

August 3, 2021



Brought to you by



Institute for  
Economics  
& Peace



Alliance for  
Peacebuilding

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

---

## CONFLICT

**200,000 protest against COVID-19 health pass in France.** Thousands of people protested in Paris and other French cities [against a mandatory coronavirus health pass](#) for entry to a wide array of public venues, introduced by the government as it battles a fourth wave of infections.

**US vows continued air support for Afghan forces fighting Taliban.** The US will continue [air raids within the country](#) to support the Afghan forces. The US Commander did not mention whether or not this would continue after the end of the mission on August 31<sup>st</sup>.

**Thousands in Guatemala protest sacking of anti-corruption prosecutor.** Thousands of Guatemalans took to the streets, [lighting fires and blocking roads](#) to demand the resignation of President Alejandro Giammattei after the firing of a well-known anti-corruption prosecutor.

**UN arms embargo on CAR extended for a year, China abstains.** The 15-member Security Council [imposed the arms embargo](#) on CAR in December 2013 when rebels ousted then President Francois Bozize, prompting reprisals from Christian militias.

**Israeli court's compromise would avoid Palestinian evictions.** Israel's Supreme Court recommended a compromise that [would prevent the evictions of Palestinians in east Jerusalem](#), where Jewish settlers attempted to expel them from their homes leading to the recent armed conflict.

---

## DEVELOPMENT

**Under Xi Jinping, the number of Chinese asylum-seekers has shot up.** Between 2012 and 2020, the annual number of asylum-seekers from China [rose from 15,362 to 107,864](#), according to data from the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

**Tubes in 890-million-year-old rock may be the oldest animal fossils.** Fossilised wormlike tubes in rock [may be ancient sea sponges](#), a new study concludes. If confirmed, that controversial claim would push back the origin of the earliest sponges by about 350 million years.

**Artificial intelligence can now be recognised as an inventor after historic Australian court decision.** This challenges a fundamental assumption in the law: [that only human beings can be inventors](#). One invention is a design of a container based on "fractal geometry", another a device to attract attention.

**Argentina, in a water emergency due to the lowest flow of the Paraná in more than 70 years.** The decrease in the water level in the [main navigable waterway of the country](#) causes millions in losses to the agro-export sector and increases the risk of fires.

**Kenya grants members of Shona tribe historic citizenship.** Members of the community were [granted citizenship certificates](#) ending their battles with statelessness. The government has hailed its decision as a victory for human rights.

---

## SOCIAL

**Tobacco CEO sees end to cigarettes in Britain in 10 years.** Philip Morris has said that its future [will not include Marlboro cigarettes](#) as it shifts to electronic devices. The company has been vocal in laying out its goal of replacing cigarettes with alternatives such as its IQOS heated tobacco system that heats tobacco without burning it.

**Pfizer and Moderna raise prices substantially for COVID-19 vaccines in EU.** Pfizer have [increased their price by 25%](#) to 19.5 Euros, while Moderna have raised theirs by 34% to 25.5 Euros.

**Thai government orders internet providers to pull access for anyone who shares news that might frighten people.** Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha has [ordered internet service providers](#) to block internet access of anyone who propagates information that may frighten people. Media organisations say it will restrict freedom of speech.

**Sky News Australia barred for a week by YouTube over COVID-19 misinformation.** YouTube issued a "strike" [under its three-strike policy](#), the last of which means permanent removal. YouTube did not point to specific items but said it opposed material that "could cause real-world harm".

**Maltese state responsible for journalist death – inquiry.** A public inquiry into the assassination of a Maltese investigative journalist has [found the state responsible for her death](#). The report said the state had failed to recognise risks to the reporter's life and take reasonable steps to avoid them.

---

## ECONOMICS

**Corporate tax rates dropping.** Global companies are benefiting from a [prolonged decline in tax rates](#) and continue to shift profits between jurisdictions to further cut their bills.

**Biden administration launches initiative to build US-Africa trade.** The administration of US President Joe Biden has [kicked off the Prosper Africa Build Together initiative](#) by requesting \$80 million from Congress to build trade and investment between the US and Africa.

**German inflation surges to 3.8%, highest since 2008.** The six-month VAT cut in 2020 had a [significant impact on Europe's largest economy](#), boosting demand.

**Euro-Zone exits recession with the south recording highest growth.** GDP expanded 2%, topping the 1.5% estimate of economists. The rebound was [driven by southern European countries](#), putting them in the rare position of being the engine of growth.

**Peru's currency plummets amid political uncertainty.** Peru's currency fell to a record low against the US dollar, [dropping more than 6%](#) amid uncertainty over the next finance minister. Castillo named Guido Bellido, a 41-year-old electronic engineer and fellow leftist with no experience in public office, as his prime minister.

**Zimbabwe annual inflation rate dropped to 56% in July.** Inflation, which had been rising rapidly since the end of 2018, [peaked at 838% in July 2020](#). In February Zimbabwe's central bank said it wanted to bring inflation to below 10% by the end of the year.

---

## POLITICS

**Qatar approves electoral law for first legislative polls.** Qatar's emir approved laws for the Gulf Arab state's [first legislative election in October](#), when Qataris will elect two-thirds of the advisory Shura Council.

**US and Russia hold 'substantive' arms talks.** The US and Russia [held productive talks regarding strategic issues](#) as well as arms control although no breakthroughs were made. The Russian foreign minister expressed that the US showed readiness to hold constructive dialogue during the talks.

**Mexico's referendum on trying ex-presidents fails due to low turnout.** The nationwide referendum asked whether [ex-officials should be tried for any illegal acts](#). The National Electoral Institute reported that while over 90% of those who participated voted "yes," only about 7% of eligible voters turned out, well below the 40% threshold needed.

**The Philippines restores key defense pact with the US.** Philippine President Duterte had paused the Visiting Forces Agreement, which provides protocols for the [rotation of thousands of US soldiers](#) for combat exercises and drills. The pact was restored as China's influence grew in the region.

**US defense secretary broadens cooperation with Vietnam.** US Defense Secretary met his Vietnamese counterpart to [deepen cooperation in security and pandemic recovery](#), after Washington vowed support for Southeast Asian nations embroiled in territorial rifts with China.

---

## PEACEBUILDING

The [Alliance for Peacebuilding](#) disseminated [Recommendations to President Biden](#) for addressing the causes of violent extremism, declining democracy, and diminishing social cohesion in the US. The paper urges the Administration to strengthen the Domestic Policy Council; commit to securing American democracy; invest in rural revitalization; address systemic racism by promoting truth, racial healing, and transformation; commit to reforming core curricula in the education system; invest in programs that build social cohesion, including the

expansion of US national service programs targeting young adults; and tackle the dissemination of disinformation, hate, and violence.

**Stanford Professor Gretchen Daily, a co-founder of the [Natural Capital Project \(NCP\)](#), has [received](#) the 2020 [Tyler Prize for Environmental Achievement](#).** The NCP has integrated science into its free open-source software program to help governments and other stakeholders prioritize conservation. In one Colombian region, for example, NCP suggested using mangrove trees instead of cement walls as barriers against rising sea levels.

**In support of the Colombian Truth Commission, [Everyday Peace Indicators'](#) [Everyday Justice](#) project is collecting indicators of justice and coexistence in communities across three war-torn regions of Colombia.** [The project has recently added photovoice technology](#) to support and amplify the everyday peace indicator process, to make visible the stories behind the indicators and to catalyze dialogue in communities and with policy and public audiences.

**[Nonviolent Peaceforce](#) launched a [Nonviolent Cities Project](#) in some 20 US cities** enabling people to share “skills, knowledge, solutions and strategies for dismantling the systems of violence and implementing nonviolent alternatives.” [In the Twin Cities \(Minnesota\)](#), for example, young peacekeepers replaced police resource officers in one school as part of [EMERGE](#), a program that provides internships, jobs, and mentorship for youth.