

1 June 2009, N°70

CrisisWatch:

- summarises briefly developments during the previous month in some 70 situations of current or potential conflict, listed alphabetically by region, providing references and links to more detailed information sources (all references mentioned are hyperlinked in the electronic version of this bulletin);
- assesses whether the overall situation in each case has, during the previous month, significantly deteriorated, significantly improved, or on balance remained more or less unchanged;
- alerts readers to situations where, in the coming month, there is a particular risk of new or significantly escalated conflict, or a particular conflict resolution opportunity (noting that in some instances there may in fact be both); and
- summarises Crisis Group's reports and briefing papers that have been published in the last month.

CrisisWatch is compiled by Crisis Group's Brussels Research Unit, drawing on multiple sources including the resources of our some 130 staff members across five continents, who already report on some 60 of the situations listed here. Comments and suggestions can be sent to crisiswatch@crisisgroup.org.

To search past issues of *CrisisWatch* visit our databases and resources page at www.crisisgroup.org.

May 2009 Trends



Deteriorated Situations

Chad (p.2) North Korea (p.5)
Guatemala (p.10) Pakistan (p.6)
Myanmar/Burma (p.7) Somalia (p.3)
Niger (p.4) Sudan (p.3)
Nigeria (p.4)



Improved Situations



Unchanged Situations

Afghanistan (p.6), Algeria (p.12), Armenia (p.8), Armenia/Turkey (p.8), Azerbaijan (p.8), Bangladesh (p.6), Basque Country (Spain) (p.9), Belarus (p.9), Bolivia (p.10), Bosnia (p.7), Burundi (p.2), Cameroon (p.4), Central African Republic (p.2), Chechnya (Russia) (p.8), Colombia (p.10), Côte d'Ivoire (p.4), Cyprus (p.9), Democratic Republic of Congo (p.2), Ecuador (p.10), Egypt (p.12), Eritrea (p.3), Ethiopia (p.2), Fiji (p.7), Georgia (p.9), Guinea (p.4), Guinea-Bissau (p.4), Haiti (p.10), India (non-Kashmir) (p.6), Indonesia (p.7), Iran (p.11), Iraq (p.11), Israel/Occupied Palestinian Territories (p.10), Kashmir (p.6), Kazakhstan (p.5), Kenya (p.3), Kosovo (p.8), Kyrgyzstan (p.5), Lebanon (p.11), Liberia (p.4), Macedonia (p.8), Madagascar (p.3), Mali (p.4), Mauritania (p.12), Moldova (p.9), Nagorno-Karabakh (Azerbaijan) (p.9), Nepal (p.6), North Caucasus (non-Chechnya) (p.8), Northern Ireland (p.9), Philippines (p.7), Rwanda (p.2), Serbia (p.8), Sri Lanka (p.6), Syria (p.11), Taiwan Strait (p.5), Tajikistan (p.5), Thailand (p.7), Timor-Leste (p.7), Togo (p.5), Turkey (p.9), Turkmenistan (p.5), Uganda (p.2), Ukraine (p.9), Uzbekistan (p.5), Venezuela (p.10), Yemen (p.11), Zimbabwe (p.3)

June 2009 Watchlist



Conflict Risk Alerts

Somalia



Conflict Resolution Opportunities

Board of Trustees

Co-Chairs

Christopher Patten
Thomas Pickering

President and CEO

Gareth Evans

Executive Committee

Morton Abramowitz
Emma Bonino*
Cheryl Carolus
Maria Livanos Cattau
Yoichi Funabashi
Frank Giustra
Stephen Solarz
George Soros
Pär Stenbäck
*Vice-Chair

Adnan Abu-Odeh
Kenneth Adelman
Turki al-Faisal
Kofi Annan
Louise Arbour
Richard Armitage
Paddy Ashdown
Shlomo Ben-Ami
Lakhdar Brahimi
Zbigniew Brzezinski
Kim Campbell
Naresh Chandra
Joaquim Alberto Chissano
Wesley Clark
Pat Cox
Uffe Ellemann-Jensen
Mark Eyskens
Joschka Fischer
Yegor Gaidar
Carla Hills
Lena Hjelm-Wallén
Swanee Hunt
Anwar Ibrahim
Mo Ibrahim
Asma Jahangir
James V. Kimsey
Wim Kok
Aleksander Kwaśniewski
Ricardo Lagos
Joanne Leedom-Ackerman
Jessica Tuchman Mathews
Moisés Naim
Ayo Obe
Christine Ockrent
Victor Pinchuk
Fidel V. Ramos
Güler Sabancı
Ghassan Salamé
Thorvald Stoltenberg
Ernesto Zedillo

Chairmen Emeritus

Martti Ahtisaari
George J. Mitchell

Crisis Group

Crisis Group is an independent, non-profit, non-governmental organisation, with some 130 staff members on five continents, working through field-based analysis and high-level advocacy to prevent and resolve deadly conflict. Crisis Group's approach is grounded in field research. Teams of political analysts are located within or close by countries at risk of outbreak, escalation or recurrence of violent conflict. Based on information and assessments from the field, Crisis Group produces regular analytical reports containing practical recommendations targeted at key international decision-takers, and backed up with high-level advocacy. Crisis Group is co-chaired by former European Commissioner for External Relations Lord (Christopher) Patten and former U.S. Ambassador and Vice Chairman of Hills & Company Thomas R. Pickering, and its President and Chief Executive is former Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans.



CENTRAL AFRICA

➡ **Burundi** Main opposition FRODEBU 5 May accused ruling CNDD-FDD of stepping up intimidation ahead of 2010 elections, alleged govt forming new militia, re-arming ex-fighters, conducted assassinations; denied by govt. Regional Initiative for Burundi, chaired by Ugandan President Museveni, late month established Partnership for Peace to monitor peace process ahead of 2010 elections. Ministry of Justice 13 May ordered release of 203 FNL political prisoners; 50 released by month end. Senate approved nomination of 2 ambassadors, 2 provincial governors from FNL.

- [“Burundi regime denies rearing militia”](#), AFP, 7 May 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°53, [Burundi: Restarting Political Dialogue](#), 19 Aug. 2008.

➡ **Central African Republic** Fighting continued in northwest with around 7 killed in 17 May clashes between APRD rebels and alleged Chadian bandits: APRD said clashes followed calls from villagers for action against cattle raiding. OCHA reported some 100 CAR refugees crossing daily into southern Chad due to increased insecurity in north, warned of risks to humanitarian access with onset of rainy season in coming weeks.

- [“Violence continues to drive out CAR families”](#), IRIN, 5 May 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°55, [Central African Republic: Untangling the Political Dialogue](#), 9 Dec. 2008.

➡ **Chad** Sharp upsurge in violence along eastern border with Sudan, while N'Djamena and Khartoum exchanged vehement accusations over attacks. Darfur-based Chadian UFR rebels crossed border 5 May in new offensive against govt and claiming intent to take capital. Followed by govt air strikes, 2 days of fighting in Am-Dam region; N'Djamena reported 225 rebels and 22 soldiers killed, 212 rebels captured. 3 May Doha deal between Sudan-Chad quickly unravelled. N'Djamena accused Khartoum of supporting UFR “mercenaries”, 15 May launched further air strikes on West Darfur rebel bases, claiming several groups destroyed, 100 people captured. Khartoum described Chadian raids as “act of war”, late-month threatened to “crush” further raids. Chadian President Deby following late month regional conference near Tripoli asserted right to defend territory, also interest in finding peaceful solution with Sudan under Libyan, UN mediation.

- [“Chad readies forces to strike rebels in Sudan”](#), Reuters, 19 May 2009.
- [“Clashes in Chad leave scores dead as UN slams rebels”](#), AFP, 8 May 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°149, [Chad: Powder Keg in the East](#), 15 April 2009.

➡ **Democratic Republic of Congo** Govt 1 May announced fresh military offensive against FDLR rebels – Kimya II – led by army with MONUC support; reportedly extended from S to N Kivu over month. Wide fears over impact on civilians. FDLR violence continued: at least 60 civilians, 30 govt troops killed in 6 May attack near N Kivu's Hombo town; 60 killed when

rebels burned down Butalonga village 10 May. 12 rebel groups in S Kivu withdrew from demobilisation program, citing lack of consultation on Kimya II, delays on prisoner release. UNSC mission travelled to eastern DRC, Kinshasa 19 May to discuss security, DRC-Rwanda relations, MONUC's mandate. 21 May interim report of UN monitoring panel outlined severe problems in rebel integration, including presence of parallel rebel-army command structures, child soldiers, extensive military abuses; also cited evidence that wanted war criminal General Ntaganda operating as de facto army deputy commander. Kabila 7 May approved amnesty bill covering “acts of war” for militias in N and S Kivu; excludes war crimes, foreign troops and former CNDP leader Nkunda (see Rwanda). CNDP 16 May began procedure to become political party.

- [“Dozens killed in Congo's east - UN citing sources”](#), Reuters, 13 May 2009.
- [“Congo ex-rebels accused of rape and killings”](#), AP, 18 May 2009.

Crisis Group Africa Report N°150, [Congo: Five Priorities for a Peacebuilding Strategy](#), 11 May 2009. The dire situation in the Kivus will not improve without a strategy of sustained partnership between the government and the international community. A peacebuilding strategy for the Congo should have five priorities: a disarmament strategy for Rwandan Hutu rebels; reform of the security sector; fostering reconciliation and human security; political engagement; and efforts to sustain stable regional relations.



➡ **Rwanda** Kinshasa-Kigali 5 May issued joint statement reporting Congolese death penalty prohibited extradition from Rwanda of former DRC rebel leader General Nkunda under Rwandan law, raised possibility of transfer to third country. Rwanda named new ambassador to DRC. Desire Munyaneza found guilty of genocide, war crimes for role during 1994 genocide in Canadian court 22 May.

- [“Congo warlord may await trial in ‘neutral’ country”](#), Reuters, 6 May 2009.

➡ **Uganda** Bill introduced in U.S. Senate proposing development of action plan to support multilateral efforts against LRA and provide humanitarian/reconstruction funding for LRA-affected areas. President Museveni 11 May said disputed Migingo islands Kenyan but surrounding waters Ugandan, warned against Kenyan fishing. Prompted renewed outcry from Kenyan MPs, calls for AU and UN mediation over ownership.

- [“LRA fighters sighted five miles from Yambio”](#), *Sudan Tribune*, 22 May 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°146, [Northern Uganda: The Road to Peace, with or without Kony](#), 10 Dec. 2008.

HORN OF AFRICA

➡ **Ethiopia** Govt 2 May said 40 arrested members of “illegal” Ginbot 7 group intended bombings to disrupt order, but retracted Apr claims that group plotting coup. Opposition 5 May accused govt of using allegations of terrorist activity to garner international support and target potential candidates ahead of 2010 elections. Rights groups 5 May called on govt to identify all Ginbot detainees.

- [“A year to election, Ethiopia opposition cries foul”](#), AFP, 14 May 2009.

➤ **Eritrea** AU 22 May called for UNSC to impose sanctions on Eritrea following reports of arms support for Somali Islamist militia al-Shabaab. Govt strongly rejected allegations, claimed fabricated by U.S. CIA. Sanctions call echoed late month by IGAD states and UN representatives meeting at 20 May session on Somalia. Information Minister 4 May announced Eritrea does not recognize Somalian govt.

- [“AU calls for sanctions on Eritrea”](#), BBC, 23 May 2009.

➤ **Kenya** Further angry exchanges between coalition partners ODM and PNU, centring on parties’ contending proposals for constitutional reform to be submitted to parliamentary expert committee; deadline for submissions extended 25 May. ODM condemned PNU’s “minimum reform” approach and proposals for hybrid presidential-parliamentary system as “cocktail of chaos”. Followed continued dispute over post of head of govt business. MPs called for AU and UN mediation in Kenyan-Ugandan dispute over Migingo islands following statement from Ugandan President Museveni 11 May claiming ownership of surrounding waters (see Uganda). Further Somali pirates apprehended by EU states handed to Kenya to face trial.

- [“Kenyan MPs’ fury over island row”](#), BBC, 13 May 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°137, [Kenya in Crisis](#), 21 Feb. 2008.

➤ ➤ **Somalia** Mogadishu rocked by intense fighting, as alliance of anti-govt Islamist factions led by influential Islamist leader Aweys launched large-scale offensive in and around capital from 7 May, taking control of large parts of city and nearby strategic points Mahadday and Jowhar; mortars fired into presidential palace 23 May. Some 200 civilians killed, hundreds wounded, over 46,000 displaced in heavy shelling into residential areas. Violence coupled with severe drought fuelled fears of greater humanitarian crisis. Followed earlier moves by Aweys to cement Islamist alliance. UNSC 15 May called for investigation into govt allegations Eritrea providing military support to al-Shabaab, denied by Asmara (see Eritrea). UNSC members in 8-day Africa mission met with AU envoys, expressed concern over threat of violence to transitional govt, presence of foreign fighters. Reports of sizable incursions by Ethiopian troops into Hiran region, denied by interior ministry and Addis Ababa. Govt mid-month called on international community to support establishment of anti-piracy coastguard. Piracy conference in Malaysia ended 19 May with call on UN to consider joint off-coast security mechanism, in apparent pull-back from proposals for an international maritime force. 200 pirates in Puntland late-month renounced criminal activities, reportedly under pressure from local leaders.

- [“Mogadishu victims swamp hospitals”](#), BBC, 27 May 2009.
- [“Islamist insurgents close in on Somali capital”](#), *Guardian*, 18 May 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°147, [Somalia: To Move Beyond the Failed State](#), 23 Dec. 2008.

➤ **Sudan** Increasingly open strains between North-South governing partners, while tensions with N’djamena increased sharply following Chadian incursions in pursuit of rebels on Sudanese soil (see Chad). 150 SPLM and opposition MPs walked out of late-month parliamentary debate on repressive press bill introduced by dominant NCP. President of South Sudan Salva Kiir (SPLM) rejected legitimacy of Apr-May national census. Darfur peace talks between govt, JEM resumed in Doha 7 May after March-Apr hiatus. Planned \$3m Darfur peace conference organised by Mo Ibrahim

involving 300 civil society representatives cancelled 10 May after delegates denied exit visas by Khartoum. In Darfur, UN USG Holmes during early-month visit reported aid effort holding, but deterioration imminent. Khartoum 8 May said new or renamed aid agencies welcome, existing operations could expand. Insecurity across Darfur continued: govt late-month launched air strikes on N Darfur’s Umm Baru town, following earlier clashes between JEM and SLM-Minni Minawi; JEM 17 May attacked military sites in Karnoi area. Govt of South Sudan announced crackdown on armed cattle raiding, as further 49 killed in raids in Upper Nile state. In South Kordofan: 167 members of 2 Arab tribes and 75 police killed in severe late month clashes near Darfur border. Commander of URF rebels Abu Garda surrendered to The Hague to face ICC war crimes charges over 2007 attack on AMIS peacekeepers. 2 killed, several villages ransacked and hundreds displaced in attacks by suspected LRA rebels in S Sudan’s Nzara county on 17 May.

- Comment by Donald Steinberg and Fouad Hikmat (Crisis Group), [“Keeping Our Eyes on the Prize”](#), allAfrica, 4 May 2009.
- [“Sudan SPLM, NCP legislators exchange accusations”](#), *Sudan Tribune*, 15 May 2009.
- [“Sudan govt forces bomb near North Darfur-UN”](#), Reuters, 13 May 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°145, [Sudan’s Southern Kordofan Problem: The Next Darfur?](#), 21 October 2008.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

➤ **Madagascar** Standoff between current and former Malagasy leaders continued, with no concrete progress in talks or setting date for fresh presidential elections. International contact group, leading talks with representatives of Rajoelina and 3 former presidents, early-May called for former leaders to be barred from upcoming elections. Contact group later retracted call, 23 May announced possible deal allowing all to contest elections, 14 month transition period, creation of new truth and reconciliation commission into political violence. But influential former president Ratsiraka withdrew from talks days later, demanding guarantees of amnesty for supporters; ousted president Ravalomanana followed suit, conditioned participation in further talks on guarantees for return from exile, liberation of political prisoners. Ravalomanana in 26 May media interview accused France of backing “putschist” Rajoelina govt.

- [“Former Madagascar leader quits crisis talks”](#), AFP, 25 May 2009.

➤ **Zimbabwe** Political deadlock between coalition partners MDC and ZANU-PF on outstanding power-sharing issues, centred on dominance of ZANU-PF in security, financial and regional administration, continued. PM Tsvangirai (MDC) initially issued ultimatum for resolution of dispute by 8 May, but 17 May party statement called for issues to be referred to SADC and AU; at national party conference MDC 31 May demanded central bank governor Gono and attorney general resign. Inter-party standoff stoked 5 May by re-arrest of 17 rights activists and MDC supporters, fresh wave of farm invasions by ZANU-PF cadres. Divides within ZANU-PF increasingly apparent, with tense exchanges at 6 and 20 May party politburo meetings grounded in apparent succession struggle between factions led by General Solomon Mujuru and long-standing security chief Mnangagwa. ZAPU party after months of consolidating

powerbase announced formal separation from ZANU-PF. IMF 6 May announced resumption of limited technical assistance, and World Bank 18 May a \$22m grant, but stressed full financial aid conditional on country's payment of significant arrears. Further contributions from regional states raised to \$1bn pledges in credit lines by private and state African banks. USAID, WFP reported continued food shortages likely to be compounded by poor harvest.

- Comment by Sydney Masamvu and Donald Steinberg (Crisis Group), ["If the World Hesitates, Zimbabwe Could Be Lost"](#), Huffington Post, 8 May 2009.
- ["Zimbabwe's MDC asks AU, SADC to sort out deadlock"](#), Reuters, 17 May 2009.
- ["Another year without much food"](#), IRIN, 22 May 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°59, [Zimbabwe: Engaging the Inclusive Government](#), 20 April 2009.

WEST AFRICA

➡ **Cameroon** Main opposition party SDF boycotted 20 May National Day commemoration of reunification, in continuing protest against lack of democratic freedoms, urged all Cameroonians to join non-violent protest. 2 opposition politicians arrested in Douala 19 May after earlier criticizing National Day; charges unclear. Govt and French PM Fillon during 20-22 May visit signed "new generation" defence agreement, which now excludes provisions for French military intervention.

- ["Cameroon's opposition party to boycott national unity holiday"](#), Afrique en ligne, 8 May 2009.
- ["French PM builds 'renewed' ties with west Africa"](#), AFP, 21 May 2009.

➡ **Côte d'Ivoire** PM Soro 14 May announced long-awaited presidential elections to be held 29 Nov. Govt and opposition parties, following 18 May meeting in Ouagadougou, stipulated voter enrolment to be completed 30 June. Opposition reacted cautiously to timetable, citing previous delays. Deployment of integrated force composed of govt and former FN rebels, charged with monitoring security during elections, began early May: 100 loyalist forces deployed in ex-rebel stronghold Bouaké, 100 FN in Abidjan. 10 northern FN-controlled zones formally handed over to civilian administration 26 May. French journalist Jean-Paul Ney, jailed for 16 months over possession of footage indicating coup plot, released temporarily with 6 Ivoirians.

- ["Election date – for real this time?"](#), IRIN, 15 May 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°139, [Côte d'Ivoire: Ensuring Credible Elections](#), 22 Apr. 2008.

➡ **Guinea** Junta leader Capt Camara, seeking to ease fears ahead of early-May International Contact Group meeting, announced he would not stand in Dec presidential and legislative elections. Contact Group welcomed electoral preparations, but amid concerns over the govt's capacity to meet its side of financial contributions and delays in agreed creation of transition oversight council. Signs of increasing dissatisfaction with Camara govt: over 1,000 protested in Conakry 6 May, with 2 wounded in gunfire by security forces; justice officials 13 May threatened to strike unless govt halt parallel military justice system. Govt announced \$38m recovered in anti-corruption campaign, pledged to extend reform effort. 30 ambassadors recalled and 2 ministers fired early-month.

- ["Junta in Guinea will not contest elections: leader"](#), AFP, 10 May 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°58, [Guinea: The Transition Has Only Just Begun](#), 5 March 2009.

➡ **Guinea-Bissau** Supreme court cleared 13 candidates to contest 28 June presidential polls, including favourites Malam Bacai Sanha (ruling PAIGC) and former presidents Kumba Yala of opposition PRS, and Henrique Rosa; 7 others rejected on technical grounds, incl ex-PM Fadul. Military commission charged with investigating March death of army chief Na Wai delivered confidential report to public prosecutor 13 May. Civilian commission into President Vieira's death extended investigation due to lack of "serious leads", called on international community to release promised \$1m in support. ECOWAS announced \$13.5m to support G-B SSR and economic stabilisation.

- ["No cash for president, army chief death probe-Bissau"](#), Reuters, 19 May 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°57, [Guinea-Bissau: Building a Real Stability Pact](#), 29 Jan. 2009.

➡ **Liberia** Govt 8 May announced results of national census, opening door for electoral threshold bill, amid concerns over impact of delays on election timetable. Truth and reconciliation commission announced popular interest in establishment of special court to prosecute atrocities committed during civil war.

- ["Liberian legislature under pressure to pass threshold or redistricting bill"](#), VOA, 6 May 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°148, [Liberia: Uneven Progress in Security Sector Reform](#), 13 Jan. 2009.

➡ **Mali** Govt stepped up drive against al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) militants, 1 May announced 4 AQIM members arrested following 26 Apr clashes in north. AQIM threatened to kill 1 of 2 remaining hostages, a British citizen, unless UK release preacher by 3 June.

- ["Mali pursues al Qaeda suspects in north: source"](#), Reuters, 9 May 2009

➡ **Niger** President Tandja 26 May dissolved parliament, hours after constitutional court rejected as unconstitutional his 8 May call for a referendum on removing presidential 2-term limits – prompted widespread outcry from opposition, civil society leaders and fears of authoritarian drift. Move comes as expiry of Tandja's 2-term tenure approaches ahead of presidential elections, set mid-month for 28 Nov. Constitution requires formation of parliament within 3 months. Thousands rallied in Niamey 9 May in protest at referendum bid, called by main opposition PND; followed quickly by counter-protest by president's supporters. ECOWAS 18 May threatened sanctions. Tandja and PM Oumarou met with northern Tuareg rebel groups over month, Oumarou agreeing ceasefire with MNJ and FPN 15 May.

- ["Niger president in 'dangerous' bid to keep power"](#), AFP, 1 June 2009.

➡ **Nigeria** Govt's Joint Task Force (JTF) responsible for Niger Delta security launched major ground, air and naval offensive against militants from 15 May, concentrated on western Delta. Hundreds of civilians feared killed and thousands displaced in ongoing violence, as military barred aid groups from

accessing fighting zone. Operation signaled apparent decision by Yar'Adua govt to focus on military approach, as progress on development agenda continues to lag, and prompted concerns over potential to alienate moderates and diminish conflict resolution opportunities. Militant group MEND vowed "all out war"; killed 12 soldiers in ambush and destroyed major Chevron pipeline 25 May, shutting in 100,000 bpd; but observers doubt capacity to launch large-scale response. Re-run of governorship election in Ekiti State on 5 May delivered ruling PDP candidate to power, amid widespread reports of fraud and violence. Rally protesting election conduct in Ekiti on 25 May forcefully dispersed by police; 20 arrested and protesters allegedly beaten.

- "Nigeria aims to knock-out Delta militants", *Financial Times*, 21 May 2009.
- "Thousands flee Nigeria Delta fighting", BBC, 21 May 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°60, *Nigeria: Seizing the Moment in the Niger Delta*, 30 April 2009.

➡ **Togo** Army chief sacked 18 May and 18 soldiers charged in connection with Apr alleged coup plot. President Gnassingbe 27 May established truth commission to investigate bouts of political violence, including 2005 election clashes in which hundreds reportedly killed.

- "Togo under control after alleged coup bid: president", AFP, 19 May 2009.



Asia/Pacific

CENTRAL ASIA

➡ **Kazakhstan** NATO 14 May invited Kazakhstan to join its Afghanistan operations, citing high readiness, technical compatibility of Kazakh military; no formal answer from Astana. Govt 13 May signed into law agreement with Russia and Turkmenistan on participation in Moscow-led pipeline; followed 8 May refusal to sign Prague EU energy summit final declaration on transport of energy supplies to Europe. Govt banned distribution of "Godfather-in-law" memoir published by Rakhmat Aliyev, former son-in-law of President Nazarbaev, citing breaches of state secrecy.

- "Evaluating Astana's democratization intentions", EurasiaNet, 14 May 2009.

➡ **Kyrgyzstan** Former defence minister Gen Ismail Isakov 19 May quit presidential race to help main opposition candidate Almazbek Atambaev ahead of July polls; but opposition's attempt to field single candidate thwarted by 7 May announcement of Temir Sariyev candidacy. Supreme Court 20 May reduced sentences for 32 people convicted of spreading ethnic, religious violence in Nookat Oct 2008. Tensions with Uzbekistan continued following Apr raids by Uzbek authorities in disputed border region and Bishkek claims that searches targeted Kyrgyz nationals. U.S. Senate committee 13 May approved \$30m to improve Kyrgyz air traffic control system, if deal is reached for U.S. to stay at Manas airbase.

- "Opposition remains divided in Kyrgyzstan ahead of presidential elections", EDM, 22 May 2009.
- "Kyrgyz-Uzbek border incident sparks political row", IWPR, 15 May 2009.

- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°79, *Kyrgyzstan: A Deceptive Calm*, 14 Aug. 2008.

➡ **Tajikistan** Energy Charter Secretariat Head 9 May expressed hope for resolution of water, energy disputes with Uzbekistan. Uzbekistan 21 May cut gas supply to Tajikistan due to non-payment. 7 sentenced to jail for membership of illegal Hizb ut-Tahrir group and calling for govt overthrow. Interior ministry 20 May denied media reports that special operations against drug traffickers in East are targeting rebels from 1990s civil war. Month saw significant damage from heavy rain, landslides.

- "Are Islamic militants trying to make a comeback in Central Asia?", EurasiaNet, 26 May 2009.
- For latest report see: Crisis Group Asia Report N°162, *Tajikistan: On the Road to Failure*, 12 Feb 2009.

➡ **Turkmenistan** Longest-serving political prisoner Mukhametkuli Aimuradov released from prison 2 May after over 14 years. Govt refused to sign EU energy summit final declaration 8 May (see Kazakhstan).

- "Berdymukhamedov playing hard-to-get with the European Union", EurasiaNet, 7 May 2009.

➡ **Uzbekistan** Fears of Islamist resurgence following fatal attacks in Ferghana Valley late month. In Khanabad, attacks on police station, border checkpoint, interior ministry office 26 May; conflicting reports of casualties, details. Suicide bomb at police station in Andijan same day left attacker and 1 police killed. Islamic Jihad Union, offshoot of Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, claimed responsibility. Govt claimed attacks originated from Kyrgyzstan; Bishkek denied. President Karimov 11 May announced Navoi cargo airport being used for non-military NATO supplies transport to Afghanistan. Govt refused to sign EU energy summit final declaration 8 May (see Kazakhstan).

- "Uzbek attacks trip alarm bells in Ferghana", RFE/RL, 27 May 2009.

NORTH EAST ASIA

➡ **North Korea** Pyongyang 25 May announced "successful" underground nuclear test, in contravention of UNSC resolution 1718. Prompted strong criticism from South Korea, U.S., Japan, Russia; Beijing 25 May announced "resolutely opposed" to test; emergency UNSC meeting unanimously condemned. Washington 26 May called for "strong UNSC resolution with concrete measures to curtail NK's nuclear and missile activities". In further development, NK launched short-range coastal defence and air defence missiles 25-29 May. S Korea 26 May upgraded participation in U.S.-led Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) from observer status to full membership; NK warned step tantamount to declaration of war, declared 27 May no longer bound by 1953 armistice and could not guarantee safety of ships near west sea boundary; S Korea, U.S. troops go on higher alert. NK 14 May announced 4 June trial date for arrested U.S. journalists. NK 15 May cancelled all contracts with S Korea at Kaesong joint industrial complex.

- "North Korea conducts nuclear test", BBC, 25 May 2009.
- "World leaders denounce N. Korea test, urge action", Reuters, 25 May 2009.

➡ **Taiwan Strait** Thousands demonstrated in Taipei 17 May against President Ma Ying-jeou's policy of engagement with

China. Opposition Democratic Progressive Party leader Tsai Ing-wen called for referendum on President's plan for free trade agreement with Beijing. President 20 May urged Beijing to remove missiles directed at Taiwan.

- ["Taiwan hails stronger China ties"](#), BBC, 20 May 2009.

SOUTH ASIA

➡ **Afghanistan** U.S. President Obama 10 May announced head of U.S. forces and ISAF, Gen. David McKiernan, to be replaced by Lt. Gen. Stanley McChrystal; U.S. Sec. Defense Gates said "new approach" needed. Govt said around 100 civilians killed in 4-5 May U.S. airstrikes in Farah province; U.S. 20 May acknowledged "some 20-35" civilian deaths, but said mostly Taliban killed in strike; hundreds protested in Farah, Kabul with ongoing calls for legal framework for foreign presence. At least 20 killed in 12 May multiple suicide bomb attacks on Khost govt buildings. Nominations for Aug presidential, provincial council elections closed 8 May; 44 presidential, over 3,000 local candidates (10% women). President Karzai criticised for choosing ex-warlord Qasim Fahim as 1 of 2 VP running mates. Challengers include ex-finance minister Ashraf Ghani, ex-FM Abdullah Abdullah. Karzai and Pakistan President Zardari met Obama at 6-7 May Washington summit; Obama said next trilateral meeting after Aug elections.

- Comment by Mark Schneider (Crisis Group), ["A Strategy Needed for Pakistan and Afghanistan"](#), GlobalSecurity.org, 5 May 2009.
- ["U.S. says most dead in Afghan strikes were Taliban"](#), Reuters, 20 May 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°89, ["Afghanistan: New U.S. Administration, New Directions"](#), 13 March 2009.

➡ **Bangladesh** Arrests continued for Feb Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) border patrol force mutiny: 352 BDR suspects arrested 14 May, bringing total arrested to over 2,000. Govt inquiry formed 21 May to investigate 21 cases of BDR suspects dead in custody. Govt 6 May announced plans to investigate and try suspected war criminals from 1971 independence war, now largely linked to Islamist groups.

- ["352 more BDR men arrested"](#), *New Nation*, 14 May, 2009.

➡ **India (non-Kashmir)** Widespread Maoist, northeast rebel attacks continued as election voting ended in 16 May Congress-led victory. 3 election workers killed 30 Apr in West Bengal landmine attack, Maoists suspected. 6 May Maoist Chhattisgarh ambush killed 7 police, 4 others; 16 police killed in 21 May Maharashtra gun battle with Maoists. 8 militants, 1 soldier killed in 14-15 May Manipur clashes.

- ["Police die in India Maoist attack"](#), BBC, 21 May 2009.

➡ **Kashmir** Pro-India parties won 5 of 6 seats in 7 May national elections. Turnout low at 26%; separatist All Parties Hurriyat Conference in Apr called for election boycott, general strike on voting day. Army killed 3 suspected militants in 22 May Tangdhar gun battle along LoC.

- ["Poll boycott mars voting in Srinagar; rural Kashmir responds better"](#), *Hindu*, 8 May 2009.

➡ **Nepal** Political crisis escalated with resignation of Maoist PM Prachanda 4 May, after President Yadav overturned 3 May cabinet decision to sack Army Chief Gen. Katwal, ordered

him to stay. Maoists 4 May launched street protests against president's move, resigned from govt; Prachanda 6 May said Maoists still committed to peace process. Maoists 5 May decided to obstruct parliament until president apologised to House. MJF party 17 May joined new 22-party NC-UML-led coalition; UML veteran Madhav Nepal elected new PM 23 May. 5 May controversy after Jan 2008 Prachanda video footage leaked, shown admitting plan of inflating Maoist army size during UN-led verification; NC party 10 May called for re-verification of Maoist combatants. 3 killed, 14 injured in 23 May bomb blast in church near capital; little-known Hindu extremist group suspected.

- Comment by Rhoderick Chalmers (Crisis Group), ["Nepal Must Escape the Shadows that Chased BP Koirala"](#), *Mail Today*, 27 May 2009.
- ["Maoists required"](#), *Economist*, 14 May 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°163, ["Nepal's Faltering Peace Process"](#), 19 February 2009.

➡ **Pakistan** Heavy army offensive against Taliban in northwest continued, launched in Apr after peace agreement violated by militants, prompting massive humanitarian crisis with more than 2.4m displaced. Army commenced heavy bombing in Swat districts of Malakand division 8 May; claim some 1,200 militants, 90 soldiers killed since, 4,000-5,000 Taliban estimated remaining in Swat. Army 15 May claimed Buner district, seized by Taliban Apr, now safe and "80%" under govt control; 20 May announced capture of Taliban stronghold Sultanwas. Military 30 May said in control of largest Swat town Mingora; offensive likely to continue into S Waziristan. No independent verification of military's accounts of operations, outcome available. All political parties except Islamist Jamaat-e-Islami expressed support for offensive at 19 May conference. UNHCR 19 May called for "urgent and massive" international help for displaced. U.S. Sec. Defense Gates 8 May praised Pakistan's "strong response" to Taliban threat. Several Taliban urban attacks: 10 killed in 11 May Peshawar suicide blast; at least 24 killed, 300 injured in Lahore 27 May.

- Comment by Samina Ahmad (Crisis Group), ["Winning the Hearts and Minds of Pakistan's Displaced"](#), GlobalPost, 26 May 2009.
- ["Swat valley could be worst refugee crisis since Rwanda, UN warns"](#), *Guardian*, 18 May 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°164, ["Pakistan: The Militant Jihadi Challenge"](#), 13 March 2009.

➡ **Sri Lanka** After months of intense govt-LTTE fighting in northeast, LTTE rebels 17 May conceded defeat; govt declared decades-long civil war over, 19 May announced LTTE leader Prabhakaran killed. UN estimated some 7,000 killed, 10,000 injured since late Jan; thousands more likely killed in final weeks, no confirmation of death toll. Govt shelling of areas with high concentration of civilians continued until end; UN 11 May called army offensive "bloodbath". Desperate humanitarian situation remains for 280,000 escaped civilians: govt put heavy restrictions on UN agencies, ICRC trying to provide aid in overcrowded IDP internment camps. Govt 21 May said plans to resettle most IDPs within 6 months despite signs many could remain in camps much longer. UNHCHR Pillay 15 May called for war crimes probe into govt conduct during war, President Rajapaksa rejected; UN Human Rights Council 27 May passed Colombo-drafted resolution ignoring calls for war crimes probe, improved access to IDPs. Govt


26 May rejected LTTE's offer to enter democratic process; Rajapaksa in 19 May victory speech promised reconciliation with Tamil community.

- Comment by Alain Délotz and Andrew Stroehlein (Crisis Group), "The EU's Role in Securing Sri Lanka's Peace", *European Voice*, 20 May 2009.
- "U.N. demands access to civilians in Sri Lanka", Reuters, 20 May 2009.
- "Some Tamils wary of Sri Lankan leader's outreach", *Christian Science Monitor*, 19 May 2009.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°165, *Development Assistance and Conflict in Sri Lanka: Lessons from the Eastern Province*, 16 April 2009.

SOUTH EAST ASIA

- ➡ **Indonesia** Official election results 9 May confirmed President Yudhoyono's Democratic Party in 1st place with 21% of vote. Yudhoyono ahead in opinion polls, 15 May chose central bank governor Boediono as running mate for 8 July presidential elections. Other 2 presidential candidates are VP Jusuf Kalla, leader of Golkar, and former president Megawati Sukarnoputri, leader of PDIP – both parties won around 14% of Apr vote. Partai Aceh announced as official winners of 9 Apr election for Aceh Legislative Council; secured 33 out of 69 seats. Constitutional Court investigating 53 allegations of election violations in Aceh. Police in Papua 15 May announced increased security measures ahead of elections.
- "Aceh Party wins election, without celebration", *Jakarta Post*, 19 May 2009.

Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°92, *Indonesia: Radicalisation of the "Palembang Group"*, 20 May 2009. Extremist fugitives still have the potential to turn non-violent activists into would-be bombers in Indonesia. The trials of ten men from Palembang, South Sumatra, sentenced last month on terrorism charges, show how radicalisation takes place. The Palembang group failed in four out of five operations, but the case holds important lessons for counter-radicalisation strategies.



- ➡ **Myanmar/Burma** NLD leader Aung San Suu Kyi on trial for violating terms of house arrest after American national allegedly swam to her home 4 May; with house arrest due to expire 27 May, critics claimed incident pretext to keep her in jail during 2010 elections. Trial began 18 May behind closed doors at Insein jail, Rangoon. Proceedings drew international condemnation and calls for Suu Kyi's immediate release, including unusually strong 10 May ASEAN statement, UNSC statement 22 May and from EU ministers 25 May. Govt 20 May allowed diplomats, journalists to attend trial, allowed Suu Kyi to speak to 3 foreign diplomats, but outsiders barred again 21 May. Suu Kyi proclaimed innocence 22 May; faces up to 5 years imprisonment if found guilty. Ruling junta claimed dissident group All Burma Students Democratic Front (ABSDF) planted bomb in train station in new capital Naypyidaw 24 May.
- "Trial may further isolate Burma", *Washington Post*, 26 May 2009.
 - For background, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°161, *Burma/Myanmar After Nargis: Time to Normalise Aid Relations*, 20 Oct. 2008.

- ➡ **Philippines** Civilians continue to flee stepped-up military offensive against MILF in Mindanao, with repeated airstrikes

against suspected MILF bases and rebel counter-attacks. Military reported casualties included 10 Muslim rebels and 1 soldier killed 27 May in military assault on southern rebel base; 7 rebels killed by military attack on positions in Maguindanao; and 7 rebels killed during foiled attack on military post in 30 May. Local UN official mid-May voiced concern over thousands of civilians forced to flee fighting. 10 New People's Army (NPA) rebels reported killed 21 May after 2-hour clash with security forces in Agusan del Sur province. 3 police, 5 militants killed in 7 May clash with Abu Sayyaf rebels holding remaining ICRC hostage on Jolo Island.

- "New clashes push back peace prospects in Philippines", Reuters, 26 May 2009.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°88, *The Philippines: Running in Place in Mindanao*, 16 Feb. 2009.

- ➡ **Thailand** People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD), spearheading protests against ousted PM Thaksin since 2006, agreed to form new political party to fight for "new politics" 25 May. Followed 1 May claim by PAD leader Sondhi that some army officers - not the army - responsible for 17 April assassination attempt on him. Medecins Sans Frontieres 20 May announced it pulled out relief effort from Hmong refugee camp to protest govt's forced repatriation of Hmong to Laos and military interference in humanitarian assistance. Series of bomb and arson attacks hit capital of Yala province in south 27 May; no casualties reported.

- "Thai 'yellow shirts' agree to form political party", Reuters, 25 May 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°82, *Thailand: Calming the Political Turmoil*, 22 Sept. 2008.

- ➡ **Timor-Leste** Eastern Lautem district 14 May became first to be handed back to Timor-Leste National Police (PNTL) after almost 3 years of control by UN Police (UNPOL). 12 May agreement between govt and UN mission foreshadows phased resumption of policing responsibilities across the country's 13 districts. UNPOL to remain in an advisory and monitoring role.

- "Returning IDPs rejected by villagers", IRIN, 11 May 2009.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°87, *Timor-Leste: No Time for Complacency*, 9 Feb. 2009.

PACIFIC

- ➡ **Fiji** Military ruler Frank Bainimarama defied 1 May deadline set by Pacific Island Forum to announce date for elections in 2009, resulting in Fiji's suspension from regional group. Said no elections until 2014, 22 May reappointed chief justice and named 3 pro-regime judges. Amnesty International report 28 May criticised continuing free speech violations, widespread intimidation.

- "Fijian leader reinstates judges", BBC, 22 May 2009.
- "Coup leader keeps iron grip on Fiji", BBC, 14 May 2009.



Europe

BALKANS

- ➡ **Bosnia** Republika Srpska (RS) PM Dodik 8 May called on Bosnian Serb soldiers to boycott NATO exercises in Georgia.

RS Assembly 14 May demanded High Representative Inzko cease using Bonn Powers, reinstate sacked politicians. Appointment of Bosnia's new Director of European Integration set back again. Joint U.S. VP Biden and EU foreign policy chief Solana visit 19 May reaffirmed EU leading role in Bosnia with U.S. support; both critical of slow progress on reforms and nationalist rhetoric. Leading Bosniak Party of Democratic Action (SDA) 27 May re-elected Sulejman Tihic as party president, prompting resignation of Federation PM Nedžad Brankovic.

- ["Controversial Bosniak premier resigns"](#), Balkan Insight, 27 May 2009.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°198, [Bosnia's Incomplete Transition: Between Dayton and Europe](#), 9 March 2009.

➡ **Kosovo** IMF 8 May offered membership to Kosovo. Kosovo Serb protests and clashes with Kosovo Police, EULEX, and KFOR in north against reconstruction of Kosovo Albanian houses continued 4 May, ended 12 May after agreement on reciprocal number of Serb houses to be reconstructed. Up to 20 injured, including 10 police, in clashes between roughly 300 Serbs and police in Gjilan/Gnjilane 10 May over electricity cuts. U.S. VP Biden warmly welcomed during 21 May visit.

- ["Kosovo points to enough votes to join IMF"](#), *Financial Times*, 6 May 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Report N°196, [Kosovo's Fragile Transition](#), 25 Sept. 2008.

Crisis Group Europe Report N°200, [Serb Integration in Kosovo: Taking the Plunge](#), 12 May 2009. A major effort is needed to persuade the Serbian minority that it has a future in Kosovo if the new state is to solidify its independence. The Pristina government should emphasise to Kosovo Serbs the benefits of dialogue and cooperation. Kosovo's best opportunity to further integration is to implement a decentralisation plan.



➡ **Macedonia** New President Ivanov sworn in 12 May; 18 May said looking forward to intensified talks with Greece over name row following early June European elections. Main ethnic Albanian opposition DPA party 27 May called for new rules to ensure Albanian voice heard in politics.

- ["DUI urges Macedonia 'name' solution"](#), Balkan Insight, 18 May 2009.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°52, [Macedonia's Name: Breaking the Deadlock](#), 12 Jan. 2009.

➡ **Serbia** ICTY chief prosecutor Serge Brammertz praised Serbia's cooperation with the court 11 May, said arrest of Ratko Mladic and Goran Hadzic still a priority. During 20 May Serbia visit, U.S. VP Biden said U.S. will not demand recognition of Kosovo's independence as precondition for better relations with Serbia.

- ["Giving a shunt towards Europe"](#), *Economist*, 21 May 2009.

CAUCASUS

➡ **Armenia/Turkey** Optimism following break-through 22 Apr roadmap to normalise Armenia/Turkey relations faded after Turkish PM Erdogan 13 May in Baku said mutual border to remain closed until Armenia withdraws from Nagorno Karabakh (NK). Armenian FM Nalbandian 16 May restated relations with Turkey should not be dependent on resolution of NK conflict. First Armenian president and Armenian National

Congress (HAK) Yerevan mayoral candidate Ter-Petrosian, criticising Apr roadmap agreement, said Turkey used promise of normalizing relations to scuttle U.S. genocide recognition.

- Comment by Hugh Pope (Crisis Group), ["Armenia and Turkey: Opening Minds, Opening Borders"](#), Today's Zaman, 29 April 2009.
- ["Turkey again reassures Baku on Armenia ties"](#), RFE/RL, 13 May 2009.

➡ **Armenia** Campaigning for 31 May Yerevan mayoral election, 1st in nearly 2 decades, began 2 May. Defence Minister Ohanian 6 May said Armenia pulled out of NATO exercises in Georgia due to NATO support for Azerbaijan in NK conflict. Armenia began importing natural gas from Iran.

- ["Former Armenian president excoriates government for 'genocide denial'"](#), RFE/RL, 2 May 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Briefing N° 48, [Armenia: Picking up the Pieces](#), 8 Apr. 2008.

➡ **Azerbaijan** Police 4 May arrested 2 men for 30 Apr campus attack, both from same part of Georgia as dead gunman; motive still unknown. 50 detained 10 May for protesting lack of official mourning for victims. Govt 8 May signed "Southern Corridor" final declaration in support of regional infrastructure projects, including energy and transport, along with the EU, Turkey, Georgia, Egypt.

- ["Southern Corridor summit produces agreement"](#), *Oil and Gas Journal*, 14 May 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°50, [Azerbaijan: Defence Sector Management and Reform](#), 29 Oct. 2008.

➡ **Chechnya (Russia)** Govt intensified campaign against militants, in coordination with Ingushetia, in face of continuing attacks; President Kadyrov late month ruled out amnesties. Follows 15 May suicide bombing in front of interior ministry in Grozny killing 2 police and 16 May clash between Russian troops and up to 50 militants believed to have entered from Ingushetia in west. Elsewhere, 3 killed, including 2 police, in 13 May attack on police in Staropromyslovski; Russian forces 16 May killed 4 suspected militants; at least 4 killed in string of incidents 25 May. Kadyrov and Ingush President Yevkurov in 17 May press conference announced increased Chechen-Ingush cooperation, after Kadyrov travelled to Ingushetia to promote coordination between Chechnya, Ingushetia and Daghestan against militants. Kadyrov appointed Adam Delimkhanov, wanted by Interpol for March assassination of émigré Sulim Yamadaev, to oversee coordinated actions. Reports emerged 21 May that Yamadaev still alive.

- ["Military action underway across the northeast Caucasus"](#), *North Caucasus Weekly*, 22 May 2009.

➡ **North Caucasus (non-Chechnya)** Following talks with Chechen leader Kadyrov, Ingushetia President Yevkurov 17 May agreed to coordinate anti-militant campaign with Chechnya. Violence in Ingushetia included 1 officer killed 14 May in Sunzhen district; 4 rebels killed 15 May during special operation; and 4 Chechen police killed by landmine 25 May. In Daghestan, authorities 13 May said counterterrorist regime imposed in Khasavyurt and Kazbekovski districts; several rebels, including leader Arsen Asulbekov, and 1 soldier killed during operation. Other incidents included top govt investigator shot dead 21 May; 2 police officers killed 26, 27 May. In Kabardino-Balkaria, head of Nalchik detention centre

assassinated 14 May; 3 rebels killed during counter-terrorism operation 28 May, including leader Anzor Astemirov.

- [“Moscow sees Chechnya’s Kadyrov as a silver bullet for the North Caucasus”](#), *North Caucasus Weekly*, 22 May 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Report N°192, *Russia’s Dagestan: Conflict Causes*, 3 June 2008.

➡ **Georgia** Opposition protests continued. Some 30 hospitalised during 6 May clash between police and opposition supporters demanding release of 3 detained activists; over 60,000 joined protests on Independence Day 26 May. Saakashvili met with 4 opposition leaders 11 May. Mutiny by some 500 soldiers at Mukhrovani base 5 May quickly quelled; one suspect killed, 2 wounded during attempted arrest. NATO, U.S., EU 1 May expressed concern over 30 Apr deal on Russian protection of Abkhazia and SO de facto borders with Georgia; Russia started patrolling borders 2 May. Abkhaz VP Khajimba resigned late-May over disagreements with President Bagapsh. SO held parliamentary election 31 May, denounced by Tbilisi as illegal. 5th session of Geneva talks between Russia, Georgia, Abkhazia and SO took place 18-19 May; “some progress” reported. 18 May UN report recommended 12km demilitarized security zones on both sides of ceasefire line, regular UN monitoring of Kodori valley, regular meetings between sides. OSCE chair Greece 11 May proposed plan for new OSCE monitoring presence; Russia 13 May vetoed, insisting on language describing SO as independent; Greece 14 May suspended talks. NATO Partnership for Peace exercises commenced 6 May in Georgia. Govt 8 May signed “Southern Corridor” pipeline agreement with EU (see Azerbaijan).

- [“The opposition locks itself up, and out”](#), *Economist*, 28 May 2009.
- [“A Russia test”](#), *New York Times*, 6 May 2009.

➡ **Nagorno-Karabakh (Azerbaijan)** Azerbaijan and Armenian presidents met in sidelines of EU Eastern Partnership summit in Prague 7 May; OSCE Minsk Group co-chair Bryza reported “most substantive exchange of views between the presidents so far”, differences on basic principles reduced. Azerbaijani presidential adviser 11 May denied progress, criticised Minsk Group co-chairs.

- [“Minsk Group meeting with Azerbaijani president on Karabakh”](#), RFE/RL, 29 May 2009.

EASTERN EUROPE

➡ **Belarus** Inclusion of Belarus in EU’s Eastern Partnership (EP) protested by some 200 Belarusian nationals at EP inauguration in Prague 7 May; President Lukashenka not present at summit. Lukashenka 5 May announced willingness to consider political reforms. Russia 28 May said will not give Belarus \$500 million loan.

- [“Lukashenko ready to consider more Belarus reforms”](#), Reuters, 5 May 2009.

➡ **Moldova** Outgoing President Voronin elected parliament speaker 12 May by Communist deputies; opposition boycotted vote. Parliamentary vote to elect new president 20 May also boycotted by opposition, leaving Communist candidate Zinaida Greceanii 1 vote short of 61 required for victory. Second vote scheduled 3 June – opposition pledged to continue boycott.

- [“Moldova fails to elect president”](#), BBC, 20 May 2009.

➡ **Ukraine** Constitutional Court 13 May ruled 25 Oct date set by parliament for next presidential election unconstitutional,

following challenge by President Yuschchenko; election set for Jan. Russia 20 May declined Ukrainian request to postpone \$5bn payment for gas storage.

- [“Russia, Ukraine on verge of new gas row – source”](#), Reuters, 21 May 2008.

WESTERN EUROPE/MEDITERRANEAN

➡ **Basque Country (Spain)** 1st non-nationalist govt in 3 decades appointed by Basque parliament 5 May by 39 votes to 35, following March election. New Socialist President Patxi Lopez pledged to fight ETA, unite Basque society. Supreme Court 16 May banned Internationalist Initiative-Solidarity among the People (II-SP) party from taking part in European Parliament elections over links with violent separatism; ruling reversed by Constitutional Court 22 May due to insufficient evidence. ETA 20 May blamed Spain and France for 18 Apr disappearance of member in France, said could launch attacks in France. Suspected ETA terrorist Iker Esparza arrested in Paris 25 May.

- [“New Basque president vows to fight ETA”](#), *New York Times*, 6 May 2009.

➡ **Cyprus** UNSG Ban 21 May released 6-month report on Cyprus to UNSC: suggested renewal of peacekeeping force UNFICYP for further 6 months until 15 Dec – adopted by UNSC 29 May – and called on leaders of 2 communities to speed up talks and draw up agreement to put to referendum in 2 communities. UN special envoy for Cyprus Downer 20 May said cautiously optimistic about outcome of talks, but new Turkish Cypriot govt expressed pessimism following 21 May failure during 29th round of talks to agree on new border crossing. Calls for progress from UK FM during late-month visit to region. Nationalist UBP leader Eroglu began 8th term as North Cyprus PM 5 May. FM Kyprianou said Nicosia not intending to veto Turkey’s EU accession process.

- Comment by Lakhdar Brahimi (Crisis Group), Desmond Tutu and Jimmy Carter, [“The Last and Best Chance for Peace”](#), *Today’s Zaman*, 8 May 2009.
- [“UN chief Ban laments Cypriots’ ‘lack of will’”](#), *Hurriyet*, 25 May 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Report N°194, [“Reunifying Cyprus: The Best Chance Yet”](#), 23 June 2008.

➡ **Northern Ireland** Independent Monitoring Committee (IMC) on paramilitary activity released report 7 May warning dissident republican threat high but not able to mount substantial terrorist campaign; peace process challenged by March killings but not unravelling; Provisional IRA remains inactive. One killed, one wounded 24 May by loyalist mob during post-football match violence.

- [“N Ireland killings ‘will not destroy peace process’”](#), AFP, 7 May 2009.

➡ **Turkey** PM Erdoğan 1 May announced new cabinet; top adviser Davutoglu new FM. President Gül discussed Middle East peace, Israel-Syria talks, in Syria 15-18 May. 20,000 marched in anti-govt, pro-secularism rally in Ankara 17 May. Court 18 May ruled President Gül should stand trial for 1990s fraud case. 44 killed in 4 May massacre at wedding party in Mardin province, south east, attributed to family feud; perpetrators included members of govt-armed anti-PKK “village guards”. 5 killed 9 May by roadside bomb, Şırnak province; 3 PKK members, 2 village guards reported killed in

15 May clash, Siirt province; 6 PKK members killed Diyarbakır, Mus provinces 22, 24 May. 6 soldiers killed Hakkari 28 May by bomb blamed on PKK; Turkish air force 28 May bombed PKK positions in N Iraq. Over 30 suspected of PKK links arrested in major cities 28 May. Govt 8 May signed "Southern Corridor" pipeline agreement with EU (see Azerbaijan).

- "Turkey mulls militia reform after wedding bloodbath", Reuters, 7 May 2009.



Latin America / Caribbean

➡ **Bolivia** Govt-opposition relations deteriorated over alleged assassination plot against President Morales and others in Apr: attorney general 5 May claimed senior opposition figures in Santa Cruz department, including prefect Ruben Costas, financed group behind plot; opposition denied, questioned govt evidence. 2 detained late Apr, accused of supplying arms to plotters; 8 May claimed they were tortured to implicate opposition involvement in plot. Morales 20 May passed decree law allowing govt to seize assets of individuals, companies suspected of links to "terrorist, separatist groups"; opposition criticised as against rule of law.

- "Morales acaba con la presunción de inocencia", Infolatam, 22 May 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Latin America Briefing N°18, *Bolivia: Rescuing the New Constitution and Democratic Stability*, 19 June 2008.

➡ **Colombia** Senate 19 May approved referendum on whether to allow President Uribe to run for possible 2nd re-election in May 2010 presidential poll; referendum likely in Oct or Nov if law approved by Congress, Constitutional Court. Uribe yet to make definite statement on whether he will run, but 22 May said seeking 3rd term would be "inappropriate". Defence Minister Juan Manuel Santos resigned 19 May, said will stand in presidential elections if Uribe does not run. Public prosecutor 15 May announced investigation into possible govt involvement in DAS (secret police) illegal wiretappings. Suspected FARC rebel attack 9 May killed 7 soldiers in Nariño department. Attorney general investigating over 1,000 cases involving extrajudicial killings by military; many where army personnel accused of killing civilians to inflate statistics on deaths of left-wing rebels and right-wing paramilitaries.

- "Álvaro Uribe, otra vez?", openDemocracy, 29 May 2009.

Crisis Group Latin America Briefing N°21, *The Virtuous Twins: Protecting Human Rights and Improving Security in Colombia*, 25 May 2009. Colombia's government must urgently address human rights abuses to enhance its security policy and bring lasting peace to the country. Serious abuses persist and in some instances are even increasing. The government and the human rights community need to overcome mutual distrust by dialogue and concrete actions.



➡ **Ecuador** Official count 6 May confirmed President Correa as winner of Apr presidential elections with 51.9% of vote; Correa's Alianza País party won 61 of 120 National Assembly seats. Opposition leader Lucio Gutiérrez throughout month

denounced alleged electoral fraud by govt; govt launched investigation into private media outlets broadcasting Gutiérrez's claims.

- "Oposición persiste en denunciar un fraude electoral", Infolatam, 19 May 2009.

➡ **Guatemala** Political crisis gripped country after President Colom implicated in 10 May murder of prominent lawyer Rodrigo Rosenberg. In posthumously released video, Rosenberg accused Colom, Colom's wife and close allies of ordering his assassination as well as March killing of his client, for refusing to participate in corruption at state Rural Development Bank. Tens of thousands demonstrated throughout country during month demanding Colom's resignation; Colom's supporters staged counter-demonstrations. Colom rejected all accusations, asked FBI, UN to participate in investigation of killings.

- "An indictment from the grave", *Economist*, 21 May 2009.

➡ **Haiti** Senate run-off elections postponed to 21 June due to preparation delays. 4 opposition senators early month said will seek to block victors in run-off, alleged fraud in Apr first-round elections. Floods killed dozens during month, country on alert as more storms anticipated. Bill Clinton 18 May named UN Special Envoy to Haiti.

- "Former President Bill Clinton named special U.N. envoy to Haiti", *Miami Herald*, 18 May 2009.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Latin America Briefing N°20, *Haiti: Saving the Environment, Preventing Instability and Conflict*, 28 April 2009.

➡ **Venezuela** President Chávez continued policies designed to tighten central govt control. Govt during month seized "idle" farms and foreign-owned factories, nationalised dozens of private oil contractors. National Assembly during month discussed law allowing govt to appoint regional "vice presidents" to oversee governors; opposition criticised as way for govt to usurp powers of elected opposition officials. Congress 5 May approved law placing 96% of Caracas budget in hands of Apr-appointed pro-Chávez "head of govt in Caracas"; budget earlier controlled by elected opposition mayor. Govt ordered investigation of pro-opposition TV station Globovisión over "alarmist" coverage of 4 May earthquake; Human Rights Watch 21 May called investigation "harassment". Thousands of students, academics 20 May demonstrated against govt cutting university funding by 6%.

- "Skint", *Economist*, 14 May 2009.
- "Hugo Chávez tightens control by silencing adversaries", *Miami Herald*, 8 May 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Latin America Report N°27, *Venezuela: Political Reform or Regime Demise?*, 23 July 2009.



Middle East / North Africa

EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

➡ **Israel/Occupied Palestinian Territories** PM Netanyahu in Washington for first meeting with U.S. President Obama 18 May. Obama reiterated call for Palestinian statehood, need for Israel to curb West Bank settlements; Netanyahu avoided

reference to two states, emphasising need for Palestinian concessions, threat posed by Iran. Netanyahu 24 May defended expansion of settlements for “natural growth”; firm U.S. opposition to any settlement expansion reiterated by Sec State Clinton 27 May, Obama 28 May. 5th round of Hamas-Fatah reconciliation talks in Cairo ended 18 May without agreement. New Palestinian Authority (PA) govt under PM Fayyad sworn in 19 May. New govt includes several Fatah members despite criticism from Fatah factions; denounced by Hamas as illegal and undermining Palestinian dialogue. 6 killed in gun battle 31 May after PA security forces attempted arrest of Hamas militants in Qalqilya. Israeli settlers clashed with Palestinians near Bethlehem 3 May. Israeli soldier killed in Bir Zeit 7 May. Civilian, Hamas commander killed by Israeli army in Hebron, 7, 28 May. Israeli airstrikes hit Gaza tunnels 2, 19 May following mortar, rocket fire into Israel; 2 killed 2 May. 2 militants killed on Gaza border 22 May.

- Comment by Robert Malley (Crisis Group) and Hussein Agha, “Obama and the Middle East”, *New York Review of Books*, 15 May 2009.
- “What did Barack Obama truly feel?”, *Economist*, 21 May 2009.
- “Rift deepens between Palestinian factions”, *The National*, 21 May 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Middle East/North Africa Report N°85, *Gaza’s Unfinished Business*, 23 Apr. 2009.

➡ **Lebanon** Amid closely contested campaign for parliamentary elections set for 7 June, tensions rose after leader Nasrallah called Hizbullah’s 7 May 2008 military takeover of West Beirut “glorious day” for Resistance; March 14 alliance strongly condemned speech. U.S. VP Biden visited 22 May, said continued U.S. support depends on election outcome, policies of new govt. 7 Lebanese charged 25, 30 May with spying for Israel, bringing total to 23 since Jan; 35 suspects detained. Israel 13 May suspended discussion of withdrawal from disputed Ghajar village until after elections. Der Spiegel report 23 May claimed Hizbollah responsible for Hariri assassination; some political factions, analysts cast doubt on credibility. Acts of pre-election violence reported throughout May; opposition supporter killed in clashes 24 May.

- “Will the shaky equilibrium hold?”, *Economist*, 28 May 2009.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Middle East Report N°84, *Nurturing Instability: Lebanon’s Palestinian Refugee Camps*, 19 Feb. 2009.

➡ **Syria** U.S. renewed sanctions 8 May, said Syria poses continuing threat to U.S. interests. U.S. 11 May called on Syria to take action against al-Qaeda fighters entering Iraq, after Gen. Petraeus late Apr said pipeline through Syria “reactivated”; U.S. Asst Sec State Feltman 6 May held “constructive” meeting with FM Muallim in Syria in 2nd 2009 visit. Israeli PM Netanyahu 8 May said “Israel will never withdraw from Golan”; 20 May stated Israel ready for talks with Syria without preconditions. Syria 12 May reiterated willingness to resume talks but 15 May said Israel no “partner for peace”. Kurd dissident Mishaal al-Tammo sentenced to 3.5 years in prison 12 May; dissident writer Michel Kilo freed 19 May after 3 years in prison.

- “Syria must take ‘immediate’ action on Iraq fighters, U.S. says”, Bloomberg, 11 May 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Middle East Report N°83, *Engaging Syria? U.S. Constraints and Opportunities*, 11 Feb. 2009.

GULF

➡ **Iran** Official campaign for 12 June presidential election began after Guardian Council 20 May approved 4 main candidates: incumbent Ahmadi-Nejad to face reformists Mir-Hossein Musavi, Mehdi Karroubi, conservative Mohsen Rezai. Supreme Leader Khamenei 18 May warned against candidates who would capitulate to Iran’s “enemies”. Ahmadi-Nejad 25 May said willing to debate global security issues with U.S. President Obama at UN, but not to discuss nuclear program outside framework of IAEA. 25 killed by suicide bombing 28 May in Shiite mosque, Zahedan, claimed by Baluchi Sunni Islamist Jundullah group; authorities 30 May hanged 3 for involvement in attack. Gunmen opened fire on Ahmadi-Nejad electoral campaign office in Zahedan 29 May. Bomb found on flight from Ahvaz, south west Iran, 30 May. Iranian airstrikes and shelling hit areas inside Iraqi Kurdistan 2, 4 May; 3 from govt Basij militia, 5 gunmen reported killed 13 May in Kurdish border area of Iran. Iranian-American journalist Roxana Saberi, detained on spying charges, released 11 May. Leaders of Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran held trilateral security summit in Tehran 24 May.

- “Iran president’s rivals slam his foreign policy”, *Los Angeles Times*, 31 May 2009.

➡ **Iraq** Bomb attacks hit Baghdad and northern cities during month. 2 bombs killed 17 in Baghdad 6 May; at least 37 killed in Baghdad’s Shula area by 20 May car bomb; bombings in Baghdad, Kirkuk 21 May killed over 20, including U.S. troops, police, Awakening members. Smaller attacks targeted police, Awakenings, U.S. forces in Mosul, Kirkuk, Baghdad area. 10 May deal between Kurdistan regional govt and oil ministry allowed Kurdish region to export oil via Turkey starting June; revenues to go to federally-managed fund. Security forces reported killing 30 Islamist militants in Diyala operation 5 May. Sunni Awakening militia leaders arrested on charges of attacking civilians 3, 18 May. PM Maliki 23 May criticised amnesty law as enabling release of “terrorists”. Kurdish troops 8 May prevented recently-elected Arab governor of Ninawa province from entering disputed area, blocked access of provincial police chief 13 May. Anti-corruption commission 27 May said preparing almost 1,000 arrest warrants for govt officials following investigation into Trade Ministry. Supreme Court 18 May set 30 Jan 2010 date for legislative elections. In rare public appearance, Shiite Mehdi Army leader Muqtada al-Sadr 1 May met Turkish leaders in Ankara.

- Comment by Joost Hiltermann (Crisis Group), “Kurdish Crude Bails Out Baghdad”, *Foreign Policy*, 14 May 2009.
- “Tensions stoked between Iraqi Kurds and Sunnis”, *New York Times*, 17 May 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Middle East Report N°82, *Iraq’s Provincial Elections: The Stakes*, 27 Jan. 2009.

➡ **Yemen** Marked increase in anti-govt unrest, separatist sentiment in South. Late-Apr clashes between govt, separatist Southern Movement (SM) supporters in Radfan, Lahj province, continued, killing 5 security force members, 2 civilians; situation calmed after mediation committee formed 3 May. Pro-SM protesters clashed with police Dhali’ 16-17 May. 3 protesters killed, over 100 arrested in Aden 21 May as govt marked official anniversary of 1990 reunification. At least four killed 30-31 May in separate clashes between protesters and police, Lahj, Dhali’ and Hadramawt provinces. Exiled former

VP al-Beidh called for southern independence 21 May. Govt banned 7 papers for covering unrest early month; 1 killed 13 May as security forces surrounded Aden offices of Al-Ayyam daily. Al-Qaeda in Arabian Peninsula leader issued statement supporting southern protests 13 May. 7 reported dead in early-month clashes between govt supporters and Houthi rebels in northern Saada region; Houthi sources accused army of targeting civilians in late-month campaign.

- “Yemen celebrates unity as separatists die in protest”, AFP, 22 May 2009.

Crisis Group Middle East Report
N°86, *Yemen: Defusing the Saada Time*



Bomb, 27 May 2009. Local, national and international actors should move quickly to prevent further violence in Yemen's Saada governorate that could destabilise a state already under severe duress. After two decades of relative stability the current convergence of economic, political and secessionist challenges is testing the regime's coping capacity.

NORTH AFRICA

➡ **Algeria** Al-Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) leaders Abdelmalek Droukdel and Mokhtar Belmokhtar given 20-year prison sentences in absentia. Former leaders of AQIM precursor Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC) 7 May announced leading GSPC figure “Abderrazak El Para”, jailed since 2004, supported govt-led reconciliation campaign in letter. 2 police killed by militants, Boumerdes, 2 May. In operations against AQIM in Tizi Ouzou region, 2 soldiers, 3 militants reported killed 7 May; authorities 18 May reported killing 4 militants. 9 soldiers killed 25 May in militant attack, Biskra.

- “Abderrazak El Para joins movement for Algerian reconciliation”, Magharebia, 12 May 2009.

➡ **Egypt** 33 members of Muslim Brotherhood (MB) arrested 14-15 May, on charges including establishing cells abroad. 7 members of alleged al-Qaeda-linked cell responsible for Feb Cairo bombing targeting tourists arrested 23 May; authorities said cell included foreign nationals, claimed link to Gaza. Prominent dissident Ayman Nour burnt by unknown attacker 24 May. Court 25 May overturned jail sentence against exiled opposition academic Saad Eddin Ibrahim. U.S. President Obama 8 May announced intention to deliver speech in Cairo in June.

- “Presidential trip gets the credit for the good news – and the not so good”, *The National*, 1 June 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Middle East/North Africa Report N°76, *Egypt's Muslim Brothers: Confrontation or Integration?*, 18 June 2008.

➡ **Mauritania** Campaigning began in controversial presidential election 20 May as opposition boycott and Senegalese-led mediation efforts continued. Thousands protested against elections in Nouakchott 18 May. Ex-junta leader, now candidate, Gen. Mohamed Ould Abdelaziz 22 May denounced opposition leaders as “blocking democracy”. Senegalese President Wade 14 May and FM Gadio 19-22 May met govt, opposition leaders, AU, UN, Western diplomats in Nouakchott to discuss proposals reportedly including postponing election, establishment of transitional govt, consensual electoral commission; further negotiations held Dakar 28-30 May failed to reach deal.

- “Mauritania coup chief campaigns as talks mull vote delay”, AFP, 1 June 2009.

“In the most troubled corners of the world, Crisis Group has been the eyes, the ears, and the conscience of the global community. Its mix of field-based analysis, well-reasoned policy recommendations, and high-level advocacy is a winning combination.”

President William J. Clinton, 5 March 2007

Advocacy Offices

Brussels	brussels@crisisgroup.org +32 2 502 9038
Washington	washington@crisisgroup.org +1 202 785 1601
New York	newyork@crisisgroup.org +1 212 813 0820
London	london@crisisgroup.org +44 207 831 1436
Moscow	moscow@crisisgroup.org +7 495 455 9798

Field Offices

Crisis Group has regional offices or local field representation in Abuja, Baku, Bangkok, Beirut, Bishkek, Bogotá, Cairo, Colombo, Dakar, Damascus, Dili, Islamabad, Istanbul, Jakarta, Jerusalem, Kabul, Kathmandu, Kinshasa, Nairobi, Ouagadougou, Port-au-Prince, Pretoria, Pristina, Sarajevo, Seoul, Tbilisi and Tehran.

Crisis Group is also currently covering (through analysts operating from regional or field bases, or consultants) Algeria, Armenia, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, China (Taiwan Strait), Côte d'Ivoire, Cyprus, Ecuador, Ethiopia-Eritrea, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Gulf States, India (Kashmir), Iraq, Kazakhstan, Liberia, Morocco, Myanmar/Burma, North Korea, Philippines, Russia (Dagestan), Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Yemen and Zimbabwe.