

A WORLD IN MOTION



P1 | WORLD

G20 leaders and representatives of international institutions gathered in Hamburg, amid mass protests, to discuss global economic issues.

P2 | GAZA

It remains to be seen which nation will offer a bold, compassionate and lasting solution to the ever-deepening humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

P3 | KURDISTAN

Kurdistan's possible independence has far-reaching implications for regional stability and the growing Kurdish Church.

P4 | PROJECTS

PROJECT RESTORATION—providing trauma counselling and training for South Sudanese refugee pastors in Uganda.



THE NUMBERS:

G20 SUMMIT



1999

The year in which the G20 was founded



85%

The percentage of the gross world product that comes from G20 countries



100,000

The number of people in Hamburg protesting the G20



15,000

The number of police officers deployed in Hamburg around the time of the G20 summit

G20 SUMMIT - SHIFTING GLOBAL LEADERSHIP



By Cherolyn Amery

In her G20 summit opening statement, German Chancellor Angela Merkel said: "We are all aware of the great global challenges. We know that time is short and therefore solutions very often can only be found if we are ready to compromise and work together without bending over backwards too much because, of course, we can express different views on some issues." Ms Merkel and other EU leaders expressed their commitment to an open international trading system, while the Trump administration pursues protectionism under the "America First" motto. (*BBC News*)

What is the G20?

The recent summit on 7-8 July – the twelfth meeting of the Group of Twenty (19 nations plus the EU) – was attended by leaders from the Western world (Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, the UK, the US and the EU), South America (Argentina, Brazil and Mexico), Asia (China, India, Japan, South Korea), the Muslim world (Indonesia, Saudi Arabia and Turkey), Africa (South Africa) and Russia. These nations are not necessarily the top 20 economies in the world – according to the organisation itself, "it was considered important that countries and regions of systematic significance for the international financial system be included... aspects such as geographical balance and population representation [were also considered]." Representatives of several international institutions also attend (such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund), as do a number of guests, which this year included the Vietnamese representative of APEC (the Asia-Pacific Economic

Cooperation), the Guinea chair of the African Union and the Senegalese leader of the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

The international forum was founded in 1999 to discuss issues relating to global financial stability and the governance of the global economy, but came to prominence in 2008 when the widespread financial crash caused "wealthy G8 nations [to need] the wealth of emerging nations to stabilise the world economy" (*Al Jazeera*). It has been criticised for its under-representation of Africa, for a lack of transparency and accountability (meetings are mostly held behind closed doors), and for lacking the ability to enforce policies (no resolutions are binding), but it is still seen to have a strong influence on international matters.

Every G20 meeting focuses on certain 'recurring themes' (global economic growth, international trade and financial market regulation), but the 2017 summit also aimed to include issues that have 'ripple effects' on the global economy, such as mass migration, digital technology, global pandemics, antimicrobial resistance, women's economic empowerment, international terrorism and African investment.

Central 2017 aspects

This year's summit was notable in that it was surrounded by numerous protest actions and marches opposing the meetings. On 6 July, the protests turned violent – water cannons were used to disperse protestors, and more than 160 police officers were injured in clashes. On 7 July, parked cars were set alight and several shops were looted and destroyed. The largest peaceful protest march took place on 8 July, with approximately 76,000 people in attendance. Ms Merkel's decision to host the summit in Hamburg, a highly-populated city, has been criticised, but analysts believe that it was, in part, intended to show that protests are tolerated and managed in a 'healthy democracy'.

Many analysts believe that this year's summit was seen to mark, as Patrick Wintour of *The Guardian* said, "the moment of the US' formal abdication as the world's pre-eminent power", with global

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Earlier this month, the US and Russia forged a partial truce in

Syria. The two countries agreed to a cease-fire in the southwestern part of the country. While the details of the deal have not been made public, Israel, Jordan and other Sunni countries such as Saudi Arabia are concerned that Iran continues to pursue its goal of carving out a land route from Tehran, through Shi'ite-controlled areas in Iraq into Syria and from Syria to Lebanon.



Faced with a North Korea that seems both increasingly unpredictable and increasingly militarily capable,

South Korea's new government, under the Presidency of Moon Jae-in, has made a formal proposal: it's time for new talks. If the North agrees (it so far has issued no response), it would be the first talks between the two governments since 2015.

A recent poll found that nearly 76.9% of South Koreans favoured a return to inter-Korean dialogue.



Ships carrying **Chinese** troops are heading to Djibouti to set up Beijing's first overseas military base, reports state media. China says the support base will be used for peacekeeping and humanitarian aid in Africa and West Asia. It will also be used for military co-operation, naval exercises and rescue missions.

leadership shifting instead to "a new unstable quartet of Donald Trump, Xi Jinping (of China), Vladimir Putin (of Russia) and Angela Merkel (of Germany)", each of whom have different agendas. Noah Barkin, in an article for *Reuters*, said that at previous G20 summits, "a broadly united West led by the US and Europe would push countries like Russia, China, India and Brazil to follow its lead", but with Mr Trump's arrival on the political scene, "the Western consensus has broken down". Nick Dearden, director of UK campaigning organisation Global Justice Now, described it in an article for *Al Jazeera* as "the fracturing of the global elite", pitting "strongmen" like Mr Trump, Mr Putin and Mr Erdogan (of Turkey) – whose power "derives from a form of nationalism that believes global rules are for the weak" – against "moderates" like Ms Merkel, Mr Macron (of France) and Mr Trudeau (of Canada). Thomas Wright of *The Atlantic* describes the G20 as a "vestige of a world that no longer exists", pointing to the shift away from liberal globalisation and international cooperation to a stronger focus on national interests.

FROM A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE

Much of the opposition to the G20 comes from a belief that these 20+ leaders cannot 'solve' the

world's problems. A liberal German newspaper, *Der Spiegel*, wrote that "the group meeting here is an exclusive club that is mostly interested in preserving a creaking system of financial market-driven capitalism". Dearden believes that "the tectonic plates of global power are moving, and only a new politics can get us out of this mess", and that only "massive popular action" can bring about necessary change.

It would be easy to say that the Church, if it was stirred to "massive popular action", could bring about this desired change. Christians know that a Kingdom approach to inequality, oppression and injustice can indeed change the world. But Jesus modelled change from bottom-up individual transformation instead of top-down political leadership. Jesus did not provide the answers for those focused on opposing the Roman rule of His day – He spoke to personal needs rather than political agendas. In this time of a fracturing G20 leadership and a shifting geopolitical world, Christians are certainly called to be a voice, but also to follow Jesus' example of individual people before big picture politics.

PRAY > For G20 leaders to address world economic disparities > For the Church to lead the way by following Christ's example more visibly

THE POLITICS BEHIND THE GAZA CRISIS



By Donnelly McClelland

The Gaza Strip's only operating power plant was turned off late on Wednesday [12 July] due to a severe shortage of fuel, leaving the coastal enclave in a complete blackout, local officials said. The besieged Palestinian territory, where more than two million people live, has been suffering from an energy crisis since mid-April due to a dispute over taxes between Hamas, which rules the enclave, and West Bank-based Palestinian Authority [PA] President Mahmoud Abbas.

(*Al Jazeera*)

Ten years under Hamas rule

Hamas, an Islamist political party (listed by numerous nations as a terrorist organisation), took over Gaza ten years ago. In June 2007, it violently removed its Fatah rivals, the nationalist faction that runs the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO). A year earlier, it had beaten Fatah in elections. The split left Fatah to rule the West Bank and Hamas to control Gaza.

As Hamas marked the tenth anniversary of its takeover last month, there was little for it to celebrate: Turkey, which used to lavish support on Gaza, has re-established relations with Israel, and Hamas' main supporter, Qatar, is itself

embargoed by its powerful Arab neighbours and has partly suspended aid (with the rest in doubt). On 11 July, the United Nations declared that a decade of Hamas rule, Palestinian infighting and crippling blockades by Israel and Egypt have made life for people in Gaza "more and more wretched" each day. Gaza is estimated to have the highest unemployment rate in the world: 40% or more (among young people it soars to around two-thirds); and approximately 80% of the population depends on some form of humanitarian assistance.

High-risk campaign

President Abbas has, in recent weeks and months, tried to squeeze Hamas by decreasing services to Gaza (electricity, salaries, and health care). But according to *Asharq Al-Awsat* newspaper, he has said he is prepared to go even further, threatening sanctions against Hamas and to freeze funds for its leaders "if they continue to rule Gaza and use the money of the Palestinian people to strengthen their hold on power".

Mr Abbas is pursuing this high-risk campaign in Gaza in the hope that residents might force Hamas to surrender control of the isolated coastal enclave. Analysts say he appears to be cracking down on Hamas in a bid to win favour with US President Donald Trump, believing that such a move could strengthen his hand in any US-brokered Israel-Palestine peace talks. There are those, however, who believe that Mr Abbas may have miscalculated in his severe actions towards Gazan residents.

An uncertain future

Taher el-Nounou, an advisor to the new political leader of Hamas, Ismail Haniyeh, said: "Abbas is tossing small grenades into Gaza. He wants to create

NEWS HEADLINES



More than 300,000 people are now infected with cholera in **Yemen**, adding to the war, famine and state collapse currently facing the country. The UN confirmed there are now 313,000 cases and 1,706 deaths across 22 provinces since March. While easily preventable, after more than two years of war the country's health, water and sanitation systems are on the verge of breaking down, making the food and water-borne epidemic very difficult to contain.



Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan — delivering feisty and stirring messages on the one-year anniversary of a failed coup aimed at unseating him — lauded the popular resistance that helped stop the coup, and promised to decapitate 'traitors', a sign that his harsh crackdown against his foes over the last 12 months will continue.



African powers launched a new multinational military force to tackle Islamist militants in the Sahel. Some observers see the initiative of the G5 Sahel bloc - Mali, Mauritania, Burkina Faso, Niger and Chad - as forming the basis of an eventual exit strategy for around 4,000 French troops now deployed to the volatile region. But French President Emmanuel Macron said Paris had no plans to withdraw them.

a hostile environment in Gaza against Hamas. But you can say that he has failed. Abbas misread the situation. Maybe you can say that Hamas has not won, but Abbas has definitely lost."

A recent survey conducted in the Gaza revealed that Haniyeh has the support of 55% of those surveyed, compared to only 39% who support Mr Abbas – the largest gap ever between the two leaderships, according to the Palestinian Centre for Policy and Survey Research in Ramallah.

It appears that instead of pushing an isolated Hamas towards collapse or capitulation, the PA's pressure is sending militants in Gaza into the arms of Mr Abbas's greatest rival, a Palestinian leader named Mohammed Dahlan. He is said to be one of a handful of names on a shortlist of possible successors to Mr Abbas and is well-positioned, with powerful friends in Saudi Arabia's new crown prince (Mohammed bin Salman), Abu Dhabi's crown prince (Mohammed bin Zayed al-Nahyan) and Egyptian president Abdel Fatah al-Sisi.

Israel is watching Gaza closely, worried that pressure on Hamas could push extremists within the region to start firing rockets into Israel again, an escalation that would be answered by retaliatory strikes. Israel has fought three wars in nine years with Hamas.

Nathan Thrall, a senior analyst with International Crisis Group, said: "It remains unclear where Gaza is going, but there is a lot in play."

FROM A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE

As leaders in the region grapple with the deepening crisis in Gaza, it remains to be seen which nation will offer a bold, compassionate and lasting solution. Noam Tibon, an Israeli former major-

general, explained: "I spent years killing Hamas terrorists, but you have to give people some hope. When someone is in a corner, he has no choice but to kick out. It's in Israel's interest to support Gaza's economy, not to strangle it. We should be giving them a port, power, water and jobs in Israel." His view is not shared by the Israeli government, which has rejected an offer from Hamas of a ten-year ceasefire in return for being allowed to build a seaport. Israel currently controls not just the land crossings, but the waters off the Gaza coast, and there is no port at all. To be allowed one, Gaza would probably have to agree to full demilitarisation, and this is a step too far for Hamas to take.

Gaza's historic but tiny Palestinian Christian community has generally been tolerated by the Hamas regime, who recognise their wider contribution to the community through education and healthcare. The Palestinian Christian witness in Gaza includes five excellent schools, a general hospital, four primary healthcare clinics, two vocational training centres, a YMCA community centre and several other social projects. The beneficiaries of these projects are nearly all Muslims.

But as the humanitarian situation in Gaza worsens, so the risk increases that more extreme Islamists gain a foothold, prompting many Gazan Christians to flee. It's estimated that only 1,200 Christians remain in Gaza, offering hope in the face of desperation to their 2 million Muslim neighbours.

PRAY > For regional leaders to take a more constructive and compassionate approach to the crisis > For Gazan believers to be strengthened and encouraged as they offer hope

REGIONAL IMPACT OF KURDISH INDEPENDENCE



By Andrew Richards

Iraq's Kurdish leader said that there was no turning back on a bid to achieve an independent Kurdish state, but he would pursue it through dialogue with Baghdad and regional powers to avoid conflict. Masoud Barzani, President of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), told *Reuters* in an interview that the timetable for independence after a 25 September vote on the issue was "flexible but not open-ended". He expected a "yes vote". (*Al Jazeera*)

Kurdistan

The history of the Kurdish people is characterised by rejection, genocide and most recently, a formidable fighting force, able to keep even the Islamic State out of their semi-autonomous region.

From rejection in Turkey, to being massacred under Saddam Hussein in Iraq, the Kurdish people have long sought an independent state, one where culture, language and politics are all Kurdish. The Kurds established a semi-autonomous region in the wake of the first Gulf war, and since then have fought for independence.

Greater Kurdistan refers to a geo-cultural region wherein the Kurdish people constitute the majority of the population. It's defined as a region where Kurdish culture, language and national identity has historically been based. It stretches across three countries: Iraq, Turkey and Iran. In recent times, it has expanded to even include parts of Northern Syria after Kurdish troops, fighting in the Syrian Civil War, were able to control sections of abandoned areas in the North. An independent Kurdistan will therefore have direct implications for four countries: one fighting a civil war (Syria), one recovering from civil war (Iraq), one recovering from an attempted coup (Turkey) and the other engaged in proxy wars in Yemen and Syria (Iran).

Regional impact

Global Risks Insights (a world-leading publication for political risk news and analysis), suggests that an

FOR FURTHER REFERENCE

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www.incontextinternational.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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independent Kurdistan would overwhelmingly shift the population balance inside Iraq in favour of the Shia, making reconciliation with the Sunnis next to impossible. Short of a massive and unending occupation of the Sunni-majority provinces, it is unlikely that Baghdad would be able to control Western Iraq, leading to the breakup of Iraq in all but name.

RAND (a research organization that helps improve policy and decision making through research and analysis), cautions that a vote for independence could very likely result in a violent backlash against the Kurds, saying that "though Baghdad may be unable to stop the emergence of a Kurdish state, how the central government would react to Kurdish independence depends on how such independence is gained. A unilateral declaration of Kurdish independence is likely to provoke the most hostile response from Baghdad of all the scenarios".

In the case of Iran, an independent Kurdistan could spell danger for the Islamic Republic because of fears that it would embolden its own large population of repressed Kurds to break away from Iran and join Kurdistan.

FROM A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE

Religion aside, cultural differences play a much more defining role when it comes to everyday life in the Middle East. Muslims/Christians are first culturally defined before they are religiously identified. Persian, Turkish, Arab or Kurdish, these cultural and ethnic divisions are what shape the region. For example, in Iraq, according to Operation World, the 'trigger line', where Arab and Kurdish areas of control meet, is the most violent place in Iraq, and the historic Christian populations

are caught in the middle. Christians are being persecuted for their faith, yet coming from the wrong tribe or being of the wrong ethnicity could be a bigger reason for persecution than religion. However, with the rise of the Islamic State, Christians were targeted despite their ethnic background. And as a result, Christianity is growing in Kurdistan.

Reporting on Christians fleeing the Islamic State, in March of 2015, Lara Logan, foreign correspondent for 60 Minutes, reported: "There are few places on earth where Christianity is as old as it is in Iraqi Kurdistan. Christians there trace their history to the first century apostles. Christians fleeing the Islamic State have found safe haven 60 miles north, in Erbil, the capital of Kurdistan, the semi-autonomous region in the north of Iraq. Some 30,000 Christians were living in Erbil before this crisis, most of them Chaldean Catholics. Bashar Warda is the archbishop of this diocese. He says his congregation has swelled by more than 60,000 refugees since the crisis began."

Kurdistan has in many ways become a haven for Christians, and with refugees starting to return home, many choose to stay. Kurdistan could become a hub for Christian activity in the region with Christians from Iran, Syria and Iraq finding refuge there. Considering that Kurdistan is bordered by Armenia in the North, a Christian majority country, there could be real potential for the Kurdish church to become a Middle East gateway for missionaries.

PRAY > For Kurdish leaders to exhibit Godly wisdom as they attempt to bring about independence > For Kurdish believers to play a stabilising role in these uncertain times > For the Kurdish Church to continue to grow and mature

KNOWLEDGE TO ACTION

PROJECT RESTORATION

Providing trauma counselling and trauma counselling training for South Sudanese refugees

"The first challenge we face here as pastors is how to counsel the traumatised people while we are also traumatised, so we need special training as leaders on counselling."

According to the United Nations, there are currently more than 1.8 million South Sudanese refugees, and more than 890,000 of them are living in Uganda. Most of these refugees live in camps in the north of the country, close to the South Sudan border.

In response to pastors' requests, INcontext has launched Project Restoration. 30 pastors from various refugee camps have been invited to attend a 5-day training course at a centralised location close to the refugee camps. First, they will receive counselling for their own trauma, and thereafter, they will be trained to do trauma counselling with their congregation members.

Funds raised to date cover the travel costs of the trainers, but funds to host and train the pastors remain an urgent need.

To support this project, please make use of the INcontext bank details and use 'Rest' 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) or [CLICK HERE](#) to visit the website.

