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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.

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October 2009 Trends



Deteriorated Situations

Iraq (p.11)
Pakistan (p.6)
Zimbabwe (p.3)



Improved Situations

Armenia/Turkey (p.8)
Honduras (p.10)
Mali (p.4)
Nigeria (p.4)



Unchanged Situations

Afghanistan (p.5), Algeria (p.12), Armenia (p.8), Azerbaijan (p.8), Bahrain (p.11), 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), Chad (p.2), Chechnya (Russia) (p.8), China (internal) (p.5), 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.3), Fiji (p.7), Gabon (p.2), Georgia (p.9), Guinea (p.4), Guinea-Bissau (p.4), Haiti (p.10), India (non-Kashmir) (p.6), Indonesia (p.6), Iran (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), Macedonia (p.8), Madagascar (p.3), Mauritania (p.12), Moldova (p.9), Myanmar/Burma (p.7), Nagorno-Karabakh (Azerbaijan) (p.9), Nepal (p.6), Niger (p.4), North Caucasus (non-Chechnya) (p.8), Northern Ireland (p.9), North Korea (p.5), Philippines (p.7), Rwanda (p.2), Saudi Arabia (p.11), Serbia (p.8), Sierra Leone (p.4), Somalia (p.3), Sri Lanka (p.6), Sudan (p.3), Syria (p.11), Taiwan Strait (p.5), Tajikistan (p.5), Thailand (p.7), Timor-Leste (p.7), Turkey (p.10), Turkmenistan (p.5), Uganda (p.2), Ukraine (p.9), Uzbekistan (p.5), Venezuela (p.10), Western Sahara (p.12), Yemen (p.12)

November 2009 Watchlist



Conflict Risk Alerts

Afghanistan



Conflict Resolution Opportunities

Armenia/Turkey

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CENTRAL AFRICA

➡ **Burundi** Dissident faction of ex-rebel group FNL at 4 Oct conference voted to replace party head Agathon Rwasa with Jacques Kenese, recently expelled by FNL leadership; govt accused of seeking to fuel FNL factionalism by authorizing meeting. Authorities 12-14 Oct deported 400 Rwandan Hutus to face trial in Rwandan Gacaca courts; rights groups, UN called for suspension until refugee status clarified, amid evidence several already acquitted. Followed early month agreement between Burundian and Rwandan FMs to prepare extradition treaty for genocide suspects in Burundi. DRC early month blocked Burundian authorities from repatriating 2,300 Congolese Tutsi to S Kivu, but sides struck repatriation agreement after talks. Authorities condemned threat by Somalia's al-Shabaab militants to attack Bujumbura over Burundian deployment in Somalia. At least 2 reportedly killed, several wounded in grenade attacks in Ruyigi province and southern Bujumbura; attackers unknown. Civilian disarmament drive launched 18 Oct.

- "UN urges Burundi to stop deporting Rwandans", AFP, 16 Oct. 2009.

- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°63, [To Integrate the FNL Successfully](#), 30 July 2009.

➡ **Central African Republic** In setback to peace process, leader of FDPC rebel group Abdoulaye Miskine 2 Oct announced govt had failed to implement 2007 and 2009 peace agreements, declared both "null and void"; follows Sept arrest of 2 FDPC officers. Govt 10 Oct accused Chadian General Baba Laddé, based in CAR, of attacking CAR-Chad border post 3 Oct and, in apparent turnaround from Sept call for talks, ordered his expulsion. Baba Laddé disappeared same day, thought extradited to Chad. President Bozizé promulgated revised electoral code, accepted by opposition, and formed electoral commission early month, but preparations for March 2010 polls still delayed. Ex-President Ange-Félix Patassé returned from exile 30 Oct amid tight security. ICRC announced recent LRA attacks in south-east CAR displaced some 4,500.

- "Mercenaire Abdoulaye Miskine dérange le processus de paix en Centrafrique", *La Plume*, 15 Oct. 2009.

- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°55, [Central African Republic: Untangling the Political Dialogue](#), 9 Dec. 2008.

➡ **Chad** New rapprochement between Chad and Sudan. High-level Sudanese delegation travelled to N'Djamena 10 Oct for talks with President Déby. Déby 20 Oct said Sudan had agreed to remove Chadian rebels from border and confine them "elsewhere", Chad to allow Sudan to verify presence of Darfur rebels in Chad. Parties committed to further talks under auspices of UN or friendly countries. AU Commission Chair Ping and U.S. welcomed dialogue. In Paris mid-month, Déby urged rebel groups to participate in 2010 elections, but reiterated rejection of inclusive national dialogue as condition of their return. UN reported 51 attacks on humanitarian workers in eastern Chad during 2009.

- "Sudan pledged to remove Chadian rebels from border –

[President Déby](#)", *Sudan Tribune*, 21 Oct. 2009.

- For latest report, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°65, [Chad: Escaping from the Oil Trap](#), 26 Aug. 2009.

➡ **Democratic Republic of Congo** National Assembly 16 Oct approved 2010 budget despite criticism from opposition and some ruling PPRD members, including over low allocations to public services. No-confidence vote in PM Muzito (PALU party) rejected. MONUC chief Alan Doss in 16 Oct briefing to UNSC acknowledged continuing "challenges" in east, rejected calls for suspension of Kimia II. Strong criticism of ongoing abuses, including rape, by Congolese forces, and of MONUC's failure to protect civilians – including from UN Special Rapporteur Philip Alston, OCHA, Congo Advocacy Coalition. UN 27 Oct announced 10 civilians killed in FDLR attack on civilian vehicles in Rutshuru. In north, at least 47 policemen and unknown number of civilians killed in ethnic clashes near Dongo, Equateur province, 29 Oct. Congo and Angola 13 Oct agreed to suspend retaliatory expulsion of migrants, after sharp increase in expulsions over 2009. Kinshasa denied knowledge of DRC-based LRA attacks, said working with CAR to resolve LRA insurgency (see CAR).

- "Congo and Angola agree to end expulsions", *New York Times*, 13 Oct. 2009.

- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°151, [A Comprehensive Strategy to Disarm the FDLR](#), 9 July 2009.

➡ **Gabon** Following late Sept review of disputed Aug presidential polls, Constitutional Court 12 Oct confirmed constitutionality of Ali Ben Bongo's victory; opposition coalition rejected verdict. Bongo sworn in 16 Oct, appointed govt 17 Oct.

- "Gabon opposition rejects validation of Bongo win", AFP, 14 Oct. 2009.

➡ **Rwanda** Former intelligence officer Idelphonse Nizeyimana, accused of ordering murder of thousands in Butare region including Queen Gicanda during 1994 genocide, arrested in Kampala 5 Oct, referred to ICTR. In other cases related to genocide, Italian police 20 Oct arrested Rwandan priest Emmanuel Uwayezu and Canadian court 29 Oct sentenced Desire Munyaneza to life; Rwanda announced plans to seek Uwayezu's extradition.

- "Key Rwanda genocide suspect arrested in Uganda", *Guardian*, 6 Oct. 2009.

➡ **Uganda** Electoral commission budget for 2011 elections tripled to increase registered voters through sensitisation program. Cabinet approved bill imposing measures to reduce corruption during campaigning. Donors, opposition continue to call for stronger electoral reform. President Museveni announced Sudanese President Bashir would not be arrested if he attended late Oct AU summit in Kampala. LRA forces continued attacks in CAR and northeast DRC, and according to S Sudan's SPLM, moved into Darfur over month. Somali state minister for defence briefly held for questioning 6 Oct during unannounced trip to Kampala. Following threat on Kampala by Somalia's al-Shabaab militants, Somali community leaders pledged to cooperate with govt to prevent al-Shabaab inroads.

- "Ugandan Rebel group stirs DRC, Sudanese concerns at Kampala summit", VOA, 22 Oct. 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

➡ **Eritrea** UK at 8 Oct UNSC session joined U.S. and AU in call for UN sanctions against Eritrea for supplying weapons to Somali militants in violation of UN arms embargo. Asmara rejected charge, 21 Oct blamed Somali violence on interference from Ethiopia, Kenya, Djibouti.

- [“Britain calls for sanctions against Eritrea”](#), AP, 8 Oct. 2009.
- For background, see [Ethiopia: Ethnic Federalism and Its Discontents](#), Africa Report N°153, 4 September 2009.

➡ **Ethiopia** FDDE opposition coalition 10 Oct threatened to boycott 2010 elections unless govt frees leader Birtukan Mideksa and others. Govt 29 Oct announced deal with 3 opposition parties on election rules; FDDE rejected. Govt 1 Oct announced ONLF rebels no longer a security threat, 18 Oct claimed ONLF arms cache seized. PM Zenawi 10 Oct said Eritrea rebuffed efforts to establish dialogue, restated accusation that Eritrea supporting Somalia’s al-Shabaab.

- [“Ethiopia’s Meles in outburst over Eritrea”](#), AFP, 10 Oct. 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°153, [Ethiopia: Ethnic Federalism and Its Discontents](#), 4 Sept. 2009.

➡ **Kenya** After failing to meet 30 Sept deadline for creating special tribunal for post-electoral violence, govt announced readiness to cooperate with ICC. Mediator Kofi Annan arrived for 3-day visit 4 Oct, urged govt to speed up promised reforms to avoid risk of renewed violence ahead of 2012 polls. Coalition govt 5 Oct rejected allegations reforms delayed. Kenyan army recruiting youths and Somali refugees in North Eastern Province to support Somali govt inside Somalia and as a “homeguard”. U.S. Assistant Sec State Carson during late month visit announced visa ban on senior official allegedly obstructing reforms, said 3 more bans planned.

- [“Kenya leaders deny delay on post-election reform”](#), Reuters, 5 Oct. 2009.

➡ **Somalia** Fighting flared in southern port town Kismayo between former allies Hizbul Islam and al-Shabaab, following struggle for control of town; at least 12 killed, hundreds fled. At least 30 killed in Mogadishu 22 Oct in shelling by al-Shabaab directed at President Sheik Sharif’s plane; al-Shabaab accused AMISOM of firing heavy artillery - denied by AMISOM - and threatened to attack Ugandan, Burundian capitals in retaliation. Increase in piracy following end of monsoon season; Chinese ship and 25 crew seized 19 Oct in one of furthest off-shore attacks.

- [“Somali insurgents attack airport”](#), *New York Times*, 22 Oct. 2009.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°64, [Somalia: The Trouble with Puntland](#), 12 Aug. 2009.

➡ **Sudan** NCP and SPLM tensions continued to rise ahead of national elections scheduled for April 2010. Govt of South Sudan (GoSS) VP Riek Machar, following talks in Khartoum, announced provisional agreement struck with North on 2011 referendum bill, including endorsement by simple majority in event of 66% electoral turnout. But SPLM General Sec Pagun Amum, following consultations with party, 25 Oct rejected deal over turnout requirement. GoSS President Kiir in late month speech in Juba called on southerners to vote for separation, stating unity would result in southerners becoming “second-class citizens”. SPLM and NDA coalition walked out of parliament 26 Oct to protest bill backed by ruling NCP retaining intelligence service powers. SPLM stepped up accusations

North arming southern tribes amid further clashes in Jonglei State early Oct. U.S. released Sudan Policy Review 16 Oct: includes joint emphasis on CPA, Darfur and accountability; annex on incentives and disincentives classified. Envoys from UNSC P5 states plus EU called for CPA progress in 6 Oct statement agreed in Moscow. AU Peace and Security Council at 29 Oct meeting in Abuja endorsed recommendations of Mbeki-led AU Panel on Darfur, including creation of hybrid tribunal; NCP expressed caution over tribunal; JEM dismissed recommendations as “unpractical”. Bashir invited but declined to attend. Further militia attacks on Darfur peacekeepers. Govt increased troops in West Darfur, near SLM-Abdel Wahed and JEM rebel strongholds. South Sudan army 24 Oct reported LRA had moved into Darfur and attacked displaced 21 Oct.

- [“Opposition parties walk out of Sudan parliament”](#), Reuters, 26 Oct. 2009.
- For background, see Africa Report N°152, [Justice, Peace and the ICC](#), 17 July 2009.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

➡ **Madagascar** Tentative progress towards formation of interim unity govt. International Contact Group convened 6 Oct, reiterated call on country’s 4 rival political leaders to abide by Aug Maputo power-sharing deal. Agreement reached same day on key sticking point of executive posts, providing for de facto leader Andry Rajoelina to take interim presidency, Emmanuel Rakotovahiny (ex-president Zafy ally) as VP, and Eugene Mangalaza (close to ex-president Ratsiraka) as PM. Followed agreement struck in Paris between Rajoelina and Ratsiraka on PM post. Ousted president Ravalomanana immediately reiterated rejection of Rajoelina’s presidency, forced postponement of talks set for Geneva by insisting meeting be held in Africa.

- [“Ravalomanana threatens Madagascar power-share deal”](#), Reuters, 8 Oct. 2009.

➡ **Zimbabwe** Political situation deteriorated as PM Tsvangirai 16 Oct announced MDC-T to “disengage” from unity govt over stalled implementation of Global Political Agreement and brief imprisonment of Deputy Agriculture Minister designate Roy Bennett (MDC-T). MDC-T boycotted cabinet, council of minister meetings, but Tsvangirai 23 Oct stressed MDC-T had not “withdrawn” from govt. SADC delegation in Harare 29-30 Oct for talks with govt announced extraordinary summit to be held as soon as possible. UN Special Rapporteur for Torture Manfred Nowak 28 Oct expressed outrage at govt’s revocation of invite for investigative mission; govt said visit clashed with SADC visit. MDC reported increase in violence after boycott. Fresh spate of farm invasions over month. ZANU-PF succession battle continued as members failed to nominate replacement for late VP John Msika by 7 Oct deadline. Former minister Jonathan Moyo readmitted to ZANU-PF 3 Oct. UK 15 Oct pledged \$100m for public services.

- Comment by Donald Steinberg (Crisis Group), [“Zimbabwe: The Case for Engagement, testimony to U.S. Subcommittee on Africa”](#), 30 Sept. 2009.
- [“Hardliners seek Zimbabwe split”](#), BBC, 27 Oct. 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°59, [Zimbabwe: Engaging the Inclusive Government](#), 20 April 2009.

WEST AFRICA

➡ **Cameroon** Biya govt continued campaign against independent national press, shutting down private radio station 7 Oct. Increased criticism among Cameroonian diaspora over govt repression of opposition. U.S. ambassador 13 Oct announced Washington would not recognise elections organised by Cameroon's electoral commission, charging pro-govt bias.

- "Cameroon military repels pirate attack, kills 4", Reuters, 15 Oct. 2009.

➡ **Côte d'Ivoire** Electoral commission 1 Oct delivered provisional voters list, comprising 6.3m voters, to govt but publication postponed due to presence of 2.7m unverified names. Govt official 28 Oct said 29 Nov election date impossible, blaming list delays; UN Envoy Choi in 14 Oct briefing to UNSC also stressed serious timetable delays. President Gbagbo confirmed candidacy ahead of 16 Oct deadline, bringing presidential candidates to 20. France 15 Oct threatened to withdraw assistance if govt failed to respect election date. UN Panel of Experts, ahead of UNSC early Nov review of arms embargo, reported North and South rearming, called on Burkina Faso to investigate systematic transfer of arms to ex-rebel FN-dominated North.

- "Ivory Coast poll plan faces 'serious delays': UN", Reuters, 14 Oct. 2009.
- Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°62, *Côte d'Ivoire: What's Needed to End the Crisis*, 2 July 2009.

➡ **Guinea** Following 28 Sept massacre, military junta 30 Sept called for formation of unity government, unheeded by opposition. Also announced commission of inquiry, rejected by rights groups. Opposition leader Cellou Dalein Diallo, injured in late Sept attacks, arrived in Senegal for treatment 1 Oct. 2-day general strike held 12-13 Oct amid heavy security in Conakry. Police reported 12 murdered in "revenge attacks" targeting officials over month. Further signs of tension within junta's ranks: 3 civilian ministers resigned 12-15 Oct; skirmishes reported early month at military HQ following move by senior military official to arrest aide to de facto leader Dadis Camara. International pressure on junta increased. UN delegation arrived 16 Oct to establish commission of enquiry into Sept violence; Camara agreed to cooperate. Contact Group for Guinea met in Abuja 12 Oct, called for junta to step down, establishment of transitional authority, sanctions. ECOWAS imposed arms embargo 17 Oct, backed by AU; EU 27 Oct imposed arms embargo, targeted sanctions. ICC opened preliminary investigations into violence 15 Oct. Govt signed \$7bn deal with Hong Kong-based Chinese mining company; Beijing distanced itself from deal.

- "West African leaders impose arms embargo on Guinea", AP, 17 Oct. 2009.

Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°66, *Guinea: Military Rule Must End*, 16 October 2009. If military rule in Guinea is not rapidly ended, there is a serious risk the country will slide into a civil war that could destabilise all of West Africa. In the context of the bloody 28 Sept crackdown, dangerous fractures within the military, popular discontent and concerns about ethnic militias reinforce the need to re-open the democratic transition process.



➡ **Guinea-Bissau** Govt reportedly increased troops along Senegalese border in response to alleged incursions by Casamance rebels; Bissau and Dakar deny reports of bilateral tensions.

- "Guinea-Bissau sends troops to Senegalese border", Reuters, 19 Oct. 2009.
- For background, see Africa Briefing N°61, *Guinea-Bissau: Beyond Rule of the Gun*, 25 June 2009.

➡ **Mali** Peace deal between Mali, Niger and Tuareg rebel groups, signed in Libya, announced 6 Oct by chief mediator Libyan President Gaddafi. Key Tuareg rebel leaders Ibrahim Ag Bahanga (ATMN) and Aghali Alambo (deposed head of Niger's MNJ) laid down arms 7 Oct.

- "Tuareg rebels renounce arms", AFP, 7 Oct. 2009.

➡ **Niger** President Mamadou Tandja 20 Oct held controversial legislative elections in face of ban by ECOWAS, opposition boycotts, EU call for delay. Official results 24 Oct gave Tandja's MNSD party 76 of 113 seats; turnout reportedly low. ECOWAS at 19 Oct meeting in Abuja vowed to reject outcome, suspended Nigerien membership. Govt launched national dialogue starting 29 Oct; opposition rejected, called for ECOWAS mediation. EU 22 Oct reiterated intention to suspend cooperation if Nigerien authorities refuse to restore constitutional order. Govt 29 Oct issued arrest warrants for several opposition leaders, including PNDP party leader Mahamadou Issoufou, on corruption charges including money laundering; party alleged charges political. Tandja 23 Oct issued formal amnesty for disarmed rebels following 6 Oct Tuareg peace accord; dissident leader of MNJ vowed continued resistance (See Mali).

- "Niger hits back over suspension", BBC, 21 Oct. 2009

➡ **Nigeria** Hopes for peace in Niger Delta increased following significant response from militants to govt amnesty offer prior to 4 Oct deadline, and MEND commitment to indefinite ceasefire. 3 militant leaders laid down arms in exchange for govt commitment to Delta development, militants' rehabilitation; govt says 15,000 disarmed. MEND faction still rejecting amnesty threatened to resume attacks at 15 Oct expiry of ceasefire, but after 19 Oct talks with President Yar'Adua agreed to indefinite ceasefire effective 25 Oct to provide time for dialogue. Govt mid-month announced plans to accelerate Delta development, including proposed diversion of 10% oil revenues to local communities. Concerns remain, including number of weapons still in circulation, govt capacity to deliver DDR, militants' response to govt's 6 Oct plan to establish maritime security agency. In Borno State, enquiry into July Boko Haram violence submitted report 23 Oct detailing 800 deaths in Maiduguri. Hundreds still detained since July without conviction. Finance committee senator Iyiola Omisore (ruling PDP; Osun State) forced to step down late month after electoral appeals court ruled his 2007 election heavily rigged. Anambra governorship candidate Chukwuma Soludo (ruling PDP) seized 27 Oct; kidnappers demanded \$3.3m ransom. PDP's Olabode George, ally of ex-President Obasanjo, convicted for corruption 26 Oct, jailed for 30 months.

- "Nigerian amnesty program viewed with caution", *New York Times*, 4 Oct. 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°60, *Nigeria: Seizing the Moment in the Niger Delta*, 30 April 2009.

➡ **Sierra Leone** Special Court for Sierra Leone wound down 26 Oct, upholding convictions of 3 former RUF leaders; trial of former Liberian leader Charles Taylor continues in The Hague.

- [“Former prosecutor calls SL Special Court remarkable”](#), VOA, 26 Oct. 2009.



Asia/Pacific

CENTRAL ASIA

- ➡ **Kazakhstan** President Nazarbayev 6 Oct told journalists constitution permits unlimited re-election of first Kazakhstan president. Govt 6 Oct signed energy deals worth over \$6b with visiting French president Sarkozy; also agreed on access for French troops, weaponry to Afghanistan. U.S. 13 Oct confirmed had secured deals with Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan for transit of military supplies. Nazarbayev 22 Oct signed strategic partnership deal with Turkish President Gul. 2 main opposition parties Azat, Social Democrats announced merger 14 Oct. Appellate court's 19 Oct upholding of Sept sentence against rights activist Yevgeny Zhovtis provoked widespread international criticism.
 - [“U.S. diplomats rap Astana's democratization performance”](#), Hurriyet, 30 Oct. 2009.

- ➡ **Kyrgyzstan** Border guards 19 Oct arrested 4 armed men in Tajik enclave, part of search for insurgents reported to have entered from Tajikistan and opened fire on border guards 14 Oct. Tajik official later claimed detainees were IMU militants. Authorities 20 Oct announced new checkpoint on border with Tajikistan. President Bakiev 20 Oct announced details of administrative reform package including restructuring of state institutions; 29 Oct appointed son Maxim to lead Central Agency for Development, Investment and Innovation, prompting opposition criticism. Reports emerged 1 Oct that remains discovered in north believed to belong to missing parliament deputy Ruslan Shabotoev, who disappeared Sept 2008.
 - [“Kyrgyz reforms leave president stronger”](#), IWPR, 26 Oct. 2009.
 - For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°176, [Women and Radicalisation in Kyrgyzstan](#), 3 Sept. 2009.

- ➡ **Tajikistan** 4 suspected members of Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan killed, one arrested mid-month in police operation in Isfara, close to border with Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. President Rakhmon met with Russian President Medvedev 22 Oct: dropped demands for payment on Russian base till 2014, settled debt on hydroelectric plant. Tajikistan dropped Russian as official language 6 Oct. U.S. General Petraeus 26 Oct held talks with Rakhmon amid growing concerns of insurgent cross border operations from Afghanistan. UNHCR warned of likely increase in refugees from Afghanistan; denied by Tajik officials. Uzbekistan 1 Oct restored gas supplies to Tajikistan, blocked 29 Sept, after resolving debt issue.
 - [“Rahmon visit to Moscow produces reduction in bilateral tension”](#), EurasiaNet, 27 Oct. 2009.
 - For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°162, [Tajikistan: On the Road to Failure](#), 12 Feb. 2009.

- ➡ **Turkmenistan** President Berdymukhamedov 1 Oct said may be able to find diplomatic solution with Azerbaijan over Caspian oil, gas resources. Authorities prevented Turkmen students from travelling to universities with U.S. links in Kyrgyzstan, Bulgaria; 10 Oct denied entry to U.S. peace corps volunteers. Late Oct arrest, imprisonment of prominent environmental

activist widely denounced as politically motivated.

- [“Is Ashgabat suspicious of U.S. education programs?”](#), RFE/RL, 13 Oct. 2009.

- ➡ **Uzbekistan** Pakistani official 2 Oct claimed leader of Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan Tohir Yuldash killed in missile strike late-Aug in South Waziristan; denied by IMU. EU 27 Oct lifted arms embargo against Uzbekistan, last of post-Andijan massacre sanctions, citing progress on human rights, need to encourage Uzbek authorities. Over 30 arrested in Syrdarya city on charges of extremism, in connection with July, Aug murders of Tashkent chief imam and anti-terrorism law enforcement officer.

- Comment by Neil Campbell (Crisis Group), [“Human rights embargoed”](#), E!Sharp, 16 Oct. 2009.
- [“The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan undergoing dangerous transformation”](#), EurasiaNet, 20 Oct. 2009.

NORTH EAST ASIA

- ➡ **China (internal)** Court in Xinjiang's Urumqi 12-15 Oct sentenced 21 for involvement in July riots, including 9 to death; majority thought to be Uighur Chinese. Uighur exiles condemned death sentences. Al-Qaeda early month urged Uighur “holy war” against Chinese rule. India-based Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy claimed China had executed 4 protesters in connection with 2008 Lhasa riots.
 - [“China sentences 6 more to death for Xinjiang unrest”](#), AFP, 14 Oct. 2009.

- ➡ **North Korea** NK leader Kim Jong-il 5 Oct told China PM Wen, during rare visit to Pyongyang, to prepare for resumption of multilateral talks on ending nuclear program, but stressed it would first seek negotiations with U.S. NK 12 Oct fired 5 short-range missiles, first in three months; U.S. Sec State Clinton announced move would not affect “trend toward easing” in peninsula. NK delegation travelled to U.S. for talks late month on resuming nuclear dialogue. Delegations from NK and S Korea held bilateral talks in Singapore mid-month; Seoul 26 Oct announced resumption of low level humanitarian aid to NK, suspended since mid 2007. Growing speculation over future meeting between Korean leaders. UN envoy 22 Oct described human rights situation as “abysmal”.

- [“North Korea says ready to return to nuclear talks”](#), Reuters, 6 Oct. 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°169, [North Korea: Getting Back to Talks](#), 18 June 2009.

- ➡ **Taiwan Strait** In blow to Beijing, President Ma 23 Sept said Uighur leader Rebiya Kadeer not a terrorist, but vice interior minister later stressed Taiwan would not apologise for cancelling Kadeer's planned Dec visit. Ma end month called for “eternal peace” and dialogue with China during speech marking 60th anniversary of crucial battle against Chinese communist forces.

- [“Ma: Uighur leader Kadeer is no terrorist”](#), AFP, 23 Oct. 2009.


SOUTH ASIA

- ➡ **Afghanistan** Political uncertainty deepened after Abdullah Abdullah 1 Nov withdrew from run-off election with President Karzai; Abdullah claimed fair vote impossible after Karzai's refusal to dismiss “biased” head of Independent Election Commission (IEC). Run-off originally scheduled for

7 Nov after UN-led Electoral Complaints Commission mid-month discounted hundreds of thousands of votes in Aug first round due to widespread fraud, gave Karzai final tally 49.7%. Karzai, IEC 1 Nov said will still hold run-off without Abdullah. Fears raised over continued violence after Taliban 24 Oct said will seek to disrupt vote, urged boycott. Head of U.S. forces and ISAF Lt. Gen. McChrystal 7 Oct requested troop increase of 40,000; U.S. President Obama likely to make final decision mid-Nov. UK PM Brown 14 Oct said UK will increase number of troops by 500 to 9,500. Ex-UN Deputy Special Envoy Peter Galbraith, dismissed Sept, accused UN Special Envoy Kai Eide of ignoring fraud during Aug vote. At least 17 killed in 8 Oct bomb attack on Indian embassy in Kabul, Taliban claimed responsibility. Militants 29 Oct killed 11, including 5 UN staffers, in attack on Kabul guesthouse used by UN. 2 local govt officials killed in 10 Oct Paktika province bomb attack.

- ["Hamid Karzai under pressure to strike power-sharing deal with Abdullah Abdullah"](#), *Guardian*, 1 Nov. 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°171, [Afghanistan's Election Challenges](#), 24 June 2009.

Crisis Group Conflict Risk Alert: **"After Afghanistan's Fraudulent Elections"**, 27 October 2009. Following the deeply flawed elections, reforming and strengthening state institutions and establishing genuine constitutional governance must be tackled as the top priority if the political rot is to be stemmed.



➡ **Bangladesh** Govt 23 Oct banned Islamist group Hizb ut-Tahrir. 21 Oct bomb attack on car of AL party MP Fazole Noor Tapas; Tapas escaped unhurt, 12 others injured; no claim of responsibility. Main opposition party BNP 2 Oct said will continue boycott of parliament, in effect since Dec 2008 elections.

- ["Bangladesh bans Islamist group after lawmaker attack"](#), Reuters, 23 Oct. 2009.

➡ **India (non-Kashmir)** Govt 9 Oct announced will deploy 70,000 paramilitary troops in major offensive targeting Maoist top leadership. Maoists 8 Oct killed at least 17 police in Maharashtra, 16 civilians in Bihar; killed several, caused widespread damage to infrastructure during 12-14 Oct strike in 6 eastern states.

- ["India in new anti-Maoist strategy"](#), BBC, 9 Oct. 2009.

➡ **Kashmir** Indian army killed 4 suspected Lashkar-e-Tayyaba (LeT) militants in 7 Oct Baramulla clash; and 3 militants, including top Hizbul Mujahideen commander, in 21 Oct Mahore clash. 1 killed, at least 10 injured in violent anti-India protests in Baramulla town 2 Oct. India govt 14 Oct said army will play smaller role in Kashmir security, to be gradually replaced by state police; 29 Oct announced withdrawal of 15,000 troops. Pakistani court 12 Oct cleared Hafiz Saeed, founder of LeT accused of Nov 2008 Mumbai terror attack, of terrorism charges, citing lack of evidence.

- ["Indian forces in Kashmir take a back seat: minister"](#), AFP, 14 Oct. 2009.

➡ **Nepal** UNMIN late month expressed concern over national army's (NA) continued recruitment, said violated peace agreement (CPA); Maoists protested FM Bhandari 7 Oct asking parliament to amend CPA to allow more NA troops. Govt 11 Oct relaunched UN-led discharge process of 4,000 disqualified Maoist combatants from Maoist cantonment. Govt unable to pass budget as Maoists continued blockade of


parliament; Finance Minister Pandey 23 Oct said govt unable to pay ministers, security forces until situation resolved. Maoists late month announced 15-day nationwide protests from 1 Nov, threatening severe non-violent disruption.

- ["Nepal crisis worries UN"](#), *Times of India*, 23 Oct. 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°173, [Nepal's Future: In Whose Hands?](#), 13 Aug. 2009.

➡ **Pakistan** Militants responded to army's operation in S Waziristan with significant escalation of violence, leaving hundreds dead in string of attacks across country, many targeting security forces. More than 100 killed in 28 Oct bombing of Peshawar market; 13 killed, including 4 militants, after Taliban 10 Oct stormed military HQ in Rawalpindi, taking hostages; at least 48 killed, hundreds injured, in 9 Oct Peshawar suicide blast; 5 killed in 5 Oct suicide attack on UN WFP Islamabad HQ. Army 17 Oct launched heavy ground offensive into S Waziristan, 24 Oct announced capture of key town Kotkai. At least 200,000 displaced by fighting; evidence that military impeding humanitarian assistance, with ICRC senior official 23 Oct claiming humanitarian access to IDPs being denied. Gunmen 25 Oct killed Balochistan Education Minister Shafiq Ahmed Khan in Quetta; separatist BULF group claimed responsibility. U.S. President Obama 15 Oct signed bill tripling aid to Pakistan to US\$1.5bn per year for 5 years; Pakistani army had said "seriously concerned" bill could impose on Pakistan's sovereignty.

- ["There they go again"](#), *Economist*, 22 Oct. 2009.

Crisis Group Asia Report N°178, **"Countering Militancy in FATA"**, 21 October 2009. The military operation in South Waziristan is unlikely to succeed in curbing the spread of religious militancy in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), unless the Pakistan government implements political reforms in that part of the country. Only reforms that encourage political diversity, enhance economic opportunity, and guarantee civil and political rights will address the problem.



➡ **Sri Lanka** Govt 22 Oct announced release of 6,000 IDPs from internment camps in north, promised further 40,000 to be resettled over coming weeks; estimated 260,000 still detained. 22 Oct U.S. State Dept report highlighted possible govt, LTTE rebels war crimes during final months of civil war Jan-May 2009; OHCHR 23 Oct said independent war crimes inquiry "warranted". EU to consult member states Nov on removing GSP+ trade concession for Sri Lanka after 19 Oct EC report found "significant shortcomings" in govt human rights record. UK govt 6 Oct said will withdraw all but emergency funding for camps after monsoon season, citing lack of free movement for IDPs and poor conditions in camps. Govt UPFA coalition won 68% of vote in 8 Oct Southern Province elections. Govt 13 Oct announced will hold parliamentary and early presidential elections before April 2010. Parliament 9 Oct approved 20% increase in military budget until end of 2009.

- ["Plus and minuses"](#), *Economist*, 22 Oct. 2009.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°172, [Sri Lanka's Judiciary: Politicised Courts, Compromised Rights](#), 30 June 2009.

SOUTH EAST ASIA

➡ **Indonesia** President Yudhoyono inaugurated for 2nd term 20 Oct; 22 Oct cabinet announcement widely criticised

for “political” choices. Police 9 Oct shot dead 2 suspected terrorists, bringing to 9 the total killed by police following July hotel bombings. Yudhoyono 30 Oct again intervened to support Corruption Eradication Commission after police detained 2 top agency officials. Sporadic violence continued in Papua as unidentified gunmen killed 1 worker, injured 3 others in 2 separate 20 Oct attacks near Freeport mine, injured soldier in 21 Oct attack. In Aceh, Legislative Council members 20 Oct agreed to review controversial Islamic criminal code after public outcry, opposition from rights groups. GAM founder Hasan di Tiro 17 Oct returned to Aceh for low-key visit.

- “Yudhoyono dents Indonesia reform hopes”, *Financial Times*, 20 Oct. 2009.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group’s Asia Briefing N°95, *Indonesia: Noordin Top’s Support Base*, 27 Aug. 2009

➡ **Myanmar/Burma** Opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi 3 Oct met labour minister, her official govt liaison, in 1st meeting with govt since Jan 2008, restated 25 Sept offer to help end sanctions; 9 Oct discussed sanctions with U.S., EU, Australian diplomats. Yangon court 2 Oct rejected appeal against her extended house arrest. U.S. 31 Oct announced Asst Sec State Campbell to visit Myanmar early Nov as part of new policy of dialogue alongside sanctions; also due to meet with Suu Kyi. ASEAN leaders 25 Oct welcomed U.S. policy shift, called for 2010 elections to be inclusive; PM Gen. Thein Sein promised ASEAN fair elections, did not say whether Suu Kyi would be allowed to participate. UN special rapporteur on human rights Quintana 22 Oct called on govt to release all political prisoners ahead of elections. Reports emerged of increase in arrests of activists, journalists. Thein Sein and Chinese PM Wen Jiabao 24 Oct agreed to cooperate on border stability after late Aug conflict between Myanmar army, Kokang rebels. Mid-month tensions with Bangladesh over disputed maritime boundaries led to troop build-up on both sides of border.

- “Burmese dissident meets with foreign envoys”, *New York Times*, 9 Oct. 2009.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°177, *China’s Myanmar Dilemma*, 14 Sept. 2009.

➡ **Philippines** Fighting continued in Jolo between govt and Abu Sayyaf, MNLF forces: multiple clashes saw several injured, 1 officer, 3 suspected Abu Sayyaf, 1 MNLF rebel killed over month. Military commander 22 Oct declared govt control over island despite spate of Abu Sayyaf bombings. In Mindanao, U.S. officials 16 Oct reportedly met with MILF chief Murad Ebrahim, reaffirmed U.S. support for peace process; no word on U.S. acceptance of MILF request for its involvement in talks. MILF leaders 19 Oct warned of new hostilities in event that talks with Arroyo govt fail. Former President Estrada vowed all-out war to end insurgency should he be re-elected 2010. MILF and govt peace negotiators 27 Oct signed Agreement on Civilian Protection in Kuala Lumpur. Multiple kidnappings in troubled south; military source alleged involvement of rogue MILF members but no group claimed responsibility, MILF leadership helping govt locate victims. Alleged New People’s Army (NPA) rebels 21 Oct abducted 8 govt workers, later released; suspected NPA rebels 26 Oct shot army intelligence officer, injured 2 civilians; suspected rebel killed in 31 Oct clash with military.

- “Philippine Muslim rebels say met US diplomats”, AFP, 18 Oct. 2009
- For background, see Crisis Group’s Asia Briefing N°88, *The Philippines: Running in Place in Mindanao*, 16 Feb. 2009

➡ **Thailand** Thousands of “red shirt” supporters of former PM Thaksin rallied in Bangkok 11, 17 Oct demanding govt respond to Aug petition seeking royal pardon for Thaksin. Former PM Chavalit 2 Oct joined Thaksin front party Puea Thai; in 21 Oct meeting with Chavalit, Cambodian PM Hun Sen called Thaksin his “eternal friend”, at ASEAN summit 23 Oct offered Thaksin asylum and economic advisor post in Cambodia. Thai PM Abhisit said Thailand would seek extradition if Thaksin moves to Cambodia; Hun Sen said would decline request. As violence continued in south, cabinet 13 Oct extended emergency decree, 20 Oct approved draft bill allowing Southern Border Provinces Administrative Centre to operate independently from military-controlled Internal Security Operations Command. Amid concerns over his health, King Bhumibol 23 Oct made first public appearance since being hospitalised 19 Sept.

- “Exile and the kingdom”, *Economist*, 15 Oct. 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°170, *Recruiting Militants in Southern Thailand*, 22 June 2009.

➡ **Timor-Leste** Govt 12 Oct survived censure motion brought by opposition FRETILIN, KOTA parties over Aug decision to release Maternus Bere, former Suai commander of Indonesia-era Laksaur militia indicted by UN Serious Crimes Unit for crimes against humanity. Nationwide village elections 9 Oct passed with few reports of violence but evidence of technical errors; formal results expected Nov. PM Ramos-Horta cited peaceful elections as sign of progress; UNSG Ban 12 Oct said community level tensions continued to threaten security.

- “E Timor govt survives no-confidence vote”, AFP, 12 Oct. 2009.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°87, *Timor-Leste: No Time for Complacency*, 9 Feb. 2009.

PACIFIC

➡ **Fiji** Military leader Bainimarama, meeting with leaders from Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu 11 Oct, vowed no foreign influence could change Fiji’s course; PNG PM Somare declared regional leaders’ intention to counter Australian, New Zealand-led international opposition to Fiji’s military regime.

- “Australia keep out of Fiji’s business: Frank Bainimarama”, *Australian*, 12 Oct. 2009



BALKANS

➡ **Bosnia** First round of emergency constitutional reform talks in Butmir 8-9 Oct concluded with EU, U.S. offering incentive package for reforms, rejected by most Bosnian leaders. 2nd, 3rd round of talks 20 and 21 Oct failed to produce a deal. RS PM Dodik invited Bosnian parties to talks on constitutional reforms in Banja Luka 30 Oct; most declined. 3 former High Representatives criticised international approach to crisis, including exclusion of current High Rep from process. EC annual progress report 14 Oct strongly critical of deadlocks on political, economic, social reforms. Sarajevo 6 Oct filed charges against Dodik for abuse of power, inciting ethnic hatred, following his Sept denial of some wartime massacres. Several hundred Sarajevo football fans protested after fan shot

dead 4 Oct in predominantly Croat town Siroki Brijig during clashes with local police, residents. UNGA elected Bosnia non-permanent member of UNSC for 2-year term. Bosnia applied for NATO Membership Action Plan. Radovan Karadzic boycotted start of his trial at The Hague 26 Oct.

- “Bosnia ‘fragile’ after talks fail”, BBC, 21 Oct. 2009.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°54, *Bosnia: A Test of Political Maturity in Mostar*, 27 July 2009.

➡ **Kosovo** International Steering Group for Kosovo 9 Oct praised progress on decentralization, preparations for Nov local elections. European Commission annual progress report 14 Oct recognised Serbia’s role in managing parallel institutions, Pristina does not control entire country; noted stability but also weakness including corruption, organized crime; called for start of process for visa-free travel. Discussing UNSG Ban’s Kosovo report, UNSC 15 Oct urged Pristina, Belgrade to improve communication. Italian ambassador to Kosovo Michael Giffoni named EU facilitator in north. Kosovo Police and EULEX signed technical agreement on information exchanges 2 Oct. Kosovo Electric Corporation 19 Oct disconnected northern Kosovo from grid; Serbia stepped in to supply power. Kosovo, Macedonia 18 Oct announced establishment of full diplomatic ties following resolution of longstanding border demarcation dispute.

- “Visa-free travel highlighted in Kosovo report”, SEE Times, 19 Oct. 2009.

Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°56,

Kosovo: Štrpce, a Model Serb Enclave?,

15 October 2009. November local elections provide a key opportunity for Kosovo Serbs to elect representatives and push forward on decentralisation, if they do not listen to Belgrade’s calls to boycott. Belgrade, Pristina and the international community should encourage voting and thereafter equip the municipal government with the expanded powers and resources it needs.



➡ **Macedonia** EC annual progress report 14 Oct recommended Macedonia start EU accession negotiations; EU urged Skopje to speed resolution of name dispute with Greece ahead of Dec EU Council meeting to decide date for commencement of negotiations, as Greece maintains resolution of dispute still a condition for Macedonia’s EU entry. As some observers expressed optimism on impact of new Athens govt on name dispute, FM Milososki and newly-elected Greek PM Papandreou met 9 Oct in sidelines of Istanbul summit, and Greek, Macedonian PMs met 29 Oct. Border police under fire from unidentified gunmen near Kosovo 1 Oct. Macedonia, Kosovo 18 Oct announced establishment of full diplomatic ties (see Kosovo).

- “Macedonians celebrate EC endorsement”, Balkan Insight, 15 Oct. 2009.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°52, *Macedonia’s Name: Breaking the Deadlock*, 12 Jan. 2009.

➡ **Serbia** EC annual progress report 14 Oct said Serbia has made significant progress toward EU integration, cooperation with The Hague. Russian President Medvedev visited Belgrade 20 Oct. Turkish President Gül signed bilateral agreements with govt during late month visit.

- “Is Russia using Serbia to strengthen hand on European security?”, RFE/RL, 23 Oct. 2009.

CAUCASUS

➡ **Armenia/Turkey** Turkish, Armenian FMs 10 Oct signed 2 landmark protocols to restore diplomatic ties, open borders and set up history sub-commission, in Zurich ceremony attended by U.S. Sec State Clinton, Russian, French, Swiss FMs, EU foreign policy chief Solana. Protocols need ratification by both parliaments; presented to Turkish parliament 21 Oct. Turkey continuing to link ratification with progress on resolving Nagorno-Karabakh dispute. Armenian President Sarkisian 14 Oct attended Armenia-Turkey World Cup soccer match in Turkey with President Gül; ban on 3rd country flags in stadium strained Turkey’s relations with Azerbaijan, triggering note of protest from Baku, reciprocated by Turkey. Azerbaijani President Aliyev 16 Oct threatened to stop selling Turkey natural gas at low prices, seek alternative gas export routes to Europe. Tensions alleviated slightly with late month Baku visit by Turkish delegation.

- Comment by Sabine Freizer (Crisis Group), “Soccer diplomacy – lessons for Armenia and Azerbaijan”, *Today’s Zaman*, 18 Oct. 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Report N° 199, *Turkey and Armenia: Opening Minds, Opening Borders*, 14 Apr. 2009.

➡ **Armenia** Internal consultations on rapprochement with Turkey continued with public hearings in parliament 1 Oct; opposition parties continued to reject agreements. President Sarkisian met with protests early month during tour to discuss deal with diaspora communities in U.S., Europe, Russia, Lebanon. Opposition journalist Nikol Pashinian went on trial 20 Oct for alleged role in March 2008 unrest.

- “At home and abroad, Turkey deal a tough sell for Armenian president”, RFE/RL, 7 Oct. 2009.

➡ **Azerbaijan** Azerbaijan strongly criticised Turkish signing of protocols to normalise relations with Armenia in absence of resolution of Nagorno-Karabakh dispute and Armenian withdrawal from territory (see Armenia/Turkey).

- “Turkey’s talks with Armenia test ties with gas-supplier Azerbaijan”, *Christian Science Monitor*, 23 Oct. 2009.

➡ **Chechnya (Russia)** In Russian municipal elections 11 Oct, 86% turnout reported in Chechnya; President Kadyrov ally Muslim Khuchiyev re-elected major of Grozny. Several insurgent attacks reported over month; President Kadyrov 17 Oct asserted fight against rebels approaching its end. Kadyrov 6 Oct won libel suit against rights group Memorial, ordered to pay symbolic damages for accusing him of role in July murder of Natalia Estemirova; same day filed lawsuit against editor of Novaya Gazeta newspaper, related to articles linking him with Jan murder of Chechen exile Umar Israilov. Kavkazsky Uzel website reported allegations security forces killing civilians and claiming they are militants.

- “Observers and locals question municipal elections in Chechnya and Ingushetia”, EDM, 13 Oct. 2009.

➡ **North Caucasus (non-Chechnya)** Month saw rising tensions surrounding 11 Oct Russian local elections. Opponents of pro-Kremlin United Russia party candidates in Dagestan and Karachayevo-Cherkessia mayoral elections complained of malpractice; independent candidate Soltan Sultanov beat United Russia candidate in latter. Significant procedural violations reported in Dagestan polls, including closure of half

polling stations in Derbent city; some 5,000 protested 12 Oct demanding ballot be declared invalid; local election commission 13 Oct declared outcome valid; several hundred protested in Moscow late Oct. Ingush president Yevkurov sacked PM and cabinet 5 Oct, citing corruption and failure to address social and economic problems. Russian security chief Bortnikov 13 Oct said 2 leaders of Islamic insurgent groups in Ingushetia, believed responsible for June assassination attempt against President Yevkurov, killed during counterterrorism operation. Number of clashes between security forces and insurgents reported in Dagestan's Kizilyurt region early Oct. Violent incidents also reported in Ingushetia, including rebel leader Ruslan Bartykhoev killed in special operation 9 Oct. Ingushetia opposition activist Maksharip Aushev shot dead in Kabardino-Balkaria republic 25 Oct. Deputy prosecutor-general 19 Oct reported 192 people killed, 484 wounded and 425 extremist crimes perpetrated in Dagestan, Ingushetia and Chechnya in 2009. Media late month reported Russia to quadruple military presence in North Caucasus.

- "Violence pervades Ingushetian president's first year in office", RFE/RL, 30 Oct. 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Report N°192, *Russia's Dagestan: Conflict Causes*, 3 June 2008.

➡ **Georgia** In wake of 30 Sept EU-sponsored report highlighting Georgia's role in Aug 2008 war with Russia, opposition criticised govt for trying to distort report's findings. Georgian Orthodox Church leader 16 Oct criticised President Saakashvili for role in conflict. Georgia denied 13 Oct claims by Russia's security chief that Georgian secret services assist Islamic extremists in Chechnya, Dagestan. 21 Georgians detained by Russian forces late month, accused of illegally crossing de facto border with breakaway republic South Ossetia.

- "Georgia rejects FSB chief's charges of supporting terrorism in the North Caucasus", EDM, 15 Oct. 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°53, *Georgia-Russia: Still Insecure and Dangerous*, 22 June 2009.

➡ **Nagorno-Karabakh (Azerbaijan)** OSCE Minsk Group met in Yerevan 1 Oct to start fresh round of N-K talks. Azerbaijani president Aliyev 3 Oct said talks are in "final phase", reiterated commitment to Azerbaijan's territorial integrity. U.S., Russian envoys reported progress in talks 8 Oct on sidelines of CIS summit, Moldova. Sides met with Russian president Medvedev 9 Oct. Russian Duma hosted meeting between Azerbaijani, Armenian lawmakers 22 Oct. Armenian President Sarkisian visited N-K late month.

- "Will Turkey-Armenia deal lead to a season of change in Nagorno-Karabakh?", RFE/RL, 12 Oct. 2009.

Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°55, *Nagorno-Karabakh: Getting to a Breakthrough*, 7 October 2009. Armenia and Azerbaijan should endorse a document on basic principles to end stalemate on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict by the end of the year, or face an eventual return to full-scale hostilities. While the current regional environment is positive, both governments and the international community must step up their efforts, as the status quo is increasingly untenable.

EASTERN EUROPE

➡ **Belarus** President Lukashenka 2 Oct announced Belarus to join Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) rapid

reaction forces, in reversal of June policy. Lukashenka 20 Oct said ready to liberalise electoral laws. Opposition activist Andrey Bandarenka sentenced to 7 years in jail for theft, claimed charges politically motivated.

- "Lukashenka supports liberalizing election laws", RFE/RL, 20 Oct. 2009.

➡ **Moldova** Acting President Mihai Ghimpu's proposal of nephew as lone candidate for national bank governor provoked widespread criticism; later withdrew name. Scheduled 23 Oct election of new president by parliament postponed amid uncertainty over constitutionality of having only one candidate. 40 injured in grenade explosion at concert in Chisinau 14 Oct.

- "Biden says US backs EU ties for Moldova", Reuters, 22 Oct. 2009.

➡ **Ukraine** Ukraine U.S. mid-month denied discussing use of radar stations in Ukraine for U.S. missile defence, following Russian objections. Russian Black Sea Fleet commanders 18 Oct voiced objection to Ukrainian police spot checks of their military vehicles, amid Ukrainian allegations the fleet is again transporting military equipment without proper permission. IMF head expressed concern over President Yushchenko's 30 Oct approval of wage bill that contravenes loan agreement. Russian PM Putin 30 Oct said Yushchenko risks provoking new gas crisis.

- "Russia's Putin warns Ukraine leader on gas payment", Reuters, 30 Oct. 2009.

WESTERN EUROPE/MEDITERRANEAN

➡ **Basque Country (Spain)** Alleged ETA political head Aitor Elizaran Aguilar arrested in France 19 Oct, along with another suspect. Several other suspected ETA members arrested over month, as well as 19 members of banned political party Batasuna.

- "Recent ETA arrests raise hopes in Spain of ending violence", *New York Times*, 20 Oct. 2009.

➡ **Cyprus** Twice-weekly talks between Greek Cypriot leader Christofias and Turkish Cypriot leader Talat 6-7 Oct discussed bridging proposals on territory. Sides closed governance and power sharing chapter 15 Oct without agreement; discussed external relations and property issues 21-22 Oct. UN envoy Downer noted difficulty of solving property issue 23 Oct. Leaders met again 27, 29 Oct to discuss federal govt competencies. Newly-elected Greek PM Papandreou and Turkish PM Erdoğan discussed Cyprus 10 Oct; Papandreou visited Cyprus 19-20 Oct, issued joint statement with Christofias saying will focus on getting European partners to pressure Turkey. Turkish chief negotiator 16 Oct said Turkey will open ports to Greek Cypriot traffic if EU starts direct trade with northern Cyprus. EC president Barroso 9 Oct appointed Leopold Maurer as representative to assist UN in Cyprus talks.

- Comment by Hugh Pope (Crisis Group), "Time Runs Out for Cypriot Solution", *Wall Street Journal*, 19 Oct. 2009.
- "Cyprus downbeat on unification talks", *Financial Times*, 29 Oct. 2009.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Europe Report N°201, *Cyprus: Reunification or Partition?*, 30 Sept. 2009.

➡ **Northern Ireland** Ongoing disagreement between Democratic Unionists and Sinn Fein over timing of transfer of policing and justice responsibility from London to Belfast; UK PM Gordon Brown 21 Oct outlined £1bn package for NI devolution. Visiting Belfast, U.S. Sec State Clinton 13

Oct encouraged parties to reach agreement. IRA dissidents blamed for Belfast car bomb injuring woman. 2 arrested mid-month in case involving 600lb bomb found in van in Co Tyrone. Explosive device thrown into Territorial Army barracks in north Belfast 22 Oct.

- [“Could IRA splinter groups bring back Northern Ireland’s troubles?”](#), *Christian Science Monitor*, 23 Oct. 2009.

➡ **Turkey** “Peace group” of 34 Kurds including 8 PKK militants 19 Oct crossed into Turkey from N Iraq in response to jailed PKK leader Ocalan’s 9 Oct call. Govt cancelled return of second group after public backlash against celebratory rallies in major cities attended by thousands of Kurds. EU progress report 14 Oct praised gov’t Kurdish initiative, but urged further political reforms, progress on Cyprus issue, expressed concern over media freedom. 12 Oct NATO air exercise cancelled after Turkey rejected Israeli participation. Following Sept agreement with Syria, ministers from both countries held first meeting of strategic cooperation council, Aleppo, 13 Oct. Erdogan 15 Oct signed agreements with Iraq on water, energy, anti-PKK cooperation; met Iranian leaders in Tehran 27-28 Oct. Agreement with Armenia presented for parliament approval 21 Oct (see Armenia/Turkey). Army 27 Oct said investigating alleged military plot against ruling AKP revealed in June. 17 arrested early month for planning attacks to undermine gov’t pro-Kurdish rights reforms. 30 al-Qaeda suspects arrested across country 15 Oct. 5 PKK militants killed 27 Oct in clash with security forces, Bingöl province.

- [“Return of Kurds puts Turkey in a bind”](#), *National*, 30 Oct. 2009.



Latin America / Caribbean

➡ **Bolivia** Public prosecutor mid-month charged ex-Pando governor Leopoldo Fernández with 6 crimes, including terrorism and murder, over role in Sept 2008 “Pando massacre” that killed 20 mostly pro-Morales supporters; Fernández, imprisoned since Oct 2008, is VP running mate for Manfred Reyes Villa, main opposition candidate for Dec presidential elections. Govt early Oct announced it had met coca eradication goal of 5,000ha for 2009.

- [“Victims of the Pando massacre still await justice”](#), Amnesty International, 9 Oct. 2009.

➡ **Colombia** Constitutional Court 23 Oct said will likely not rule until Jan 2010 on whether to permit referendum on extending presidential term limit; opinion polls indicate referendum likely to pass if held, leading to possible third term for President Uribe. Main opposition Liberal and PDA parties early month said will seek coalition against Uribe camp in 2010 elections. Attorney general 19 Oct reopened investigation into VP Santos’ alleged ties to paramilitary groups; Santos rejected charges. Attorney general 20 Oct issued arrest warrants for 15 soldiers accused of “false positives” extrajudicial killings; hundreds further under investigation. Govt 1 Oct said some 40 FARC rebels killed in 30 Sept army bombardment of FARC camp in Tolima department. FARC 18 Oct killed 2 local councilmen in Sumataz region; 4 Oct started “armed strike” in Arauca department, blocking roads and local infrastructure. Govt 30 Oct finalised controversial deal allowing U.S. to use

Colombian military bases to fight narco trafficking.

- [“Colombia court sees re-election ruling next year”](#), Reuters, 23 Oct. 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Latin America Briefing N°21, [The Virtuous Twins: Protecting Human Rights and Improving Security in Colombia](#), 25 May 2009.

➡ **Ecuador** Colombia 15 Oct suspended talks with Ecuador on re-establishing diplomatic ties after Ecuadorean judge issued arrest warrant for Colombia army commander General Freddy Padilla for his involvement in Colombia’s March 2008 airstrike on FARC rebel camp inside Ecuador; both govts late month announced OAS-monitored talks to resume 3 Nov. Colombia gov’t 6 Oct claimed at least 2 FARC camps present inside Ecuador.

- [“Cancilleres retomarán diálogo en noviembre”](#), Infolatam, 25 Oct. 2009.

➡ **Haiti** Senate 30 Oct dismissed PM Pierre-Louis in no confidence vote after Lespwa party accused her of inefficiency in office; pro-Pierre-Louis senators said decision unconstitutional, boycotted vote. President Préval 30 Oct designated Planning Minister Jean-Max Bellerive as new PM, Senate to vote early Nov. UNSC 13 Oct extended MINUSTAH peacekeeping mission for 1 year. Préval 19 Oct appointed new provisional electoral council by decree.

- Comment by Bernice Robertson (Crisis Group), [“Spur Haiti’s development”](#), *Miami Herald*, 15 Oct. 2009.
- [“Haiti’s president turns to Cabinet for new PM”](#), *Miami Herald*, 30 Oct. 2009.

➡ **Honduras** De facto President Micheletti and ousted President Zelaya 30 Oct reached agreement to end protracted political crisis. Zelaya to be reinstated as president under new power-sharing gov’t until end of his term Jan 2010, pending 3 Nov Congress vote approval; Zelaya promised to recognise 29 Nov presidential elections. Micheletti 5 Oct rescinded decree suspending civil liberties, issued late Sept, after strong criticism from coup-supporters in political, business sectors; rights groups said beatings, mass arrests of Zelaya supporters by security forces continued.

- [“El ‘pacto secreto’ de Honduras”](#), BBC, 31 Oct. 2009.

➡ **Venezuela** President Chávez 23 Oct promulgated law instituting civilian “Bolivarian militias” parallel to army, restored compulsory 1 year military service. Tensions with Colombia continued: Bogotá 23 Oct claimed drug loaded planes operate from Venezuela; gov’t 28 Oct arrested 3 Colombian intelligence agents, accused of unauthorised cross-border investigation into murder of 10 Colombian football players by unidentified armed group, found 24 Oct in Venezuela.

- [“Chávez militariza por decreto a los venezolanos”](#), *El País*, 23 Oct. 2009.



Middle East / North Africa

EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

➡ **Israel/occupied Palestinian Territories** UN Human Rights Council 16 Oct endorsed Sept Goldstone report accusing Israel, Hamas of war crimes and possible crimes against humanity in Dec-Jan Gaza war, passed resolution

critical of Israel, without reference to Hamas. Israel 26 Oct said would consider reviewing its internal investigation into the war but would not bring soldiers, officers before an independent commission. Palestinian PM Abbas 7 Oct backed UNSC debate on report after facing Palestinian, Arab criticism for earlier pushing for postponement under Israeli, U.S. pressure. Late Sept clashes between Palestinians and Israeli police continued early month in E Jerusalem, Old City; 150-200 Palestinians holed up in mosque at Temple Mount/Al-Aqsa compound until 11 Oct; clashes resumed 25 Oct. In ongoing U.S. efforts to revive talks, Sec State Clinton 31 Oct met separately with Abbas, Israeli PM Netanyahu, said Israel was making “unprecedented” concessions on settlements; Palestinians continued to insist on full settlement freeze before talks resume. After Fatah 14 Oct signed Egyptian-sponsored reconciliation document, Abbas 23 Oct announced Palestinian elections in W Bank, Gaza to take place 24 Jan; Hamas said elections would not take place in Gaza in absence of Hamas-Fatah reconciliation, insisted on further discussions. Authorities 27 Oct demolished 5 Palestinian houses in E Jerusalem. Israeli airstrikes on Gaza City, S Gaza 22 Oct following rocket fired into S Israel.

- [“Israel prepares to fight war crimes trials after Goldstone Gaza report”](#), *Haaretz*, 20 Oct. 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Middle East Report N°89, [Israel’s Religious Right and the Question of Settlements](#), 20 July 2009.

➡ **Lebanon** Negotiations on allocations of ministries in national unity govt entered 4th month following June election victory of March 14 alliance. No breakthrough despite hopes placed on 7-8 Oct Syrian-Saudi summit (see Syria); French FM Kouchner also called for agreement after 23-24 Oct meetings with political leaders. Hizbollah denied Israeli accusation that 12 Oct explosion near member’s home in south was arms cache. Explosions 2km inside border 18 Oct identified by Lebanese army, UN as detonation of up to 3 buried Israeli espionage devices; army fired at Israeli drone overflying explosion site. Israeli artillery 27 Oct hit Hula village after rocket fired into Israel; Lebanese army found more rockets in area 28 Oct. UNSG’s 23 Oct report on UNSCR 1559 called for Hizbollah, other militias to disarm, Israel to withdraw from Ghajar and end overflights, improved conditions for Palestinian camps.

- [“Eavesdropping sparks fresh border tension”](#), *National*, 19 Oct. 2009.

➡ **Syria** Thaw in relations with Saudi Arabia confirmed by 7-8 Oct Damascus visit of King Abdullah to discuss regional issues including Lebanon, Iraq, Palestinian territories. Several cabinet ministers met with Turkish counterparts 13 Oct in first session of strategic cooperation council, Aleppo. Signature of EU association agreement scheduled for 26 Oct postponed indefinitely after Syrian officials said more time needed for review. Dissident human rights lawyer Haitham Maleh arrested 14 Oct.

- [“Damascus delays signing on dotted line for EU deal”](#), *National*, 25 Oct. 2009.

GULF

➡ **Bahrain** Court 13 Oct acquitted 19 Shiite villagers accused of killing policeman in Apr 2008 riot. Thousands in 30 Oct Shiite-led rally against alleged politically-motivated naturalisation of Sunnis.

- [“Villagers not guilty of policeman’s murder”](#), *National*, 14 Oct. 2009.

➡ **Iran** Talks on Iranian nuclear program with UNSC P5 + Germany 1 Oct, 19-21 Oct produced draft deal for Iran to export 75% of low-enriched uranium stockpile in exchange for high-enriched fuel for medical research reactor. In 29 Oct formal response, Iran reportedly requested major changes to proposal. Internal critics of deal included parliament speaker Larijani, opposition leader Musavi. IAEA inspectors visited recently-revealed Qom nuclear facility 25-27 Oct. At least 42, including top Revolutionary Guard commanders, killed in 18 Oct bombing, Pishin, SE Iran, claimed by Sunni Baluchi armed group Jundallah; officials accused U.S., UK, Pakistan of supporting group. Post-election opposition activities continued, including student protests in several cities, statements by leaders, disturbances around visits of Karrubi and Musavi aide to media exhibition 23, 25 Oct. Judiciary 13 Oct announced case against Karrubi for alleging rape of detained protesters; 100 MPs reportedly signed petition calling for legal action against Musavi. 3 members of anti-regime organisations allegedly linked with post-election unrest sentenced to death 8, 10 Oct. Sentences issued for several post-election detainees including 15 years for U.S.-Iranian scholar Tajbakhsh 20 Oct. Over 60 reformists and relatives of detainees arrested at 22 Oct prayer ceremony, many subsequently released.

- [“Iran tells U.N. it wants nuclear fuel first: envoys”](#), Reuters, 30 Oct. 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Middle East Briefing N°28, [U.S.-Iranian Engagement: The View from Tehran](#), 2 June 2009.

➡ **Iraq** In deadliest attack for 2 years, car bombs 25 Oct hit justice ministry, provincial council buildings in heavily-guarded central Baghdad, leaving at least 155 dead, over 500 injured; attack, claimed by al-Qaeda-linked Islamic State of Iraq, followed Aug ministry bombings in same district. Officials reported over 60 security personnel arrested following attack. Smaller attacks continued across country during month, including several in Anbar province killing over 40. Up to 200 suspected insurgents arrested in early-month operation, Mosul area. MPs repeatedly failed to pass new law for Jan parliamentary election despite compromise proposal drafted by political leaders 26 Oct; deadlock centred on open versus closed party lists, Kirkuk voter register. PM Maliki announced formation of State of Law bloc, including Daawa party, Sunni tribal leaders, to stand against Shiite-dominated Iraqi National Alliance. Sadrist movement held primaries to elect candidates 16 Oct. Contract to develop Rumaila oilfield signed with BP, CNPC 8 Oct. Kurdistan region govt 12 Oct announced suspension of oil exports due to central govt refusal to pay foreign oil companies. Maliki signed accords with Turkish PM on energy, water, anti-PKK cooperation 15 Oct.

- Comment by Joost Hiltermann (Crisis Group), [“Iraq on the Edge”](#), *New York Review of Books*, 19 Oct. 2009.
- [“Iraq car bombings kill 147”](#), *Los Angeles Times*, 26 Oct. 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Middle East Report N°90, [Iraq’s New Battlefield: The Struggle over Ninewa](#), 28 Sept. 2009.

➡ **Saudi Arabia** 1 police officer, 2 suspected al-Qaeda militants killed in 13 Oct shootout in southern province of Jizan. 5 terrorism suspects arrested in security operation in Samita near Yemen border 2 Oct.

- [“Al-Qaeda suspects die in shootout”](#), BBC, 13 Oct. 2009.

➡ **Yemen** Continued heavy fighting in north between govt forces and Houthi-led rebels. Casualty figures, claims of progress from both sides not independently verified as access to conflict zone restricted. Army claimed 100 rebels killed attacking Saada city 9 Oct, scores more killed in later clashes; rebels reported killing 80 govt troops in Razih 19 Oct. UN reported several civilian dead in 29 Oct strike on IDP camp near Saada. Saudi authorities denied several Houthi accusations that troops fired across border, clashed with rebels. Security forces 13 Oct closed down Iranian-funded hospital in Sanaa, alleging support for Houthis; seized Iranian ship 26 Oct. 24 Houthis sentenced to death in mid-late month trials for 2008 anti-govt fighting. UNHCR 11 Oct sent first aid convoy across Saudi border to remote northern areas of Saada. Southern Movement supporters demonstrated in southern cities during month calling for release of detainees from previous protests. At least 2 soldiers killed in 25 Oct ambush, Dhali'. Soldier killed in 31 Oct clash with jihadist group, Abyan province.

- "In Yemen, war centers on authority, not terrain", *New York Times*, 24 Oct. 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Middle East Report N°86, *Yemen: Defusing the Saada Time Bomb*, 27 May 2009.

NORTH AFRICA

➡ **Algeria** Security forces reported killing 5 militants in 4 Oct clash, Djelfa. Al-Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb 5 Oct claimed 29 attacks, 80 govt forces killed over last 2 mths. 10 militants, 3 soldiers reported killed 9 Oct in army clash with armed group in SW desert region. 7 guards working for Canadian company killed in 22 Oct attack, Tizi Ouzou. Rioters clashed with police 19-20 Oct in eastern Algiers slum in protest over housing

shortages, unemployment.

- "Algeria riots reveal anger of a generation", Reuters, 22 Oct. 2009.

➡ **Egypt** Campaign against potential succession of President Mubarak's son Gamal launched 14 Oct by opposition leader Ayman Nour, attended by members of several groups including Muslim Brotherhood (MB). MB 20 Oct denied resignation of leader Muhammad Mahdi Akef, but said Akef had delegated powers to deputy after leading members blocked appointment of reformist Erian to MB governing body. 20 MB members arrested at 18 Oct political meeting, Mansoura. Trial of 26 "Hizbollah" cell members detained in May resumed 28 Oct. Ruling NDP began annual conference 31 Oct.

- "Muslim Brotherhood's testing time", Al Jazeera, 24 Oct. 2009.

➡ **Mauritania** President Abdelaziz visited France 26-28 Oct as relations normalised following July elections, return to democratic rule. Officials from both countries held security meetings 5 Oct. French army chief visited Mauritania 11-13 Oct; joint exercise with French military held in north 25 Oct. EU evaluation mission 6-7 Oct recognised restoration of constitutional order following elections. 6 of 7 al-Qaeda suspects arrested late Sept in remote north released 14 Oct.

- "France normalises Mauritania ties after coup, poll", Reuters, 26 Oct. 2009.

➡ **Western Sahara** 7 Sahrawi activists detained in Morocco following widely denounced visit to Polisario-run camps in Tindouf, SW Algeria. UNSG 7 Oct appointed Egyptian Hany Abdel-Aziz as new head of MINURSO.

- "Morocco detains Polisario activists after HQ trip", Reuters, 10 Oct. 2009.

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Madeleine K. Albright, U.S. Secretary of State (1997–2001), April 2008

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