

June 8, 2021



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Institute for  
Economics  
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Alliance for  
Peacebuilding

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

## CONFLICT

**DRC extends martial law for 15 more days.** The National Assembly voted to [extend martial law](#) in the east of the country for 15 days, a month after they replaced civilian authorities with military administrations in North Kivu and Ituri provinces due to ongoing violence.

**Budapest protest against China's Fudan University campus.** Thousands of people [marched through Budapest](#) to protest against plans to open a Chinese university campus in the Hungarian capital. This follows the closure of many independent universities.

**Colombia President announces policing changes amid brutality accusations.** In response to 20 deaths during demonstrations, the government [will ask Congress](#) to approve the creation of a police human rights directorate.

**Pan-African Parliament meeting marred by violent skirmishes.** The meeting of the continental body was called off after a discussion on whether or not to rotate its presidency [descended into chaos](#). There were allegations of death threats amid the fracas.

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## DEVELOPMENT

**Biden administration halts oil exploration in Alaska's Arctic refuge.** The US government [halted all petroleum activities](#) in an Alaskan wildlife reserve pending an environmental review.

**First release of a children's rights index.** The index shows [some surprising results](#) with Thailand ranking in the top ten and New Zealand and Britain in the bottom 20.

**The price of batteries has declined by 97% in the last three decades.** To put this into perspective: The Nissan Leaf electric car has [a 40 kWh battery](#). In 1991, the battery would cost \$300,000; in 2018 the battery would cost \$7,300.

**42% of land has been added to the world's network of national parks and conservation areas in the last decade.** Around 17% of land and [8% of marine areas](#) are now managed protected areas.

**G7 decides to make climate risk disclosure mandatory.** G7 finance ministers meeting called for more coordination to measure what impact companies are having on the climate and environment, warning of the [risk of fragmentation](#) as local jurisdictions adopt different approaches.

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## SOCIAL

**United Airlines orders 15 supersonic jets.** The new supersonic jets will fly [twice as fast as conventional jetliners](#) and will be 75% cheaper to operate than the Concorde.

**Nigeria suspends Twitter after President's post removed.** Nigeria said it had [indefinitely suspended Twitter's activities in the country](#), two days after the social media giant removed a post from the President that threatened to punish regional secessionists.

**COVID-19 pushed over 100 million more workers into poverty.** An estimated additional 108 million workers are now [extremely or moderately poor](#), living on less than US\$3.20 per day.

**The price of food globally has increased at the fastest monthly rate in over a decade.** This rise has been led by the [increased cost of vegetable oils, grain and sugar](#). Lockdowns have created food shortages and consequently an increase in prices due to the high demand.

**The FDA recommends people with seafood allergies avoid eating cicadas.** As cicadas become more popular as a food source, the FDA has [warned people with allergies](#) to avoid eating the insects as they are related to shrimp and lobsters.

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## ECONOMICS

**Asia's worst-performing bonds.** Thai bonds are [vulnerable to further decline](#) as the slow pace of vaccination and rising debt affect the tourist dependent economy.

**China's central bank tries to stop surge in currency's value.** China's central bank is [trying to restrain the surging exchange rate of its currency](#), temporarily backtracking efforts to make the tightly controlled yuan more flexible and market-oriented.

**G7 countries want to counter China's Silk Road initiative.** The aim is to advance [large construction projects](#) in emerging and developing countries through an infrastructure partnership and to create a western alternative to China's Silk Road initiative.

**G7 nations agree to set a 15 per cent global tax rate on multinational companies.** The move could raise [hundreds of billions of dollars](#) to help cope with the aftermath of COVID-19. Companies will pay more tax in the markets where they sell goods and services. However, it still needs the backing of the G-20.

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## POLITICS

**New Israeli coalition to oust Netanyahu from the presidency.** Eight parties have joined in an [effort to form a new government](#), with parliamentary backing pending. A vote will take place next week, but Netanyahu has already called for right-wing members to vote to block the coalition.

**EU veto by one nation on foreign policy must end –Germany.** The comments came after [Hungary alone blocked a resolution on Hong Kong](#). It reflects the growing frustration at the way in which one EU member country can prevent the EU from acting in matters on which almost all members agree.

**Reliable, lovable and respectable – Xi wants to change the way the world sees China.** After several years of [a noticeably more assertive shift](#) in China's diplomatic and media tone, often dubbed 'Wolf Warrior', Xi has indicated that the confrontational style needs adjustment.

**UN Lebanon tribunal scraps new trial because of funding shortage.** A new trial against the man convicted of the [2005 assassination of Prime Minister Rafik Hariri](#) has been scrapped because they expect the court to run out of money before it can finish. The tribunal is funded 51% by UN voluntary contributions and 49% by the Lebanese government.

**CAR loses UN voting rights.** CAR and Iran were suspended [due to non-payment of dues](#). Comoros, Sao Tome and Principe, and Somalia are the other African countries in arrears. They however retain their voting rights for the current session.

**Mexican President says 'transformation' intact after mixed election night.** Mexican President Obrador [vowed to forge ahead](#) with his shake-up of the country after mid-term elections that eroded his power base in Congress but he maintained a majority.

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## PEACEBUILDING

The [University of Notre Dame Kroc Institute's fifth report on the implementation of the Colombian Peace Agreement](#) concluded that during 2020 the Colombian government and civil society continued to advance implementation of the agreement despite the disruptions of the COVID pandemic and persistence of insecurity in some areas. The report details areas of progress as well as remaining challenges.

The [International Labour Organization \(ILO\)](#) has released [new guidance on Peace and Conflict Analysis](#), outlining concrete steps for designing programs that are conflict sensitive and make deliberate contributions to peace. The guidance was developed by the ILO's Coordination Unit for Peace and Resilience together with [Interpeace](#).

[International Alert](#) has released a report analysing development interventions in conflict-affected areas in the Horn of Africa to highlight evidence of what works and what could be improved. The document, [Can More Jobs Bring Peace?](#), concludes that job creation alone does not necessarily lead to peace. Inclusive development and peace factors, such as fair access to power, opportunities to earn income, justice, safety, and wellbeing are also pivotal for sustainable peace.