

GLOBAL NEXUS BRIEF



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

Between June 6-9, 2024, the European elections took place, resulting in significant political shifts within the European Union. These elections are crucial as they determine the composition of the European Parliament, which influences EU policy and legislative directions for the next several years.

G7 SUMMIT IN ITALY

The G7 summit, hosted by Italy in June 2024, brought together leaders from the world's major economies. This summit was a platform for discussing and forming international policies on crucial issues such as climate change, economic stability, and security. The outcomes of such summits often have wide-ranging implications for global economic and political strategies.

GEOPOLITICAL SHIFTS AND POWER DYNAMICS

The expansion of the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) group to include new members like Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE marked a significant geopolitical shift. This expansion is poised to challenge the existing global order dominated by Western institutions like the IMF and World Bank. The BRICS countries' increased economic influence and potential moves towards a common currency could reduce their dependence on Western markets and reshape global trade dynamics.

Africa



TERRORISM AND INSURGENCIES

Africa continues to struggle with terrorism and insurgent activities, particularly in regions such as the Sahel, Somalia, and Nigeria. The Sahel, in particular, has seen an increase in attacks by groups affiliated with al-Qaeda and ISIS. These groups have targeted military outposts and civilian populations, leading to significant casualties and displacement. In Somalia, al-Shabaab remains a potent threat, conducting frequent attacks in both rural areas and the capital, Mogadishu. Nigeria's northeastern region is still plagued by Boko Haram and its splinter faction, ISWAP, causing continued instability and humanitarian crises.



South Africa's National Elections

Rwanda's Political Landscape



South Africa's national elections marked a significant political shift, with the African National Congress (ANC) losing its outright majority for the first time since the end of apartheid. The ANC secured 159 seats in the 400-seat National Assembly, necessitating coalition partnerships to form a government. The Democratic Alliance (DA) and the newly prominent MK Party also made significant gains. This election reflects growing public dissatisfaction with the ANC, attributed to corruption, poor service delivery, and the ongoing electricity crisis managed by Eskom. The results indicate a demand for political change and greater accountability.

Rwanda is gearing up for its general elections scheduled for July 2024. President Paul Kagame is expected to secure another term, with the ruling Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) maintaining its dominance. The political environment in Rwanda is tightly controlled, with limited space for opposition activities. While Kagame's administration is credited with economic growth and stability, concerns about human rights and political freedoms persist. The upcoming elections will be closely watched by the international community for indications of democratic processes and governance.

America



MEXICAN DRUG CARTEL VIOLENCE

Mexico continues to grapple with severe drug cartel violence, particularly in the states of Michoacán, Tamaulipas, and Chiapas. The period saw several high-profile clashes between rival cartels and security forces, resulting in numerous fatalities and heightened insecurity. The Mexican government has deployed additional troops to these regions and increased collaboration with the United States on intelligence sharing and border security to combat the drug trade. Despite these efforts, the pervasive influence of cartels continues to challenge law enforcement and public safety.



Haiti's Gang Violence and Instability



U.S. Presidential Primaries



Haiti remains embroiled in severe gang violence and political instability. Armed gangs continue to control significant portions of the capital, Port-au-Prince, leading to frequent clashes with security forces and further exacerbating the humanitarian crisis. The international community, including the United Nations, has called for urgent action to restore stability and support the Haitian government in its efforts to combat gang violence and address underlying socio-economic issues.

The United States held several key presidential primary elections, setting the stage for the 2024 presidential race. Both major parties have seen intense competition, with candidates focusing on critical issues such as healthcare, immigration, and economic policy. The outcomes of these primaries are crucial in shaping the political landscape and voter sentiment leading up to the national elections. Early frontrunners have emerged, but the race remains highly competitive, reflecting deep divisions within the electorate.

Asia



NORTH KOREA'S MISSILE TESTS

North Korea conducted a series of missile tests, including an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM), heightening regional security concerns. These tests are part of Pyongyang’s strategy to showcase its military capabilities and exert pressure on the United States and South Korea. The international community, particularly the United Nations Security Council, has condemned these actions, calling for stricter sanctions and increased diplomatic efforts to curb North Korea’s nuclear ambitions.

China’s Belt and Road Forum



Beijing hosted the Belt and Road Forum, bringing together leaders and representatives from participating countries. The forum emphasized infrastructure development, trade, and investment cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). China announced new funding commitments for BRI projects, aiming to bolster economic ties and expand its influence across Asia and beyond. The forum also addressed concerns about debt sustainability and environmental impact, seeking to improve the initiative’s global image.

ASEAN Economic Integration



The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) held its annual summit, focusing on economic integration and regional cooperation. Key discussions included the implementation of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) blueprint, enhancing intra-regional trade, and addressing challenges such as supply chain disruptions and digital transformation. The summit also explored opportunities for collaboration with external partners, including the European Union and China, to strengthen economic ties and promote sustainable development in the region.

Europe



CYBERSECURITY THREATS

Europe continues to face significant cybersecurity threats, with a series of high-profile attacks targeting critical infrastructure and private companies. In May, a major ransomware attack disrupted operations at several European ports, highlighting the vulnerability of vital supply chains. The European Union Agency for Cybersecurity (ENISA) issued an alert urging member states to bolster their cybersecurity measures and collaborate more closely to counter these threats. The attacks have led to increased investment in cybersecurity and a push for new regulations to ensure better protection against cyberattacks.



Brexit Aftermath and UK-EU Relations



Post-Brexit negotiations between the UK and the EU continued, focusing on resolving outstanding issues related to trade, Northern Ireland, and financial services. While some progress has been made, significant challenges remain, particularly regarding the implementation of the Northern Ireland Protocol. The UK government has proposed amendments to ease trade barriers between Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK, which have met resistance from the EU. These negotiations are critical for maintaining stability and preventing disruptions in trade and economic relations.

Trade and Economic Policies



The EU is negotiating new trade agreements with key global partners, including India and Mercosur. These agreements aim to boost economic ties, reduce trade barriers, and create new opportunities for European businesses. However, negotiations are complex, with significant discussions around agricultural subsidies, intellectual property rights, and environmental standards. Successful trade deals could provide a much-needed boost to the European economy, enhancing competitiveness and fostering sustainable growth.

Middle East



Israel-Hamas Conflict

The conflict between Israel and Hamas escalated during this period, with frequent rocket exchanges and military strikes causing significant casualties and infrastructural damage. This escalation has drawn international concern, with various nations calling for ceasefire and peace talks. The conflict has major implications for regional stability, influencing neighboring countries and international relations.



Syria's Reintegration into the Arab League

Syria participated in the 33rd Arab League Summit in Manama, Bahrain, marking its reintegration into the regional political framework after being suspended in 2011. This marked a significant step towards Syria's reintegration into the regional political framework. The move was met with mixed reactions internationally, with some Western nations criticizing the decision while regional powers saw it as a step towards stabilizing the region.



Lebanon's Economic Crisis

Lebanon's economic situation worsened, with inflation reaching record levels and the Lebanese pound losing further value against the dollar. The World Bank and IMF highlighted the urgent need for economic reforms and international aid to prevent a complete economic collapse.



Saudi Arabia's Diplomatic Engagements

Saudi Arabia hosted a summit with Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries to discuss regional security and economic cooperation. The summit focused on countering Iranian influence in the region and enhancing economic ties among GCC members. Saudi Arabia also announced new initiatives under its Vision 2030 plan, aiming to diversify its economy away from oil dependence.



Far-Right Gains in European Parliament: A Shift Toward Nationalism

Recent European Parliamentary elections have seen significant gains for far-right parties, signaling a potential shift in the European Union's future policy directions. Parties such as France's National Rally, Italy's League, and Germany's Alternative for Germany have increased their influence, raising concerns about the impact on EU unity and policy-making.

These parties advocate for greater national sovereignty, stricter border controls, and a reduction in immigration, which could lead to a reevaluation of the Schengen Agreement and other migration policies. Economically, the far-right's protectionist stance might disrupt trade agreements and slow down the EU's green transition efforts. Resistance to environmental regulations could hinder the EU's ambitious climate goals, including the European Green Deal aimed at making Europe the first climate-neutral continent by 2050.

Socially, the rise of far-right parties risks inflaming tensions within member states and undermining the EU's commitment to human rights. Issues such as LGBTQ+ rights, freedom of the press, and judicial independence may come under increased scrutiny. As the European Parliament becomes more polarized, achieving consensus on critical issues may become more challenging.

In response, traditional centrist and progressive factions may need to unite to counteract the far-right's agenda and preserve the principles of European integration. The next few years will be crucial in determining whether the EU can maintain its principles of unity and cooperation or succumb to the pressures of nationalism and division. The outcome will significantly influence the EU's role in global affairs and its ability to address pressing challenges such as migration, climate change, and economic stability.