NEW ZIF PUBLICATIONS

ZIF kompakt: EUNAVFOR MED IRINI
Today, the German Parliament decides on a German contribution to the newest CSDP (Common Security and Defence Policy) military operation in the Mediterranean, EUNAVFOR MED Irini, which was launched on 1 April 2020. Its primary task is to enforce the UN arms embargo on Libya. Parallel to its launch, the existing military operation, EUNAVFOR MED Sophia, permanently ceased its activities. The latest ZIF kompakt briefly describes the background, mandate and current challenges.
Download the paper here (German only)

Comment at EurActiv and HuffPost Italia on Operation Irini
In his new comment at EurActiv and Huffington Post Italia, Tobias Pietz argues that the new European maritime Operation Irini is the wrong approach – both for crisis management in Libya as well as sea rescue. Read full article: EurActiv (German) Huffington Post (Italian)
EUROPE

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Corruption, political blockages, threaten international efforts to help BiH weather corona
Bosnia and Herzegovina is weathering the COVID-19 outbreak better than some other nations, but there’s a real danger that corruption will undermine global efforts to help it contain the pandemic, the international community’s High Representative to the Western Balkan country told the Security Council on Wednesday. Read full article: UN News (05/06)

Report of the High Representative
Read full report: S/2020/345 (04/29)

Kosovo

Kosovo’s Constitutional Court delays parliamentary vote on new prime minister
Kosovo’s Constitutional Court has suspended a parliamentary vote on a new prime minister until May 29, dashing President Hashim Thaci’s hopes for a quick resolution to a political crisis. Read full article: RFERL (05/01)

Ukraine

Media watchdog condemns ‘wave of violence’ against Ukrainian journalists
Reporters Without Borders (RSF) is urging Ukrainian authorities to enforce legislation penalizing violence against journalists after a reporter was assaulted by officers in Kyiv last week while he was filming an anti-lockdown protest. Read full article: RFERL (05/07)

AFRICA

Burundi

Burundi elections - what’s at stake and what to expect
On 20 May 2020, Burundians head to the polls to elect a new president. Incumbent Pierre Nkurunziza has promised to step aside after 15 years in office. The ruling party has selected an army general, Evariste Ndayishimiyeye, as its candidate. Read full article: allAfrica (04/30)
Central African Republic

At least 25 dead in Central African Republic clashes
Militia clashes this week in Central African Republic left at least 25 people dead and 51 injured, the country's communications minister said, confirming the latest violence to undermine last year's peace deal between rebel groups and the government... Political tensions are meanwhile rising in the country ahead of presidential elections slated for December but which may be pushed back due to the coronavirus pandemic.
Read full article: The New Humanitarian (05/01)

Democratic Republic of the Congo

Civil society organisations call for a complete ceasefire to tackle the coronavirus pandemic
[...] 139 civil society organizations based in the Democratic Republic of Congo have called for a complete ceasefire across the whole of the country, which has to contend with the novel coronavirus and Ebola virus in stable regions such as Kinshasa, as well as in provinces affected by conflict, including Ituri, Nord-Kivu and Sud-Kivu.
Read full article: allAfrica (05/05)

Armed group in northeast Congo says to lay down weapons
[...] The new leader of the Cooperative for the Development of the Congo (CODECO), Ngabu Ngawi Olivier, called on the army to enact a ceasefire to allow talks with the government, a potential breakthrough for President Felix Tshisekedi who has promised to bring an end to decades of unrest in the region.
Read full article: Reuters Africa (05/05)

Rebel splits and failed peace talks drive new violence in Ituri
When hundreds of militiamen arrived in January at a government-run demobilisation camp in the Democratic Republic of Congo's northeastern province of Ituri, there was a flicker of hope that more than two years of conflict might be abating. But a few weeks later, the fighters... deserted the camp.... Now violence is peaking again in a province where more than 1.2 million people have already been displaced by a two-year conflict that has divided communities and revived memories of past wars that rank among Congo's bloodiest.
Read full article: The New Humanitarian (05/05)

Libya

Wagner, shadowy Russian military group, 'fighting in Libya'
Hundreds of mercenaries from Russia's shadowy Wagner Group are operating in Libya, a leaked UN report says. They have been supporting renegade general Khalifa Haftar's battle against the Tripoli-based government, it says.
Read full article: BBC (05/07)

UN welcomes call by Al-Sarraj to resolve the Libyan crisis peacefully
[...] Stephane Dujarric, a spokesperson for the Secretary-General said, “This is the message that we always urge and this is very important.”
Read full article: The Libya Observer (05/06)
Libya needs European boots on the ground
The EU must seize on the strategic opportunity presented by the coronavirus pandemic to take the initiative away from Russia and Turkey in Libya.
Read full article: Carnegie Europe (05/05)

Attacks on civilians, arbitrary arrests, top list of abuses in Libya: ICC Prosecutor
Unabated violence, particularly in and around the Libyan capital, has now been raging for more than a year, the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) told the Security Council in a virtual briefing on Tuesday, warning that war crimes may have been committed.
Read full article: UN News (05/05)

Mali
Sahelian security forces accused of hundreds of extrajudicial killings
Security forces in Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso have been accused of committing a rising toll of extrajudicial killings in their battle against jihadist groups in the Sahelian region. In Mali, soldiers allegedly conducted 101 executions, 32 forced disappearances, and 32 cases of torture in the first three months of the year, the UN Mission in Mali reported – an overall increase compared to the end of 2019. Most of the violations occurred in heavily contested central Mali.
Read full article: The New Humanitarian (05/05)

South Sudan
New fighting in South Sudan threatens ceasefire
South Sudan’s new violence this week could threaten a precarious peace agreement between the government and rebel groups that have yet to sign on a unity deal.
Read full article: The East African (05/07)

Weapons embargo on South Sudan lapses in May
The South Sudan arms embargo ends on May 31 but investigations on the ongoing disarmament, demobilisation and rehabilitation reveal that it has been violated by arms companies since it was imposed in July 2018.
Read full article: The East African (05/05)

Sudan (Darfur)
30 people killed in intercommunal violence in South Darfur
About 30 civilians were killed in South Darfur state in intercommunal violence on Tuesday, according to a statement by the office of the Sudanese prime minister.
Read full article: Sudan Tribune (05/06)
**MIDDLE EAST**

**Iraq**

Parliament approves government of new PM Kadhim

A new Iraqi government has been finally formed after months of deadlock and a political crisis that hit the country’s stability and economy.  
*Read full article: AL-Monitor (05/06)*

**IS militants step up attacks on Iraqi security forces**

Islamic State militants have stepped up their attacks on security forces in north-eastern Iraq, reportedly killing at least 18 people since the weekend. ... Analysts believe IS is taking advantage of the coronavirus pandemic, which is occupying the authorities’ attention.  
*Read full article: BBC (05/05)*

**Israel / Palestine**

Israel’s top court allows Netanyahu to form new government

In an eagerly awaited decision, Israel’s supreme court ruled Wednesday that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu can form a new government even while under indictment for alleged corruption. The ruling paves the way for the right-wing Netanyahu to form a coalition government with centrist opposition leader Benny Gantz after three inconclusive elections over the past year.  
*Read full article: VOA News (05/06)*

**CENTRAL ASIA**

**Afghanistan**

**Taliban urges Afghan government to speed up prisoner release**

The Taliban has called on the Afghan government to speed up the release of prisoners in order to pave the way for negotiations with the militant movement.  
*Read full article: RFE/RL (05/05)*

**US Defense Secretary: Afghanistan peace process 'behind schedule'**

U.S. Defense Secretary Mark Esper says the peace process in Afghanistan is not going as quickly as expected, with the Taliban failing to reduce violence in the war-torn country.  
*Read full article: VOA News (05/04)*
**SOUTH ASIA**

**India / Pakistan**

Top Kashmiri militant is killed, sparking protests and rage

Over years of fighting, Riyaz Ahmad Naikoo recruited scores of young Kashmiris in an armed quest for independence from India. His death has set off a fresh wave of unrest.

*Read full article: New York Times (05/06)*

**SOUTH AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN**

**Haiti**

UN committed to a ‘brighter future’ for Haiti, as independent rights experts call for more action on behalf of cholera victims

A group of 13 independent UN human rights experts on Thursday called on the UN chief, António Guterres, to “urgently step up efforts” to fulfill a UN pledge to help victims of a nine-year-long cholera epidemic in Haiti that killed over 10,000 citizens. ... The experts said in their joint statement, that more than three years ago, the UN acknowledged the role played by its peacekeepers in causing the epidemic. “It has since failed to pay any compensation and its subsequent underfunded aid effort has amounted to little more than a spate of symbolic development projects”, they added.

*Read full article: UN News (04/30)*

**OTHER PEACEKEEPING RELEVANT NEWS**

Freedom House drops Hungary, Serbia, Montenegro from list of democracies

[...] There were positive developments in some places, such as in Kosovo, the only country to secure gains in each of the last five years, and in North Macedonia, which saw multiple score improvements.

*Read full article: RE/I (05/06)*

**COVID-19**

Will lessons from Cholera in Haiti be applied to COVID-19?

In recent weeks, the United Nations Department of Peace Operations announced a series of protocol changes to reduce the risk that peacekeepers will introduce COVID-19 into vulnerable countries. As the introduction of cholera to Haiti in 2010 by UN peacekeepers demonstrates, such preventative measures are critical.

*Read full article: IPI Global Observatory (05/06)*
The impact of COVID-19 on political tensions and conflict in Africa
Some of the measures taken to contain COVID-19 are increasing political tensions and heightening the risk for social unrest and violent conflict. At this stage there is no significant increase in the overall number of violent conflicts or fatalities, but a number of incidents are being reported that indicate that the risk for social unrest and violent conflict remains high.
Read full article: Accord (05/06)

How COVID-19 gave peace a chance, and nobody took it
Ceasefires are breaking down as America and China bicker at the UN.
Read full article: The Economist (05/05)

UN launches COVID-19 aid flights to vulnerable developing nations
The U.N. World Food Program on Thursday sent a first plane loaded with medical supplies for developing nations especially vulnerable to the coronavirus pandemic, aiming to ramp up the service to 350 flights per month.
Read full article: Reuters Africa (05/01)

Joseph Borrell: The post-coronavirus world is already here
[...] In the history of human societies, major crises are always heralded by warning signs or events. And major crises usually have an accelerating effect on trends. This is why it would make more sense to look at the consequences of covid-19 from the point of view of how this crisis could magnify dynamics that are already at work. What are these dynamics? I can see three: ...
Read full briefing: ECFR (04/30)