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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: Ukraine downs Russian hypersonic missile with US Patriot, Myanmar pardons more than 2,100 political prisoners, UN says 800,000 people could be forced to flee Sudan conflict, United plans to hire 15,000 jobs this year, Russia receives approving recommendations on claim to seabed in the Arctic, Aurora australis potential for the next two years.

SPECIAL EDITION: UKRAINE

Ukraine downs Russian hypersonic missile with US Patriot. Ukraine's air force claimed to have downed a Russian hypersonic missile over Kyiv using newly acquired [American Patriot defence systems](#), the first known time the country has been able to intercept one of Moscow's most modern missiles.

Ukraine delegate punches Russian delegate. A Ukrainian delegate has punched a Russian delegate in the face during a gathering of Black Sea nations in the Turkish capital, after his [Ukrainian flag was snatched away](#) to stop him photobombing a video interview with Russia's lead delegate.

Russian engineers reduce risk of dam bursting near Russian-held Ukraine nuclear plant. Engineers have reduced the risk of a dam bursting and damaging a large Russian-held [Zaporizhzhia nuclear power station](#) in Ukraine, a senior Russian official was quoted as saying by TASS news agency.

POLITICS

Myanmar pardons more than 2,100 political prisoners. Myanmar's ruling military council said it was releasing more than 2,100 political prisoners as a [humanitarian gesture](#). Thousands more remain imprisoned on charges generally involving nonviolent protests or criticism of military rule, which began when the army seized power from the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi.

Nine EU countries join forces to reform voting rules on foreign policy. The "Group of Friends on Qualified Majority Voting" is advocating for a move towards [qualified majority voting for EU foreign policy decisions](#), which currently require unanimous approval. They argue that the ongoing crisis in Ukraine and other geopolitical shifts necessitate a more efficient decision-making process amending veto power.

Erdogan rival promises to restore Turkish democracy. [Kemal Kilicdaroglu](#), backed by a six-party opposition alliance, says if he wins he will bring freedom and democracy to Turkey. He is Erdogan's main rival in the elections of May 14th and has a narrow lead in opinion polls. Erdogan has been in power since 2003.

Canada considers expelling Chinese diplomats for targeting MP. Canada has said it is considering [expelling Chinese diplomats](#) after Beijing was accused of targeting a member of parliament and his family. It follows a report that Canada's spy agency believes China sought details about the MP's relatives in an effort to deter "anti-China positions".

Arab League readmits Syria as relations with Assad normalise. [Arab League](#) foreign ministers adopted a decision to readmit Syria after more than a decade of suspension, consolidating a regional push to normalise ties with President Bashar al-Assad.

CONFLICT

800,000 people could be forced to flee Sudan conflict, UN says. The conflict in Sudan could [force 800,000 people to flee the country](#), as battles between rival military factions persist in the capital despite a supposed cease-fire.

Iran seizes second oil tanker in a week amid US confrontation. Iran has [seized an oil tanker in the Strait of Hormuz](#) in what is the second such incident in the region in a week. The US Navy said several Iranian vessels approached the tanker and forced it into Iranian waters.

Mali denounces ECOWAS after Burkina Faso's massacre is ruled as a genocide. Mali's interim government has accused ECOWAS of adjudging the massacre as a [genocide](#) without sufficient evidence. They have also accused Burkina Faso's President Embalo of imposing his views on the commission.

Ethnic clashes continue in India's Manipur as death toll reaches 54. Violence has resulted in 500 homes being burnt and 13,000 people displaced. [The Meitei people](#), the largest single ethnic group in the state, have been agitating to be granted scheduled tribe status, but the other recognised tribes in Manipur oppose that move.

Corpses pile up after nearly 200 killed in Congo floods. At least 176 people have died in [flash floods in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo](#), as heavy rain destroyed buildings and forced aid workers to gather mud-clad corpses into piles.

ECONOMICS

United plans to hire 15,000, adding to surge in airline jobs. United Airlines said that it hired [7,000 new workers](#) in the first four months of this year and plans to hit 15,000 new hires by year-end, matching the number it hired last year.

COP28 president says fossil fuels still have a role to play, prompting concerns about climate summit's goals. The president of the UN's COP28 climate conference has said that he sees a [future for fossil fuels](#) – even as scientists say the world must rapidly transition to clean energy – in remarks that have raised concerns about a backsliding on climate commitments.

Australia's exports to China reach an annual high after lifting barriers. Australia has reached a record high of exports compared to the previous year as Beijing lowered [barriers on trade](#). This comes amid improving diplomatic relations between the two countries.

Afreximbank signs multi-billion-dollar agreement with Kenyan government. The country program will focus on boosting trade-related investments and will be delivered over a three-year period. Kenya is the first country to benefit from Afreximbank's recently introduced [Climate Change Adaptation Facility](#).

DEVELOPMENT

Russia has recently received “approving recommendations” on claim to seabed in arctic. Russia has received “approving recommendations” for the majority of its claim to the seabed in the central parts of the Arctic Ocean from the UN Commission for the Limitation of the Continental Shelf. The [exclusive economic zone](#) extends across the North Pole to the exclusive economic zones of Canada and Greenland.

Press freedom under attack in every corner of the globe. Speaking ahead of World Press Freedom Day, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres issued a rallying cry for journalists and media worldwide. He argued that [Press freedom](#) is under attack in every corner of the globe, with journalists continually harassed, jailed and killed.

China's Belt and Road to enter Afghanistan in Taliban's victory. The Taliban agreed with China and Pakistan to extend the Belt and Road Initiative to Afghanistan to fund infrastructure projects. China pledged to work together on Afghanistan's reconstruction process including taking the \$60 billion [China-Pakistan Economic Corridor](#) to the Taliban-ruled nation.

USAID and UN suspend food aid to Tigray, Ethiopia. Food meant to relieve the famine conditions in Tigray is being [sold on the black market](#). The two agencies have announced that they will be suspending all humanitarian aid until investigations are completed.

Who owns the moon? No longer a rhetorical question, but rather one that goes to the heart of a governance deficit that is likely to spur [interstellar confrontation](#). The new cold war between the United States and nations such as Russia and China is extending to the cosmos.

SOCIAL

Aurora australis potential for the next two years. Tourists are flocking to the southern Victorian and Tasman coasts in Australia to capture the [rare breathtaking spectacle](#).

New Alzheimer's drug slows disease by a third. We could be entering the [era of Alzheimer's treatments](#), after the second drug in under a year has been shown to slow the disease. Experts said we were now on the cusp of drugs being available.

Giant seaweed flotilla disturbs shipping. The [5,000-mile-long seaweed](#) found between Africa and the Gulf of Mexico is proving to be a menace for the boats making their way from Brazil to Rhode Island.

Mysterious surge of activity detected in the brains of dying people. Scientists from the University of Michigan have detected a [surge of gamma activity](#) well above the normal waking activity in the brains of two people as they transitioned into death, with the phenomenon similar to spikes of brain activity seen previously in animals whose hearts had stopped beating.

First in utero brain surgery performed in Boston. Doctors at the Brigham and Women's hospital in Boston, Massachusetts, have performed the [first surgery](#) on a baby's brain while still in the mother's womb. Had the surgery not been performed, the birth would have led to irreparable consequences, doctors say.

PEACEBUILDING

[Bolivia has met its goal of protecting 30 percent of its land](#) ahead of schedule, due in large part to Amazonian villages that are accelerating their pace and scale of conservation. Their lands represent a third of all land under conservation in the country. With support from [Conservation International](#), two new municipalities deep in the Amazon recently joined the effort and there are plans to support nine additional municipalities in creating protected areas.

In a groundbreaking project to advance tribal sovereignty and cultural resource protection in state and local environmental decision-making, the [Environmental Law Institute](#), the [National Association of Tribal Historic Preservation Officers](#), and the community environmental health analyst for the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community have announced their partnership with two California Native American Tribes – the [Dry Creek Rancheria Band of Pomo Indians](#), and the [Pechanga Band of Indians](#) to implement the project.

The [Alliance for Peacebuilding](#) has recognized D.G. Mawn, the President of the [National Association for Community Mediation](#), with the [Melanie Greenberg U.S. Peacebuilding Award of Excellence](#). NAFCM, founded in the wake of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, serves as a hub to support community mediators in transforming

conflict to “opportunities for engagement, resolution, and partnership with the goal of uniting divided communities.”

Over the 25 years since the Good Friday agreement to end sectarian fighting in Northern Ireland was signed, people living with conflict around the world have traveled there to [learn first-hand how a society can transition from violence to politics](#) as a way to address conflict. Although sectarian tensions endure and initiatives to address the legacies of past violence have faltered, Northern Ireland is “unrecognizable” in comparison to the violence at the height of the “Troubles,” according to [Conciliation Resources](#), which has supported travel to Northern Ireland.