

10-19-22

Week 5 Analysis

Strategic Intelligence and Foreign Affairs Initiative

Weekly Newsletter

Liberty University

Helms School of Government Students



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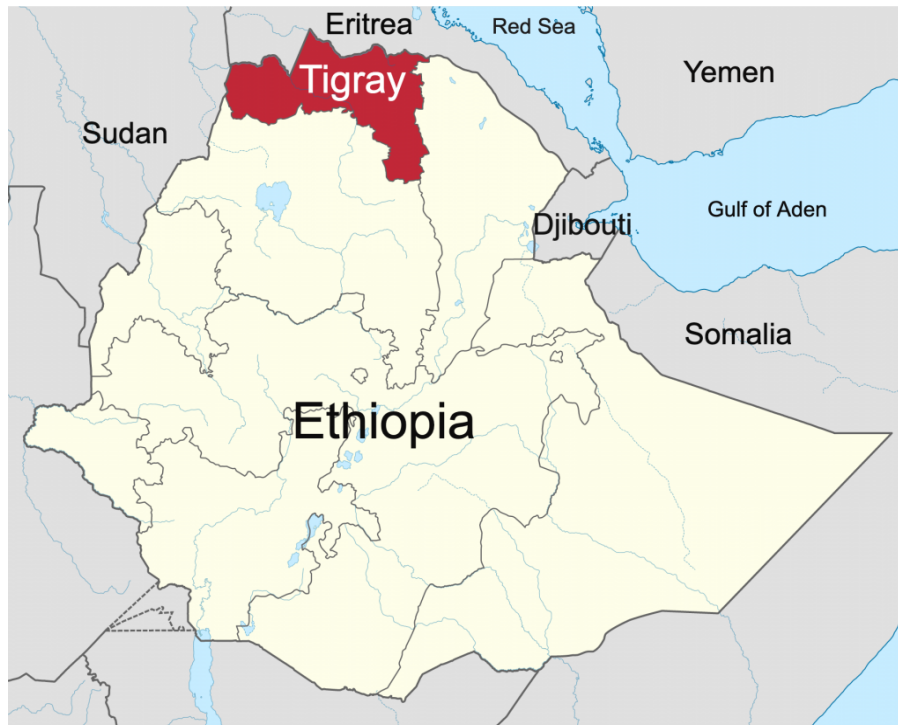
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Ethiopian Civil War Continues

BLUF

- Tigrayan conflict has restarted and will continue into battle, threatening civilian lives and escalating tension in Ethiopia.



Analysis

Chronology

- 3 November 2020: War breaks out in Tigray province, against Ethiopian government
- 28 November 2020: Ethiopian military begins direct occupation of Tigrayan capital of Mekelle
- 2 February 2021: Ethiopian occupation force increases to include mechanized units
- 3 June 2021: Eritrean forces (Ethiopia's ally) begins withdrawal from Tigray
- 28 June 2021: Mekelle is recaptured by Tigrayan forces following an Ethiopian withdrawal
- 12 July 2021: Tigrayan forces recapture south Tigray from Ethiopian forces
- 21 October 2021: Ethiopian air offenses begin
- 1 November 2021: Tigrayan counter-offensive begins against Ethiopian forces
- 24 March 2022: Ceasefire is agreed upon between Ethiopia and Tigray
- 24 August 2022: An Ethiopian air strike against Tigrayan military target indirectly destroys a school in Mekelle
- 13 October 2022: Peace talks break down and offensive begins against Tigray

DHME: Tigrayan Perspective on Ethiopia

Diplomatic	Humanitarian	Military	Economic
France and China (bilateral creditors) with Ethiopia	Eritrean military blocking humanitarian aid corridor to Tigray	Escalating airstrikes from Eritrean and Ethiopian militaries	Debt reconstruction in Ethiopia under the Group of 20's Framework
Lack of international recognition and support	Diseases and infections are spreading throughout Tigray, causing an additional humanitarian crisis	Troop movement encroaching upon Tigray's northern border, including skirmishes	Lack of international funding for defense, critical infrastructure, etc.
Negative relations with Eritrea and surrounding countries	External aid from UN, NGOs, etc. is unable to access Tigray due to safety concerns	Vehicles and artillery amassing on both sides of the border	Recent conflict has delayed exports of rare earth minerals from Tigrayan region

Conclusion

- The border crisis and civil war show an escalating trend, especially the recently administered airstrikes and further military encroachment along the northern border of Tigray. Both sides are actively escalating the situation, and there are no strong indicators for the situation to de-escalate. However, Tigray states that they would “abide by an immediate truce”, given their humanitarian catastrophe conditions. The Minister of Finance of Ethiopia also states that debt reconstruction would be delayed primarily because of the war. This has led to the “humanitarian crisis about to unfold”.

Sources

- [WSJ](#)
 - [Reuters](#)
 - [Reuters](#)
 - [Bloomberg](#)
 - [Bloomberg](#)
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Israeli Maritime Deal with Lebanon

BLUF

- Israel and Lebanon have reached a historic agreement, brokered by the US, to resolve a maritime border dispute over the Karish and Qana prospect gas fields in the Mediterranean. The deal establishes a boundary as well as respective exclusive economic zones enabling both countries to explore and develop offshore gas opportunities promising a large impact. Though not an indicator of normalization of relations between the longstanding adversarial countries, this agreement will ease tensions and extend a point of stability.

Analysis

Overview

- Tensions over the maritime boundary that have existed for decades were heightened in June when Israel announced its readiness to begin production in the Karish gas field. This announcement sparked violent threats from militant group, Hezbollah, which claimed Lebanon had jurisdiction over part of the field in accordance with a boundary extension unilaterally declared by the country in 2021. Therefore, Hezbollah threatened that it would attack any Israeli ships or equipment in the area. In July, when Israel deployed a production vessel over the Karish, Hezbollah responded by sending three unarmed drones towards the ship. The drones were shot down by Israeli forces who warned such an attack would be met with retaliatory measures against Lebanon.
- Escalated tensions, coupled with export opportunities from the energy crisis in Europe, the crippling economic crisis in Lebanon, and political chaos in both countries hastened the move to resolve this dispute.
- Under the new agreement, Israel will have full rights to the Karish field and Lebanon to the Qana field with the caveat that royalties be paid to Israel for any export revenue produced from Israel's side of the boundary (an estimated 17% of the Qana field). The border will be based on Line 23. While Israel is ready to develop the Karish with London energy group Energean, yield from the Qana prospect will take anywhere from 3-4 years to a decade. In the next several weeks the agreement will be finalized through the respective government processes before the final letter will be sent to Washington, the broker of the deal, since the two nations do not speak with one another. Each country will then register the border with the UN.
- Lebanese officials close to the group have reported that Hezbollah will adhere to Lebanon's official policy once the deal is signed. Given its extensive internal problems, Hezbollah cannot afford a large-scale conflict with Israel.



SWOT on the Agreement

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The agreement eases a point of tension between adversarial countries and provides mutually beneficial opportunities. • Israel can exploit the Karish field without fear of attack from Hezbollah since such a move could cause a rise in tensions resulting in a disruption of Lebanon's newfound energy supply. "Hezbollah's struggle against Israel is subordinate to its interests in Lebanon" (Hezbollah expert Joseph Daher). • Newfound natural gas supply could alleviate Lebanon's financial and energy crisis. The country is facing one of the most severe economic crises of the century, and its current grid can only supply a couple of hours of power a day. • With vested interests in stability, the agreement reduces prospects for conflict between the two countries. 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lebanon lacks the mechanisms and infrastructure to benefit from production on an ample level (currently under the governance of caretaker government, political system fraught with corruption, revenue likely won't reach the people) • The agreement does not provide any resolution to border disputes on land– the true source of tension between the nations.
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased energy supply from Israel could be exported to the EU providing revenue boom for Israel and alleviation of shortage for Europe. • Production in the Qana prospect could aid Lebanon's financial and energy crisis. Estimates assert that the field is worth \$3bn. Lebanon's current debt is \$100bn. • The framework from this agreement could be used to enact future deals enabling stability and economic integration throughout the region (Cyprus problem). 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to Lebanon's heavily corrupted and failed energy sector and Hezbollah's pervasive reach in the unstable state, there is a risk that revenue from Qana production could fund Hezbollah. • Israeli's due royalties from the Qana field are not clearly defined leaving their delineation up to future "good faith" agreements between Lebanon and Israel. Considering the two countries involved, such negotiations could become a point of tension when the time to pay them comes. • Former Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu considers the talks a capitulation and surrender to Lebanon. If he is placed back in power by the Nov. 1 elections, he has promised to cancel the deal.

Sources

- [Al Jazeera](#)
- [AP NEWS](#)
- [BBC](#)
- [CNBC](#)
- [CNN](#)
- [DW](#)
- [NPR](#)
- [Reuters](#)
- [Reuters](#)
- [United States Institute of Peace](#)
- [US Department of State](#)

Iranian Protest Updates

BLUF

- With the death of Masha Amini, the Iranian protests are still going strong into their fourth week. As tanks have rolled into the Turdush areas of Iran, the “morality police” are being heavily sanctioned by the US and the UK.

Analysis

Overview

- Mahsa Amini has been turned into a martyr for the cause
 - This is causing intense unrest in various areas of Iran as people now have a person to rally around.
 - The protests are even reaching Evin prison, the most heavily guarded prison in Iran. (Source 1)
 - A massive fire was set ablaze on 10/17 killing 8, “Death to the Dictator” was heard as gunshots rang out.
 - Evin prison is the prison where most political opposition is held.
 - Children are reported to be taking part in the protests now. (Source 2-3)
 - Between September 20-30, 23 children died because of the crackdown (Amnesty)
 - Roughly 16% of the deaths are children
 - Most who protest are being taken to a psychiatric facility to be reeducated.
 - “It is possible these students have become ‘anti-social characters’ and we want to reform them... they can return to class after they’ve been reformed”
-Education Minister Yousef Nouri
- The US placed sanctions on all top Iranian officials as of October 6 (no progress as of Oct 17). (Source 4)
 - Iran responds by saying Biden “incited chaos”
- The EU followed the US with sanctions. (Source 5)
 - All assets for top Iranian police officials are frozen and cannot travel to/in Europe.
- Internet blackouts (source 6-7)
 - The population has largely relied on VPNs to access the internet since the beginning of the protests on Sept 17
 - Musk has tried to set up Starlink in Iran but has announced extreme difficulty setting up
 - Iran blocked the Starlink website.
 - Will cost millions of \$\$ to fully set up Starlink in Iran

Conclusion

- Protests seem to be ramping up as the International community becomes involved. Iran will likely seek to display its own power against the protesters as they are taking plays out of China’s playbook of quashing and silencing a rebellion.

Sources

- [Stripes](#)
 - [CNN](#)
 - [CNN](#)
 - [Malaymail](#)
 - [Washington Post](#)
 - [CNN](#)
 - [Ibtimes](#)
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Ukraine War Updates

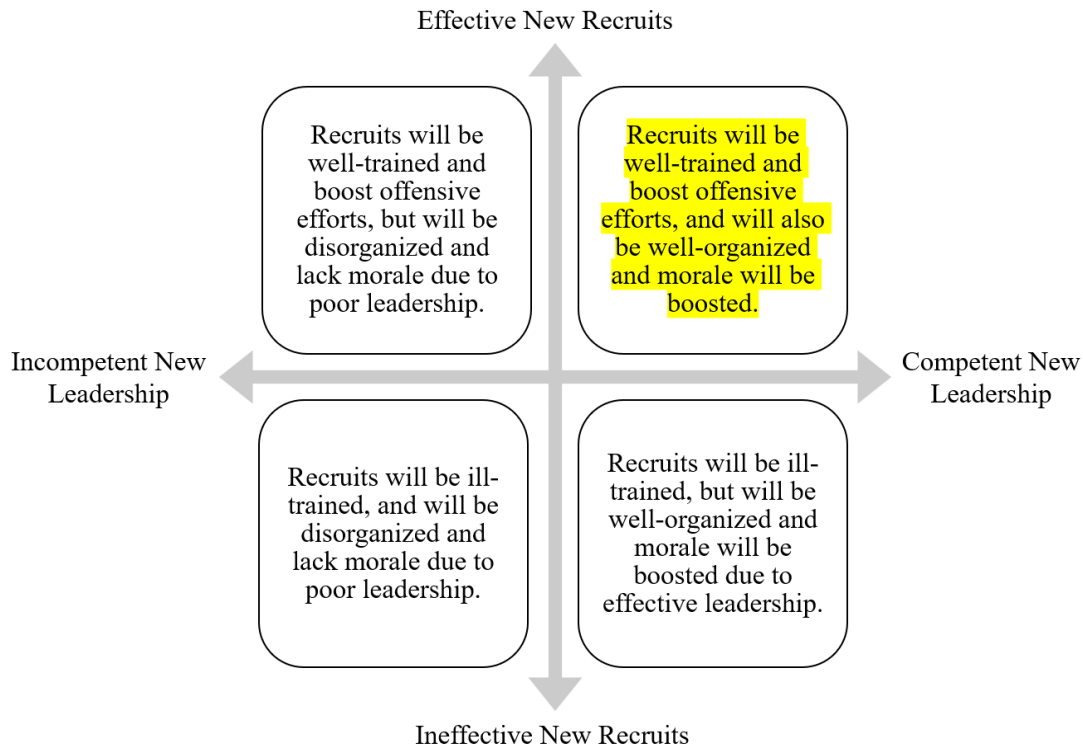
BLUF

- Ukraine continues to resist Russian forces in Kherson and Luhansk regions, while Russia increasingly allocates more resources toward the war effort. In the coming months, the US should monitor leadership changes, new troops, winter weather, and weapons supply changes to prepare for possible outcomes.

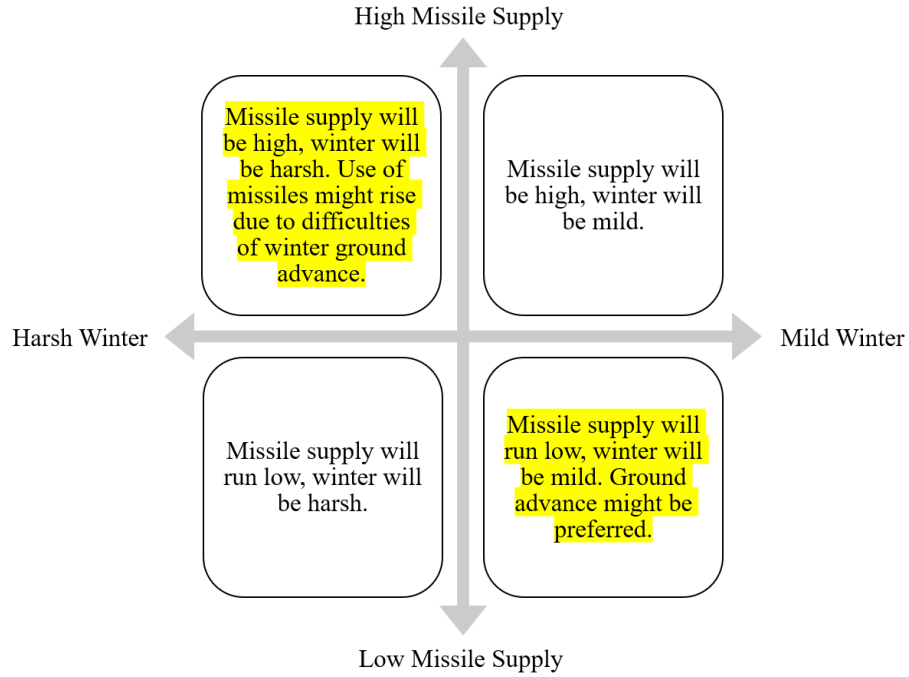
Analysis

Multiple Scenarios Generation

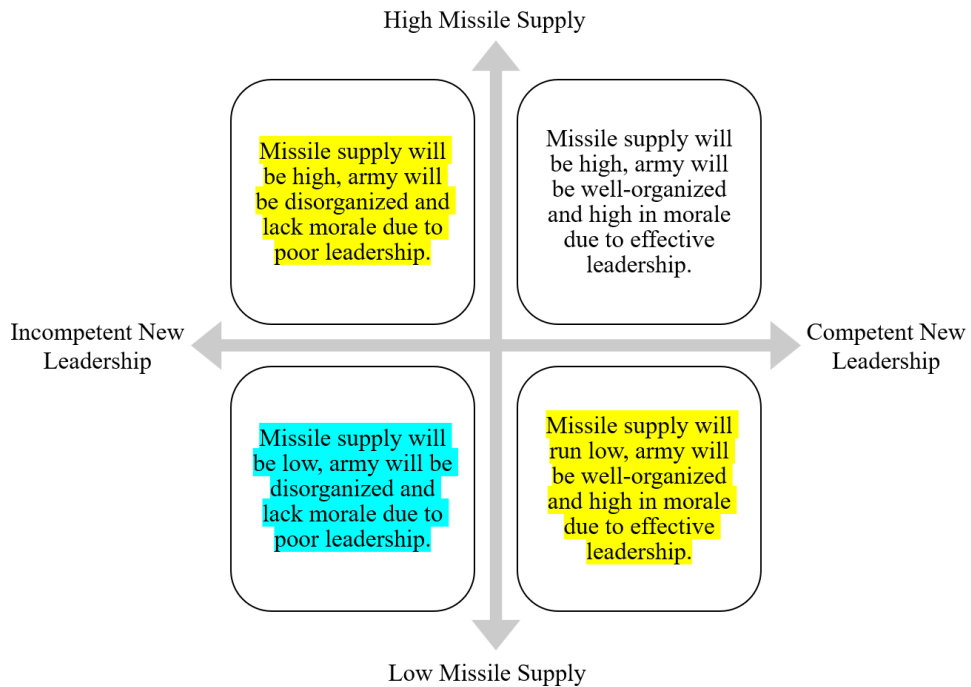
- Main Issue: Future effectiveness of Russian army considering recent alterations to its makeup and changing conditions
- Drivers:
 - Newly appointed Ukraine War commander
 - Fresh recruits
 - Weapons supply
 - Winter Weather
- Blue highlights are worst-case scenarios for Russia, where they could be driven to extremes such as nuclear force due to lack of other options.
- Yellow highlights are scenarios for continued watch, as they predict either greater use of missiles or greater strength to land forces.
- Scenario 1: Effectiveness of new recruits versus effectiveness of new Ukrainian War leadership



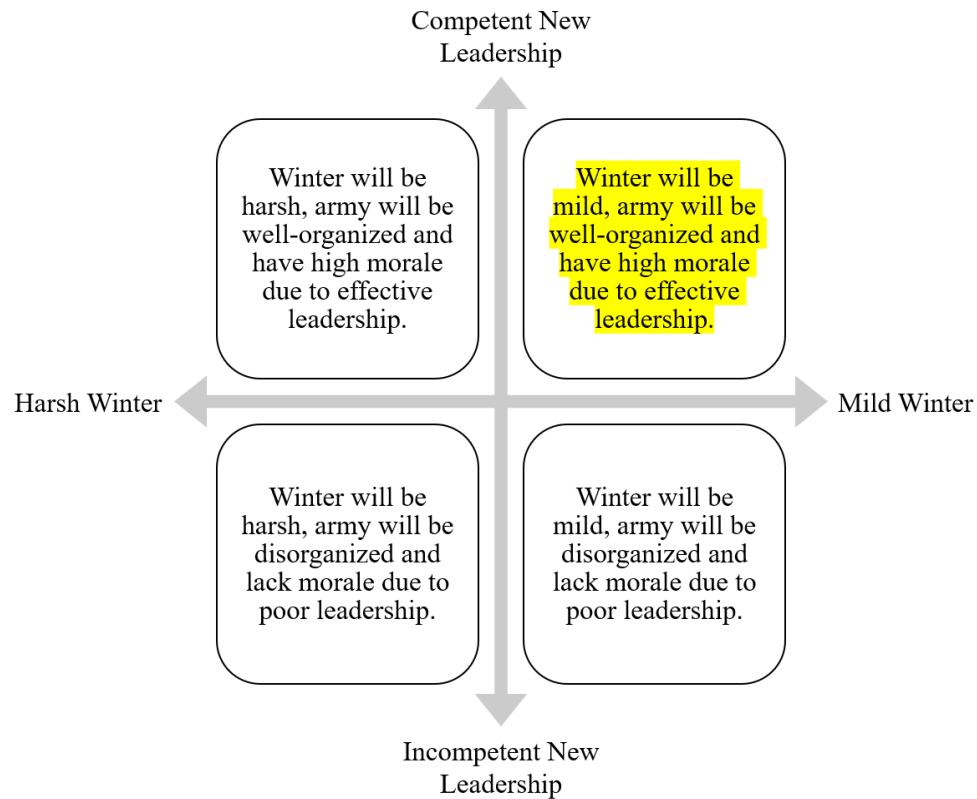
- Scenario 2: Missile supply versus the severity of the coming winter



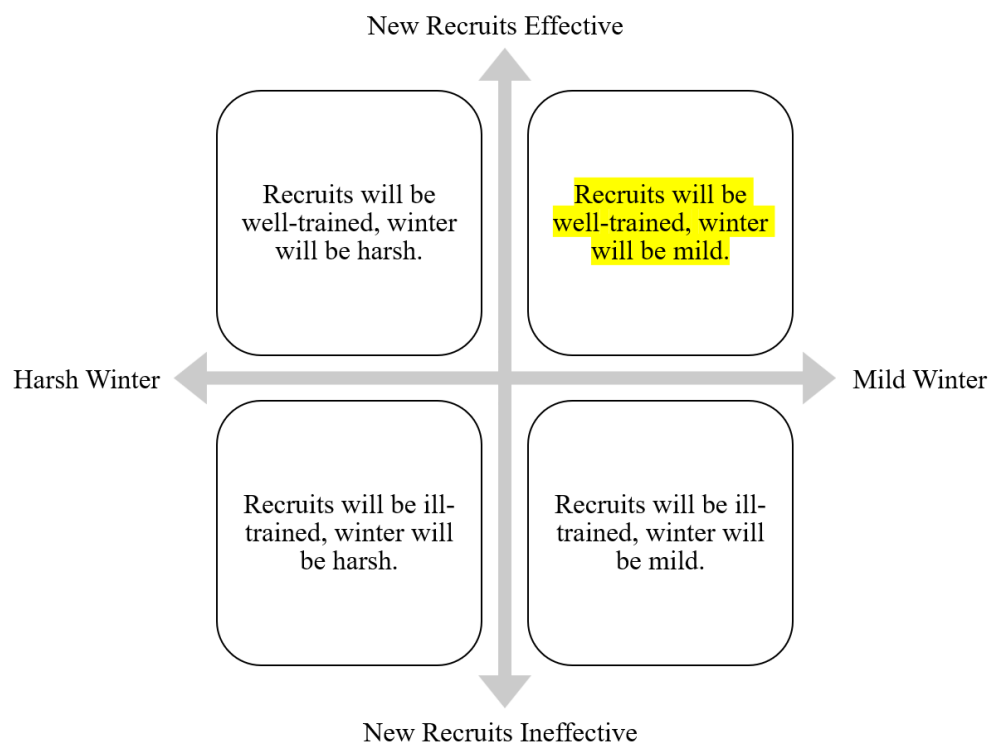
- Scenario 3: Missile supply versus the effectiveness of Ukrainian War leadership



- Scenario 4: Effectiveness of Ukraine War leadership versus the severity of the coming winter



- Scenario 5: Effectiveness of new recruits versus the severity of the coming winter



- Scenario 6: Effectiveness of new recruits versus missile supply



Conclusion

- The most dangerous scenarios for Ukraine are those that greatly strengthen the Russian ground offensive, such as the combination of competency in new Ukraine War leadership and good training in new recruits. Other scenarios to watch are those where Russia's missile supply is low but their troop and/or leadership strength on the ground is high, leading them to press harder for a ground offensive, or the scenarios where their leadership and troop strength on the ground are weak but missile supply is high, leading them to potentially focus more on missile strikes. The nightmare scenarios are those in which Russia has neither a strong ground offensive nor a high missile supply, leading the nation to potentially turn to extreme measures such as nuclear weapons due to lack of other options.

Sources

- [Defense](#)
 - [Critical Threats](#)
 - [CSIS](#)
 - [Yahoo](#)
 - [Reuters](#)
 - [Yahoo](#)
 - [Aljazeera](#)
 - [Forbes](#)
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Chinese Police Station in New York City

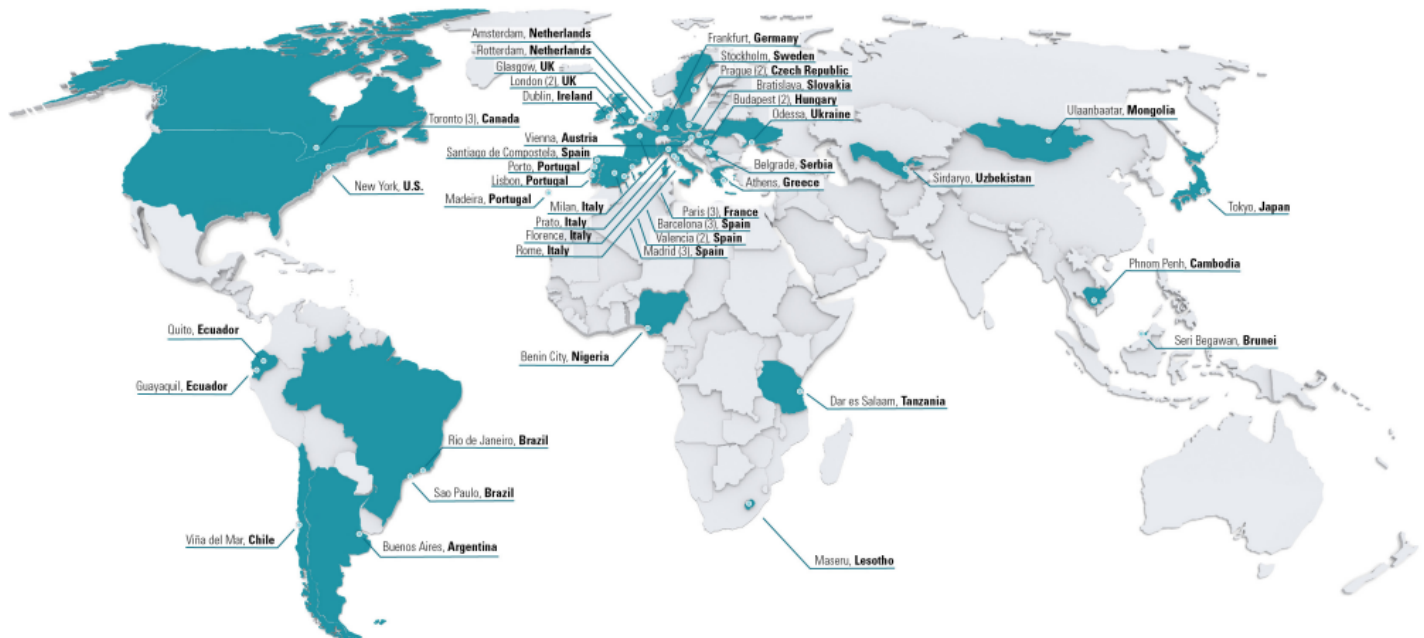
BLUF

- China has established Chinese Police Stations in major cities all around the world. The Chinese claim that the stations have been put in place to assist Chinese citizens that are living abroad. However, the stations seem to be abusing human rights, using harassment and intimidation tactics.

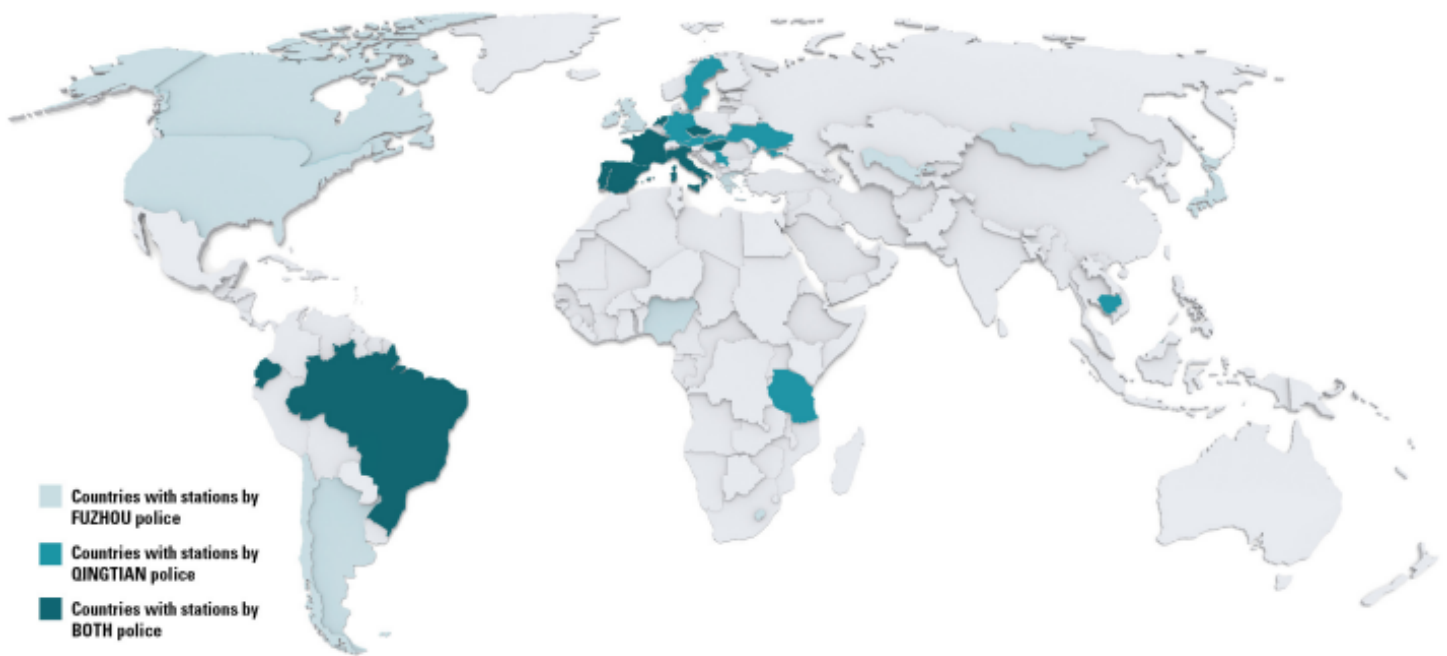
Analysis

Overview

- Chinese police “persuaded” 230,000 *claimed fugitives* to return to China “voluntarily” (safeguard defenders)
- China established 9 forbidden countries where nationals are no longer allowed to live unless they have “good reason” (safeguard defenders)
 - Turkey, UAE, Myanmar, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia, Malaysia, Philippines, and Indonesia
- Some Chinese police stations have been able to carry out policing operations on foreign soil (ex: Spain) (safeguard defenders)
- China established a new law 2 September that will go into full effect 1 December that “establishes full extraterritoriality over Chinese and foreigners globally for certain crimes (fraud, telecom fraud, online scams, etc.)” (safeguard defenders)
- The police stations are “openly labeled as overseas police service stations to accommodate the growing administrative needs of Fuzhou residents abroad...” (livemint)



Map of the known cities with operating Chinese Police Stations



Map of countries with stations and who runs the stations

Conclusion

- With a Chinese police station being placed in New York City in February of 2022, Americans are weary on why and how the Chinese were allowed to do this on American soil. Many question whether the Chinese are stepping out of line and are infringing on the human rights of Chinese citizens living abroad. However, it is so far unclear whether countries can and/or will do anything to stop or limit their actions.

Sources

- [NY Post](#)
- [Washington Times](#)
- [ABC](#)
- [Yahoo](#)
- [News](#)
- [Safeguard Defenders](#)
- [Livemint](#)

“The question shouldn’t be what we ought to do, but what we can do” – Rory Stewart
