



# THE FUTURE

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

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## Special Article

### Bangladesh Police: Public Protectors or Massacre Perpetrators?

- *Nousheen Sharmila Ritu\**

As of 24th September, the government of Bangladesh has found that at least 708 people have been martyred during the July Revolution in Bangladesh. The number of people who have incurred grievous injuries and are currently languishing in hospitals are much higher. As unfortunate and ironic as it may sound, a large number of these deaths were perpetrated in the hands of the Bangladesh Police. The law enforcement agency that was responsible for protecting public lives mutated as perpetrators of a massacre. The police shot bullet pellets like raindrops in broad daylight to the utter horror and disgust of the people. Probably the most heinous and inconceivable of this atrocity was surmised in one of the statements of the police reporting to the Home Minister saying, "We kill one and only one falls, the rest don't go away– and that is probably the most intimidating thing."

As people grapple with how the police could descend into such brutal carnage and dehumanization of innocent lives, it's worth considering that the police may have been dehumanized themselves as well. Aimé Césaire formulated this concept of imperial boomerang which suggests that colonization does not only dehumanizes the colonized, but morally corrupts the colonizer as well. The same punitive and repressive tactics that the colonizer used to subjugate the colonial subjects boomerang into the domestic policies of the imperial power. This underscores the dialectic relationship of violence between the colonizer and the colonized– where the colonizer, in dehumanizing the colonial subject, ultimately becomes the very thing he reduces the colonized to.

One may wonder how this imperial boomerang is relevant in understanding the metamorphosis of Bangladesh police from being public protectors to massacre perpetrators. The key puzzle here lies in recognizing the colonial history and legacy of the police as both an individual and institution. The genesis of the police administration was initiated through the Indian Police Act of 1861 following the Sepoy Mutiny or Indian Rebellion of 1857. The British colonial rulers established a centralized, hierarchical and militarized police force to implement colonial laws and suppress political dissent or social uprisings. This colonial legacy has been sustained post-independence as the state continues to use police as a tool for the suppression of any form of opposition.

The Awami League government has politicized the police administration heavily to carry out extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, torture and brutal abuse of power in order to marginalize the oppositional forces within the country. When the question of oppositional parties such as BNP or Jamaat came into the question, the principle of human rights or procedural rights went out of the window. It was as if sanctified to exterminate people as long as they had an iota of association with the oppositional parties.

However, what we saw during the July revolution is that the police had become so desensitized from their years of blind allegiance to the state power that they were ready to kill innocent civilians as well to perpetuate the state's monopoly on violence. Suddenly, every citizen who dares to take the street had become an oppositional force, and hence a target for the Bangladesh police. And just like that, the police metamorphosed from being public protectors to perpetrators of the July Massacre.

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## After a year of Israel-Gaza war, it has now become a regional war

As the Israel-Gaza war nears its one-year anniversary, the prospect has become one of unending war; Israel has expanded the war to include an aerial bombing campaign and land invasion of Lebanon after it had previously attacked and destroyed parts of the occupied West Bank. US Secretary of State Blinken and the US mediators have exposed their role behind using negotiations to release the hostages as just another cover for Israel and its warring PM Netanyahu to carry out their real objective - land grabbing, colonisation, and the erasure of Palestinians through genocide. At the UN this month, the rights of the representative of Palestine were upgraded after a motion was passed by the UN General Assembly (UNGA) to this effect, allowing the envoy a seat among member nations, while on September 18, the same body adopted a resolution calling for Israel to terminate its illegal occupation of Palestinian territory within one year. However, not only have Israel and its allies worked to diminish and ridicule Palestine on the international stage, but Israel has become even more unhinged in a regional capacity, wreaking havoc, destruction, and raining death on multiple countries in the region including Lebanon, Yemen, and Syria.

There has been a serious price to pay, however – namely the decimation of Israel's economy over the past few months. Just at the end of September, Moody announced that it was downgrading Israel's credit rating from A2 to Baa1 with a negative outlook. This was the second time they had downgraded Israel's credit rating during the war, with the previous time being this February when it was downgraded from A1 to A2. The ratings agency explained that there was no chance the Israeli economy would quickly recover, especially given that there is little chance the war would anytime soon or even in 2025 – not only has the conflict with Hezbollah escalated, but even prospects for a ceasefire in Gaza have receded. Following the assassinations of Hezbollah leader Hasan Nasrallah and Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh, and the political vacuum in the US during an election year, an open conflict between Iran and Israel appears to be increasingly likely, the repercussions of which could extend through the region for years if not decades. The progression of the conflict also coincides with a historical low in terms of the image of US in the region, since it has unabashedly supported Israel for the longer part of this past year with billions of dollars in military aid and advanced weaponry, which has allowed Israel to power through its genocide of local populations without any accountability or fear of repercussions.

The number of Palestinian casualties in Gaza as of October 6 is at least 41,000 dead, including more than 16,765 children, while the number of Palestinians wounded has reached more than 97,166. However, last July, according to a study published in the Lancet, the accumulative effects of Israel's war on Gaza could mean the true death toll could reach more than 186,000 people; current estimates are much higher with the expansion of the war into other areas of the region. The number of missing people is more than 10,000. In the Occupied West Bank, there have been at least 742 deaths, of whom more than 163 are children, while more than 6,250 are injured. According to the latest data from the UN, WHO and the Palestinian government as of October 6, more than half of Gaza homes have been destroyed or damaged, 80% of commercial facilities, 87% of school buildings, 17 out of 36 hospitals are partially functioning, 68% of road networks and 68 per cent of cropland have been damaged. Every hour in Gaza, 15 people are killed, of whom 6 are children, while 35 people are injured and 12 buildings are destroyed. As of July 31, more than 125 journalists, predominantly Palestinians, had been killed since October 7. According to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) and the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), 120 Palestinian, three Lebanese, and four Israeli journalists were killed.

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## Top Hezbollah leader Hasan Nasrallah assassinated by Israel; Iran retaliates with ballistic missiles

On 18th September, Tuesday, hundreds of handheld pagers used by members of the Lebanese resistance group Hezbollah simultaneously exploded across Lebanon, killing at least 12 people, including two children. Nearly 3,000 others were wounded, many of them critically. The next day, Wednesday 19th September, twenty people were killed and more than 450 wounded when electronic devices exploded in south Beirut and other parts of Lebanon for a second day. The second attack allegedly targeted mobile phones, laptops, solar energy cells as well as walkie-talkie radios that were purchased at a similar time – about five months earlier – as the exploding pagers a day earlier. Devices exploded in cities including Beirut and its southern suburbs, Hermel, Baalbek, Saida, Nabatieh, Tyre, Naqoura and Marjayoun. Using this tactic, Israel succeeded in wiping out much of the senior leadership of Hezbollah, something it had continued over the past several months, leaving the group in disarray over possible major security breaches that allowed these high-profile targeted assassinations to happen with relative ease.

But the major blow to Hezbollah came just two days later on Friday when a massive air strike in Beirut's southern suburb of Dahiyeh in Beirut led to the assassination of long-time influential Hezbollah leader Hasan Nasrallah, 64, who was killed alongside other civilians as at least six residential buildings were completely flattened. A US official later confirmed the use of an American-made 2,000-pound bomb Mark 84 series bomb in the killing, while President Joe Biden congratulated Israel's actions, angering many in the region. Despite Lebanon's announcement of three days of mourning on the occasion of Nasrallah's death, Israeli aggression continued against the general people of Lebanon. Following Israeli aggression, Iran on 1st October, fired a barrage of ballistic missiles at Israel targeting three of its military bases in response to deadly Israeli attacks against people in Gaza and Lebanon, as well as the assassinations of top IRGC, Hamas and Hezbollah leaders. Currently, with Israeli aggression on three fronts, the

region is on the verge of a major outbreak of war, something which has raised alarm bells throughout the region's capitals.

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## UNGA 2024 – Without accountability, future of humanity is at stake

World leaders gathered in New York for the 79th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in September 2024. While the key focus of discussions revolved around addressing global challenges - climate change, international security, and the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the inaction of world leaders regarding global crises as they gather for the UN General Assembly (UNGA) was evident. Despite the devastating conflicts in regions like Gaza, Sudan, Myanmar, and Ukraine, the perpetrators of mass atrocities have continued to operate freely, and many of these crises are sustained by external powers supplying arms to those responsible for the violence. Western countries, while claiming to work for peace, continue providing arms to Israel amid its offensive in Gaza. And even when some arms sales are paused, these actions are often insufficient. Similarly, in Sudan, weapons continue to flow to warring factions despite international embargoes, fuelled by nations like China, Russia, and the UAE.

Human Rights Watch's Executive Director, Tirana Hassan, in her opinion piece, calls for a more robust international response, including cutting off arms supplies, enforcing embargoes, taking meaningful steps toward peace and human dignity, and pursuing accountability through international courts. She argues that the international community has the tools to act, as shown by previous interventions, but is often blocked by the UN Security Council's veto power. Others, however, also argue that it is time to set up a new global social contract – one that recognises that the international power balance has changed since 1945, one that prioritises shared protection of our global commons over state sovereignty, and one that puts the world's people and future generations before short-sighted national interests. They argue that a new charter could not only redistribute power in a more equitable way and treat threats like climate change and artificial intelligence seriously, but it could also make the UN more effective by increasing enforcement and accountability.

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## Israel's killing of US citizen Ayşenur Ezgi Eygi and US double standards

Ayşenur Ezgi Eygi, a 26-year-old Turkish-American activist, was tragically killed on September 6, 2024, during a protest in the Israeli-occupied West Bank. Eygi was shot by an Israeli sniper and live ammunition while participating in a peaceful demonstration in Beita, which frequently faces Israeli military crackdowns. While the US administration, including President Joe Biden, parroted Israeli authorities in saying that her killing was likely accidental, this explanation has been contested by her family, ground witnesses, as well as multiple medical forensic autopsies, leading to calls for an independent investigation into the incident. Experts noted the double standards of the US administration in dealing with the killing of Ayşenur Ezgi Eygi, as compared to Israeli American captives of Hamas, where it is highly vocal and typically forceful. Mehmet Suat Eygi, the father of the victim, suggested ahead of her funeral that the U.S. government was deliberately avoiding a direct investigation into its close ally's actions out of bias, even though Israel had claimed partial responsibility for her killing by one of its soldiers.

Turkiye has opened an investigation into Eygi's killing and will request international arrest warrants, said Turkish Justice Minister Yılmaz Tunc, while President Tayyip Erdogan said Turkey would go to the ICJ over the matter. Born in Turkey and raised in Seattle, Eygi was actively involved in various social justice movements, including protests against the Dakota Access Pipeline and Palestinian solidarity work. She had recently graduated from the University of Washington, where she was active in the recent pro-Palestine student encampments, and arrived in the West Bank just days before her death to join protests against Israeli settlement expansion. After a huge funeral procession was held for her at Nablus, she was later sent to be buried in her hometown of Didim, on the Aegean coast of Turkiye. Eygi's death echoes the killing of Palestinian-American journalist Shireen Abu Akhlah, who was shot dead by Israel in the West Bank in May 2023., and American activist Rachel Corrie, who was killed in 2003 trying to prevent the demolition of Palestinian homes by the Israelis.

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## Developments in post-revolution Bangladesh during September

Almost two months have passed since the August revolution and the signing in of Dr. Yunus's interim government into power. While the interim govt has prioritised reform of the government in the wake of the fascist 15-year Awami regime, the pace has been quite slow and rather chaotic. The biggest challenge has been the issue of security, as the government has failed to consolidate its hold on the police and other organs of security implementation following their highly negative role during the tenure of the previous Awami regime. Moreover, there have been several unfortunate instances of mob justice, exacerbating an already dire security situation. In order to remedy the situation, the government issued a notification granting executive magistracy powers to commissioned officers of the Bangladesh Army, and later extended this to commissioned officers of the Air Force, and Navy to serve as executive magistrates under the supervision of the relevant district magistrates or deputy commissioners.

On the international stage, Dr. Yunus's trip to the UN General Assembly in New York opened up new opportunities for a positive image of Bangladesh on the world stage, where he met with top leaders including US President Joe Biden. His meeting with Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif at the UNGA on September 25 also raised expectations of mending of ties between the two countries. On a related note, despite a previous announcement of an export ban on hilsa fish to India, the Bangladesh government made a U-turn on its policy and decided to allow the export of 3000 tons, drawing criticism from various quarters of the Bangladeshi society for showing weakness in its India policy. This criticism comes in light of recent events of sudden flooding, the shooting of Bangladeshis at the Indian border by the Indian BSF, as well as unrest in the Chittagong Hill tracts region; many believe India is behind these events.

The Bangladesh interim government has also been criticized for its handling of the cases of Mahmudur Rahman, veteran journalist and editor of Daily Amar Desh. Rahman, who had returned to a hero's welcome on the 27th of September to Bangladesh, voluntarily surrendered to the lower court on 29 September 2024 in anticipation of bail. In lieu of legal proceedings, he was then sent to jail in a case where he had been sentenced to an unjust 7-year prison sentence in absentia back in 2023. Rahman, who had returned to the country to visit his critically ill mother, was later released on 3rd October, but not before a huge media outcry demanding his immediate release and scrapping of all the 130 or so cases against him filed during the time of the Hasina regime.

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## First elections in Indian-administered Kashmir since loss of autonomy

The 2024 Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly elections are the first elections to be held in Indian-administered Kashmir since it lost its autonomy after revocation of Article 370 in 2019. The abolition of autonomy by the Hindu-nationalist BJP government brought the Muslim-majority territory under New Delhi's direct control. The move was accompanied by widespread protest in a region suffering from a decades-long rebellion. Mass arrests and a long communications blackout followed. Since then, the territory has been without an elected government, ruled instead by a federally appointed governor. The imprisonment of many young Kashmiris in distant Indian jails, along with local challenges such as rising drug abuse and unemployment, are major issues, as is unemployment, which at 18.3 per cent is more than double the national average, according to government figures this July.

Voting has already taken place in three phases, beginning on September 18 and concluding on October 1, 2024. A voter turnout of around 65% was recorded during the final phase of polling on October 1, reflecting a strong participation rate across both the Jammu and Kashmir divisions. Votes will be counted on October 8, with results expected the same day. The high unemployment rate and anger at the 2019 changes have animated campaigning.



Regional parties have promised to fight for the restoration of autonomy, and India's main opposition Congress party has allied with a prominent regional group. However, it is notable that even after the polls, key decisions will remain in New Delhi's hands, including security and appointing Kashmir's governor; the legislative assembly will only have powers to debate local issues, make laws and approve decisions for governing the territory. Furthermore, New Delhi will also have the power to override legislation passed by the 90-seat assembly.

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## Türkiye applies to join BRICS – the implications

Frustrated by a lack of progress in its accession to the European Union, Türkiye has officially requested to join the BRICS alliance of developing markets as it looks to forge new ties beyond its traditional Western allies, which would align it with major emerging economies like Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa. In the belief that the geopolitical centre of gravity is shifting away from developed economies, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and his administration see BRICS membership as an opportunity to strengthen Turkey's global influence and diversify its economic partnerships. This move is also seen as part of Erdoğan's broader foreign policy strategy to balance relations between East and West.

The country's new diplomatic push reflects its aspirations to cultivate ties with all sides in a multipolar world while still fulfilling its obligations as a key member of NATO; joining BRICS would not require political or economic commitments or agreements. Ankara strongly maintains that joining BRICS does not signal a shift away from NATO



or its Western ties but rather represents an attempt to engage with multiple platforms for potential economic and strategic gains. Experts have opined that Türkiye's engagement with BRICS could help increase its exports to member countries, which is crucial given the dominance of Western markets in its export portfolio. By diversifying its trade relations, Türkiye could reduce its economic vulnerabilities in the long run. Moreover, establishing long-term, stable relationships with BRICS members could help Türkiye navigate the volatility of the global economy, disrupted supply chains, and geopolitical tensions between major powers.

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## Greta Thunberg, climate awareness icon arrested for Palestine activism

Climate activist Greta Thunberg was arrested on September 4, 2024, during a pro-Palestinian demonstration calling for an academic boycott of Israeli institutions at the University of Copenhagen organized by the group "Students Against the Occupation." Thunberg, along with other activists, occupied the university's central administration building to bring attention to the situation in Palestine, particularly in light of the ongoing Israeli occupation and military actions, after which she was arrested alongside others for allegedly forcing their way into the building and blocking entrances. Thunberg, known globally for her climate activism, was seen wearing a keffiyeh scarf during the protest. She shared videos of the police entering the building on social media, highlighting the forceful nature of the arrests.

Later this month, she was reported joining another pro-Palestine rally on Stockholm where she denounced Israel's genocidal actions against Palestinians. Thunberg advocated for boycotts of Israeli products, divestment from Israeli

companies, and the imposition of sanctions as ways to pressure Israel to stop the violence in Gaza. She stressed that those with the power to act must do so, adding that countries like Sweden should take tangible steps to support Palestinians. Thunberg's comments align with the broader movement advocating for global solidarity with the Palestinian people. Following her arrest and pro-Palestine activism, Thunberg was named "Antisemite of the Week" by a Jewish advocacy group named StopAntisemitism. With this label, Thunberg joins the ranks of other candidates for "Antisemite of the Week" such as popular media figure and debater Mehedi Hasan, and popular Egyptian-American satirist Bassem Yusuf.

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## UN Secretary General issues warning on climate change

United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres delivered a stark warning on the escalating climate crisis during his address to the UN General Assembly (UNGA) for nearly a billion people living in low-lying coastal areas due to the risk of rising sea levels caused by climate change potentially resulting in catastrophic flooding, coastal erosion, and climate migration. He called on world leaders to take immediate and unprecedented action to curb global warming, warning that the world is approaching a point of no return. In his speech, Guterres highlighted the increasing frequency of extreme weather events, such as devastating wildfires, floods, and heatwaves, which have caused widespread destruction and loss of life across the globe. He noted that the world is on track to exceed the 1.5°C warming threshold agreed upon in the Paris Climate Accord, which would result in catastrophic environmental impacts.

"Our planet is burning," Guterres stated, urging swift and decisive action to cut carbon emissions and transition to renewable energy sources. The Secretary-General emphasized that the window for meaningful action is closing rapidly, urging nations to deliver on their climate promises. He criticized developed countries for not fulfilling their financial commitments to help vulnerable nations cope with climate change and called for more equitable climate financing. Guterres also urged for stronger commitments at the upcoming COP29 climate conference, stressing the importance of achieving net-zero emissions by 2050. The UN Secretary General's warning comes as the world grapples with record-high global temperatures, rapidly melting ice caps, and the devastating effects of rising sea levels, with 2024 already shaping up to be the warmest year in recorded history, largely driven by the persistent impacts of El Niño and human-induced climate change.

**References:**

Rising sea levels mean 'tide of misery' for coastal communities. (2024, September 28). Al Jazeera. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/9/28/coastal-communities-face-catastrophic-flooding-from-rising-sea-levels>

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