

CBGA NEWS DIGEST

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BANGLADESH | DIPLOMACY | SECURITY | CONFLICT | DEVELOPMENT | ENVIRONMENT | GLOBAL AFFAIRS



BANGLADESH RANKED 5TH IN COVID RECOVERY INDEX, FIRST IN SOUTH ASIA

On Nikkei's Covid-19 Recovery Index, Bangladesh has moved up eight spots and is now ranked fifth out of 121 countries. With an index score of 80, Bangladesh is only behind Qatar, UAE, Cambodia, and Rwanda in the most recent version of the index, which came out on Thursday (May 5, 2022). Nepal was

Nikkei COVID-19 Recovery Index (As of April 30)					
Rank	Country/region	Total score	Rank	Country/region	Total score
1	Qatar	87.0	62	Canada	63.0
1	UAE	87.0	62	Egypt	63.0
3	Cambodia	83.5	62	Italy	63.0
4	Rwanda	82.5	62	Japan	63.0
5	Bangladesh	80.0	62	Luxembourg	63.0
6	Nepal	79.0	62	Myanmar	63.0
7	Dominican Republic	78.0	62	Singapore	63.0
8	Chile	76.0	62	Vietnam	63.0
8	Kuwait	76.0	70	Haiti	62.5
10	El Salvador	74.0	70	India	62.5
11	Portugal	73.5	72	Hungary	62.0

ranked sixth, Pakistan was ranked 23rd, Sri Lanka was ranked 31st, and India was ranked 70th in the world. In the last few months, the number of Covid-19 infections in Bangladesh has been going down. The total number of deaths in the country is still 29,127, and no new deaths have been reported in over two weeks. In March, Bangladesh was 13th on the Covid recovery index. In the latest version of Nikkei's Covid-19 Recovery Index, Taiwan's ranking has dropped. This is because the island is switching from a strict zero-virus strategy to a strategy of living with the respiratory illness, even though the number of infections is going up. The country dropped from fourth to 94th in the latest ranking, tying with China, which fell 62 spots since last month as it deals with its worst outbreak since the virus was first found in the city of Wuhan more than two years ago. - May 7, [The Daily Star](#)

SHEIKH HASINA SEEKS MORE HELP FROM ADB FOR DELTA PLAN-2100

During a meeting with ADB Vice President Shixin Chen at her official residence Ganabhaban on Monday, her Press Secretary Ihsanul Karim said that she told Chen that the plan was very important for Bangladesh. The prime minister also asked ADB for help to improve regional cooperation, especially in the areas of trade, energy, and connectivity. Hasina said, "Bangladesh's doors are always open for the development of connectivity." She said this to stress how important regional connectivity is for development. She talked about what needs to be done to reopen some roads that were shut down after the war between India and Pakistan in 1965.



Before it became its own country in 1971, the eastern part of Bangladesh was a part of Pakistan. To keep the balance of power in the region, the prime minister hoped that Bangladeshis would be given more consideration for top jobs at ADB. Hasina said that COVID-19 is now "under control" in Bangladesh and that people were able to celebrate Eid-ul-Fitr without fear for the first time in two years. - May 9, [BD News 24](#)

BANGLADESH PROVIDES MEDICAL ASSISTANCE TO SRI LANKA



Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen said today that in these hard times, it is more important than ever for countries to work together. He said that each country has its own problems, which vary in severity. He said that the Covid-19 pandemic, which messed up the supply chain, and the war between Russia and Ukraine had both hurt the world economy. The foreign minister said these things at a ceremony at the State guesthouse Padma where he gave medical aid to Sri Lanka. | "We are also ready to help Sri Lanka in any way we can," he said. Health Minister Zahid Maleque, President of the Bangladesh Association of Pharmaceuticals Industries (BAPI) Nazmul Hasan Papan MP, and High Commissioner of Sri Lanka to Bangladesh Prof. Sudharshan Seneviratne were all there. Momen said that as a friend and close neighbor, it is also Bangladesh's duty to help Sri Lanka in any way it can when it is in trouble. "This is another sign that our two countries' relationships are going in the right direction," he said. The foreign minister said that the government of Bangladesh giving medical help to the friendly people of Sri Lanka is a sign of friendship and solidarity between the two countries, which are celebrating 50 years of diplomatic ties this year. Over the past 50 years, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, which are both in South Asia, have stayed close. - May 5, [The Daily Star](#)

BANGLADESH ON TOP IN RECEIVING VACCINE FROM WHO: HEALTH MINISTER



Bangladesh's Health Minister Zahid Maleque said that out of all the countries that got free Covid-19 vaccines from the World Health Organization, Bangladesh is number one (WHO). Our reporter in Manikganj says that the minister said this at a program today at the Shubhra Centre in Manikganj Sadar upazila. He was greeting people from Manikganj and wishing them a happy Eid. "Bangladesh is at the top of the list of countries that WHO gave free Covid-19 vaccines to.

They have seen that we are able to vaccinate a large number of people and use the benefits without wasting vaccines. Because of this, Bangladesh got the most vaccines, which are worth more than Tk 20,000 crore "Zahid Maleque said. "The situation in the country of Covid-19 did not get better by magic. We worked very hard to get here. The prime minister told us over and over again to do this. So far, we have vaccinated 98 percent of the people we wanted to. About 75% of the country's 17 crore people have been vaccinated against Covid-19. Because of this, the country is no longer at risk for Covid-19 "g well," he added. - May 4,

[The Daily Star](#)

SUU KYI'S APPEAL REJECTED BY MYANMAR SUPREME COURT, COULD FACE 150 YEARS OF PRISON

The country's highest court turned down Aung San Suu Kyi's request to change her five-year prison sentence on Wednesday. Reports say that the decision was made as soon as the appeal was filed, and the court didn't listen to arguments from either side. Suu Kyi, who is 76 years old, was given a sentence last week after being found guilty of 11 counts of corruption, including taking a bribe of \$600,000 in cash and gold bars. Her lawyer said that the charge was not true. Suu Kyi had already been given a six-year sentence for actions against the military, breaking COVID-19 rules, and breaking a telecommunications law. She is being accused of many more things, and if she is found guilty, she could go to jail for more than 150 years. Since a military coup took over the country last year, Suu Kyi has been under house arrest. Since the coup on February 1, 2021, many people have been protesting against the military government. According to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners, the regime cracked down violently on many occasions, killing more than 1,800 civilians and arresting, charging, or sentencing more than 10,000. - May 4, [Voice Of America](#)

INDIA AND BANGLADESH DECIDE TO WORK TOGETHER FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT



Bangladesh and India will enhance regional collaboration and growth after the Russia-Ukraine crisis and Covid-19 outbreak disrupted supply networks and economy. "We discussed the subject during Dr. Jaishankar's recent visit. Regional collaboration was discussed. Regional gatherings will increase "yesterday's AK Abdul Momen. He stated the two countries are discussing first, then other South Asian countries will join. "Our prime minister wants sustainable regional growth and cooperation," Momen stated. Jaishankar spoke about boosting regional value chain and energy cooperation, notably hydropower, during his April 28 visit to Dhaka (BBIN). At a ceremony in the capital, the foreign minister said this. The occasion was held to give Sri Lankan High Commissioner Prof Sudharshan DS Seneviratne a few cartons of medicine as a token of Bangladesh's commitment to contribute medical supplies worth Tk 20 crore to Sri Lanka, which is undergoing one of its worst financial crises ever. Health Minister Zahid Maleque attended. Essential Drugs Company Limited (EDCL) and Bangladesh Association of Pharmaceutical Industries (BAPI) donated Tk 10 crore each to Sri Lanka. Medical supplies should reach Sri Lanka within days. Sri Lanka's economic difficulties has caused it to raise costs on basic medications. Antibiotics, painkillers, and heart medications are marked up 40%. BBC reported that Sri Lankans must take short courses of medicine or import them. Bangladesh helped Sri Lanka by shifting currencies for \$200 million. Foreign Minister Momen said the present symbolizes the two countries' 50 years of diplomatic relations. - May 6, [The Daily Star](#)

EUROPEAN UNION TO CUT OFF RUSSIAN GAS

EU warns member states to prepare for a possible breakdown in Russian gas supply, maintaining it won't give in to Moscow's demand that imports be paid for in rubles. The European Commission will recommend new penalties against President Vladimir Putin's Kremlin on Tuesday, including an oil embargo, officials said. Energy and environment ministers met in Brussels on Monday to discuss Russia's natural gas, which many nations, including Germany, rely on for power. Moscow has demanded "unfriendly" countries, including EU members, pay for gas in rubles to avoid Western sanctions against its central bank. Bulgaria and Poland were shut off for not complying. After the meetings, French chair Barbara Pompili and European energy commissioner Kadri Simson announced the 27 member states would store gas with Poland and Bulgaria in case of a breakdown. Simson claimed "following Russia's full procedure violates EU sanctions." She stated no European corporation was planning to change its payment systems per Putin's order. Several countries will renew supply contracts at the end of May, and sources suggest several may try to avoid sanctions by using Moscow's strategy. - May 3,

[Bangladesh Shangbad Shangstha](#)

CITIZENSHIP AMENDMENT ACT WILL BE IMPLEMENTED AFTER THE COVID WAVE: AMIT SHAH



On Thursday, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said that West Bengal's ruling Trinamool Congress (TMC) was "spreading lies" about the Citizenship (Amendment) Act. He also said that the law would be put into effect after the Covid-19 pandemic is over. He said that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) would not stop working until the TMC's dictatorship was overthrown and democracy was restored in West Bengal. At a public rally in the North Bengal town of Siliguri, he also said that the Saffron Party would keep fighting against the "cut-money" (extortion) culture, corruption, and political violence. "I'd like to thank the people of north Bengal for boosting the BJP's number of seats in the Bengal Assembly from three to 77. The BJP won't stop until the tyrannical rule of the TMC is overthrown. We had hoped that after being voted into power for the third time, Mamata Banerjee would change for the better. We waited a whole year for her to make things right, but she didn't. "The law of the ruler is the law of the state," he said. - May 6, [The Business Standard](#)

US CONGRESS APPRECIATES 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF BANGLADESH-US RELATIONS

The US Congress recently passed a bipartisan resolution to mark the 50th anniversary of the start of diplomatic relations between the US and Bangladesh. Tuesday, Democratic Congressman Brian Higgins of New York brought the resolution to Congress. Republican Congresswoman Amata Coleman Radewagen of American Samoa is also a supporter of the resolution. Yesterday, the Bangladesh Embassy in Washington said that the resolution had been sent to the House Committee on Foreign Affairs. The resolution pointed out that the US and Bangladesh have a deep and complex relationship, with a focus on working together on economic, security, governance, and development issues to move forward a shared vision of a free, open, inclusive, peaceful, and safe Indo-Pacific region.



The resolution talked about how the US recognized Bangladesh as an independent country on April 4, 1972, and how Prime Minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman thanked the US in a letter to President Nixon on April 9, 1972. It also acknowledged the work that Bangladesh and the US did together to fight the COVID-19 pandemic and to help Rohingya people who had to leave Myanmar because of the genocide there. The Congress resolution also talked about how Senator Edward Kennedy helped Bangladesh get its independence in 1971 and how President Bill Clinton went to Bangladesh in 2000. It also talked about President Joe Biden's promise to help Bangladesh with climate aid in 2021. The House resolution has been welcomed by the Bangladesh embassy in Washington. - May 7, [The Daily Star](#)

BANGLADESH SECURES \$200 MN FROM AIIB

The loan will be paid back over 18 years, with a five-year grace period in the middle. Bangladesh will have to pay a fee of 0.25 percent and a commitment fee of 0.25 percent per year for the part of the total that is not withdrawn. The interest rate is 0.60 percent plus the variable margin that the AIIB adds to the cost of borrowing money.



Infrastructure Development Co. Ltd. (IDCOL), which is owned by the government of Bangladesh, will lend the money to support projects that use renewable energy, save energy, and improve social infrastructure. The IDCOL gives low-cost loans to the renewable energy sector by getting loans from the government of Bangladesh and from international sources. IDCOL is now pushing for rooftop solar power installations, especially on top of factories that make clothes. So far, it has given loans to 41 factories, which can produce a total of 50 MW. It has set a goal of giving enough money to help install 300 MWp of solar power on rooftops by the end of this year. About 19.5 MW of solar panels have already been put up on rooftops and turned on. One of the largest is a 3.1 MWp installation, and the smallest is a 324 KWp one. - May 9, [PV Magazine](#)

GWYN LEWIS APPOINTED UN RESIDENT COORDINATOR IN BANGLADESH

With the approval of the government of Bangladesh, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres chose Gwyn Lewis of Ireland to be the UN Resident Coordinator in Bangladesh on May 8. With more than 20 years of experience in international development, peacebuilding, and humanitarian work, Ms. Lewis has worked as Director of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) Affairs in the West Bank and Deputy Director of Programs for UNRWA Affairs in Lebanon. The Emergency Division of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in Geneva was also run by Ms. Gwyn Lewis.



She was in charge of the Global Clusters Coordination section. She came from the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), where she worked on policies for helping people and helped FAO country offices. She also worked at the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Geneva, where she built partnerships between the United Nations and non-governmental organizations and helped roll out the humanitarian reform agenda. - May 9, [The United Nations](#)

BEIJING GOES QUIET IN FEAR OF A COVID-19 OUTBREAK

Monday, millions of people in Beijing stayed at home because China's capital is trying to stop the spread of Covid-19 by making it harder and harder to move around. People in Beijing worry that they will soon have to deal with the same harsh rules that have kept most of Shanghai's 25 million people at home for weeks. Officials there say that the eastern powerhouse is winning its fight against the worst outbreak in the country since the pandemic started. But the lockdown in Shanghai has gotten worse, which has caused anger and a very rare protest in the last major economy that still has a zero-Covid policy. This policy has hurt China's economy, which was recovering quickly from the pandemic just a few months ago. - May 9, [The Daily Prothom Alo](#)

G7 LEADERS CALL FOR FURTHER ISOLATION OF RUSSIA



In a joint statement on Sunday, the leaders of the Group of Seven said they would make it harder for Russia to do business and "step up" their campaign against Russian elites who back President Vladimir Putin. After meeting virtually with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy, the leaders said they would cut off key services that Russia needs. This would make Russia even more isolated "across all sectors of its economy." They also agreed to stop relying on Russian energy over time, including by stopping the import of Russian oil. | "We will keep up and step up our campaign against the financial elites and family members who support President Putin in his war effort and waste the resources of the Russian people," the statement said. Sunday, the US put sanctions on three Russian TV stations, banned Americans from giving accounting and consulting services to Russians, and put sanctions on Gazprom bank executives to punish Moscow for invading Ukraine. - May 8, [Reuters](#)

EU CHIEF CALLS FOR A NEW SET OF SANCTIONS INCLUDING BAN ON RUSSIAN OIL IMPORTS



Wednesday, the leader of the 27-country European Union called for a ban on importing oil from Russia. This is the sixth set of sanctions against Russia for its war in Ukraine. Ursula von der Leyen, the head of the European Commission, also suggested that Russia's biggest bank, Sberbank, and two other big banks be cut off from the SWIFT international banking payment system.

Von der Leyen told the European Parliament in Strasbourg, France, that EU countries should stop importing crude oil in six months and refined oil by the end of the year. | Von der Leyen said that we will make sure to phase out Russian oil in a way that doesn't hurt global markets too much and gives us and our partners time to find other ways to get oil. The proposals can only go into effect if everyone agrees on them. This is likely to cause a lot of heated debate. Von der Leyen admitted that it will be hard to get all 27 member countries, some of which are landlocked and depend a lot on Russia for energy, to agree on oil sanctions. - May 4, [The Business Standard](#)

FRANCE AND INDIA CALL FOR AN IMMEDIATE END OF THE UKRAINE CRISIS



On Wednesday, India and France called for "an immediate end to hostilities" in Ukraine. However, Prime Minister Narendra Modi stopped short of saying that Russia's invasion of its neighbor was wrong. India has long walked a diplomatic tightrope between the West and Russia. It gets a lot of its military equipment from Russia, and it has refused to condemn Russia or vote against it at the United Nations over its actions in Ukraine. "France and India expressed their deep concern about the humanitarian crisis and the ongoing conflict in Ukraine," Modi and French President Emmanuel Macron said in a joint statement after they met in Paris for talks and a working dinner. "Both countries condemned the fact that civilians have been killed in Ukraine and called for an immediate end to the fighting so that the two sides can come together to promote dialogue and diplomacy and end the suffering of the people as soon as possible." But only France said that the "illegal and unjustified aggression against Ukraine by Russian forces" was wrong. The two countries said they would "respond in a coordinated and multilateral way" if the conflict made it more likely that a global food crisis would get worse. Ukraine is one of the world's main wheat producers, so this was a big deal. - May 5, [Bangladesh Shangbad Shangstha](#)

TALIBAN IMPOSING HARSH RESTRICTIONS ON WOMEN

The Taliban ordered Afghanistan's women to wear the burqa in public yesterday, one of their strictest restrictions since gaining power. The militants gained back control of the country in August 2013, promising a milder rule than their last reign from 1996 to 2001. Women are banned from many government professions, secondary education, and alone travel outside their cities or Afghanistan. Afghanistan's Taliban leader Hibatullah Akhundzada established a severe dress code for women yesterday. "They shall wear a chadori (head-to-toe burqa) as it's traditional and courteous," an order in his name declared in Kabul. "Not-too-old or-too-young women must hide their faces, except their eyes, following sharia regulations to avoid provocation while meeting men who are not mahram," it said. Foreigners were expected to condemn the order. Many in the international community want Afghan aid and Taliban recognition tied to women's rights.

Akhundzada's order declared women should stay home if they had no significant work. The Taliban made the burqa mandatory during their first administration. Since returning to power, the Ministry for Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice has published "guidelines" on what women should wear, but yesterday's edict was the first nationwide mandate. Women's rights activist: "Islam never recommended chadari for women." "I think the Taliban are regressing. They're returning to their old ways." Muska Dastageer claimed Taliban rule sparked "too much rage and bewilderment." In March, hardline Islamists forced girls' secondary schools to close just hours after reopening for the first time since seizing control. - May 8, [The Daily Star](#)

SRI LANKA PM MAHINDA RAJAPAKSA QUILTS

Sri Lankan Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa resigned Monday after a day of violence in which three people, including an MP, were killed and over 150 were injured. After being encircled by anti-government protestors outside the city, ruling party lawmaker Amara Keerthi Athukorala shot two people and then himself, authorities said. Sri Lanka's biggest economic crisis since independence has caused months of outages and food, gasoline, and medical shortages, inciting peaceful anti-government protests. AFP reports that scores of Rajapaksa followers attacked unarmed protestors sleeping outside the president's office since April 9. Several thousand supporters of the prime minister spilled out of his neighboring official house. Rajapaksa committed to "defend the nation's interests" to 3,000 supporters at his home. The supporters destroyed anti-government banners and posters and tore down demonstrators' tents near the prime minister's home. They marched to a neighboring promenade and destroyed other "Gota go home" tents. - May 9, [Bangladesh Shangbad Shangstha](#)

25 MEMBER US DELEGATION IN BANGLADESH

A group of 25 US businessmen from the US-Bangladesh Business Council is in Bangladesh to look for ways to trade and invest there. This afternoon, Foreign Minister Dr. AK Abdul Momen will meet with a group from Chevron led by vice-president of business development Jay R. Pryor at the Foreign Service Academy. The US business leaders from sectors like digital, energy, financial services, insurance, and agriculture that are part of the delegation that will be here until May 11 are from around the world. On Sunday, US Ambassador to Bangladesh Peter Haas told the delegation about high-level opportunities for stronger economic and business ties between Bangladesh and the US. - May 9, [Bangladesh Shangbad Shangstha](#)

UNSC EXPRESSES DEEP CONCERNS OVER UKRAINE CRISIS UNANIMOUSLY

In its first statement since Moscow's invasion, the U.N. Security Council, which includes Russia, said it was "deeply concerned about the maintenance of peace and security in Ukraine." It also backed the U.N. chief's efforts to find a peaceful solution. When the Security Council makes a statement, everyone agrees on it. Norway and Mexico wrote the short text that was passed on Friday. It says, "The Security Council is very worried about keeping peace and security in Ukraine," which means that the council is very worried about Ukraine. "The Security Council reminds everyone that the Charter of the United Nations says that all Member States have to settle their international disputes through peaceful means." "The Security Council strongly backs the Secretary-General's efforts to find a peaceful solution," the statement says. - May 6, [US News](#)

INDIA'S DOUBLING OF COAL USE MIGHT CAUSE GREATER HEATWAVES

A government official said on Friday that India plans to reopen more than 100 coal mines that were once thought to be too expensive to run. This comes as a power crisis forces the world's third-biggest emitter of greenhouse gases to double down on the dirty fuel. India's electricity use hit a record high in April, when nearly three-quarters of the country's 1.35 billion people lived through the hottest months before summer in decades.



Last month, more people turned on their air conditioners than usual, which caused the worst power crisis in more than six years. Temperatures have gone down in the past few days, but they are expected to go up again soon. | "We used to be called bad boys because we pushed fossil fuel, but now we're in the news because we're not giving out enough of it," Anil Kumar Jain, the coal secretary, said at a conference meant to get more private companies involved in coal mining. "Given this history, it is a very brave move by the ministry and Coal India to offer large amounts of coal very quickly." India is the second-largest coal producer, importer, and consumer in the world, after China. Jain said that the reopened mines will add 75–100 million tonnes of coal production in the next two to three years. In the year that ended on March 31, India made 777.2 million tonnes of the fuel and burned over a billion tonnes. - May 6, [Times of India](#)

WHO COLLECTS EVIDENCE AGAINST RUSSIA ON WAR CRIMES



World Health Organization

The World Health Organization (WHO) says it has "documented 200 attacks on hospitals and clinics" in Ukraine and is gathering evidence for a possible war crimes investigation into the attacks. "Attacks on health care facilities are a violation of international humanitarian law and, based on the investigation and who was responsible for the attack, are war crimes in any situation," WHO Emergencies Director Mike Ryan said Saturday in Kyiv, the capital of Ukraine.

"We continue to keep track of and report on these attacks... We trust that the UN system, the International Criminal Court, and others will do what they need to do to find out who was behind these attacks and why they did what they did. | Ryan, who was on an unannounced visit with the head of the WHO, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, told a news conference that it was the responsibility of both sides of a conflict to stay away from health facilities. Ukraine and Western countries have accused Russia of possible war crimes in the past. Russia has denied these claims and also said that civilians are not a target in the war. Ryan said that the 200 cases were not all of the attacks on medical facilities in Ukraine, but only those that the WHO had confirmed. Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine on February 24, Kyiv says there have been about 400 attacks like this. - May 7, [Al Jazeera](#)

BIDEN ON THE VERGE OF SIGNING \$100 MN WEAPON PACKAGE FOR UKRAINE

Four US officials told Reuters that President Joe Biden is likely to sign a new package of weapons for Ukraine worth at least \$100 million later on Friday or this weekend. Since Russia invaded Ukraine on February 24, the US has sent \$3.4 billion worth of weapons there quickly. These include howitzers, anti-aircraft Stinger systems, anti-tank Javelin missiles, ammunition, and body armor. Under the condition that they not be named, the officials said that the latest package would probably include more ammunition for systems like howitzers. About 184,000 artillery rounds have already been sent, according to the Pentagon. Two of the officials said that the news could come as soon as in the next 24 hours. | The new round of weapons transfers would come from the remaining \$250 million in the Presidential Drawdown Authority. This authority lets the president order the transfer of extra weapons from US stocks in an emergency without getting permission from Congress. Last month, Biden put forward a \$33 billion plan to help Ukraine, which included more than \$20 billion in military aid. - May 6, [Dhaka Tribune](#)

ISRAEL COURT VERDICTS AGAINST THE EVICTION OF 1000 PALESTINIANS

After a two-decade legal fight, Israel's supreme court determined that 1,000 Palestinians can be expelled from a West Bank area and the land repurposed for Israeli military use, in one of the greatest expulsion judgments since Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territories began in 1967. Masafer Yatta, a rural area in the south Hebron hills under Israeli control and home to several small Palestinian villages, was designated a "firing zone" in the 1980s. Civilians aren't allowed in military firing zones. According to the Geneva conventions on humane treatment in conflict, it is prohibited to expropriate conquered land for non-beneficial purposes or forcibly relocate the local inhabitants. Israel argues that the Masafer Yatta villagers producing and rearing animals in Fire Zone 918 were not permanent inhabitants when the firing zone was proclaimed and had no rights to the land. The high court decision published overnight on Wednesday – ahead of Israel's Independence Day on Thursday, a public holiday – accepted the state's argument that the community could not prove they were residents before the 1980s, despite expert testimony and literature showing the area has been inhabited for decades. According to Israeli international human rights lawyer Michael Sfard, the judges also rejected the idea that the "prohibition of forced transfer in international law is customary and binding." Instead, they called it a "treaty standard" that is not enforceable in a domestic court. - May 5, [The Guardian](#)

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