

September 15, 2020



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

## CONFLICT

**Islamic extremists suspected in the death of 53 villagers in Congo.** The attack is suspected to have been [conducted by a Ugandan terror group](#). Local authorities are afraid that more casualties are yet to occur unless robust interventions are made.

**Greece announces 'robust' arms deal as tension with Turkey rises.** Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis has announced a "robust" arms purchase programme including 15,000 additional troops and an [overhaul of the country's military](#), amid tension with Turkey in the Eastern Mediterranean.

**Protesters set government building on fire in eastern Libya.** Protesters set fire to the Haftar's government's headquarters in the Libyan city of Benghazi, as rare [demonstrations over living conditions and corruption](#) continued in the east of the country for a third day.

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## DEVELOPMENT

**Climate crisis could displace over 1bn people in 30 years.** Drawing on the Institute for Economics and Peace's Ecological Threat Register's findings, The Guardian highlights the [potential displacement of 1.2 billion people by 2050](#) due to the interplay of high levels of ecological risk exposure and low levels of resilience and peacefulness.

**Floating vegetable gardens in Bangladesh.** As rice fields were getting destroyed by monsoons and floods, [Bangladesh farmers switched to a traditional practice](#) of hydroponic growing.

**The US COVID-19 task force shuts down.** The USAID has shut down the agency created to act on the [global front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic](#). The task forces' key functions will be transitioned to other bureaus and agencies.

**Phosphine discovery points to the possibility of life on Venus.** Phosphine, a short-lived toxic gas, is produced on Earth either by [microbes that thrive in the absence of oxygen](#), or by

industrial processes. "We aren't saying it's a 100 per cent robust detection of life, but what we can say is that we've opened it up to the possibility that it is that," Dr Dempsey said.

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## ECONOMICS

**EU to delay euro clearing decision on Brexit divorce threat.** The European Union is set to delay a decision on allowing clearing houses in London to [continue clearing euro transactions for EU-based clients](#) due to Britain's plan to breach part of the Brexit divorce settlement.

**Rio Tinto CEO resigns after mining company destroys a 46,000 year-old sacred indigenous site in Australia.** CEO Jean-Sebastien Jacques came [under pressure from investors to step down](#) after the Juukan Gorge site was destroyed to expand the company's iron ore mine.

**US budget deficit soars to \$3tn record.** [The federal government spent](#) more than \$6tn in the first 11 months of its financial year, including \$2tn on coronavirus programmes, the Treasury Department said. The figure [outpaces the \\$3tn it took in from taxes](#). The shortfall is more than double the previous full-year record, set in 2009.

**Generous governments weaken Eastern Europe's currencies.** Currency devaluation has accelerated in the east-central European EU [countries that do not have the Euro](#). The increase in inflation has risen beyond what the central banks wanted.

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## POLITICS

**Japan and India sign military supply-sharing pact.** The military pact enables them to exchange supplies and logistical support as part of [efforts to step up security cooperation](#) in the face of China's growing assertiveness.

**Tear down your barriers, EU says after summit with China's Xi.** European Union leaders told Chinese President Xi Jinping to open up markets, respect minorities [and step back from a crackdown in Hong Kong](#), also asserting that Europe would no longer be taken advantage of in trade.

**Hotel Rwanda hero, accused of terrorism, was abducted by government in Dubai.** Paul Rusesabagina, the man who inspired the Hollywood film Hotel Rwanda, is [being held on terrorism and other charges](#) in his homeland, after a forced abduction at Dubai airport.

**Thailand tells universities to stop students' calls for monarchy reform.** Thai authorities have summoned the heads of universities to tell them to [stop students demanding reform of the monarchy](#), warning that such calls could lead to violence, a member of the military-appointed Senate said.

**Germany ends China honeymoon with new Indo-Pacific strategy.** After years of shaping its Asian strategy around China, Germany has made a sharp break and will focus instead on [stronger partnerships with democracies in the region](#), such as Japan and South Korea to promote the rule of law.

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## SOCIAL

**Israel first country to reintroduce nationwide lockdown, but risks mass disobedience.** As it prepares for a second nationwide lockdown ahead of the Jewish high holidays on September 18, the Government could be facing mass disobedience. [Business owners are pledging not to abide by the closure](#) and senior Government ministers have openly opposed it.

**Europe's largest refugee camp, the Moria camp in Greece, destroyed by fire.** The camp was originally built for 3,000 people, but was home to [13,000 refugees living under poor conditions](#), who are now homeless. Adding to the problem is growing acts of hostility by the local population. The EU stated that the camp will be rebuilt.

**Japanese beat the summer heat with fan-fitted clothes.** There is a growing popularity of jackets being fitted with [battery-powered fans that circulate air](#) over the wearer's body. Fan-fitted clothing manufacturers have started to branch out to meet the needs of everyone struggling to deal with searing temperatures.

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## PEACEBUILDING

**Peace talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban are underway** in the capital of Qatar on September 12<sup>th</sup>. [The International Crisis Group](#) has previewed the issues on the table and the public positions of the warring factions participating in the talks. To coincide with the start of the talks, [International Civil Society Action Network](#) has released its [Better Peace Tool \(BPT\) booklet in Farsi/ Persian](#), which provides guidance on including women peacebuilders and gender perspectives in peace processes. Earlier this month, [a letter signed by over 100 global leaders](#) called for the meaningful inclusion of Afghan Women throughout every step of the peace process in order to ensure durable peace.

**Mercy Corps has posted two publications on the links between the COVID-19 pandemic and violent conflict.** Drawing on evidence from Mercy Corps programs in more than 40 countries, [Advancing Peace in a Changed World](#) outlines five areas in which COVID-19 and government responses to it are impacting conflict dynamics: "fraying social cohesion, deteriorating state-society relations, proliferating dis/misinformation, expanding armed groups' influence, and increasing economic scarcity and resource competition." [The Need for Good Governance and Peacebuilding in the Time of COVID-19](#) uses a case study from northeast Nigeria to suggest how donor funding and programs can be oriented to address both the immediate COVID-19 public health crisis and broader governance and peacebuilding goals.

**Peacebuilding organizations will mark both #TruthWeek and [Peacebuilding Action Week on September 14-21](#).** #TruthWeek, which is sponsored by the Office of Congresswoman Barbara Lee, the US National Truth Coalition, [the Mary Hoch Center for Reconciliation \(MHCR\)](#), [+Peace](#), and others, aims to generate support for House of Representatives Concurrent Resolution 100 to establish a US Commission for Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation. Peacebuilding Action week virtually convenes peacebuilders from around the world to show the power and unity of the global peacebuilding community.