



THE FUTURE

MARCH 2023

ISSN 2753-3670



The Future is a newsletter periodically published by The Future Institute from Marlyon Road, Ilford, United Kingdom.

This newsletter aims to chronicle the major events and developments in the societies of the emerging nations with the potential of impacting their future. This publication offers snippets of news analysis that might be advantageous to the academics, policymakers, social and political workers, students and various organisations.

If you are interested in engaging with or participating to any TFI project or publication, please write to us at: admin@tfiuk.org



Topics in this issue

DEVASTATING EARTHQUAKES SHAKE SOUTHERN TURKIYE AND NORTHERN SYRIA; MORE THAN 50,000 DEAD..... 3

WORLD STANDS IN SOLIDARITY WITH EARTHQUAKE DEVASTATED PEOPLE OF TURKIYE AND SYRIA..... 4

U.S. CONGRESSWOMAN ILHAN OMAR TARGETED BY REPUBLICAN LAWMAKERS..... 5

HIGH-ALTITUDE BALLOON INCIDENT STRAIN US-CHINA RELATIONS..... 7

BIDEN’S VISIT TO UKRAINE BEFORE ANNIVERSARY OF RUSSIAN INVASION – WHAT IT BODES FOR THE WAR 8

INDIA’S BULLDOZER REGIME EVICTING MUSLIMS AMIDST RISING ISLAMOPHOBIA WORLDWIDE..... 9

ANTI-RACISM PROTESTS IN TUNISIA AFTER KAIS SAIED REMARKS..... 10

ADANI STOCKS PLUNGE AFTER HINDENBURG FINANCIAL REPORT..... 11



Devastating earthquakes shake southern Turkiye and northern Syria; more than 50,000 dead

Tens of thousands of people were killed in Turkiye and nearby Syria as a result of powerful twin earthquakes that occurred in southern Turkiye in the early hours of February 6, 2023. The first earthquake measuring a magnitude of 7.8, struck at 4:17 am Monday morning, the epicentre being roughly 20 miles east of the city of Gaziantep, Turkey. It was followed by a magnitude 7.7 earthquake at 13:24 pm in the nearby province of Kahramanmaras.

Among the strongest earthquakes recorded in the history of the Levant, the shocks were felt as far as Egypt, Israel, Palestine, Lebanon, Cyprus, and the Black Sea coast of Turkiye. The twin earthquakes were the deadliest disaster in the history of modern Turkiye and caused widespread damage over an area of 350,000 km² (an area of the size of Germany) consisting of 10 provinces - Hatay, Gaziantep, Adiyaman, Malatya, Adana, Diyarbakir, Kilis, Osmaniye, Sanliurfa, and Elazig, and affecting about 14 million people, or 16 per cent of Turkiye's population.

The earthquakes resulted in a massive death toll and devastation - more than 52,800 people have been reported dead in the earthquakes to date – more than 46,100 in Turkiye and 6,700 in Syria. Moreover, in Turkiye, 108,000 people were reported injured, while millions were forced to find shelter in tents or move to other cities within the country.

The Turkish government reported that 173,000 buildings had so far collapsed or faced severe damage and that nearly 530,000 people have been evacuated from the disaster area in Turkiye alone. About 2 million people have sought refuge in hotels, public buildings, or temporary shelters. The rescue efforts, coordinated from the very beginning by Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD), had been hampered by severe winter storms, damaged road systems, and disruptions in communications and supply lines. Over 570

aftershocks were recorded within 24 hours of the first earthquake, while 10,000 were recorded within the space of three weeks after February 6.

References:

2023 Turkey–Syria earthquake. (2023, February 9). Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. Retrieved March 7, 2023, from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2023_Turkey%E2%80%93Syria_earthquake

Image attribute: @EU Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid and duncan cumming from Flickr under Creative Commons.



On 09/02/2023, Prime Minister Rishi Sunak visited donation centre for earthquake run by the Turkish Society at University College London

World stands in solidarity with earthquake devastated people of Turkiye and Syria

Turkiye has been renowned for its advocacy of “humanitarian diplomacy” in both theory and practice for many years. According to the Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2022, it was ranked second only to the United States in terms of international humanitarian funding, and it has been hosting millions of Syrian refugees, continuing its support. In response, the world appears to have responded in kind in Turkiye’s time of need. Following the twin earthquakes on February 6, Turkiye received an overwhelming amount of global support, with many countries offering assistance in the form of search and rescue operations, emergency relief supplies, and significant donation campaigns. As of February 18, the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs reported that 102 countries had offered assistance, with at least 74 international rescue teams deployed.

On the other hand, however, aid to Syria has been slow and inadequate, facing major challenges due to an international blockade, the war, and a host of obstructions posed by Bashar Al-Assad's regime.

Moreover, Turkey has also received substantial international financial aid, among them the World Bank (\$1.78bn), the United States (\$185m), and the United Arab Emirates (\$100m). Furthermore, the U.N. made an appeal for \$1 billion to assist survivors of the quakes in tackling the humanitarian crisis, including providing temporary mobile accommodation, sanitation, and emergency medical services. Both inside and outside of Türkiye, donation drives resulted in billions of dollars being raised, which the government has pledged to use to rebuild the areas affected by the earthquake. During the aid drive campaign, for instance, "Türkiye One Heart," eight Turkish television channels raised over \$6 billion (115.1 billion Turkish liras), with more than nine million SMS text messages sent to donate to support the survivors. In another instance, leading soccer figures helped raise 845.7 million Turkish liras (\$44.8 million) in a single day on a televised fundraiser called the "shoulder-to-shoulder" fundraising campaign. According to the World Bank, the earthquake caused an estimated \$34.2 billion in direct physical damages, which is the equivalent of 4% of Turkey's 2021 GDP.

References:

Humanitarian response to the 2023 Turkey–Syria earthquake. (2023, March 7). Wikipedia. Retrieved March 7, 2023, from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Humanitarian_response_to_the_2023_Turkey%E2%80%93Syria_earthquake

Stepansky, J. (2023, February 21). Turkey's 'aid diplomacy' reverberates in global quake response. Al Jazeera. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/2/21/turkeys-aid-diplomacy-reflected-in-earthquake-response>

Turkey, Syria earthquake: Who is stepping up to help? (2023, February 6). Al Jazeera. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/2/6/major-earthquake-hits-turkey-syria-which-countries-offered-help>

Turkish T.V. channels raise billions for quake victims in marathon telecast. (2023, February 16). TRT World. <https://www.trtworld.com/turkey/turkish-tv-channels-raise-billions-for-quake-victims-in-marathon-telecast-65429>

Türkiye-Syria earthquake: Arab relief efforts continue, one month on. (2023, March 6). TRT World. <https://www.trtworld.com/turkey/t%C3%BCrkiye-syria-earthquake-arab-relief-efforts-continue-one-month-on-65880>

Yusuf Gezer, Hande Atay Alam. (2023, March 2). Leading soccer figures raise more than \$44 million in a single day for Turkey's quake fundraising campaign. CNN. <https://edition.cnn.com/2023/03/02/football/turkey-earthquake-soccer-fundraise-spt-intl/index.html>

Image attribute: @Number 10 Flickr under Creative Commons.

U.S. Congresswoman Ilhan Omar targeted by Republican lawmakers

Minnesota Congresswoman Ilhan Omar became the latest target of the House Republicans after she was singled out and removed from the House Foreign Affairs Committee for comments criticising Israel in 2019, which the Republicans said constituted antisemitism. In a February 2019 tweet, Ilhan wrote that U.S. support for Israel among politicians was "all about the Benjamins," in reference to the high amount of spending by pro-Israeli groups and the influence of the Israeli lobby. After receiving a high amount of backlash, including from within the Democratic party, Ilhan apologised, saying that she understood the painful history of "antisemitic" tropes. Nevertheless, many have observed that as a Muslim representative of Congress, and a woman of colour, Ilhan has been constantly on the receiving end of targeted Republican criticism regarding her anti-Israel stance, which has frequently been equated with antisemitism.

In a move targeting the Minnesota Congresswoman, Republicans voted a motion 218-211 to remove Ilhan from the House Foreign Affairs Committee; former Republican leader and current House Speaker Kevin McCarthy, an old adversary of Ilhan, spearheaded the move. Meanwhile, at the same time that Ilhan Omar was voted out, she co-sponsored a measure condemning antisemitism and recognising Israel as "America's legitimate and democratic ally." News reports pointed out the irony of the situation – that of accusations of antisemitism against Ilhan Omar despite her earlier apology and supporting a measure condemning

antisemitism. Leading Democrats decried the Republican-targeted move, accusing them of hypocrisy and racist bias in equating criticism of Israel with antisemitism. Notably, Ilhan Omar, in the past, has been vocal in opposing U.S. military aid to Israel and is a frequent critic of Israel's illegal occupation of the West Bank.

**References:**

U.S.: Ilhan Omar Co-sponsored bill condemning antisemitism on day she was voted off committee. (2023, February 3). Middle East Eye. <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/us-ilhan-omar-co-sponsors-bill-condemning-antisemitism-recognising-israel-legitimate-ally>

U.S.: Ilhan Omar removed from foreign affairs committee for 2019 'antisemitic' remarks. (2023, February 2). Middle East Eye. <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/us-ilhan-omar-voted-house-foreign-affairs-committee-2019-antisemitic-remarks>

Image attribute: @Number 10 from Flickr under Creative Commons.



High-altitude balloon incident strain US-China relations

US-China relations attained a new low in the aftermath of a high-altitude balloon incident on February 4, when the U.S. Air force shot down a Chinese-operated high-altitude balloon over U.S. territorial waters off the coast of South Carolina. U.S. officials later said that debris from the balloon wreckage was recovered and sent to the FBI for analysis. While Chinese officials maintained that it was a civilian weather balloon that had been blown off-course, the U.S. said that the balloon, being capable of geolocating electronic communications, carried intelligence surveillance equipment not consistent with that of a weather balloon. As such, it was more of a spy balloon, and U.S. officials noted that similar 'spy' balloons had been observed in the past over more than 40 nations. Although the incident resulted in the further shooting down of at least three more high-altitude objects across the U.S. and Canada, none of the downed objects is believed to be connected with China.

The incident has heightened tensions between the United States and China, which were already at a historic low prior to the event. The presence of the balloon was viewed as a violation of U.S. sovereignty. It directly led to U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken's decision to postpone his long-awaited diplomatic visit to Beijing, which many had hoped would help ease relations between the two countries. In response to the U.S. claims, Mao Ning, spokesperson for the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, reiterated that the balloon was primarily intended for research and meteorological purposes and that its deviation from its intended course was due to strong winds. The Chinese official labelled the shooting down of the balloon as "unacceptable and irresponsible."

References:

2023 Chinese balloon incident. (2023, March 7). Wikipedia. Retrieved March 8, 2023, from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2023_Chinese_balloon_incident

What we know so far about the Chinese spy balloon and the other objects shot down. (2023, February 15). CBS News. <https://www.cbsnews.com/live-updates/chinas-spy-balloon-unidentified-objects-shot-down-what-we-know-so-far/>

Image attribute: @Focal Foto from Flickr under Creative Commons.



Biden's visit to Ukraine before anniversary of Russian invasion – what it bodes for the war

On the eve of the anniversary of the full-scale Russian invasion last year, U.S. President Joe Biden made a surprise visit travelling to Kyiv, the capital of Ukraine, in a show of support for the country and its leader Volodymyr Zelenskiy. Defying threats of Russian missile attacks, Biden visited Ukraine and revealed that the U.S. would provide the country with a new package of additional U.S. weapons supplies worth \$500 million to resist the Russian advance.

Earlier, Biden had left Washington in secret with a small group of officials and a small pool of reporters before travelling by train for ten hours from the Polish border to Kyiv to meet the Ukrainian leader. The visit came at a time when the U.S. leader was expected to announce an extra \$500 million in military aid, including artillery ammo, anti-armour systems, and air surveillance radars. The scheduling of the Biden visits right before Vladimir Putin's scheduled speech was interpreted by many to be a calculated admonishment of the Russian leader.

Biden stated that he was in Kyiv to reiterate the U.S.'s "unwavering and unflagging dedication to Ukraine's democracy, sovereignty, and territorial integrity." Experts point out that Biden's visit to Kyiv was intended to send a strong message of U.S. support for Ukraine to Moscow and the international community, a message the U.S. President reiterated when he later met NATO allies in Poland. Soon after, Russian President Vladimir Putin, in his state of the nation address before the first anniversary of the Ukraine campaign, announced that Moscow was going to freeze its participation in the New START treaty, a vital nuclear arms deal with Washington. The Russian President's threat drew the concerns of major powers in the region, including France and the United Kingdom, who urged Russia to reverse its decision to suspend participation in the crucial nuclear treaty.

References:

Biden rallies behind Kyiv as Putin freezes nuclear deal with U.S. (2023, February 21). Al Jazeera. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/2/21/biden-rallies-behind-kyiv-as-putin-freezes-nuclear-deal-with-us>

Joe Biden visits Kyiv in major show of support for Ukraine. (2023, February 20). The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/feb/20/joe-biden-visits-ukraine-kyiv>

Image attribute: @Prachatai from Flickr under Creative Commons.



India's bulldozer regime evicting Muslims amidst rising Islamophobia worldwide

Muslims have been the constant target of an unjust dehumanising campaign by the Hindutva government led by the BJP, which thrives on stoking communal tensions and repression of Indian Muslims. A tried and tested tactic is the displacement of entire Muslim families and communities as part of a broader pattern of injustice masquerading as law and order. Bulldozers are used in the name of the law to demolish not just houses but also schools and mosques and wipe out entire communities in the name of clearing off state lands from illegal possession.

Among the most consistent offenders within India are the state authorities of Assam, where the BJP has been in power since 2016, and have repeatedly targeted Miya Muslims, who have been in Assam for generations after their families settled there from East Bengal.

In the past few months, the campaign to render Muslim families homeless and displaced has picked up steam - on December 19, about 250 families were evicted in the Nagaon district of Assam, while a week later, 47 families' homes were destroyed in Barpeta district. In the Lakhimpur district, hundreds of families were evicted in early January. The rhetoric of "illegal migrants" is often employed to displace such communities and ensure that Muslims in these regions remain poor, backward and impoverished. Not just

Assam, but this manner of evictions is being used to either attack community organisers who have ventured to speak out against government injustices or to collectively punish Muslims all over India.

Such state-sponsored acts are part and parcel of the very same spirit of holy-book-burning Islamophobia in the West and present the kaleidoscope of a worldwide phenomenon that centres on victimising Muslims, whether for their faith, nationality or perceived attribution to a lower rung of the human race. Moreover, Islamophobia as a phenomenon does not exist in isolation from notions of sexism, racism, xenophobia, and the propensity towards supporting authoritarianism, as opposed to respecting differing opinions and voices. It is high time that it be realised that the propagation of Islamophobia makes all democracies, whether India or in the West, less free and less safe – not only for Muslims but in time for everyone in that society.

References:

Mogahed, D. (2023, January 27). Islamophobia makes democracies less safe for everyone. Al Jazeera. <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2023/1/27/islamophobia-makes-democracies-less-safe-for-everyone>

Siddique, N. (2023, February 2). India's bulldozer regime is evicting Muslims, killing justice. Al Jazeera. <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2023/2/2/indias-bulldozer-regime-is-evicting-muslims-killing-justice>

Image attribute: @Al Jazeera English from Flickr under Creative Commons.



Anti-racism protests in Tunisia after Kais Saied remarks

Racist comments by Tunisian President Kais Saied have galvanised hundreds of protesters in Tunisia, who have come out to the streets to denounce the President's hate speech against migrants. Speaking at a meeting with the National Security Council, Tunisia's President Kais Saied condemned undocumented Sub-Saharan African immigration to the country and called for quickly ending illegal immigration, claiming that it aimed to change Tunisia's demographic makeup. The President's comments invoked outrage from various rights groups, who denounced them as racist, and as a cover-up to shift attention away from Tunisia's slide towards authoritarianism.

The comments were also condemned by regional bodies such as the African Union, which registered shock at the comments and iterated that they went against the letter and spirit of the African Union and its founding principles. Many believe that Saied's comments are aimed at creating an 'imaginary enemy' to distract Tunisians from basic problems and cover the fact that Tunisia is fast sliding towards authoritarian, dictatorial rule. The situation is made more complex by the fact that alongside continental migrants, Tunisia is also home to many black Tunisians, who have a long history in Tunisia and make up 10-15% of the total population. As such, Saied's remarks that Tunisia was not an African nation, but an Arab and Islamic one, will be seen as inflammatory as well as discriminatory by many such Tunisians of African heritage, who often already suffer from some form of pre-existing racism in the country.

References:

African Union condemns Tunisia's 'hate speech' against migrants. (2023, February 25). Al Jazeera. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/2/25/african-union-condemns-tunisias-hate-speech-against-migrants>

Tunisian President says migration to Tunisia aimed at changing demography. (2023, February 21). Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/tunisian-president-says-migration-tunisia-aimed-changing-demography-2023-02-21/>

Image attribute: @MEAphotogallery from Flickr under Creative Commons.

Adani stocks plunge after Hindenburg financial report

For some time, at the beginning of 2023, the self-made Indian industrialist Gautam Adani, head of the Adani Group, was celebrated as the fourth-richest person in the world with a personal fortune estimated at \$120 billion, higher than either Bill Gates or Warren Buffet. However, all that changed very suddenly when allegations of fraud and market manipulation by short-seller firm Hindenburg Research triggered an investor flight, leading to the share value plummeting by almost 55%. In its aftermath, Adani's firms lost more than \$140 billion in value, and his wealth halved to little more than \$61 billion.

Hindenburg Research stunned investors in late January when it published a report accusing Adani and his companies of widespread fraud and "brazen stock manipulation" that stretched over decades.

On his part, Gautam Adani has denied any wrongdoing and has rejected all allegations by the short-seller Hindenburg Research. The effect of the fall of Adani shares could culminate in a snowball effect since Indian banks that hold shares in Adani Group assets would also be affected negatively by the sell-off.

Following the event, Adani's businesses have come under scrutiny from banking and market regulators, as well as the government, leading to the launch of investigations. The incident also led to growing political turmoil in India, where opposition lawmakers in parliament have strongly demanded a probe into the report in the face of government silence. However, any investigation into Adani Group activities is likely to be a convoluted affair since Adani is close to Prime Minister Modi, and this could likely spell out political trouble for the latter.

References:

Horowitz, J. (2023, February 6). Gautam Adani lost half his wealth in a flash. Here's what happened. CNN. <https://edition.cnn.com/2023/02/04/business/adani-hindenburg-explainer/index.html>

India's Adani secures \$3 bln credit from sovereign wealth fund -sources. (2023, March 2). Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com/world/india/indias-adani-says-has-secured-3-bln-credit-sovereign-wealth-fund-sources-2023-03-01/>

Image attribute: @Friscocali from Flickr under Creative Commons.

Contributing Editors

Mohammad Hossain

Dr Nazmus Sakib

Dr Faroque Amin



THE FUTURE INSTITUTE

www.tfiuk.org