

*"Discovering International Relations and Contemporary Global Issues"*

# Cultural Relations Policy

## News and Background

# July 2013





## About CRP News & Background

Cultural Relations Policy News & Background is a part of ICRP Monthly Review Series and an initiative of Institute for Cultural Relations Policy Budapest. Launched in 2012, its mission is to provide information and analysis on key international political events. Each issue covers up-to-date events and analysis of current concerns of international relations on a monthly basis.

As an initiative of ICRP, the content of this magazine is written and edited by student authors. The project, as part of the Institute's Internship Programme provides the opportunity to strengthen professional skills.



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## Snowden turned to Moscow for temporary asylum

**Edward Snowden** former CIA and NSA worker leaked details about American governmental secrets, since then he has been running away from the US authorities to find a final place to live. In June he travelled to Hong Kong, then with the cooperation of China and Russia could fly to Moscow. Russia still has not decided about the future of Snowden, who spent his whole July in the transit zone of Sheremetyevo Airport of Moscow. The decision can transform the Russian-US relations, that is why Putin tries to do everything guardedly.

In the first days of June everyone waited for a fast and decisive reaction from Russia. Vladimir Putin immediately pointed out that Edward Snowden could stay in Russia with one condition: if he stops leaking information and this way does not cause more damages to the United States. But according to the Russian president it was not likely to happen. The world defines Edward Snowden as a modern freedom fighter and he probably would not stop his action in revealing the secrets of the White House.

The United States asked Russia to extradite Snowden, but Moscow decidedly refused the request. Putin stated that Russia had

never extradited anyone and never would do that. Particularly because no one has ever been extradited to Moscow – even if there were times when Russia wanted other countries to do so.

The United States is really concerned about the issue, it fears from the effect of the leaked information. But Putin stressed out that they do not treat Edward Snowden as a Russian agent and will not work with him on the secret data. Moscow does not want to let the Snowden case to harm Russian-American relations. This is why Putin tells it on every possible international forum, ensuring Washington that Snowden cannot be risky as long as he stays in Sheremetyevo Airport.

What Moscow really wants for Snowden is to find a final destination as soon as possible. To reach this goal Russian security agency FSB and the American FBI started to work on the problem together. They consider a common interest to reach an agreement in the near future that is beneficial for everyone.

After the NSA's scandal Moscow still has not stated out that the United States was bugging their diplomatic missions- just like many other foreign embassies did. Putin says it is possible that it happened, but



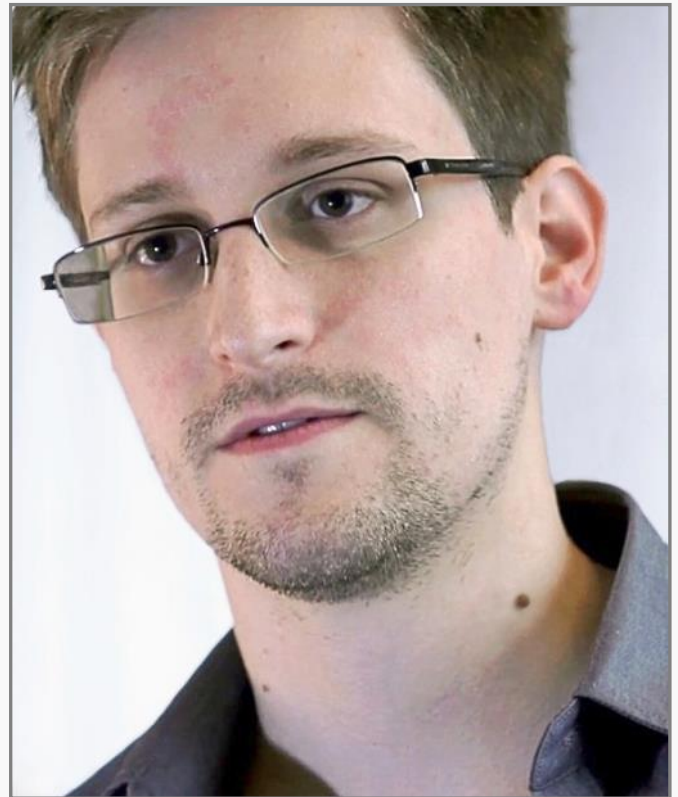
Russia does not want to be a part of other countries' conflicts.

These debates went on until the 16 of July when Edward Snowden took a significant step: he asked for temporary asylum from Russia after 23 days at Sheremetyevo.

Later that month Washington stated that they would be disappointed if Russia let Snowden to depart the Moscow airport with the asylum. This happened after some media reports saying that he will get soon the needed documents from the Russian authorities. In a telephone conversation Kerry told Lavrov Russian Foreign Minister that Snowden should be returned to the USA to get fair treatment. Jen Spaki US spokesperson added that Russia still had the chance to do the right thing and let the government do what it has to get done.

Meanwhile the United States threatened that it might impose sanctions against those who offer even a temporary asylum to Snowden and do not let his original country to deal with its own problem. These sanctions would be mostly economic.

Jay Carney, White House Spokesman told that all Obama want is clarity and cooperation with the Russian authorities. US president intended to travel to Saint Petersburg to attend a G8 summit in



*Edward Snowden. Photo: Screenshot of the film Prism by Praxis Films*

September and then a bilateral meeting with Putin in Moscow. But no one knows what will happen if the Snowden case won't be resolved soon. Maybe the meetings will be cancelled and the relations will get colder between the two countries than ever.

Head of the FSB Aleksandr Bortnikov and FBI Chief Robert Mueller has worked really hard on the best solution this month, but they have not reached an agreement yet.



## The EU reacts to the NSA actions

**After the** Snowden scandal every country tries to find a proper reaction to handle the situation. This is why the European Union in July threatened the USA to suspend two data-sharing contracts that were signed after the terror attacks of 11 September 2001 in Washington and New York.

The EU previously agreed that it will give information to the US in two main areas to avoid possible terrorist attacks. One of them is the Terrorist Finance Tracking Programme (TFTP) and the other one is the Passenger Name Record Agreement. TFTP tracks data on international financial transfers stored in Europe, and the second one sends the data of internet users who book or search for flights.

The EU still agrees with the aim of these agreements but they think that the original purposes and the actual way of execution simply do not meet.

These pieces of information were passed to the US Department of Homeland Security before, but now the EU changed its mind. They say that Washington has to respect the European Union's secrets and follow their rules of privacy. This is an essential key to further cooperation.

The main reason is based on the Snowden case – that the USA spied on European internet users and the EU. The other one is a different leak reporting that the United States was spying on EU offices and officials.



Photo: nsa.gov

And not only the EU is concerned about the issue, some in the USA are also against the NSA and the overdone inspection. Since 9/11 the USA records the dialled numbers and the length of phone calls. Washington says it has nothing to do with privacy, because no one listens to the conversations of American people. But not everybody thinks this way. With the sponsorship of Reps. Justin Amash and John Conyers a proposal was brought to the



Congress. It was voted down with 217 to 215 but even the vote session showed many interesting attitudes.

The proposal aimed to reduce the phone call observation only to those cases when it is needed to an ongoing investigation. Between the 205 pro votes we can find many political views: Republicans and Democrats as well. 94 Republicans and 111 Democrats voted for the amendment. It shows that there are many opponents with many different political attitudes of the NSA's activity. And the little difference between the number of the pro and contra voters shows that with a new scandal such proposals would easily pass the Congress. Amash commented that the discussion is really about "the American people versus the elites in Washington"

The vote against the proposal was a great achievement for Obama, who tried to defend the program since Snowden



*"The Mission Never Sleeps".  
Photo: nsa.gov*

leaked the information. Opponents said that Snowden's actions were not patriotic, what he did was rather an act of traitor. They think that the new proposal was based on people's anger and emotions and instead of rational interest. And this way, voting down the amendment was a success for the American nation.

“some in the USA are also against the NSA and the overdone inspection”





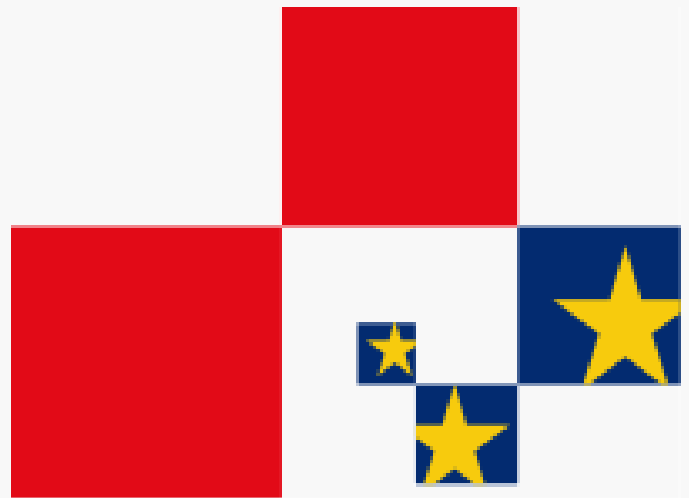
## Was Croatia a good choice for the EU?

**Croatia became** member of the European Union on the first of July after 20 years of independence and 10 years after the first negotiations with Brussels. It was the first enlargement since 2007, when Bulgaria and Romania joined. Now the mainly Roman Catholic country of 4.4 million people became an important part of the European integration.

Croatia did a lot to meet the demands of the bloc. They passed almost 350 new laws to fulfil the requirements of the European standard. In addition – only two years after the demand of the EU- arrested dozens of war criminals in cooperation with the United Nations.

Most Croatian people are optimistic about becoming a part of the EU. On 1 of July thousands celebrated on the streets of Zagreb. Fireworks worked for hours while everyone listened to Beethoven's Ode to Joy. "This will change the life of this nation for good. I welcome you wholeheartedly" - said EU Council president Herman Van Rompuy. "Welcome to the European Union!" – added EU Commission president Jose Manuel Barroso.

They hope that the 500 million new consumers and the 18 billion USD of financial source can open new markets for their economy and change its post-Communist characteristics. President of Croatia, Ivo Josipovic, in a television interview said that they truly believe that the European Union has future.



But many fear from the fact that countries like Spain, Italy and particularly Greece suffer from the crisis because of the financial system of the European Union. The global economic system is really vulnerable and such steps can bring Croatia into an even harder financial situation. In addition, being a weaker economy, such strong ones as Germany or Austria can have too much influence in this area.

Meaning a serious problem, corruption is really high in the country and according to local people it is highly difficult to avoid it in the everyday life. The Transparency International ranked Croatia 62 of 176 nations. It is better than some neighbour countries' but still could be much better. For example in 2012 Croatia's former prime minister was jailed for 10 years for taking bribes. The head of Transparency International told that the country's improvement is really slow in fighting with





corruption, becoming a big problem to resolve.

Not only some Croatians think that joining was not the best idea. Some EU members are worried about the large number of states in the bloc. There are difficulties even with the current amount and in addition there were problems with Bulgaria and Romania as well. Some specialists say that they became the part of the EU too soon. It can happen in the case of Croatia as well, where the economic situation is not stable and the unemployment rate is around 18%. If they become a part of the euro zone with this rate, it can cause huge damages for other countries as well.

But if Croatia turns out to be a good choice, it can mean a chance for the poorest regions of Europe. The former Yugoslavian countries are all hoping to become a part of the European integration and if Croatia becomes a good example, it may be an opportunity to Bosnia and



Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia. Kosovo and Serbia have already signed a power-sharing agreement to deal with ethnic conflicts to prove to Brussels that they are ready to join. Croatia would also be glad if these countries could become members as well. “We don’t want Europe to stop at our borders, it must be open to other countries” – President Ivo Josipovic said in an interview.

“some EU members are worried about the large number of states in the bloc”



## Pope Francis visiting Lampedusa to commemorate the deaths of migrants from North Africa

**On July 8th 2013** Pope Francis made his first official journey outside Rome to the tiny island of Lampedusa at the southernmost point of Italy in order to celebrate a mass devoted to the hundreds of refugees dying during their perilous trip across the sea. The torrent of people fleeing from North Africa since the beginning of the Arab Spring in 2011 have already outnumbered the island's native population of 6,000. Thousands of migrants have arrived since 2011 when the influx had reached its height with 62000 refugees landing in the port of Lampedusa. Although this number has declined there is still a steady flow of migrants arriving daily, as some 160 people touching land shortly before the arrival of the Pope's vessel in the small fishing port. The Argentinean pontiff, whose grandparents fled from Italy to Latin America, saluted the migrants for their brave efforts seeking a better life and thanked the natives' for receiving them warm-heartedly, which in his view is a sign of solidarity in our present-day world of global indifference. Although the refugee centre of the small town cannot cope with the burst of migrants, local people build improvised campsites on the hills to accommodate them. The island is the main access point to the EU for refugees and a transit point, from where they are



*Pope Francis graffiti. Photo: Thierry Ehrmann [Flickr]*

transported to the mainland of Italy and to other EU-countries. Still the small reception centre has reached its limits and is dealing with a huge backlog of unaccompanied minors (with an 11-year-old Somali boy as the youngest among them), who are forced to sleep outside the centre on the bare ground. This situation is due to the fact that Italy has changed its policy towards North African refugees by stopping considering the region as one in a state of emergency, thus Italian national agencies putting an end to handling the critical stance. More than 800 migrants are now staying on the island, which has a reception centre, built with a capacity of tending merely a number of 250. According to the Italian agency Save the Children the hub is at the point of breakdown. The topmost difficulty is that



unaccompanied minors are not being transferred to the mainland and new children arriving are added to those already staying in the centre. The establishment is therefore overcharged and cannot fulfill its mission, so that dozens of children are forced to sleep outside the building, and have trouble accessing the centre's limited shower and toilet facilities. After Raffaella Milano the agency's associate these are children, who need immediate support and protection since they have gone through a trying and hazardous journey and institutional inertia must not thwart the situation from being tackled. There are only two officials dealing with the transfer of the minors; however their work is even made more difficult by reason of the lack of national databases of places where the children could be housed.



*Lampedusa. Photo: Luca Siragusa*

Pope Francis' trip was also an attempt to turn the public's attention rather on this popular action and deflect their perception of the still alive pedophile scandal as well as from the Church's financial trickeries. The Church's leader underlined the importance of reviving our conscience in order to be able to feel sympathy for those, who are struggling to find a better place to live and are seeking a way out of poverty and unrest. He depicted our present world as one, where

we became used to other people's sufferings, where we do not care about them anymore, because of the predominant selfishness and ignorance ruling our planet. At the same time he asked for forgiveness for those, who created such circumstances under which these people were compelled to leave their homes and face a precarious situation. After the Pope's visit to the Sicilian island another 31 people died on July 26th, when a vessel capsized during the journey from Libya to Lampedusa. The survivors of the motorized rubber dinghy add up to 22, who are a fraction of the 470 refugees arriving in the port of the small island in the space of 24 hours. The number of migrants reaching the refugee camp this year mounted up to 4,000, which is the triple of yesteryear's amount. Early August Italian authorities secured the life and well-being of some 400 refugees helping them reach the island and providing them with medical service, although Maltese authorities have recently turned a Liberian boat back alluding that in their opinion the passengers of the vessel were in good physical condition and were not exposed to threats. While the duration of the exodus wave is unsure yet, the Pope's engagement in the matter, as well as Italian authorities' efforts to provide a secure environment for the migrants and a possibility to move on to set up better life circumstances shows hope for the desperate asylum seekers. Those who succeed reaching land in Lampedusa, and thereafter settling in Italy or in another country of the EU will probably seize the opportunity, perhaps the biggest chance of their lives.



## Israeli-Palestinian peace talks are set for 9 months

**Israel and Palestine** agreed to set up a nine-month timeline for negotiations between the two nations. They would like to find a final solution for their conflicts after almost six decades, since Israel became an independent state in 1948.

The peace talks are supposed to take place in Washington and will endure until the end of April 2014. By the end of this time it is expected to set up the actual and final borders of the Palestinian state. Other final status issues are the future of Jewish settlements in the West Bank, the fate of Palestinian refugees and the status of Jerusalem.



*Photo: U.S. Department of State*

The negotiations have already started and the second round is supposed to start in August. The next location will probably be in Israel or in a Palestinian area, but it is not decided yet. Certainly the next round will

move away from the territory of the United States to the original place of the problems. Unites States Department spokesman Jen Spaki emphasised that the timeline is not like a deadline but an agreement that the two sides really want to fulfil. They can negotiate on their own and they do not have to follow anyone's directions. And the nine month period is only the minimum, they can keep carrying on the cooperation. Israelis and Palestinians will regularly meet on Mondays, and the most important part of these meetings is not the debate but the discussion- she added.

Before the first talk at a dinner, members of the Israeli envoy told what everyone should know: Israel does it for itself and it is not a favour for Palestinians or Americans. They think about the peace as their own aim. They also noted that to find a proper solution is much harder than it seems and probably will take a long time.

Israel took an important step, they voted to release 104 Palestinian prisoners as a sign of goodwill. The USA highly welcomed this action, noting that it was a hard but great move from the Israeli government.

Palestinian chief negotiator, Saeb Erekat noted that "Palestinians have suffered enough, and no one benefits more from the success of this endeavour more than





Palestinians" and "It's time for the Palestinian people to have an independent, sovereign state of their own."

The USA has a key role in the talks, Kerry is expected to hold series of meeting with the two delegations. Barack Obama was also involved in the preparation of the process, this is why he visited Israel in March. After the defeat of US influence in Syria and Egypt, the case of Palestinian-Israeli talks brought back the hope of other successes in this problematic region for Washington.

US appointed a new envoy for the peace in the Middle East, Martin Indyk, who is a former ambassador to Israel. He would like to achieve Obama's goals – to see these two nations living in peace side by side. But some people are sceptics about the possible results of the talks – considering that they defeated for about 60 years. As a reaction Kerry said: "While I understand the scepticism, I don't share it. And I don't think we have time for it". He thinks that the process of searching for solution cannot be left for another generation again.



West Bank Checkpoint.  
Photo: Chris Yunker [Flickr]

“it is expected to set up the actual and final borders of the Palestinian state”



## Syrians require urgent humanitarian assistance Kurds are planning to create temporary autonomous regions

**Great Britain's** Foreign Secretary William Hague stated that UK delivers protection against chemical weapons to Syrian rebels. This step is described as necessary because the Assad regime started to use the nerve agent Sarin as a chemical weapon which accentuates the need for the possibility of supplying protective equipment to the Supreme Military Council of the Syrian National Coalition, "which the UK recognizes as the sole legitimate representatives of the Syrian people". Due to a "matter of special urgency" the government came to this decision but its main focus is on "diplomatic efforts to secure a ceasefire".

A new report of the UN reveals the enormity of the destruction the war leaves. Comparisons to the Rwanda genocide are made because there are estimated 5,000 Syrians dying every month while refugees are fleeing in large scales to neighboring countries posing a risk of spillover-effects to the wider Middle-East. Like already prophesied, at least 6.8 million Syrians require urgent humanitarian assistance risking a famine crisis and accused the government and opposition of "systematically and in many cases deliberately" failing their obligation to protect civilians. "The security, economic,

political, social, development and humanitarian consequences of this crisis are extremely grave and its human impact immeasurable in terms of the long-term trauma and emotional impact on this and future generations of Syrians, we are not only watching the destruction of a country but also of its people."



*Kurdish town in Syria. Photo: Bertramz [Wikimedia Commons]*

Syria's Kurds are planning to create temporary autonomous regions in the north of the country, where the majority of Kurdish minority (about 15 per cent of the Syrian population) lives. Many of them live close to Aleppo where fights between the antagonists happen regularly. The autonomy would only be provisional but a guarantee of stability until a broad agreement on the future of Syria to sustain





peace is reached. Neighboring Turkey observes the PYD, a branch of the Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK) which is concerned by Turkey as a "terrorist group", and its plans in distrust. The fear of a violent attack by Kurdish fighters, Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu warned, would provoke an immediate Turkish answer.



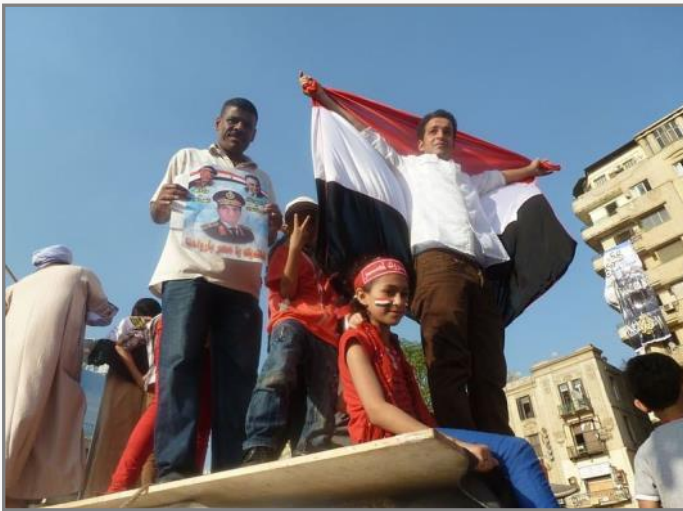
US State Secretary, John Kerry gave at last as well as Britain a positive answer to the question of arms-supply to Syria justified by the desperation of the situation. The arms shall be strictly used for self-defense, protection of self and defense of civilians. "The Syrian opposition committed that they believe Geneva II is very important and they agreed to work over the course of the next couple of weeks to pinpoint the terms, the conditions, under which they think that it can work." A peace conference at the end of August in Geneva hosted by Russia and the USA, despite the quarrel can be possible.

Meanwhile rebels attacked on Assad's home province; a report in New York Times claims that Sudan is supplying arms to Syria, despite Sudan's international embargo and its close ties to Iran, a backer of Bashar al-Assad. Sudan in his tradition of supplying arms to rebel groups and then denying, sold them to Qatar where they were delivered to the rebels through Turkey.

“at least 6.8 million Syrians require urgent humanitarian assistance risking a famine crisis”



## President Morsi removed from power



Many of those who rallied in Tahrir Square brought their families and children, July 7, 2013.  
Photo: S. Behn [VOA]

**Only one year** after Mohammed Morsi's inauguration as the first democratically elected president of Egypt, he was asked to resign by an angry Anti-Morsi rout on 30th of June. The former president Hosni Mubarak had ruled before for thirty years which made him the longest-serving ruler of the 20th/21st century. But his government was overthrown in Egypt's revolution which took place as part of a popular uprising, called the Arab spring. When people grew tired of the arbitrary rule including violence and corruption, they also became civilly disobedient and resistant to the government and its system.

According to sources, Morsi lost his legitimacy already in November, when he declared courts could not review his decrees and ousted the country's

prosecutor-general, while the Muslim Brotherhood "hijacked the vote of the people" by running on a religious platform. The prosecution of numerous journalists, the oppression of political activists, and others on charges of "insulting" officials, also led to media restrictions and censorship.

Likewise in the overthrow of 2011, the military experienced some influence on political questions and decisions. After the assumption of power by the Armed Forces, suspension of the Constitution and the dissolution of the Parliament in 2011, Mubarak was sentenced to life imprisonment; the moment when Morsi became the candidate of his Freedom and Justice Party being a member of the Muslim Brotherhood. However after his win, he decided to follow in Mubarak's footsteps enjoying a too wide range of powers which even granted him the right to declare a controversial constitution. Morsi's call for an intervention in Syria in June crossed a "national security red-line".

The military gave him after the break-out a 48h-ultimatum among 1-3rd July and during the protests people chanted "The police and the people are one" as the police was traditionally against the Muslim brotherhood. Morsi's speech on 2nd July did not reach anything as the tide already had turned against him. "On 3 July,



General Abdul Fatah al-Sisi, head of the Egyptian Armed Forces, announced that he had removed President Mohamed Morsi from power, suspended the constitution, and would be calling new presidential and Shura Council elections."



*A man in Tahrir Square holds a sticker saying "No To Terrorism" in reference to the Muslim Brotherhood, July 7, 2013. Photo: S. Behn [VOA]*

The remove was decried by Morsi's supporters as a "coup" and celebrated as a "correction" by his opponents so that after the Friday prayers, demonstrations of Morsi supporters ended in death and violence. Statistics claim that there were 850 wounded, 26 died, several sexual assaults against women demonstrators, as well as acts of destruction of property.

While Morsi was put under house arrest, two top leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood's political party had been taken into custody and more arrests of members are planned.

The military, the political opposition, representatives of the Tamarod campaign, the Coptic Church and high-ranking Islamic scholars have agreed that Adly Mansour, head of the country's Supreme Constitutional Court, will replace Morsi as Egypt's interim president, Mansour will "establish a government that is a strong

and diverse". But it is not clear for how long Mansour will govern, when the next elections will come and what will happen with Morsi.

The unconstitutional removal of Mursi caused the Suspension of Egypt from the African Union "until the restitution of constitutional order", rejecting "any illegal seizure of power". Egyptian ambassador to the United States defended that "the voice and the call of tens of millions of Egyptians must be heard, understood and respected", which US-Secretary Kerry first fully supported and later after being pressured from the international community of favoring to restore normality and a peaceful democracy solution.

The Freedom and Justice Party, called "the international community and international groups and all the free people of the world [to] intervene to stop further massacres [...] and prevent a new Syria in the Arab world." as an al-Qaeda-video already showed the interest of the terrorist group to turn Egypt away from democracy into an Islamic lead country and accusing the USA of a complot against Morsi. Indeed, Egypt is the largest Arab country in the world and a close ally of the United States, which gives it \$1.5 billion per year for military and civilian programs or institutions and "spreading false information", a human rights group stated.

A former member of parliament from the Morsi-allied Freedom and Justice Party said that Egyptians "will never recognize a coup d'etat," and the party would "continue [the] peaceful resistance to the bloody military coup against constitutional legitimacy. The peaceful and popular will

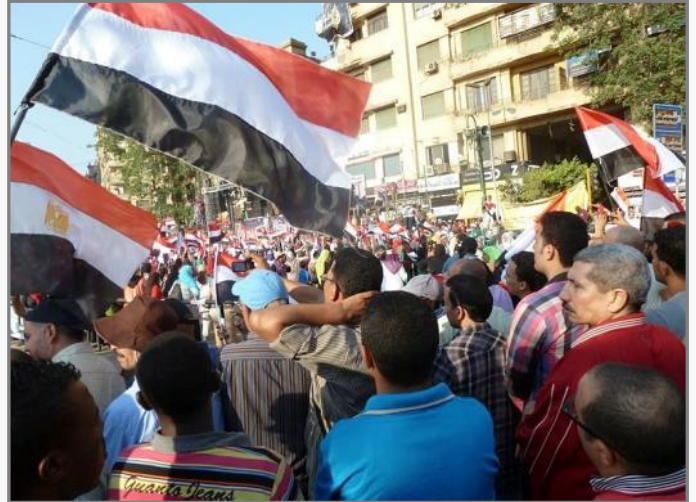




of the people shall triumph over force and oppression.” To support the former government and its leader, followers with their families built up whole protest camps close to highly symbolic places although the interim authority told that this behavior is punishable by vacation. But until the end of the Islamic fasting month Ramadan the police most probably will not intervene.

The difficult situation of Coptic Christians in the country who already experienced hatred of Morsi's supporters leave a lot of questions open: where will Egypt go? Will there be a secularist or Islamist future? Is the

current government legitimate or was the removal really an unconstitutional act?



“likewise in the overthrow of 2011, the military experienced some influence on political questions and decisions”



## IMF urging China to launch reforms in the economy

**Chinese economic** growth has fallen significantly in recent months and even the current slower pace of economic performance is likely to prove to be not sustainable, if the Chinese government will not show willingness to implement a structural overhaul in its economy. The economy has been shrinking steadily since 2007, when GDP growth was at its peak with 14 per cent, which has fallen to about 7.5 per cent last year and is expected to hover around the same number this year. Former policies seem to have had merely near-term effects resulting in the upswing of China's economic performance and according to the IMF-report the mix of investment, credit and fiscal stimulus to boost the economy is not sustainable anymore. Experts point out increasing risks and vulnerabilities despite the country's still vast foreign currency reserves. The main problem is that China has become too reliant on investment and credit, thus it needs to change direction of its policies towards a more consumer-based economy. IMF has also raised concerns about the country's huge spending on mispriced real estate and infrastructure investments, which have stimulated growth

only in the short term. However their fuelling impact on the economy may not last too long, so that adjustments to the financial markets as well as a slow-down in investments are necessary to achieve a rather moderate, but surely permanent and stable growth path. The fund's report underlines several major areas of risk, which are to be avoided by speeding up the transformation of China's growth model. These sectors include the financial system, which lacks adequate regulatory controls concerning the boom in lending. The banking sector is also exposed to threats due to the possible worsening of corporations' performance. Another



Beijing City Commercial Bank. Photo: Patrick Jayne and Thomas [Flickr]



problem is the expansive debt-financed local government spending without adequate tax bases, which is considered a major weakness of Chinese markets. Finally the report emphasizes the risk of steeply falling real estate prices due to the behaviour of Chinese savers, who do not earn interest on their deposits and therefore increasingly pour money into housing markets.



*Des Voeux Road Central, Hong Kong. Photo: Baycrest [Wikimedia Commons]*

Decision-makers of China's elite show willingness to implement the reforms and to keep economic growth within a reasonable range, especially as the population is aging and active labor force is shrinking. The government is now committed to increase domestic consumption and productivity, to reduce the country's reliance on construction investment and exports and, last but not least, to master financial risks signaled by the IMF. The Chinese government – along with its leader Li Keqiang – has confirmed that it will settle for slower growth and pledged that it will not execute another aggressive stimulus, which was implemented right after the global financial crisis. According to HSBC's chief economist, Qu Hongbin, Beijing is now striving for regaining public confidence as it pursues a new policy, which focuses on a stable, moderate and calculable growth.

“the mix of investment, credit and fiscal stimulus to boost the economy is not sustainable anymore”





## Violence feared as India moves to approve new state

**Long time ongoing** protests and separatist movements in Andhra Pradesh state seem to be closing in on their final goal: achieving the independence of Telangana.

As a federal state, India has always had minor issues amongst its states concerning the question of self-government. Although the original federal state system has been revised in 1956, today it seems that the once reorganized system fails to keep up with the peoples' desires.

The notion of a new reform for the federal system is not new to the Indian society. Many communities emphasize the fact that the current structure is lacking efficiency. However, the main difference between the common folk's movements and the politicians' criticism is that while amongst the common people these thoughts are mainly from a tribal view; leading politicians of the country are trying to achieve a greater portion of votes for their parties.

Recent events show on the other hand that when it is down to the division of a former federal state, many compromises must be made. As it stands today, Andhra Pradesh state will be divided in the near future into two new states: Telangana and a remnant state consistent of Coastal Andhra and Rayalaseema. Despite the fact that the government has many reasons to make this

very hard decision, many of the local communities are outraged because of the plans.



There are many fractures in the Andhra Pradesh society but the most significant lies between the western and the eastern (coastal) people. The western part of Andhra Pradesh, that is planned to form Telangana consists of mostly tribal people who were vastly neglected during the last few decades. This is the main source of their independence movement: to achieve greater scale of self-governance and to have a louder voice in the National

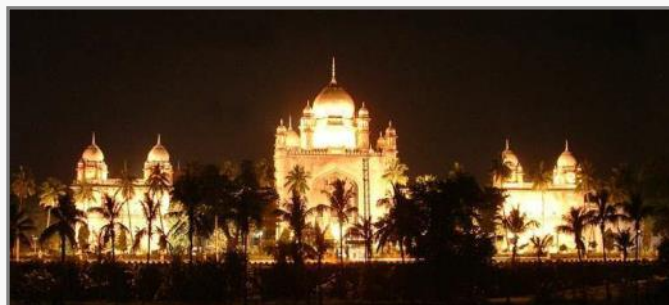


Assembly. On the other hand the economy of Andhra Pradesh is very dependent on its capital city, Hyderabad, which happens to be the future Telangana capital as well. This caused many demonstrations and violent protests from Coastal Andhra residents who are desperate to keep their important trade and workplace hub, the most significant in the region. If Hyderabad were to be removed from Andhra, then the state would suffer an irreversible economic breakdown. Latest plans however are proposing a major compromise to the two future states: share Hyderabad as capital city for the next 10 years, and during this period the government will try to find a solution to this most irritating issue.

The question of Telangana raises attention to many other problems that are affecting the Indian state. As it can be seen from the intensity of the demonstrations in Andhra Pradesh, the hunger for workplaces is unimaginably high in some parts of India, especially in those areas that are so bipolar like Hyderabad and the region surrounding it.

From one side the government acknowledges the fact that the Telugu people of Andhra Pradesh have been neglected and that their region is deeply underdeveloped compared to the rest of the state.

On the other hand, it should also consider the problem of Hyderabad, which serves as an IT, trade and workplace hub for most of the population living in Andhra.



*High Court at Hyderabad, the main judicial body for Andhra Pradesh. Photo: Wikimedia Commons*

This particular question of Telangana shed light on similar issues throughout India. As a matter of fact there are many federal states tackling the same issues as Andhra Pradesh. For example: Maharashtra, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh (that lies between Delhi and Bihar) and Assam. As it can be imagined, many of these problems are multi-layered and cannot be solved in one great solution, but they were already successful in raising the politicians' attentions to such important problems that are threatening the internal integrity of the state.



“There are many fractures in the Andhra Pradesh society”



## Today's Cuba: 60 years after the start of revolution

**Cuba celebrates** this year the 60th anniversary of the assault on the Moncada Barracks which is considered the beginning of the Cuban Revolution. On July 26, 2013 more than 10,000 citizens gathered on the occasion of the so-called National Rebellion Day and listened to Cuban President Raúl Castro's speech. The ceremony in Santiago was attended by several leading politicians of Latin America such as Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro, Bolivia's Head of State Evo Morales and Nicaragua's President Daniel Ortega who all have vowed solidarity with Cuba.

60 years ago, on 26 July 1953 more than 150 rebels – led by Fidel Castro and his brother, Raúl – attacked the Moncada Barracks in Santiago and the barracks in Bayamo in order to defeat the regime of Fulgencio Batista. The attempt failed. Several revolutionaries were tortured and killed, others got imprisoned such as the Castro brothers themselves. However, in 1955 the Batista government bowed to international pressure and released all political prisoners in Cuba, which marked a new start for those who wanted changes in the country's leadership. Indeed, Fidel and Raúl Castro gathered very soon a group of Mexican exiles to prepare for the overthrow of Batista's government even gaining the

support of Argentine revolutionary Ernesto "Che" Guevara. After three years of guerrilla warfare, the revolution ended on 1 January, 1959 with the escape of Batista to the Dominican Republic. Since then, Cuba is one of the world's few remaining socialist states governed by the Communist Party of Cuba and its key politicians, Fidel and Raúl Castro. Latter took over the presidency in 2008, following the retirement of Fidel Castro.



*Fidel Castro at Palacio Municipal of Santa Clara before march toward Havana in 1959.  
Photo: Andrew Saint-George*

Although a series of social and economic reforms was launched since then, Cuba basically has remained the same. Obviously, due to the rapidly changing world and the international – political – pressure, the government is forced to take actions. For example, recently it has decided to free up sections of the economy and cut back state-sector jobs as



a response to the worsening economic situation. Likewise, we can mention the facilitation of travel conditions which provides that citizens can leave much easier the island than before. However, these steps do not change the fact that Cuban government has been accused of numerous human rights abuses and – as a consequence – US embargo is still in place. President Obama has declared that without Cuban willingness to move toward democratization and to improve human rights and freedoms, the embargo remains “in the national interest of the United States”. It should be mentioned here, that some people underline the counterproductive effects of the embargo which actually help the Castro regime. According to these opinions, the United States has succeeded only in making Cuba a symbol of proud independence. In an interview of 2010 Hillary Clinton herself said that “It is my personal belief that the Castros do not want to see an end to the embargo and do not want to see normalisation with the United States, because they would lose all of their excuses for what hasn't happened in Cuba in the last 50 years”.

However, violation of human rights is not the only reason that – at least in a rhetorical level – helps keeping up the embargo. We shall not forget the importance of Cuban lobby in the United States which main purpose is the same: maintain the embargo as long as Cuban government does not establish democracy. The principal lobby organisation – the Cuban American National Foundation (CANF) – undoubtedly has a major say in US politics. Although Cuba poses little threat to American interests and policies, the CANF is able to push Congress to put pressure on the Castro regime with decisions sought to increase the island's economic isolation. And if you would like to know the key of success just think about the Cuban American community in South Florida which means a population of almost 900,000 people who are potential American voters at the same time.

In conclusion, it seems that everything has remained the same. Despite any changes, Cuba is still a socialist state under US embargo and for now there is not much chance that anything would change.

### **Suspicious military cargo seized by Panama**

Cuban government has admitted being behind an arm shipment seized in the Panama Canal. The cargo's original destination would have been North Korea. According to the Cuban Foreign Ministry's official statement, the ship was carrying obsolete Soviet-era arms from the island for repair in North Korea and they were all to be returned to Cuba. UN sanctions prohibit any supply of arms to North Korea because of the international dispute over its nuclear programme.





## Brazil protests: Tens of thousands in union-led strikes



*Brazilian protests. Photo: Tânia Rêgo/ABr*

**The distinguished attention** that is focused on Brazil right now has resulted in an ambiguous opinion about the country. Recent events showed that while being the biggest and strongest country in Latin-America, Brazil still has many problems to face and solve before the upcoming trials of the World Cup, the Summer Olympic Games of 2016 and next year's elections.

The reason for this complex picture of Brazil can be found by following two chain of events happening almost at the same time. The more triumphant one, yet also filled with many protests, is the first international visit of Pope Francis. The pontiff did not defy his habits and visited places that many of his predecessors would avoid. By paying visits to these places (amongst them a prison) the Holy Father emphasized his

radical yet, at the same time in many questions orthodox attitude. It is of little surprise that the Pope's journey and especially the final great Sunday mass was attended by many Latin-American dignitaries.

On the Copacabana Beach of Rio de Janeiro his Holiness raised attention on the youth activism and enthusiasm that is very much needed in the Catholic Church and he also added that the Church should not forget to reach out to the peripheries of society and thus help those in utmost need.

According to the Rio authorities more than 3 million people were present on the final mass and the Vatican also announced the journey and the final mass as a huge success.

And this is the point where the glorious history of Pope Francis's journey to Latin-America ends. It ends because there where many problems during the preparations and the mass itself. Of course the protests against the orthodox anti-abortion opinion of the Church can be considered natural, however many local residents raised their voices against the corruption and mischief surrounding the Papal visit. A splendid example of the state of corruption in Brazil is that in spite of the fact that the city of Rio spent \$50 million on preparations, the place



of the Sunday mass had to be changed in the last moment, because the originally planned site, in the outskirts of the city was waterlogged. Not to mention that the money spent on preparations came from public funds.

Meanwhile the Brazilian government and society was occupied with the festivities of the Papal visit, a great wave of strikes went through the country. Although this time it could not muster as many people as in June, this time the strikes organized by the unions nationwide called some 1 million protesters on the streets. The new wave of protests started with a 3 days strike of tens of thousands of workers organized by their unions, however the events quickly escalated.

The main reason for the protests were to demand better working conditions and public services, however as the protests spread, new demands appeared. Such as reduce corruption, increase investment in health and education and free public transportation. The last one was an answer to the June protests where the reason that brought people on the streets was the rapid increase in transportation fares.

The July demonstrations hit 10 of the federal states of Brazil, and their importance is showed by the fact that parallel to building

road-blocks and barricading authority buildings, the demonstrators could hinder the transportation lines in important cities like Santos or Salvador almost completely to a standstill.



*Riot police in São Paulo, during the protests against the increase in public transport fares.*  
Photo: Gabriel Vinicius Cabral

The protesters violent demand to reduce corruption is well presented in their action in São Paulo, where they shut down a recently build road which symbolizes the improper spending of money in the local communities.

The scale of demonstrations prompted President Dilma Rousseff to propose a package of investment and reforms in public services, furthermore she also proposed a national plebiscite on political reform. The proposal, however remains unsupported by the Congress with the approaching elections in next year.

### Pope Francis

Jorge Mario Bergoglio was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina in 1936. He was ordained a priest in 1969, from 1973 to 1979 he was Provincial superior for Argentina in the Society of Jesus. Later on, in 1998 he became Archbishop of Argentina and a cardinal in 2001. He is the first cardinal from the Southern Hemisphere to be elected as the head of the Roman Catholic Church.





## Slow recovery in Mali

**As part of** the slow recovering process, the UN peacekeeping mission – MINUSMA – started its operation recently. The peacekeeping force planned to be some 12,000 troops strong is nearing its final numbers. It is indeed an important mission for the UN, because nearly half of the troops of MINUSMA are partly deployed by the ECOWAS countries, meaning that the current peacekeeping force, upholding the ceasefire in Mali, is composed of neighboring countries' soldiers. The task of the peacekeeping force is to maintain the relative peace between the governmental and the northern separatist forces, while the country prepares for the elections planned for July 28th. The full-fledged peacekeeping force will be around 13,000–14,000 men, with approximately 1,400 policemen amongst them.

As the Malian interim government's Defense Minister addressed the events: the arrival of the UN forces was a “comfort” to them. Furthermore the new operating peacekeepers eased the burden of the French in the country. This was France can keep up with its intentions of leaving only 1,000 troops in the country from the currently 4,500.

Meanwhile the freshly started peacekeeping force already faces some

issues of support from neighboring countries. Nigeria recently announced that the Nigerian troops currently deployed in Mali will be regrouped and reorganized in the near future. The reason from President Jonathan was that the Nigerian forces are needed inside Nigeria for the time being. On the other hand the President also assured ECOWAS Chairman and Côte d'Ivoire President Allasane Outtara that his country will not fully withdraw from the operation, it is in fact just a minor regrouping process that Nigeria's current internal state justifies.



*Hawa Maiga, 45, is just one of thousands of people that are currently internally displaced within Mali. She sits patiently with around 100 other men, women and children, at a WFP-organised food distribution site in central Bamako. Hawa comes from Gao, one of Mali's northern towns that has been acutely affected by conflict in recent times. Photo: DFID - UK Department for International Development*



## Is Kenya birthing a new country named Jubaland?

**Recently** a new source of tension appeared on the Horn of Africa. Somalia's southernmost autonomous region, commonly referred as Jubaland has become a hotspot of interests. When mentioning a country like Somalia, which has a series of quite bloody conflicts in its recent history, it is not surprising that new tensions arise from time to time. However, the most recent cause of trouble between Somali officials and Kenyan leaders of the peacekeeping forces in Somalia is the slightly disturbing issue of Jubaland. More specifically the independence of Jubaland. Accusations from Somali officials are rather bold, stating that Kenya in fact intends to create a buffer state from the former Jubaland region of Somalia.

According to Kenyan based Horn of Africa experts it may be the situation, however if



*Kismaayo City, Jubaland, Somalia*

Kenya indeed aims to create such a buffer zone between the two “old allies” states, leaders of the Kenyan state should calculate every possible result very cautiously. A badly conducted plan can result in not just pushing Somalia back into turmoil, but at the same time destabilizing the Northeastern Region of Kenya.

As Kenyan involvement in Somalian peacekeeping operations evolve, Somalia accuses Kenyan forces deployed in southern Somalia with picking sides and supporting local warlord Sheikh Ahmed Madobe in becoming the leader of an independent Jubaland state. It is true that the Kenyan forces worked in close connection with Mr. Madobe's militia called Ras Kamboni in order to repel the Al Shabab forces from the area, but the Kenyan government continuously refused the accusations of picking sides and pursuing self-interests in Jubaland.

The problem of Jubaland is further complicated by the recent visit of Mr. Madobe to Puntland (a northern autonomous region of Somalia) and the fact that a conference was held in Kismaayo concerning the possible independence of Jubaland in the future. Mr. Madobe stated on his visit to Puntland, which is proud of its autonomy and self-governance, that Jubaland considers Puntland its mother.



Meanwhile the conference held in Kismayo University and attended by 550 delegates vastly disputed the possibilities of Jubaland and invited the Somali government, who although attended the conference, after travelling back to Mogadishu refused further cooperation with the participants and declared many of its decisions unconstitutional, such as drafting a constitution of Jubaland and electing Mr. Madobe as president of the country.



This particular issue seems to be worsened by the fact that the Somali government is officially recognized and supported by the United States and the International Monetary Fund, while the 6 warlords competing for the leadership of Jubaland are completely unrecognized and unsupported apart from Mr. Madobe, though the Kenyan support for Madobe is rather subtle.

Relations between Mogadishu and Nairobi furthermore eradicated by a recently misdirected letter to the African Union from Somalia written by deputy prime minister Fawzia Yusuf Adam, in which he claimed that Kenyan forces are sided with the warlords and that the neutrality of the peacekeeping force is non-existent, in addition he stated that the peacekeeping force is “incompetent”.

As it can be seen, Kenyan-Somali relations have deteriorated during the last few months to a state of official accusations. The two long-time allies now seem to be on different opinions that could cause a lot of trouble if remained unattended. While both sides' intentions can be understood from a different point of view, instead of further weaving the thread of conflicts, countries like Kenya and Somalia should focus on the continuation of the stability process started by the African Union and the complete repressing of the Al Shabab.

While it still remains unknown whether the two states can settle their disputes, a little more cooperative behavior could only be help for a region that has suffered so much during the last few decades.

“Jubaland has become a hotspot of interests”



## ■ News in Brief

# Domestic affairs affecting international relations

### **UNICEF finds gradual falling in Female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) in Africa**

■ UNICEF published a new report about female genital cutting in Africa analyzing household survey data from of the 29 African countries. The tradition of FGM/C is a deeply entrenched social norm to preserve the family honor especially in the Sahel region and East Africa; so it should be positively rewarded that Egypt experienced a drop from 96 to 81 per cent of women who experienced and accordingly will have to experience it. Often the fear of social outlawing is greater than of criminal prosecution because the tradition has been banned by law in many countries, but the feeling of duty is stronger even if the majority avows itself against the brutal ritual. "The steepest declines in the prevalence of the practice have occurred in Kenya, one of Africa's most dynamic and developed nations, and – most surprisingly – In the Central African Republic, one of its poorest and least developed without receiving "no significant foreign aid to combat the practice". 125 million women are already affected; 30 million at risk to undergo it, but the statistical tendencies shows that the younger generation is becoming less prevalent overall and less vulnerable to the practice.

### **Africa's Pinochet Chadian ex-president Hissene Habré faces court**

■ The former dictator Hissene Habré who ruled with fierce repression will be charged of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity after being alleged to have caused the deaths of about 40,000 of his own countrymen between 1982 and 1990. Until the sentence, most probably to life term, he is kept in custody while his lawyers concern his arrest as an illegal act. The incumbent Chadian president Deby who ousted Habré will join 1,015 people identified by a special court in Dakar to testify against the imprisoned.

### **Pakistan's 12th president**

■ The candidate Mamnoon Hussain of the Muslim ruling party had been elected the next president of Pakistan. He is a close ally of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in Karachi having been considered certain to replace Zardari. Hussain's loyalty to Sharif and low profile is expected to bolster the prime minister's authority and provide a stark contrast to Zardari, considered to be a sharp political operator behind the scenes. A change in the constitution makes the president rather a master of ceremonies which does not hinder the president to be the puppet master. The Taliban attack on a prison overshadowed the vote.





### **Tens of thousands in Hong Kong stage rain-hit March for Democracy**

■ Getting soaking wet could not discourage the group of approximately 50,000 protesters from waving anti-CCP and pro-British banners and flags on the streets of Hong Kong on 1st July, 2013, on the 16th anniversary of the city's return to mainland rule. The most important goal of the rally was to show the citizens' disapproval towards current communist leader Leung Chun-ying, whom critics accuse of kowtowing to Beijing and not doing anything to handle quality-of-life troubles in Hong Kong. Due to the torrential rain, the number of protesters might seem low after last year's estimate of 400,000, a recent survey, however, published by the Hong Kong University, shows that only one-third of H.K. citizens are proud of being a Chinese national – the lowest level since 1998.

### **Japan's Abe has chance to show true colors after big election win**

■ The ruling coalition of Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe managed to score an overwhelming victory in the upper-house election on 21st July. Having secured at least 133 seats in the 242-seat upper-house, the coalition of Abe's Liberal Democratic Party and the New Komeito party enjoys a considerable majority, which significantly tightens Abe's grip on power. Despite claiming to prioritize continuing his efforts to fix the world's third biggest economy with his so-called "Abenomics" mix of hyper-easy monetary policy, fiscal spending and a growth strategy, critics suspect that Abe will soon shift to focus on his long-cherished ideological agenda which includes revising Japan's post-war pacifist constitution and amplifying the country's defence capabilities.

### **Mexico's election violence is said to be worst in years**

■ It has long been very dangerous to run for public office in Mexico, with the candidates constantly being exposed to threats, assaults or even killings committed by criminal gangs and political (or other) opponents. This electoral season, however, has proven to be the far most brutal one in recent years – at least six candidates died from homicide since February, and another one was wounded in a murder attempt that left two casualties. Party and campaign officials and their family members have also been assaulted on several occasions. So far, all this violence has caused only trouble and embarrassment for the government of incumbent president Enrique Peña Nieto, who has promised to put an end to the assaults. Some members of the opposition claim that putting the army in the streets in order to ensure the safety of the voting proceedings would be the solution, while more harsh critics say that "a state that fails to protect its candidates is a state that fails to protect democracy."



### **Luxembourg calls early elections after spy scandal**

■ The Grand Duke of Luxembourg decided to dissolve the parliament of the country as of 7th October after Prime Minister Jean-Claude Juncker was caught up in a misconduct scandal by domestic spy agencies. The new elections are to be held on 20th October, leaving Juncker fully in charge until then. The incumbent prime minister, now 58, has been in power for eighteen years in Luxembourg, decided to run again for office in the upcoming elections.

### **Political crisis in Portugal likely to deepen**

■ Two additional ministers are expected to resign in Portugal – minister of agriculture Assuncao Cristas and minister of social security Pedro Mota Soares were preparing to tender their resignation on 3rd July, aggravating the upheaval that could destroy Lisbon's chances of exiting from an international bailout. The turmoil began with finance minister Vitor Gaspar throwing in the hat on 1st July, followed by the resignation of CDS-PP party leader and foreign minister Paulo Portas on the 2nd, which Prime Minister Pedro Passos Coelho did not accept. The leader said he would remain head of the government to ensure political stability and break out of the stalemate situation. Should Portas decide to pull his rightist CDS-PP party out of the coalition, Coelho's centre-right government would lose its majority in the Portuguese parliament.

### **Battle lines drawn as protesters seek overhaul of Chile's political system**

■ In spite of Chile's recent economic growth and the almost complete disappearance of severe poverty throughout the country, Chilean politicians running for office in this November's presidential election have been stalked and harassed by protesters. Leftist frontrunner Michelle Bachelet was spat on the face by an upset student, while an angry fisherman threw eggs at right-wing candidate Pablo Longueira. The socialist Bachelet, former president of Chile, who is considered to be the favourite to win against Longueira, has claimed to attempt to overcome the social uprising by forging a coalition with the Chilean Communist party, thus creating a "new majority." The communists would ship in between 4–8% of the votes for Bachelet in November, which could be decisive, yet seeking alliance with the communists is a controversial move by the leftist leader, as many blame the far left for creating social and economic havoc in the 1970s that led to the bloody coup of General Augusto Pinochet.



## ■ News in Brief

# Bilateral relations

### **Nigerian-Chinese loan accord**

■ Nigeria and China were just signing five agreements to boost financial, trade, economic, technical and cultural relations in order to strengthen infrastructure, traffic network in the air and on rails in Nigeria. The Chinese interest in natural resources like oil have been rewarded with a soft credit over 1.1 billion US dollars to develop domestic manufacturing capacity as the most populous country has an enormous internal and huge regional market for foreign investors. While America is deeply involved in democratic or political processes in many countries, China is more concern with business interests.

### **China Starts largest-ever foreign naval drill with Russia**

■ China has sent a naval group of four guided-missile destroyers, two guided-missile frigates, a supply ship, three shipborne helicopters and a special operations detachment to this year's joint drill with Russia called Naval Interaction 2013. The exercises, held between 8th-10th July, included a wide variety of scenarios, such as rescuing a hijacked ship, escorting commercial ships, and defending a convoy from a set of sea and air attacks. China and Russia have regularly had joint naval exercises since 2005. The two countries have agreed to co-operate in their anti-piracy efforts, and to respond promptly and efficiently to other common at-sea threats as well.

### **Family reunion talks to be held between North and South Korea**

■ On 10th July, North Korea proposed holding meetings to discuss common issues with South Korea, namely the reopening of the Gaeseong Industrial Complex (GIC), tourism on Mt. Geumgang and the possible reunion of family members parted by the Korean War back in the 1950's. Seoul agreed to engage in the talks as they also have elevated interest regarding these matters. If the sides manage to reach an agreement, reunions should most likely to be expected on the Korean Thanksgiving Holiday, Chuseok, which falls on 19th September this year.



### **Philippine protesters mark 2nd day of global action vs. China**

■ No less than 2,000 protesters, led by the West Philippine Sea Coalition, gathered in front of the Chinese Consular Office in Makati City to mark the second “Global Day of Protest” against China. The protesters, holding placards written “Our Soil, Our Soil” and “China Respect Philippine Sovereignty” on them, wished to oppose China’s aggression on Philippine territory and to defend their national sovereignty. Staged simultaneously with similar protests in the United States, Saipan and Rome, the Makati City protest was held on 24th July, the first anniversary of China’s occupation of the Ayungin Shoal, an integral part of the Philippine territory.

### **Ecuador says it found a hidden microphone at its London embassy**

■ Foreign minister of Ecuador Ricardo Patino said that a hidden microphone had been discovered in his country’s London embassy, where WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange is currently taking refuge. The device was found in the office of Ambassador Ana Alban, at the time of Patino’s visit to the embassy. Assange, who has been living inside the embassy for more than a year to avoid extradition to Sweden, and eventually, to The United States, lives and works in a different room than the one in which the microphone was detected.

### **US drone strike in Pakistan kills at least 16**

■ On Tuesday 2nd July, an American drone strike against a suspected Haqqani military establishment left at least 16 people killed and 5 wounded in north-western Pakistan. The casualties were reportedly members of the Haqqani militant network, a group that is responsible for attacks against American and Afghan forces across the border in Afghanistan.

After taking power in June, the country’s new prime minister, Nawaz Sharif demanded an end to drone attacks over Pakistani territory. The recent strike, the deadliest since Sharif became prime minister, also found criticism from the Pakistani government. “These strikes are a violation of Pakistan’s sovereignty and territorial integrity,” a spokesman for the Pakistani Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement. “Pakistan has repeatedly emphasized the importance of bringing an immediate end to drone strikes.”





## ■ News in Brief

# International relations

### **New data signals eurozone recession may be over**

■ A survey released on 24th July found that for the first time in 18 months, Eurozone businesses had shown growth in July, which could be a convincing proof of the recession soon coming to an end. The survey resulted in a 50.4 point index, above the 50-mark signalling growth. Ever since February 2012, the index has been in negative territory, and even though there has been a constant but slow rise in the past four months, July's results managed to surprise analysts, after posting only 48,7 points this June.



Photo: Wikimedia Commons

### **Iran, Syria to seek seats on UN Human Rights Council**

■ Amongst some of the most oppressive regimes in the world such as Algeria, Chad, China, Cuba, Russia, Saudi Arabia and Vietnam, the nations of Iran and Syria also have plans to serve on the United Nations' Human Rights Council in the near future. The above mentioned states are competing to fill 14 seats of the Council for the 2014–2016 period. The nations are seeking to replace current council members of infamous rights violators Pakistan, Venezuela and Kazakhstan. UN Watch, a Geneva-based NGO has recently led successful campaigns to block bids by Syria and Sudan, but according to executive director Hillel Neuer, most nations get elected to the body because “politics, not principles, are too often what rule in UN elections.” Neuer finds the aforementioned countries completely unqualified for Council seats. “When the UN's highest human rights body becomes a case of the foxes guarding the henhouse, the world's victims suffer,” he said.



US Mission Photo: Eric Bridiers





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