

A dense field of various national flags flying on tall poles against a clear blue sky. The flags are arranged in rows, creating a vibrant and colorful display. The flags include the Union Jack, the flag of the Marshall Islands, the flag of the Philippines, the flag of the United States, the flag of the United Kingdom, the flag of the Republic of Korea, the flag of the Republic of China, the flag of the Republic of the Congo, the flag of the Republic of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the flag of the Republic of the Central African Republic, the flag of the Republic of the Ivory Coast, the flag of the Republic of the Benin, the flag of the Republic of the Niger, the flag of the Republic of the Chad, the flag of the Republic of the Mali, the flag of the Republic of the Burkina Faso, the flag of the Republic of the Guinea-Bissau, the flag of the Republic of the Sierra Leone, the flag of the Republic of the Liberia, the flag of the Republic of the Ivory Coast, the flag of the Republic of the Benin, the flag of the Republic of the Niger, the flag of the Republic of the Chad, the flag of the Republic of the Mali, the flag of the Republic of the Burkina Faso, the flag of the Republic of the Guinea-Bissau, the flag of the Republic of the Sierra Leone, and the flag of the Republic of the Liberia.

# **GLOBAL AFFAIRS MAGAZINE**

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“ADDRESSING  
CONTEMPORARY  
CHALLENGES”**

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# THREATENED WORLD'S BIODIVERSITY

*Written by Ryan Sim*



The world's biodiversity, which refers to the variety of life including plants and animals in nature, is experiencing a drastic decline. This alarming trend is largely driven by human activities such as resource over-consumption and harmful practices that disrupt various ecosystems.

If biodiversity decreases, the natural world will inevitably collapse. According to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), human society directly relies on biodiversity. For example, as stated by the UNEP, “Fish provide 20 percent of animal protein to about 3 billion people. Over 80 percent of the human diet is provided by plants.” Another consequence of the decrease in biodiversity is the expansion of zoonoses, diseases transmitted from animals to humans.

According to the World Wildlife Fund’s (WWF) 2022 Living Report, there has been an average decline of about 70% in the global population of mammals, fish, birds, reptiles, and amphibians since 1970. In addition, about 1 million species of animals and plants are threatened to become extinct, which is the peak rate recorded in human history. The WWF also stated that “Three-quarters of the land-based environment and roughly 66% of the ocean environment have been significantly altered. More than a third of the world's land surface and nearly 75% of freshwater resources are now devoted to crop or livestock production.” This illustrates that humanity and the ecosystem are in a dire situation to find a way to alleviate and mitigate this biodiversity crisis. A specific example that highlights the importance of biodiversity is the role of bees in our ecosystems.

As one of the main reactors of biodiversity, bees are a prime example of an insect that is closely tied to biodiversity. An experiment conducted by the Rutgers School of Environmental and Biological Sciences mentions how bees are truly vital in sustaining biodiversity due to crop pollination, which is closely tied to food supplies for humans. “This research shows that abundance [of a species] matters, but bee diversity matters even more,” said Michelle Elekonich, the deputy division director of the National Science Foundation’s Directorate for Biological Sciences. “It’s not the same bees that are abundant at a given point in time, and variety is necessary to provide balance during a growing season – and from year to year.” As it can be seen bee biodiversity is very important for humanity and for the environment.

As shown in the paragraphs above, there is a biodiversity crisis as many animals, plants, and other living beings species are threatened to be extinct or already extinct. These events are caused by the overuse of natural resources and other environmental damages. A high rate of biodiversity is essential to human society because it prevents the expansion of zoonoses and allows sufficient crop growth for humanity. In order to preserve and increase the biodiversity of all living organisms, I believe that it is necessary for all governments and various global environmental organizations, such as the UNEP, to work in harmony to produce awareness and regulations. These organizations and governments could aim to have a more strict regulation process on resources and using sustainable resources. If we do not start protecting biodiversity, our future generation will only see the animals we see now in videos and books.

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# WHY GUNS SHOULD BE BANNED IN AMERICA

*Written by Kristina Kuryndina*



School shootings are further proof of how guns are misused in America. There were fifty-one school shootings in 2022 alone, which led to injured students, teachers, and deaths. These types of massacres are sometimes the effect of children being in the possession of their parents' firearms. To elaborate on that, banning guns can help reduce the risk of violence and fear in an educational facility. Schools are safe spaces for children all over the world, and gun violence isn't something kids of any age should be worried about, nevertheless experience. Whilst safety measures like bullet-proof backpacks and shooter drills are implemented, the possibility of a school shooting is still very likely. Some parents even claim they fear sending their children to school on a daily basis. Furthermore, around 24,000 people die from gun suicide in America every year, among these, 700 are teens. These devastating statistics show that possession of a firearm can lead you to end your own life. If guns were banned these numbers would decrease drastically.

Given the complexity of this situation, I understand that a complete ban on guns won't be possible right away. But, it is still important to make an effort to protect Americans from mass shootings, school shootings, and gun suicides. Despite the fact that some still argue that guns are crucial for making a country safe because they can be used for self-defense, I think that the negative effects outweigh the positive ones. Other countries, like South Korea and Japan, model a gun-free country with little violence perfectly. It would be better for the US to invest in CCTV cameras or other methods of security that can reduce bloodshed and crime. As mentioned before, this will be a gradual process, starting with the application of stricter laws which will then move up to a total ban and a country living without anxiety around gun violence.

Gun violence in the US has been a controversial topic of debate for some time. Not only among politicians but also among the general public. Should gun laws stay the same, be regulated, or be banned completely? While some say that guns are a tool used for protection and the safety of American citizens, I believe that firearm regulations are too loose. These types of weapons increase mass shootings and suicide rates in the US, causing people to live in fear in their own country.

With increasing numbers of shootings over the years, it is becoming clear that the government needs to do something about the purchase and possession of firearms. Approximately 40,000 Americans die from fatal gunshots each year. A number of these deaths happen in public areas like sports stadiums and concert halls. It is apparent that mass shootings do not result from someone trying to protect themselves. Instead, shooters behind these tragic events are either under the influence or are experiencing an unexpected fit of rage which results in them acting impulsively. Columbia University's Department of Psychiatry explains that most mass shootings that occur are not directly linked to any underlying mental illnesses. This proves that it is not always easy to tell if a firearm being sold is in the right hands, even with many background checks. This is one of the reasons why I think the possession of guns should be banned to the public at large. Additionally, by not letting people have access to firearms we can reduce the crime rate, making people feel safer and not need guns as a form of protection. Studies even show that countries where guns are illegal have reduced crime rates and people feel safer overall.

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# WHAT WE SHOULD LEARN FROM NORTH KOREA'S FAILED SATELLITE LAUNCH

*Written by Claire Zhang*



On Wednesday, May 31st, residents of Seoul awoke to the blare of air raid sirens and emergency evacuation alerts on their cell phones. After twenty minutes, the emergency alert was canceled, identified as an error. However, it was later revealed that the real cause of the alerts was North Korea's launch of its first spy satellite. According to the Korean Central News Agency, a North Korean media outlet, the launch failed due to an unstable, malfunctioning engine, which caused the satellite to fall into the Yellow Sea. This was not the first time North Korea's plans for military spy satellites have made headlines, nor is it likely to be the last.

The failed launch occurred just two days after North Korea had informed Japan of its plans to launch a satellite between May 31 and June 11. North Korea has been planning to send up military spy satellites since its announcement in a Workers' Party of Korea (WPK) meeting in early 2021. Throughout 2022, North Korea conducted numerous tests with various satellites and ballistic missiles. During this time, Kim Jong Un himself visited space development agencies and testing grounds. On Sunday, June 4, Kim Jong Un's sister, Kim Yo Jong, released a statement saying that North Korea would successfully launch a military reconnaissance satellite into space in the near future.

The launch immediately triggered emergency alerts and evacuation warnings in Seoul, South Korea, and Okinawa, Japan. Japan also ordered its military to shoot down any technology posing a threat within its territory. In Seoul, the launch brought issues in the current state of the country and the city's alert system went off. Many residents are conscious of the potential threat of invasion from China or North Korea. However, as reported by Reuters, "South Korea has bomb shelters throughout the country, but they are not specifically built to protect against nuclear, chemical, or biological attacks." Owing to the very real threat of an attack from their neighbors, widespread confusion ensued throughout the city after the emergency was canceled, with residents unsure whether they should pack up and evacuate. Later that day, Seoul Mayor Oh Se-hoon defended the city's decision as a necessary precaution at the time but promised to improve future warnings.

On the international political stage, South Korea, Japan, and the US quickly condemned North Korea for employing ballistic missile technology and destabilizing the Korean Peninsula, rather than pursuing negotiation and peace talks. The US also called for an emergency UN meeting, though it is likely that any US resolutions to sanction North Korea will be blocked or limited by China and Russia's vetoes in the UN Security Council. In her statement on June 4, Kim Yo Jong responded to South Korea and the US by defending the launch and her nation's right to self-defense as a sovereign state. She pointed out that other countries also launched countless spy satellites without condemnation.

At the end of the day, it is likely we will witness another attempt in the next few months. Until then, we can reflect on the ongoing issues that have resurfaced during the launch, such as the confusing emergency alert system in Seoul, the clash of US, Russian, and Chinese interests in the UN Security Council, as well as regional tensions in the Korean Peninsula.

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# WHY WNBA PLAYERS ARE BEING PAID LESS THAN NBA PLAYERS

*Written by Byeong-Soo Kim*





Jackie Young is the highest-paid WNBA player having a salary of \$252,450 while the highest-paid NBA player, Stephen Curry, gets \$48,070,014 for his salary. WNBA players and NBA players both play the same sport and arguably at the same skill level, if this is the case why are they being paid less? An obvious answer is that the WNBA doesn't bring in the same amount of revenue as the NBA, which is true but there are more complex reasons for the issue. The WNBA only makes a fraction of what the NBA makes and with that, the WNBA has low attendance and TV ratings. This would mean that there would be less money available for players.

Another factor is gender discrimination. The WNBA and many other women's sports leagues don't give enough support to their players and society does have a bias toward watching men's sports. There are many feasible solutions to this problem such as getting a better television contract. Another possible solution is to negotiate for more favorable terms with partners and sponsors, or invest in marketing and creating a fanbase for the league. Many basketball fans don't watch the WNBA because there are no NBA flairs such as electrifying dunks, mind-blowing blocks, and uncanny feats of athleticism. In the WNBA the ball is smaller compared to the NBA ball and the 3-point line is closer to the basket. Everything is adjusted for a woman's biological physical ability but what we have not changed is the rim height. Lowering it by a foot or even half a foot could provide the entertainment that fans want to see like more opportunities for dunks and public advertisement.

For fans, sports leagues are for entertainment, and without enough acts that are considered entertaining, there would not be enough viewers. Brittney Griner is the league's leader in dunks all time coming in at 23 and is currently performing dunks and blocks that have not been seen since the league started in 1996. Shaquille O'Neal former NBA player and current NBA TNT analyst said "So in beach volleyball, the women's net is maybe a half-an-inch lower. You think if we lower the rim so y'all can dunk like we dunk that would give y'all more oomph than you already have?". Shaq's statement was negatively received by WNBA player Candace Parker who has dunked in college and in the WNBA. In her response, Candace Parker stated that the players can already dunk, but the problem is that not every WNBA player has the same talent as Candace Parker a two-time regular season MVP and an all-star game MVP. Another problem is homophobia in sports fans, especially because 20 percent of WNBA players have publicly announced that they are LGBTQ+. A study from Out on the Fields showed that 82 percent of lesbians have been targeted with a form of homophobia. This could be another driving factor pushing fans away, although it is not the WNBA's problem but rather a problem in society itself right now.

In conclusion, WNBA players are being paid significantly less than their male counterparts due to factors such as homophobia in viewers, gender discrimination, and having a lesser entertainment value. To address this issue, the league should invest in better contracts for television and with sponsors, as well as better marketing techniques like creating a fanbase. In order to create more opportunities for players to dunk and display other feats of athleticism, the league should consider lowering the hoop rim to adjust for women's biological abilities.

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