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

CONFLICT

Biden confirms United States would come to Taiwan's defence. The president says the United States has a "[commitment](#)" to protect Taiwan as China continues to impose its sovereignty on the island. Beijing has urged Washington to act with caution on the Taiwan issue.

Ecuador's president Lasso declares state of emergency over drug trafficking. Lasso said drug trafficking has brought an increase in homicides, burglaries, car thefts of and robberies. The [state of emergency](#) gives authorities the power to restrict the freedom of movement, assembly and association.

Ethiopia military conducts airstrikes on Tigray region. Ethiopia's Tigray region was bombed for the second time in one week. The Ethiopian government says that the airstrikes were targeting sites used to make and repair weapons by the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF). There are reports of [several civilian casualties](#).

Sudan's military sizes power in deadly coup. Sudan's military [has seized power](#), dissolving the transitional government and arresting the Prime Minister. It also cut-off the internet and closed bridges in the capital Khartoum amidst violent protests.

DEVELOPMENT

Greenhouse gas levels hit record high and increased at faster rate in 2020. The World Meteorological Organization reported Monday that greenhouse gas concentrations [hit a new record high last year](#) and increased at a faster rate than the annual average for the last decade despite a temporary reduction during pandemic-related lockdowns.

Fossil fuel production twice as high as needed to meet Paris goals. Governments are planning on producing [more than twice the amount of fossil fuels in 2030](#) than the level necessary to limit global warming to the Paris agreement goal of 1.5 degrees Celsius, a UN-backed study has said. Fossil fuel production is also 45% higher than what would be consistent with limiting warming to the less ambitious goal of two degrees Celsius.

Foxconn sets sights on making EVs in Europe, India and Latin America. Taiwan tech giant Foxconn is looking at making electric vehicles (EVs) in Europe, India and Latin America, including "[indirectly](#)" cooperating with German automakers, according to Chairman Liu Young-way.

US planning to return to UN cultural agency. The United States is making early moves toward [rejoining the United Nations cultural agency UNESCO](#) four years after former President Donald Trump withdrew his nation from the body.

Call for humanitarian aid in Somalia amidst intensifying drought. Due to an ongoing drought and worsening food insecurity in Somalia, that [country has requested urgent humanitarian assistance from United Nations agencies](#). More than 5.9 million Somalis need urgent assistance and 3.5 million are currently facing severe food insecurity according to the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

SOCIAL

Woman who won a million-euro (\$1,160,000 USD) Spanish literary prize was actually three men. At a ceremony to award the prestigious Euro Planeta literary prize to author Carmen Mola for her historical thriller 'The Beast,' [three men ascended the podium](#) and claimed the award instead.

A pig kidney has been successfully transplanted into a human for the first time. The organ was [successfully attached](#) for three days in an experimental procedure on a brain-dead patient.

Animals recognized as legal persons by US district court in southern Ohio. The U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Ohio [has recognized animals as legal persons](#) for the first time. The decision is the result of a lawsuit concerning a hippo cull in Colombia.

Investment bank Credit Suisse fined over Mozambique corruption scandal. United Kingdom authorities [imposed a fine on Credit Suisse worth almost £350 million](#) (\$482 million USD) and have agreed to write off hundreds of millions over a loan to Mozambique which was misused on bribery and naval gunships.

10 years after the Arab Spring: gains for democracy? On October 23, 2011, Libya was declared liberated from the regime of Muammar Gaddafi, marking one of the key events of the Arab Spring.

ECONOMICS

Winners and Losers of the commodity boom. This year's commodity boom will shift about [\\$742 billion from importers like China and Europe](#) to producers such as Russia, Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

US chipmaker Micron unveils \$150bn global expansion plan. Micron's [biggest-ever expansion plan](#), which runs through 2030, comes as the U.S., Europe, Japan and China race to boost their domestic chip supply chains amid an unprecedented global chip shortage.

Britain, New Zealand strike free trade deal, including haka clause. Britain and New Zealand have unveiled a [comprehensive free trade deal](#), including a commitment aimed at preventing the revered Maori cultural tradition of the haka, famously performed by the All Blacks, from being misused.

U.S. urges all WTO members to support intellectual property waiver for COVID-19 vaccines. [More than 100 countries backing the waiver](#) say it will help save lives by allowing developing countries to produce COVID-19 vaccines, but the European Union and several countries, including Switzerland, remain opposed.

Biden backs down on corporate tax increases. U.S. President Joe Biden [backed away from pledged tax increases](#) to fund planned infrastructure and social spending. The tax increases were a cornerstone of his election pledges and came after President Trump dropped the rate from 35% to 21%.

POLITICS

Lebanon confirms March elections amid race to secure IMF rescue. Lebanon's parliament [voted on Tuesday to hold legislative elections on March 27](#), parliamentary sources said, giving Prime Minister Najib Mikati's government only a few months to try to secure an IMF recovery plan amid a deepening economic meltdown.

NATO agrees master plan to deter growing Russian threat. NATO defence ministers [agreed a new master plan on Thursday](#) to defend against any potential Russian attack on multiple fronts, reaffirming the alliance's core goal of deterring Moscow despite a growing focus on China.

EU leaders lambast Poland over its challenge to union. As a Polish court ruling questioned the primacy of EU law, European leaders lined up to chastise Warsaw for challenging the EU's legal foundations, but Poland's premier said he would not bow to "[blackmail](#)."

Barbados elects first ever president ahead of becoming republic. Barbados has elected its [first ever president](#) as it prepares to become a republic, and remove British monarch Queen Elizabeth as head of state.

Sierra Leone introduces bill to ensure women participation in politics. The government of Sierra Leone [has introduced a bill](#) that would ensure that 30 percent of 146 seats in parliament are occupied by women as well as 30 percent of cabinet posts. The bill intends to link government spending to improving gender equality and to improve women's access to finance.

Brazilian Senators [publish report damning their President's pandemic strategy](#). The initiative is a consequence of the high COVID-19 death toll in the country, which is reportedly second only to the United States. The Attorney General will analyse the strategy in the coming days and may take action.

PEACEBUILDING

[Interaction](#) has published a revised edition of its [Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse \(PSEA\) Training Guide](#), in recognition that "SEA is still a problem that is

underreported and unaddressed.” It offers a new approach to the issue consisting of three Modules: PSEA Standards, Preventing PSEA, and Managing an SEA investigation.

[Katharine Hayhoe has published a new book, *Saving Us: A Climate Scientist’s Case for Hope and Healing in a Divided World*](#). Hayhoe argues in her book and a Ted talk that “the most important thing you can do to fight climate change[is] to talk about it,” in part because talking about it can lead to common actions. Hayhoe is chief scientist for the Nature Conservancy and a professor at Texas Tech University.

[A NAFCM booklet provides information about seven online community mediation trainings by members across North America](#). The booklet summarizes the information in each training and offers information about how to access trainings.

[GPPAC member *Peace Boat* has been awarded the *Lifetime Organizational War Abolisher Award 2021*](#). Peace Boat is a Japan-based organization that promotes peace, human rights, and sustainability. It is a founding member of GPPAC and has acted as a [Regional Secretariat in the Northeast Asia Region](#). GPPAC members in Northeast Asia, including Peace Boat, have launched the [Ulaanbaatar Process](#), a civil society dialogue for peace and stability in Northeast Asia.
