



IMPACT ANALYSIS

September 15, 2022

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RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Monkeypox

The number of weekly cases has decreased for the week ending September 11 compared to the previous week. However, twenty-one countries reported an increase in weekly cases, the highest being Mexico. Jordan reported its first case on September 8. The Americas and European regions reported the most cases in the past four weeks.

Figure 1 — Monkeypox Global Spread
Monkeypox.tally.info



Trial of Pakistan's Former Prime Minister

The trial of former Prime Minister Imran Khan, who is being tried on terrorism and contempt charges, is likely to trigger further protests, particularly if he is found guilty. Khan's trial stems from a speech he made on August 20, 2022, in which he blamed law enforcement and a judge for the torture of one of his aides. If Khan is convicted on any charges, he would be disqualified from standing for office for five years. If protests take place, they are likely to attract large crowds and result in widespread unrest. This comes as Pakistan is also still recovering from recent severe flooding that killed over 1,000 people and caused more than US\$30 billion in damage.

Tensions Between Greece and Turkey Unlikely to Lead to Conflict

The tension between Greece and Turkey has increased in recent weeks. The prime minister of Greece, Kyriakos Mitsotakis, said comments by Turkey's president, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, were "unacceptable" after Erdogan suggested possible military action over disputed territory in the Aegean sea. Greece responded by stating it is ready to defend its sovereignty and asked the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the European Union (EU), and the United Nations (UN) to condemn Erdogan's comments.

Greece also accused Turkey of provoking tensions between the two countries after the Turkish Interior Ministry claimed the Greek Coast Guard fired at a cargo ship sailing in international waters southwest of the Turkish island of Bozcaada. Meanwhile, Turkey claimed that Greece locked onto Turkish fighter jets with its Russian-made S-300 anti-aircraft missile systems deployed on the island of Crete and that Greek pilots placed Turkish aircraft under a radar lock over the Eastern Mediterranean during a NATO mission last month.

Border Clashes Between Azerbaijan and Armenia

At least forty-nine Armenian soldiers were killed in border clashes with Azerbaijan on September 13. Azerbaijan also claimed it had suffered casualties but did not disclose an exact number. It is the heaviest fighting since the 2020 six-week war over the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region. Russia claims to have brokered a ceasefire to end the latest fighting, but Azeri media claimed it had already been broken. The fighting is unlikely to result in a full-scale conflict at this time, but further ceasefire breaches and shelling on both sides of the border are likely.

Papua New Guinea Earthquake

A 7.6 magnitude earthquake struck the highlands of Papua New Guinea on September 11. As of writing, seven people were confirmed dead as a result of landslides triggered by the earthquake. Infrastructure has also sustained serious damage. The Yonki Dam, a major electricity supplier to the surrounding area, was also damaged, resulting in a temporary disconnection from the grid. Shocks from the earthquake were felt in Papua New Guinea's capital, Port Moresby, but no significant damage was reported. A tsunami warning was issued immediately as a precaution but was rescinded several hours later.

Kenyan President Sworn In

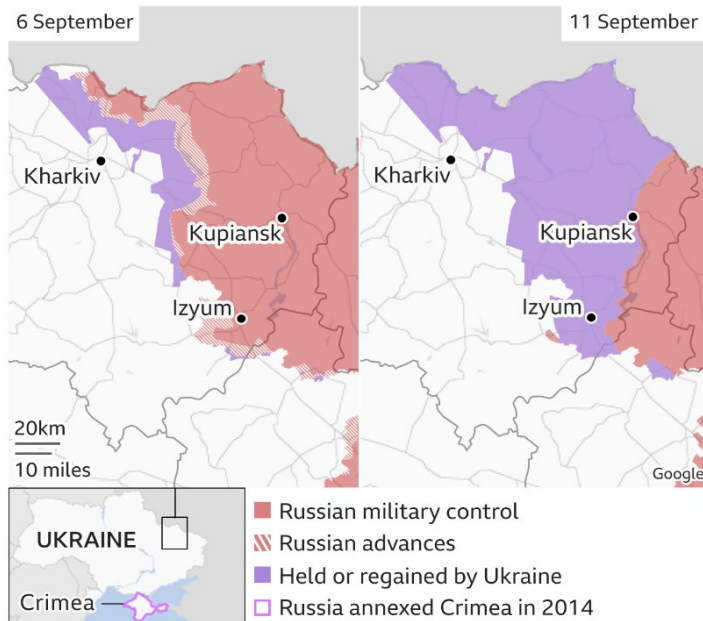
William Ruto was sworn in as President of Kenya on September 13 following the Supreme Court's upholding of election results after they were challenged by the opposing candidate, Raila Odinga. Following the court's ruling, Odinga stated he still had concerns surrounding the election outcome and did not attend the swearing-in ceremony. However, following the swearing-in of Ruto, it is unlikely Odinga will be able to come forward with any additional legitimate challenges. Kenya remained relatively peaceful throughout the transition of power compared to recent elections.

A CLOSER LOOK...

Ukrainian Counter Offensives Make Rapid Gains

Ukraine has retaken at least 6,000 square kilometers (2,317 square miles) of territory in a counter-offensive launched on September 6. Most of the retaken area is focused in the Kharkiv region in the northeast part of the country, though smaller gains have also been reported further south towards Kherson. Further Ukrainian advances in the south are likely in the coming days. There is speculation of further counterattacks in the Zaporizhzhia region, but it is unclear if Ukraine is presently able to open a third front.

Figure 2 — Ukraine Offensive Gains
Institute for the Study of War



Russia responded to the counterattacks with missile strikes on civilian infrastructure, including power stations and water supplies. As a result, blackouts were reported in several regions, and further similar attacks are very likely in the coming days.

Moscow is describing its withdrawal from Kharkiv as a "regrouping" with the aim of focusing on the Luhansk and Donetsk regions in Ukraine's east. However, Ukraine's recapture of the logistical hubs of Izyum and Kup'yans'k effectively ends Russia's objectives of the entire Donbas region.

The withdrawals are being heavily criticized in Russia, with some social media users calling them "shameful" and pro-war commentators blaming Russian military commanders and the Defense Minister, Sergei Shoigu, and Vladimir Putin for the losses. Other nationalist commentators are calling for a wider military mobilization, but this would be domestically unpopular and has so far been rejected by the Kremlin. However, some reservists may be mobilized in the coming weeks. Although Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov talked about being open to peace talks, Russia has no intention of halting the conflict at this time.

Several factors have contributed to the success of Ukraine's counterattacks. Most crucial has been Ukraine's external support through advanced weapons and other military equipment such as air defenses and rocket systems. However, Russia's poor military tactics, limited resistance from Russian troops, and likely decision to withdraw from the Kharkiv region to defend other areas have also been influential. Moreover, Russia's reported lack of military manpower, ammunition, and other equipment means that it is poorly placed to rebuff further attacks.

This increases the risk of escalations from Russia in other areas through targeting civilian infrastructure and, in an extreme scenario, using a tactical nuclear weapon. Russia has threatened to utilize nuclear weapons several times and could stage a nuclear test over the Black Sea or target a Ukrainian military base with a tactical strike. The likelihood of this is presently low but would increase if Ukraine makes further substantial military gains.

Meanwhile, there are ongoing concerns due to shelling around the Russian-held Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant (ZNPP). However, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said both sides were interested in creating a protection zone around the plant.

Ukraine's advances are significant, and it will likely attempt to capitalize with ongoing counter offenses. However, a battlefield victory is a long way off and a prolonged conflict remains the most likely scenario.

Tigray Rebel Peace Talks

Rebels in Ethiopia's Tigray region have agreed to a ceasefire and long-term peace negotiations led by the African Union (AU). The Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), which controls the Tigray region of Ethiopia, has been engaged in a civil war with the Ethiopian government since late 2020. The TPLF held regional elections even though Ethiopia's Prime Minister, Abiy Ahmed, delayed all elections due to the coronavirus pandemic. TPLF forces attacked a military base, and the Ethiopian government responded with military action.

The Ethiopian government has been unable to decisively end the conflict and has endured numerous defeats at the hands of the TPLF. In late 2021, the TPLF advanced towards Ethiopia's capital, Addis Ababa. The Ethiopian government urged civilians to take up arms and be prepared to defend the city against the rebels. Instead, the TPLF came within 100 miles of the city before being pushed back to the Tigray region. Since then, neither side has made significant advances.

A ceasefire was signed in March 2022, but no long-term agreement was made. The ceasefire fell apart in August 2022, with both sides blaming the other for instigating the renewed fighting. Information regarding specifics of the war remains scarce, and conflicting information is frequently publicized. The Ethiopian Ministry of Defense claimed it shot down a plane carrying weapons for the TPLF, while the TPLF denies that such an event occurred.

International organizations have condemned the actions of both the Ethiopian government and the TPLF in no uncertain terms. UNICEF criticized air strikes on Tigray by the Ethiopian government, one of which hit a kindergarten and resulted in numerous casualties. The World Food Program (WFP) has experienced significant disruptions to its operations in the region, most significantly after Tigrayan authorities stole nearly 600,000 liters of fuel from warehouses, limiting the ability of the organization to deliver food to those most in need.

World leaders and international organizations have expressed their support for the proposed negotiations through the African Union. U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken tweeted his support for the negotiations saying, "...we call on the country's leaders to put Ethiopia on a path that achieves a lasting peace." White House spokesperson Karine Jean-Pierre welcomed the proposal and stated that "Eritrea and others should stay out of the conflict."

Negotiations will be held at the African Union headquarters in Addis Ababa, but conditions for the negotiations have not been made public. The Ethiopian government has previously expressed openness to negotiations “anytime, anywhere” without preconditions. Tigray lies on the border between Ethiopia and Eritrea, and the TPLF has also engaged in conflict with the Eritrean government. Ethiopia and Eritrea ended a decades-long war in 2018 and are united in their opposition to the TPLF. Eritrea’s interest in the negotiations may complicate the peace process, but their involvement remains to be seen. Negotiations through the African Union are likely a step in the right direction to achieving lasting peace and bringing much-needed relief to those in need.



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