

# A WORLD IN MOTION



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## P1 | NORTH KOREA

While global leaders met in China for the G20 summit, North Korea again fired missiles into nearby waters, further escalating tensions.

## P2 | BRAZIL

Former president Dilma Rousseff was officially impeached at the end of August, leaving the economically challenged country deeply divided.

## P3 | GLOBAL

The use of child suicide bombers by extremists is on the rise from Nigeria to Afghanistan—a heartbreaking reality the Church cannot ignore.

## P4 | PROJECTS

PROJECT DOTA supports discipleship training in South Asia, where there is much need for theological education.



## DEFIANT NORTH KOREA FIRES MISSILES



During WWII, Japan was conducting laboratory-stage testing of nuclear weapons, but this programme was stopped after the US occupation and the end of the war. Japan vowed not to pursue nuclear arms as long as the US is able to provide suitable security measures. Now the spotlight is on the US – how far is it willing to go to defend Japan against ballistic (and possibly nuclear) threats from North Korea?

Just over a week ago (31 August), Japan's defence ministry asked the government for additional spending. If approved, this would mark the fifth consecutive year in which the Japanese defence budget has increased. According to *Reuters*, the biggest expenditure (99 billion yen, or \$970 million) is upgrades to Japan's Patriot batteries, a last line of defence against missile strikes. The improvements will double the Patriots' range to around 30km (19 miles) as well as sharpening the defensive targeting of incoming ballistic warheads. The Patriots will take five years to complete, but the first four are expected to be ready for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

### South Korean defence

The proposed THAAD (Terminal High Altitude Area Defence) missile deployment by the US in South Korea has drawn widespread disapproval, not only from North Korea (against which the defence system is set) but also from China, which argues that the system threatens its sovereignty. According to the Centre for Research on Globalisation, experts expect the THAAD system to raise regional tensions, rather than deterring North Korea's nuclear and missile threats. With the THAAD deployment, South Korea now enters the US missile defence network, which could harm the geopolitical balance in the region and provoke strategic response from China and Russia.

### FROM A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE

Could North Korea really draw the world into a large-scale East-West conflict? With China and Russia as allies, North Korea is not a country that

## THE NUMBERS:

### NK Missile Programme



1969

Obtained their first tactical missiles from the Soviet Union



1,000

Number of missiles of varying capabilities and range that NK is thought to possess



12.12.2012

First successful launch of a three-stage rocket (using technology said to be identical to inter-continental ballistic missiles)



18

Number of instances of missiles fired in 2016 (at least two this year landed within Japan's air defence identification zone)

North Korea fired three ballistic missiles into the sea off its east coast on Monday (5 September), South Korea's military said, as the leaders of the Group of 20 major economies held a summit in China, the North's main diplomatic ally. "We are still analysing details but this is a grave threat to our nation's security, and we express deep concern," the Japan Defence Ministry said in a statement. The missile launches were the latest in a series of launches by the isolated North this year in violation of UN Security Council resolutions, supported by China, that ban all ballistic missile-related activities by the North. Pyongyang rejects the ban as infringing its sovereign right to pursue a space programme and self-defence. (*Reuters*)

### Japan in the crosshairs

North Korea has been threatening South Korea with war for many years, mainly because the North seeks the re-unification of the two states. Recent shows of power and advancing ballistic technology have, however, been directed at Japan.

During a meeting in June between US vice-president Joe Biden and Chinese president Xi Jinping, Biden warned that if North Korea is allowed to continue threatening Japan, Japan will obtain nuclear weapons "virtually overnight". This amounted to the US telling China to reign in their neighbouring ally in order to avoid nuclear war. At the same time, Biden assured China that the build-up of the US naval presence in the region was a 'safeguard' against military confrontation with US allies in the region (i.e. South Korea and Japan) and was not directly targeting China in response to its actions in the South China Seas.

# NEWS HEADLINES



Some 3000 migrants were saved in the Strait of Sicily in 30 separate rescue missions, the Italian coastguard said, bringing the total to almost 10,000 in two days and marking a sharp acceleration in refugee arrivals in **Italy**. The migrants were packed on board dozens of boats, many of them rubber dinghies that become dangerously unstable in high seas.



Al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri called on **Iraq's** Sunnis to prepare for a "long guerrilla" war as Islamic State (IS) militants lost more land near their de facto capital Mosul. This year, the Islamic State has lost about half of the territory it conquered in 2014/15 in Iraq. Zawahiri reprimanded IS leader Al-Baghdadi for an extreme interpretation of Islam and the "bloodletting" which, he said, gave "Safavid Iran and its subservient government in Iraq ... a pretext to eradicate the Sunnis."



Christians in the north **Indian** state of Telangana are under fresh assaults by ultra-Hindu nationalist groups. Telangana ranks second in the list of places most likely to experience religiously-motivated violence in India, with 25 major incidents so far this year.

can be attacked (even in 'pre-emptive defence') without serious wider consequences. The US currently finds itself in a tight position as challenges and oppositions develop and shift.

Mikhail Alexandrov, from the Centre for Military and Political Studies at the Moscow State Institute of International Relations, spoke to *Russia Insider News* about the "reconfiguration of forces" taking place around the world: "The strength of power centres independent from the West, among them Russia, China, India, Iran and Brazil, is growing. And the United States can no longer control the entire planet. Once they get involved in some kind of confrontation with any one power centre, the others take the opportunity to spread their influence. The Chinese took full advantage of the conflict between Russia and the West. American resources were diverted to the European direction, and to Syria, Turkey and Ukraine. There was even talk of the possibility of war in Europe. The Americans escalated the situation

around the Baltic. [Subsequently] they overlooked the fact that China might be strengthened as a result."

All of these shifts in the various "power centres" impact the Church in various ways: in North Korea, increased aggression from the West could result in even more persecution of Christians within the country's borders; in China, which is home to the second largest number of Christians worldwide, political shifts are opening and closing doors for mission endeavours; in Russia, there is a new wave of clampdowns on evangelical Christianity. With Christianity being associated with the West in many non-Christian countries around the world, decisions by Western leaders at this sensitive time will either aid or hinder the global Church.

**PRAY > For Western leaders to make wise decisions when dealing with NK > For a softening of the hearts of NK leadership > For resilience for the small NK church**

## BRAZIL'S ROUSSEFF CONTROVERSIALLY IMPEACHED



Brazilian presidents have taken similar financial steps before, without impeachment, and Ms Rousseff continues to insist that she did not do anything wrong. She, and her supporters, are adamant that the actions taken to impeach her amounts to a political coup, and that she is a 'political martyr' for standing by her principles.

Ms Rousseff, once was a guerrilla fighter against the 1964-1985 military dictatorship (and who was imprisoned and tortured), has had a difficult presidency over the last few years. Her approval ratings dropped from 79% in March 2013 to around 10% in March 2016, and her re-election in 2014 was by a narrow margin. One of the biggest problems she had to deal with was a series of corruption scandals in which her Workers' Party was implicated: in one, public funds were paid to Congress members in return for backing the government in crucial votes, and in another, kickbacks from corrupt deals with Petrobras (Brazil's state-oil company) were paid to executives and politicians.

**B**razil's new President Michel Temer is preserving, but quietly overhauling, some signature social programmes of his leftist predecessor Dilma Rousseff in the face of accusations that his conservative government will hurt the poor. In recent weeks Mr Temer has boosted the budget for a key cash-transfer programme, committed to keep a low-income housing plan in place and extended a health-care initiative that has brought thousands of Cuban doctors to underserved communities across Brazil. Mr Temer has been leading the country since May, when Ms Rousseff was suspended from office to face an impeachment trial. She was ousted on Wednesday (31 August) after the Senate convicted her of violating budget laws, putting Mr Temer at the helm for the remainder of her term, which runs through the end of 2018. (*Wall Street Journal*)

### A complicated impeachment

Dilma Rousseff's impeachment is far from simple, and was described by Paulo Pinheiro in a Guardian article as leaving "deep scars in political and institutional life". Officially, the reason for her impeachment was 'illegal manipulation of government accounts' – moving funds between government budgets, which is illegal in Brazil. Supposedly, she did this in order to boost her chances of re-election in October 2014 (the budgets that were 'plugged' were for popular social programmes). However, other

What complicates the impeachment even further is that 45 of the 81 senators who determined the outcome have been convicted or investigated for serious crimes or corruption themselves, as have 274 of the 513 members of the lower house of Congress. In addition, President Temer was convicted of corrupt electioneering, and as a result, is not allowed to run for office for the next eight years. Thus Ms Rousseff's ousting will do little in terms of improving the 'corrupt climate' of politics in the country.

Some analysts say that the financial irregularities were a technicality, and that her ousting was actually more to do with her stubborn leadership style: she was unwilling or unable to "make the deals and alliances necessary to run an effective government in Brazil's fractured multi-party system" (Wyre Davies, BBC News) and refused to "foster a working relationship with Congress" (Lucia Newman, Aljazeera).

## NEWS HEADLINES



The African Union is to send a delegate to **Gabon** to help resolve a post-election standoff between President Ali Bongo, whose family has ruled for a half century, and his main opposition rival. Official results gave Bongo a slim victory, but challenger Jean Ping claimed he had won and accused security forces of using violence against his supporters. Opposition anger at Bongo's re-election boiled over into riots in the capital, Libreville, and other towns, leaving six people dead.



A draft report by MPs has said the **UK** should stop selling arms to Saudi Arabia while Saudi actions in neighbouring Yemen are investigated. The government has faced sustained pressure to suspend the sale of weapons to the country amid claims that international humanitarian law has been breached in fighting between the Yemeni government, backed by Saudi Arabia, and Shia Yemeni rebels.



After Angela Merkel's ruling party came third to the anti-immigrant party in a state election, analysts are questioning both how much longer the **German** chancellor's refugee policy can stay intact and how long she can stay in power.

In the aftermath of the impeachment, people are extremely divided. Fernando Gabeira, a former politician, says that the process was good for the country: "The rules were obeyed, the constitution was considered and it means that Brazil's democracy will be stronger than before." Another, however, described the recent events as "a sordid and lamentable affair".

### *The wider picture*

In recent history, Brazil has been hailed as one of the world's 'success stories'. Civilian rule was restored to the country in 1985, and in the new era of democracy, vigorous political debate was welcomed and embraced. The country also prospered financially, and with a huge labour force and vast amounts of natural resources, it grew into one of the world's top 10 economies.

Today, however, Brazil is going through its worst recession since the 1930s. This has been largely linked to a drop in sales prices for resources and exports, including oil, iron ore and soya. There is "widespread anger among the population at the entire political class" (Matt Sandy, *TIME Magazine*), so the next few months will prove to be critical as the new leadership attempts to bring stability and positive change.

### *FROM A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE*

Brazil is home to one of the largest evangelical Christian populations in the world, and has become a key 'sending nation' with a strong

mission force. There is, however, a rising sense of hopelessness among Christians and the Church, because the recent political changes do not reflect significant change to social and economic problems. There is strong division related to the recent political developments: some say that Dilma Rousseff's administration was very bad (it left a record of high unemployment, rising inflation and economic instability), while others are defending her with all their strength; some are saying that they do not support any particular leader but are just against corruption, and others are calling for a new election.

Mission leaders in Brazil (friends of INcontext) say that these opposed political positions are even breaking friendships. "Things are uncertain. These political problems are causing a hate culture and intolerance among people. Thousands of people went to the streets to express their position, in favour or against [the impeachment]. But we know that it was not the people who removed Dilma Rousseff – the politicians decide what is best for their own interests, and people continue to suffer the effects of corruption."

**PRAY > For an miraculous end to the widespread corruption > For the new leadership to work for the good of the country > For the Brazilian Church to work for unity despite different political convictions**

## USE OF CHILD SUICIDE BOMBERS ON THE RISE



**R**ecent footage captured by a local Kurdish TV station in the Iraqi city of Kirkuk showed the moment a would-be Islamic State (IS) child suicide bomber [possibly as young as 12 or 13] was apprehended, seconds before he was able to detonate his explosives belt. The boy's arrest came less than 24 hours after another child suicide bomber killed at least 51 people and injured 100 more at a wedding party in Turkey.

"The boy [Hussain] claimed during interrogation that he had been kidnapped by masked men who put the explosives on him and sent him to the area," said Kirkuk intelligence official Brigadier Chato Fadhiil Humadi. He was said to have been displaced from the IS-held city of Mosul, Iraq's second largest, by recent military operations in the area. [A later statement indicates that the boy's father, an IS supporter, ordered his sons to kill themselves.]

A report released earlier this year by Combating Terrorism Centre at West Point university in the

US revealed 89 children died fighting for the Islamic State last year. Figures from early 2016 appeared to show the use of child suicide bombers was rising. (The Telegraph)

### *Alarming trend*

As the nature of conventional warfare continues to change, the recruitment of children in modern conflicts (especially where extremists and other militant groups form the main opposition) has become a common practice. As civilians become more involved in regional conflicts and the standard rules of engagement are abandoned in favour of guerrilla tactics, children become more vulnerable and the mobilisation of children and youth for military purposes is accelerating.

According to one report, there were three times as many suicide operations involving children and youth in January 2016 compared to the previous January. And this alarming trend is not limited to the war zones of Iraq and Syria: UNICEF has reported that one in every five suicide bombers used in the past two years by Boko Haram, the Nigerian Islamic group, has been a child, and that the use of children for such operations has surged eleven-fold in West Africa.

A more unique trend in West Africa seems to be the use of girls as suicide bombers. According to UNICEF's report, three-quarters of the suicide bombers were girls. It would seem that children (and girls in particular) are less likely to arouse

## FOR FURTHER REFERENCE

### INcontext Website:

[www.incontextministries.org](http://www.incontextministries.org)

Please visit our website for up-to-date information on events around the world.

If you have any questions or comments relating to the articles in this publication or on the website, please feel free to contact us at any time.



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Bank: BMO Harris Bank

Account number:

4818649309

Routing Number:

071025661

suspicion. With this alarming increase, however, this perception may be changing.

### **Deadly 'recruiting' tactics**

The exploitation of children by Islamic extremists is also practiced by the Taliban, Al-Shabaab, Al-Qaeda and others, and there appears to be similarities in their 'recruiting' techniques: kidnapping, indoctrination, exposure to violence, intimidation, deprivation, drug-use and coercion. But a striking difference particularly between IS and Boko Haram is the apparent complicity of family members in the recruitment of their children (as seen in the case of the would-be suicide bomber mentioned in the news extract above). Boko Haram focuses more on the abduction of children, while IS apparently pays families for their children's 'service'.

IS-recruited children (officially dubbed "ashbal al-khilafa", or "cubs of the caliphate") are venerated as the next generation – and thereby inheritors – of IS jihad. The Islamic State has released a guidebook for young mothers with "helpful tips" on how to raise a "Mujahid" child ("one engaged in jihad"), outlining techniques they believe will develop the body and jihadi spirit of the new generation of extremist fighters. IS argues that the key to success lies in introducing these values to them while they are babies.

### **Strategic or desperate?**

The increasing involvement of children in terrorism could be viewed as a strategic manoeuvre as terrorist organisations aim to increase operational 'success'. However, it

could also be seen as a sign of desperation, as counter-terrorism measures have improved to such an extent that terrorists have to resort to using children in order to sneak in 'below the radar'.

Many terror groups view children as 'expendable'. The Islamic State, however, appears to recognise the need to pursue long-term goals in order to ensure future stability. To IS, children are highly strategic in terms of long-term future objectives. IS uses children in a systematic and organised manner, and demonstrates an uncharacteristic transparency concerning their 'use'.

### **FROM A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE**

It is because of children like Hussain – the would-be suicide bomber in Kirkuk – that one cannot settle for simply declaring the enemy to be 'irredeemable'. It is imperative that Christians cross enemy lines to bring hope and Christ's redemptive love as well as emergency aid, helping families long after wars are over and extremists are defeated. The Church needs to help those displaced and made vulnerable by war to find meaningful futures so they do not give in to despair and hatred and to the lure of extremism. There are many children like Hussain across the world, especially in countries like Syria, Iraq, Libya, Nigeria, and Afghanistan, and the futures of these nations are tied to the future of this generation.

**PRAY > For effective strategies to reach vulnerable children > For the plans of the enemy to be frustrated > For more children to be reached with the Gospel of Peace in their formative years**

## KNOWLEDGE TO ACTION



### **PROJECT DOTA**

#### **Supporting Discipleship Training in South Asia**

The Church in South Asia is growing at a phenomenal rate, but as the Church is growing, the need for adequate training is becoming greater.

*Operation World* expands on this, focusing on one of the countries in the region: "The life and health of the Church depends on the proper development of pastors, teachers, evangelists and missionaries. In churches, poor discipling and lack of teaching and modelling of biblical life and leadership are problems... There is, on average, one trained pastor for every six congregations... The need is greater than what residential institutions can produce, and 90% of pastors lack access to adequate theological training."

There are opportunities to provide this vital training in three countries in this impoverished region. This project aims to cover participant costs for pastors attending DOTA\* training sessions (including travel, food and accommodation, and study materials).

\* "DOTA" refers to the "Discipleship On The Air" training, developed for rural pastors and leaders

**To support this project, please make use of the INcontext bank details and use DOTA together with your email address (as much as possible of it) as reference.**

*If you have any questions about this project, please contact our project department ([gustav@incontextministries.org](mailto:gustav@incontextministries.org)) or [CLICK HERE](#) to visit the website.*