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# Future Trends

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Institute for  
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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:** Bosnian-Serb leader tells EU Bosnia cannot join sanctions against Russia, conflict and natural disasters displaced almost 60 million people in 2021, Zimbabwe urges sale of seized ivory stockpile to help conservation of growing elephant populations, debt default for Sri Lanka, Lebanon's pro-Hezbollah bloc loses parliamentary majority in national elections, who was the first human?

## SPECIAL EDITION: UKRAINE

**Bosnian-Serb leader tells EU Bosnia cannot join sanctions against Russia.** Milorad Dodik told the European Council President that [Bosnia should maintain neutrality](#), and refrain from joining the EU sanctions against Russia over its invasion of Ukraine.

**Russia is likely facing unmanned aerial vehicles shortage.** The UK's Ministry of Defence said that Russia is likely experiencing a [shortage of reconnaissance UAVs](#), which it uses to identify targets to be attacked by air or land.

**YouTube removes more than 9,000 channels relating to Ukraine war.** Platform takes ['unprecedented action'](#) to address mass content guideline violations since the invasion of Ukraine.

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## CONFLICT

**Conflict and natural disasters displaced almost 60 million people in 2021.** Millions were forced to escape within their own countries, generating a record number of [internally displaced people](#). This number is expected to be surpassed in 2022 amidst the mass exile in war-ravaged Ukraine.

**Togo may be West Africa's new frontier of violent extremism.** Despite its proximity to countries affected by [violent extremism](#), Togo has experienced relative peace and security until recently. In the latest attack, 11 jihadists killed eight Togolese soldiers at a military outpost.

**President authorises redeployment of troops to Somalia.** President Joe Biden has approved a plan to [redeploy American troops to Somalia](#), to help counter the terrorist group al-Shabaab. This is a reversal of a decision by his predecessor, Donald Trump.

**Gangs strangle Haiti's capital as deaths and kidnappings soar.** Gangs are [fighting each other](#) and seizing territory in the capital of Port-au-Prince with new intensity and brutality.

**Ethiopia's Tigray forces to release over 4,000 prisoners of war.** The Tigray People's Liberation Front announced they plan to release 4,208 prisoners of war with an [amnesty](#).

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## DEVELOPMENT

**Zimbabwe urges sale of seized ivory stockpile to help conservation of growing elephant populations.** The country is seeking international support to be allowed to sell its stockpile of seized ivory, saying it is urgently needed for the conservation of its [rapidly growing elephant population](#) which it describes as "dangerous".

**Algae-powered computing and solar cells.** Researchers have used a widespread species of [blue-green algae](#) to power a microprocessor continuously for over a year using nothing but ambient light and water. Their system has potential as a reliable and renewable way to power small devices.

**International plan to tackle food shortages.** The US, several global development banks and other organisations unveiled a multibillion-dollar plan aimed at addressing a worldwide [food security crisis](#) exacerbated by Russia's war in Ukraine.

**Food insecurity threatens societies and exacerbates conflicts.** Last year, most of the [140 million people](#) suffering acute hunger around the world lived in just ten countries: Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Ethiopia, Haiti, Nigeria, Pakistan, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria and Yemen. These countries are all conflict affected.

**Commercial flights from Yemen suggest positive development towards peace.** For the first time in six years Yemenis are able to travel. The UN says the truce raises hopes for negotiations between the Saudi-led coalition and the Houthis and [lasting peace in Yemen](#).

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## ECONOMICS

**Debt default for Sri Lanka.** The country has defaulted on its debts for the first time in its history as it struggles with an [economic and political crisis](#) triggered by global shock waves from the pandemic and the war in Ukraine.

**Japan protests Beijing's extraction of undersea gas reserves in the East China Sea.** The [gas fields](#) lie between the two countries territorial waters. An agreement for joint production was signed in 2008, but suspended in 2010.

**India's projected economic growth at almost 9% in 2022.** The country's finance ministry projected a [high growth rate](#) until next year, potentially pointing to India's resilience and fast recovery.

**Marcos wants 'trade, not aid' from US.** The Philippines' presumptive President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. said he wants to [boost trade ties](#) with the US instead of a "dependence" on aid, and signalled willingness to join an economic initiative pushed by President Joe Biden to counter China's influence.

**Airbnb plans to close down all its mainland China listings,** including homes and experiences, this summer. The company will [maintain](#) its office in Beijing, focusing on outbound travel.

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## POLITICS

**Lebanon's pro-Hezbollah bloc loses parliamentary majority in national elections.** Final election results showed no clear majority for any group, indicating a fragmented and deeply [polarised parliament](#), divided between pro and anti-Hezbollah lawmakers.

**Biden says US would be willing to use force to defend Taiwan against China.** This is one of the most forceful and overt statements [in support of Taiwan](#) in decades.

**Former King Juan Carlos met by cheering crowd amid controversy on return to Spain.** Juan Carlos made his [first public appearance](#) in his country in more than two years after investigations in Spain and Switzerland over alleged fraud were dropped.

**For first time in nine years Bangkok votes in new governor - without election.** A former transport minister in the Thai government ousted by a 2014 military coup won Bangkok's [first governor election](#) for nine years.

**Spain and Morocco open their borders after two years of dispute.** The [EU's only land borders](#) with Africa have long been closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and a diplomatic crisis between Madrid and Rabat.

**Russia announces plans to withdraw from WHO and WTO.** The Kremlin declared its intention to unilaterally [step out of various international organisations](#), accusing them of neglecting their obligations towards Russia. This could further reinforce their isolation from the international community.

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## SOCIAL

**Ancient human tooth discovered in Laos cave.** The tooth may belong to the [Denisovan](#), a group of humans that went extinct around 20,000 years ago in Southeast Asia. Their fossils are incredibly rare with just a finger bone, a few teeth, and a jaw bone found so far.

**In one giant leap for Earth plants, seeds are grown in moon soil.** The samples were retrieved during NASA missions in 1969 and 1972. Achieving this heralds the promise of [using earthly plants to support human outposts in other worlds](#).

**Study warns that pollution kills an estimated 9 million people annually.** Most of the deaths occurred in developing low-and middle income countries. In 2019, India and China had the largest number of [premature deaths related to pollution](#).

**Afghanistan: The girls school defying the Taliban.** In all but a handful of provinces in the country, [girls' secondary schools were ordered to close by the Taliban](#). One school continues to hold lessons in secret for one or two hours per day, focused on maths, biology, chemistry and physics.

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## PEACEBUILDING

**Norway's capital offers large cities a [blueprint for cost-effective climate action](#).** Each year, Oslo's municipal departments are asked to outline specific ways to reduce their carbon footprint. The shifts are subtle but pervasive and have relied heavily on incentive-based policies. In late 2019, the city broke ground on the world's first net-zero construction project. Between 2009 and 2019, the city's emissions fell 16 percent, and they're projected to drop 72 percent by 2030.

**[Democracy SOS](#) has announced the inaugural cohort of 22 Democracy SOS Fellowship Newsrooms.** Together, the 22 newsrooms selected will experiment with new ways to strengthen democracy by working with and for the communities they serve. Other newsrooms can access some [resources](#) being taught as part of the Democracy SOS Fellowship. This fellowship is a joint initiative created by [Hearken](#) and [Solutions Journalism Network](#).

**[Peace Direct](#) and the [Alliance for Peacebuilding](#) have published a new report on [Local Peacebuilding: What Works and Why](#),** based on evaluations of more than 70 projects. The study finds that local peacebuilders have a significant impact on peace and deserve more sustained funding and collaboration. Specifically, the study finds that local peacebuilders rely on local knowledge, connections, and latent trust. They generally have a practical orientation and are cost-effective.

**[Partners Global](#) has started a podcast on [Resilient Conversations](#)** that explores different facets of civil society resiliency by talking to experts and peers who have had to navigate shifting dynamics and adapt how they function