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# DIAMUNthly Newsletter

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## Introduction

Following the recent worldwide Black Lives Matter protests, where citizens have been protesting against the institutionalized systemic racism in America and their own countries, it has become clear to all of us how far we are from a just and compassionate world. In fact, our societies are rampaged with crises from one corner of the world to another -- including ones that often go unheard of. Although at first glance it may seem that media coverage determines the severity and frequency of crises, it is not surprising that crises do not just disappear once their headline is deemed outdated; people continue to suffer and livelihoods are still threatened after the wave of public attention. This time? Silently, and without the onlooking piercing gaze of the international community. Yet these individuals deserve our attention. As the future generation of leaders, it is our responsibility to hold world leaders accountable to the atrocities committed in certain nations which more often than not are hidden from potential critics to protect the interest of the wealthy and powerful. As the future generation of leaders, it is our utmost priority and duty to unearth the crises that many turn a blind eye to. Thus, this month's edition of DIAMUNthly is focused on shining a light on three urgent yet less well known crises in three different parts of the world.

# Muslims in Chinese Concentration Camps

In the Xinjiang province of China, one of the biggest human rights violations in the world is taking place, yet there is unfortunately very little media coverage.

It is estimated that 1 million ethnic muslims and Uighurs are held in so-called “re-education” camps, which seem more like prisons.

Leaked documents and footage proves that these camps are not in fact for re-education, but to indiscriminately imprison and brainwash the ethnic minority population. They are meant to deprogram the people of their muslim culture and program them for integration with the rest of Chinese society and most importantly, the Communist party.

China is denying and calling these and such allegations fake news, but with more and more evidence surfacing day to day, these statements are becoming more difficult to defend. Furthermore, there have been instances when the government contradicted itself, such as during the Press conference held by the Chinese Ambassador to the UK that denied the existence of such camps and documents that provide a “guide” to “re-education”, while a foreign ministry official confirmed this, but blamed western media for falsifying its contents.



The documents were perhaps leaked by a Chinese official, who was a suspected enemy of Xi Jing Ping due to his removal of political enemies under his “anti-corruption” campaign. Any official or citizen caught leaking such information is executed or imprisoned. These were again denied at first by China even in organizations such as the UN, however on October 6th 2018, the Chinese changed strategy in light of international pressure, and in fact confirmed the existence of the camps, calling them “Vocational Training Camps”. It was now clear that the government was trying to spin the story, because unraveling the layers seems only to the point to the fact that the government is largely Islamophobic and considers only the ethnic majority, the Han Chinese.

Some reports suggest that individuals are placed into these camps based on nothing more than a mathematical algorithm that suggests “suspicious” citizens to the police using an application. During any given time, there can be up to 100,000 people on said list, with many being placed into camps on the basis of nothing more than the algorithm.

In these camps, there is a score system, in which if you score well enough on your exams that consist of Chinese culture, politics, law and history content, then you are eligible to receive awards such as getting to see your family or even being released. On the other hand, the lack of points or a low score means punishments such as beatings, deprivation of food and other inhumane acts.





# Desert Locust Invasion



The Horn of Africa is facing the worst Desert Locust crisis in over 25 years, and the most serious in 70 years for Kenya. The locusts have been migrating particularly from Yemen (and the general Empty Quarter Basin), where the locust control program has been defunded for the past few years due to the ongoing Civil war and security reasons near the border with Saudi Arabia, allowing them to multiply further. This unprecedented locust 'invasion' from the East means hundreds of millions of locusts swarm into East African countries, namely Somalia, Ethiopia, Chad, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Eritrea, South Sudan, and others, a plague within the COVID-19 pandemic that calls for national emergencies in many of these named affected nations.

This species of locust is regarded as the world's most destructive migratory pest, with 800 million capable of covering just 1 square kilometer. They can consume the same amount of food in one day as 35,000 people, while a large swarm can eat up to 1.8 million metric tons of green vegetation, equivalent to food enough to feed 81 million people. Other than being highly mobile, locusts breed very fast -- a single female locust can lay egg pods containing anywhere from 80- 150 eggs.



Despite their name, the desert locusts thrive following periods of heavy rainfall that trigger blooms of vegetations across normally arid habitats in Africa and the Middle East. Studies has shown that a prolonged period of exceptionally wet weather, and not to mention several rare cyclones (Cyclone Mekunu and Cyclone Luban, amongst others, have accumulated an enormous cyclone energy) that struck eastern Africa and the Arabian Peninsula over the last 18 months, are to blame as they create ephemeral lakes where each generation of locusts has a 20-fold increase in population on average.

The Desert locusts have been triggering widespread devastation to farmland - crops and pasture lands are getting devoured every second, in a region that's already extremely vulnerable to famine -- over 13 million people in Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia experience "severe acute food insecurity", while another 20 million are on the brink, according to the FAO. Since most crops are planted at the beginning of East Africa's first rainy season, in March of April, this will coincide with the new generation of starving swarms ready to wreak havoc.

In the time of COVID-19, many countries are still recovering from recent shocks and traditional coping capacities across communities are already stretched beyond the breaking point. Local agri-food supply chains are already experiencing disruptions, including reduced access to inputs and services, labor movement, transport and roadblocks, and credit or liquidity due to COVID-19. Furthermore, agricultural production contracts and food imports decline elsewhere around the world. Africa seems set to fall into its first recession for 25 years due to the COVID-19 outbreak, which will further hobble the ability of governments to counter the crisis.

However, there may be hope: while scientists continue to explore where East Africa's climate is headed, aid organizations are scrambling to prevent the locust crisis from getting worse. In April 2020, the Food and Agriculture Organization scaled up its Desert locust appeal from 76 million USD to 153.2 million USD for pest control operations, surveillance aircrafts, and ground control equipment and other materials in order to protect farmers and pastoralists. In addition, The U.S. Agency for International Development released \$800,000 to support FAO's response in eastern Africa and The United Nations' Central Emergency Response Fund has already authorized a release of \$10 million to help governments contain the infestation. Not to mention, The World Bank Group has approved a US\$ 500 million program to provide flexible support to countries in Africa and the Middle East affected by the locust outbreak. So far, more than 240,000 hectares across 10 countries have been treated with chemical pesticides or biopesticides, and 750 people have been trained to carry out ground locust control operations. Furthermore, to adapt to restrictions on the movement of personnel due to border closures to limit the spread of the virus, FAO is making use of remote data collection through a handheld device called eLocust3.

The biggest challenge to tackle now is delays in pesticide deliveries due to a significant reduction in global air freight operations during this pandemic, and to prevent a breakdown in pesticide stocks in each country, as rural populations depend on the success of the FOA's control campaign to restore their livelihoods and food security.

The priority is helping affected households to meet their immediate food needs and to safeguard their physical and human capital assets via cash transfers and other social protection measures. Follow up actions will focus on rehabilitating food production and livelihood systems to get communities back on their feet, while strengthening surveillance and warning systems to mitigate the threat of future outbreaks.





# Sino-Indian Conflict

In 1962, the first Sino-Indian Border war occurred. The Chinese military pushed to create a Line of Actual Control, which would be a border between the two countries, however in 1967, in the second Sino-Indian war occurred, and the new Line of Actual Control was created. No further wars occurred between the two countries over the border, however, there have recently been several conflicts on the actual border itself.

The whole border conflict originates from the fact that there is disputed land in the region; especially Aksai Chin. The causes of these disputes began in the early 20th century, when the British still had control over India, and had to set many different lines in between the two countries to define their borders, one of which being the McMahon line. The McMahon line was meant to be signed by the British, Tibetan and Chinese representatives, however the Chinese representatives refused to sign it. Despite China's absence, the treaty was signed anyway, which caused many more disputes in the area since China did not recognize this McMahon line as a valid border.

Many skirmishes and conflicts happened on the borders of China and India since, however the most recent one, in the Galwan Valley (in Aksai Chin) was one of the most controversial. Allegedly, there was a brawl between soldiers of each nation, where some reports stated that the fighting happened with rocks and clubs. Eventually, 20 Indian Soldiers were killed, and an undisclosed number of Chinese soldiers were injured and killed. This is very important to note, since these are the first deaths on the Sino-Indian border in almost 45 years. Both sides claimed that the other had violated the borders, and crossed into their respective land, however since the LAC is poorly demarcated, especially in an area where rivers and geographical landmarks shift often, there are no confirmations of who entered whose land.

The repercussions of this are huge. Realistically, this conflict is happening with two global superpowers, both of which have a Nuclear Weapons program, and have the capability of unleashing them on the other. This escalation is very unlikely, however there have been slow, yet continuous escalations between the two nations. Most recently, the Indian government banned 59 Chinese applications, including the recently viral app "TikTok". These bans were relatively insignificant, however they signify that the tension between the countries is rising, and they will continue to rise until the countries come together bilaterally and solve the LAC border disputes once and for all.

