what the [Carter Center](#) termed "peaceful and well-administered" balloting. A [Carter Center election expert mission](#) found that virtually all the major cities in the West Bank experienced competitive electoral contests, despite a formal boycott by Hamas and a challenging political environment, marked by human rights violations, including intimidation and harassment of political actors.

The [Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding](#) is asking its community to engage in ["3000 Conversations for Building Respect."](#) The organization is offering its resources to record and share conversations exploring how individuals can build respect for religious difference and support each other in this endeavor.

Afghan civil society organizations are now receiving grants through [Peace Direct's](#) newly established [Afghan Solidarity Fund](#). The Fund supports locally-led peacebuilding and human rights activities through rapid, flexible sub-grants to local groups. It has obtained almost \$500,000 to support local organizations, in partnership with EQUALITY for Peace and Development.

The UN has brokered a truce in Yemen's war between the internationally recognized government and Huthi rebels. Both sides agreed to specific conditions and what is in effect a self-policed military freeze-in-place. The internationally recognized president handed over his powers to an eight-man council which is evenly split between northerners and southerners. Since the truce was announced on April 6, fighting has diminished but has not completely stopped, according to the [International Crisis Group](#).