

June 18, 2020



Alliance for
Peacebuilding



Conflict

Britain witnesses ugly scenes as demonstrations become violent. A large group of [Far-Right demonstrators](#) headed to the centre of the capital to protect a statue of Winston Churchill that had been vandalised during Black Lives Matters protests. More than 100 people were arrested in London alone.

Erdogan's parallel police force. Turkish President Erdogan has greatly increased the so-called 'neighbourhood watch'. Now he wants to give the [23,000 strong troop](#) of mostly young men more skills and increase its numbers to 30,000.

Things are looking calmer along the China-India border. The two countries are reportedly pulling back troops from areas of the [disputed border region](#) in the Himalayas, a key step in de-escalating the recent standoff.

Signal downloads are up since the protests began. Over the last two weeks, the number of Americans who have downloaded Signal, an encrypted messaging application, has skyrocketed. Many are using the app to [organize and participate in protests](#) against police brutality (without being spied on by law enforcement).

Development

Lockdown measures prevented around three million deaths in Europe. It is estimated that over [3 million people](#) would have died by the beginning of May if no lockdown measures had been enforced.

COVID-19 highlights broken systems. The pandemic has shown that Kenya has been [operating under broken systems](#). For instance, there has been a rush to fix Kenya's healthcare and food systems, which are not resilient enough to take on such unprecedented shocks.

The COVID-19 pandemic is much more than just a health crisis, and may have [erased all progress in human development](#) from the past six years by increasing inequality around the world.

Economics

European countries face the biggest economic hit from COVID-19. The ["double-hit scenario"](#) would knock down their GDP by 14 percent or more, nearly double the global projection of 7.6 percent. The US would also fare worse than average in a second wave, at 8.5 percent.

The post-coronavirus economic slump will be less impactful in Asia than the West. The OECD's [second wave scenario](#) predicts 2020 GDP declines of 7.25% in Japan and India, 3.9% in Indonesia, 3.7% in China, and 2.5% in South Korea, compared to a world average 7.5% year-over-year drop.

UK economy shrinks record 20.4% in April due to lockdown. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) said the "historic" fall [affected virtually all areas](#) of activity. The contraction is greater than the decline seen during the whole of the 2008 to 2009 economic downturn.

BP writes down energy asset values on bleak COVID-19 oil outlook. BP will [write off US\\$17.5 billion](#) from the value of its oil and gas assets as the COVID-19 crisis accelerates a shift away from fossil fuels. The energy giant is reinventing its strategy to focus on its growing renewables business.

Social

Swiss police probe 8-year-old boy over toy banknote. Swiss police confirmed they [investigated an eight-year-old boy](#) after he allegedly asked whether he could use a toy banknote in a village shop. Even though the note was clearly identified as pretend money, shop staff felt obliged to call the police.

Nigeria to cut healthcare spending by 40% despite coronavirus cases climbing. The crash in global oil prices and the economic [impact of the coronavirus pandemic](#) are cited to be the reason for the cuts. Cuts could affect immunisations, childcare, maternal healthcare and family planning services.

Huawei builds up 2-year reserve of 'most essential' US chips. The stockpile aims to [shield against Washington DC crackdowns](#) but a long-term solution remains elusive. Huawei's stockpiling efforts focused on central processors made by Intel for use in servers and programmable chips from the US based Xilinx.

America's bloated prison system has stopped growing. America, with less than 5% of the world's population, accounts for around 25% of the world's prisoners. The system has been designed to [react to crime and to punish](#) - it needs to prevent crime instead. That will take a broad cultural change.

Politics

EU says China behind 'huge wave' of COVID-19 disinformation in Europe. China has been accused by Brussels of [running disinformation campaigns](#) as the bloc set out a plan to tackle false facts about the coronavirus pandemic. An example - French care workers had abandoned their jobs leaving residents to die.

UN Libya mission says warring sides have engaged in truce talks. Libya's warring sides have begun to engage in a [new round of ceasefire talks](#), after rapid gains by the internationally recognised government around the central coastal city of Sirte.

Minneapolis to dismantle its police force. Minneapolis City Council has promised to create a [new system of public safety](#) in a city where law enforcement has long been accused of racism. Saying that the city's policing system could not be reformed, the move represents an unprecedented turning point.

Democracies contain epidemics most effectively. People living under [freely elected governments](#) have been more responsive to lockdown measures.

Peacebuilding

US protesters' demands to "defund the police" have prompted increased interest in alternative ways of addressing community conflicts. [National Association for Community Mediation centers](#) offer alternative dispute resolution processes, such as mediation and restorative justice. ["Violence interrupters"](#) identify and mediate potentially lethal conflicts in more than 25 US cities. [Cahoots](#) operates a mobile crisis intervention program to handle mental health calls in Eugene, Oregon.

Current and former US foreign policy officials protest against racism in the US. In [a letter to USAID leadership](#), some 1000 staff members advocated "dramatic action" against "systemic racism," noting that the agency's "credibility and effectiveness abroad are undermined" by "injustice at home." A group of [veteran US diplomats](#) said in a statement that the US must "live up to the values we so proudly defend abroad" and pointed out that of 189 US ambassadors serving abroad only three are Black and four are Latino. In a press release, the [Association of Black American Ambassadors](#) condemned "acts of police brutality" in the US and the "stubborn resistance to addressing institutional racism."

In response to COVID-19, peacebuilders in Africa have drawn on lessons learned during Ebola outbreaks in 2013-2015 to slow the spread of the virus. [Search for Common Ground](#), [Conciliation Resources](#), and [Mercy Corps](#), among others stressed the importance of building on relations of trust, disseminating accurate information and providing clean water and hygiene supplies. However, the response has been hampered by already limited resources for testing and treatment made worse by the economic consequences of the pandemic, and there are indications that COVID-19 is now [spreading rapidly in some African countries](#), including South Africa, Nigeria and Egypt.

Peacebuilding organizations are offering training, support, and collaboration for local women peacebuilders as they cope with the added burdens imposed by COVID-19. [ICAN](#) hosts

a weekly check-in for participants to address a range of issues, from increasing domestic violence to participation in peace processes. Other organizations have sponsored online meetings to highlight the [work of “women on the frontlines” of the COVID crisis](#) and [support training](#) for mediators.