

# DIAMUNTHLY NEWSLETTER

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## An Overview

This volume of DIAMUNthly is a collection of articles pertaining to an array of prevalent and crucial topics that plague today's world. Such discussions are what power the social integrity of DIAMUN and their relevance to ongoing events. Read on to discover more about the current affairs and upcoming acts that help rectify some of the biggest issues in today's society.

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# CLIMATE CRISIS

The climate change crisis isn't new to us- in fact, studies show that the global temperature started rising in the 1800s.

Although it was an extremely minimal change, scientists noticed that during the latter half of the industrial period (around the 1830s), an upwards trend was seen in the global temperatures. The catalyst for this was the increase in carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions during industrial growth, which caused the Earth's natural greenhouse effect to be enhanced. This enhancement, however, was nothing but an exacerbation, because by emitting extra greenhouse gases (such as methane and CO<sub>2</sub>), the release of heat from the atmosphere becomes extremely difficult, thereby heating up the planet. Since then, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions have only increased, and there has been a sharp spike in climate change, which has led to global warming, which has led to a multitude of other issues.

Some of the most prevalent ramifications of global warming are melting glaciers, severe heat waves, and droughts. The melting glaciers have disturbed the habitat of Arctic species and raised sea levels significantly, which has been the cause of flooding in coastal towns and regions. Greenhouse gas emissions have raised the global temperature, thereby raising the frequency and intensity of heat waves. Droughts have impacted regions such as Africa and the US, among others, triggered and worsened by the heat waves. It has also ruined the fertility of agricultural land, thus decreasing crop yield and quality as well as negatively affecting the economy.

Studies have shown that there will be a permanent impact on the planet from global warming, however, if action is taken soon, most of the extremely harmful effects can be curbed.

In response to the ever-growing threats posed by climate change, multiple governments around the world have committed to the Net Zero Coalition proposed by the UN, passing laws and legislations to cut carbon emissions to 0 by 2050.



# RUSSIA VS. UKRAINE

The Russo-Ukrainian conflict has been ongoing for two decades now, however, escalated to war only in February of 2022.

The origin of the dispute can be traced back to 2002, when Ukraine first publicly expressed its interest in joining NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization), to improve its safety. A conflict of opinions followed, as Russian president Vladimir Putin claimed that it would be a threat to Russia's safety if Ukraine joined NATO, while Ukraine stated that it was its sovereign right to reinforce its own safety and support. Following these events, Putin warned Ukraine not to join NATO multiple times, while Ukraine maintained its opinion.

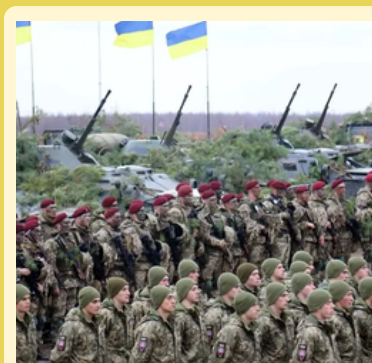
In 2014, Russia annexed Crimea (a region on the border of Ukraine and Russia that was internationally recognised as Ukrainian territory) and began a war in Donbas that is still in progress to this date. Both these acts were done as warnings toward Ukraine.

Further warnings were issued in late 2021 when Putin began mobilising the troops and ordered a military build-up on the Russo-Ukrainian border. Most dismissed it, with the thought that it was simply a fear tactic on Russia's end, and when Ukraine did not back down, Putin ordered a full-scale invasion of Ukraine on the 24th of February 2022.

In response to Russia's invasion, the UN condemned its actions and a large number of countries imposed sanctions, aiming to topple the Russian economy, while also providing aid to Ukrainians. Despite the multitude of sanctions, Putin did not back down on his attacks, and since then, at least 29,500 people have died, almost 53,000 people have been injured, and approximately 14 million people were displaced. In addition, at least 2,800 buildings were destroyed and the property damage is estimated to be approximately 750 billion USD.

The Russo-Ukrainian war has not only affected those two countries but the rest of the world, as prices of gas, coal, and food have immensely risen due to the shortage of supply from both Russia and Ukraine. This has led to food shortages in some countries, as well as unbalanced the global economy.

Unfortunately, there are no signs of the war ending any time soon, yet there doesn't seem to be much progress from either side.



# FLOODS IN PAKISTAN

Since June 14 of this year, Pakistan has been suffering from extreme flooding. Pakistan usually has a heavy monsoon season, but due to climate issues, this year's rainfall was 10 times heavier than usual, flooding the Indus River and essentially creating a large lake. Additionally, Pakistan has the highest number of glaciers outside the polar regions, and global warming has led to the ice melting and flooding from the mountains.

The southern provinces Sindh and Balochistan were affected the worst, and mountainous regions in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have also been badly hit.

Flash floods and landslides along the Indus and Kabul Rivers have killed over 1,000 people, out of which around 400 were children, and around 1,600 people were injured. Approximately 33 million people have been affected by this natural disaster, along with \$10 billion worth of infrastructure. Over 17,500 schools, 800 health facilities, and 1 million homes have been damaged or destroyed by the flooding. According to a report by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2 million acres of crops and nearly 800,000 livestock have been impacted by the floods as of August 26. More than a third of Pakistan was underwater at one point, based on satellite images from the European Space Agency.

As a result of the floods and the damage they have caused, food, water, and health crises are being faced by the country. 27 million people already did not have access to enough food prior to the floods according to the charity Action Against Hunger, and now the risk of hunger is even more imminent. The damages to the water systems have led to waterborne diseases being widely spread, with children the most at risk; clean water is also not in abundance anymore. The WHO has warned of new outbreaks of diarrheal diseases, skin infections, respiratory tract infections, malaria, and dengue in the aftermath of the floods, a progressively pressing matter due to the lack of medical assistance.

In order to provide assistance, a \$160 million appeal has been launched by the United Nations, with the aim of reaching 5.2 million of the most vulnerable people in the country, while \$10 million has been released by the WHO to treat the injured, distribute supplies to health facilities, and contain the spread of infectious diseases. China has pledged \$14.5 million in aid to Pakistan, while the UK government also announced a contribution of \$1.73 million for relief efforts.



# SYRIAN CRISIS

2022 marks the 12th year of the Syrian crisis; March 15, 2011, is widely considered the first day of the civil war.

In 2000, complaints began arising about the high unemployment rate, governmental corruption, and lack of political freedom after Mr Bashar al-Assad became president. In January 2011, inspired by the 'Arab Spring' movement, groups began leading peaceful protests and demonstrations against the president. In retaliation, to repress the crowds, the Syrian government used violence and deadly force, which was met with an uproar from the public. Protests calling for the resignation of the president broke out nationwide, and on the 15th of March that year, violence ravaged the country, rapidly escalating into a civil war between several rebel groups and the government led by President Assad. Fuelling the fire of the war was foreign countries beginning to take sides and sending money, weaponry, and soldiers as assistance. Russia and Iran supported the Syrian government, whereas Turkey, Western powers, and several Gulf Arab states backed the opposition. As the situation was exacerbated, extremist jihadist organisations such as ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) became involved. With the involvement of the government, protesters, foreign countries, and extremist groups, Syria quickly turned into a proxy war zone, while civilians were caught in the crossfire.

Considering the state of the country, accurate statistics cannot be gathered, but it is confirmed by the United Nations that between 2011 and 2021, at least 350,210 civilians and fighters were killed, although has disclaimed that it is most likely an "undercount of the actual number". Refugees within Syria exceeded 6.8 million as of 2021, and Turkey is hosting at least 3.6 million refugees. Approximately 6.9 million are displaced within the country itself; as of February 2022, 14.6 million people in Syria needed some form of humanitarian assistance, according to the UN, including about 5 million classified as being in extreme or catastrophic need. Combined with the destruction of infrastructures such as healthcare facilities, schools, utilities, and water and sanitation systems, children need assistance for both physical and mental health; half a million children are chronically malnourished, and most are exposed to diseases and human rights crimes.

The implementation of the 2012 Geneva Communiqué has been called for by the United Nations Security Council, to "form a transitional governing body formed based on mutual consent". Numerous peace talks mediated by the UN failed to make headway with the situation, due to President Assad's unwillingness to negotiate with the opposition groups. Geir Pedersen, the UN special envoy, declared that "a military solution is an illusion" and that a political solution "is perfectly doable if the will is there", however it still does not seem as though the war will come to an end soon.



# SRI LANKAN CRISIS

Sri Lanka is currently in an economic crisis, with budget and current account deficits, hyperinflation, a devalued currency, and a huge sovereign debt that it can no longer pay.

The origins of this can be mainly attributed to the president of Sri Lanka, Mr. Gotabaya Rajapaksa, and his influence over the parliament. The members of the Rajapaksa family have always been prominent political figures, and during his presidency, Mr. Gotabaya increased his presidential powers and appointed several members of his family through the 20th Amendment.

The country was in debt since 2009, when the president at the time, Mr. Mahinda Rajapaksa, took massive foreign loans from countries such as China to repay loans for infrastructure projects aimed to attract tourism. Sri Lanka had limited foreign reserves, but rather than implementing reforms to increase those reserves, several tax cuts were implemented by the Rajapaksas to increase their political support. Combined with the 2019 Easter shootings, the COVID-19 pandemic, and 2021 ban on chemical fertilisers (which destroyed the tea industry, Sri Lanka's primary export crop), the country began suffering financially, unable to repay debts or provide for the people.

Restricted oil imports lead to significantly increasing prices. To ration, petrol stations had up to 8 hour waits at petrol stations, only providing 2 to 3 litres at a time. Unemployment, deriving from the halting of manufacturing due to lessened oil imports, substantially affected the country's GDP. Unsurprisingly, people were unable to afford basic necessities. Sri Lanka's credit rating was being degraded further and further into junk, making other countries unwilling to extend loans. External debt reached 50.6 USD billion in March 2022.

Consequently, the public's unrest grew and brought rise to riots and protests. Though the protests were initially peaceful, they morphed into notably violent actions, such as the burning of the Prime Minister's house and the occupation of the Presidential Palace. On the 13th of July 2022, President Gotabaya Rajapaksa fled the country, sending his resignation the following day.

The appointment of Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe as acting President was met with scrutiny, from both the public and other political parties. After Mr. Wickremesinghe was asked to step down, he stated that he would not do so until a suitable candidate had been elected.

After numerous negotiations, the International Monetary Fund preliminarily agreed to extend a 48-month \$2.9 billion loan to Sri Lanka on the 1st of September 2022 for the restoration of the country's economic stability.



# FURTHER INFORMATION

## Our Conference

DIAMUN 2023 hopes to be revolutionary, and will bring in quite a few changes in comparison to the last few years. Firstly, the new theme for the conference - "Collaborating to foster sustainable development". The DIAMUN 23 theme was initially inspired by SDG goals 8 and 11, and also links to SDG goals 7, 9, 12 and 13. These goals call for an inclusive society with strong institutions that provide the foundation for sustainable development for all as well as building resilient infrastructure and fostering sustainability. These SDGs highlight the importance of resilience and the need to ensure that sustainability is always fostered in today's advanced world to make the world a better place in all aspects. Secondly, we aim for this year's conference to be entirely face to face, with no online committees whatsoever! We're also hoping to bring back the much loved social event, however it is dependent on the situation with Covid-19 at the time. Finally, DIAMUN is introducing two new committees, the Special Conference on Climate Change (SpC-CC), and the Second General Assembly (GA2), also known as the Economic and Financial Committee (ECOFIN); and so DIAMUN 2023 will have 15 committees! We look forward to an exciting, engaging, and back-to-normal conference!

## The Next Issue

The next issue will be focused on world topics and/or issues, and more information on potential events at the DIAMUN 2023 conference.

## Stay Tuned!

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