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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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December 2010 Trends



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January 2011 Watchlist



Conflict Risk Alerts

Côte d'Ivoire



Conflict Resolution Opportunities

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 UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Louise Arbour.



CENTRAL AFRICA

➡ **Burundi** Politically motivated assassinations of opposition figures reported in Bujumbura, including FRODEBU member shot dead 2 Dec, Union for Peace and Development (UDP) supporter killed 9 Dec and FNL youth movement local leader executed 22 Dec. Armed men in military uniform 13 Dec killed 4 in Bujumbura Rural province including ruling CNDD-FDD party member and ex-FNL member suspected of collaborating with govt. Authorities continue to refute indications new rebel movement forming: officials 6 Dec downplayed UN Group of Experts on DRC end Nov report, said UN claims that 700 FNL arming in east Congo needed to be verified. UNSC 16 Dec authorised significant reduction of UN office presence effective 1 Jan 2011. Grenade exploded in Bujumbura 31 Dec during New Year celebrations causing 3 fatal injuries; perpetrators yet to be identified.

- [“Officials downplay FNL activity in eastern Congo”](#), IRIN, 8 Dec. 2010.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°155, [Burundi: Ensuring Credible Elections](#), 12 Feb. 2010.

Crisis Group Africa Report N°167, [Dangerous Little Stones: Diamonds in the Central African Republic](#), 16 Dec. 2010.



In the diamond mines of the Central African Republic (CAR), extreme poverty and armed conflict put thousands of lives in danger.

➡ **Central African Republic** Month saw laborious progress in preparations for 23 Jan 2011 presidential and legislative elections; UN SRSG Sahle Work-Zewde 9 Dec told UNSC all major remaining political obstacles have been lifted, emphasized fair process crucial for restoring stability. As MINURCAT entered final phase of troop drawdown and withdrawal from Chad and CAR, UNSC 14 Dec extended UN integrated peacebuilding office (BINUCA) mandate for further 12 months until 31 Dec 2011. Govt early Dec confirmed 71 killed including 65 rebels during Convention of Patriots for Justice and Peace (CPJP) late-Nov attack on Birao town. Sudanese President Bashir cancelled plans to attend 1 Dec celebrations marking fiftieth Independence anniversary, reportedly due to CAR's status as Rome Statue signatory and International Criminal Court indictment against him. LRA 18-19 Dec reportedly attacked Zumaro village, Western Equatoria; 2 killed, more than 50 abducted.

- [“Fair elections key to stability in Central Africa”](#), UN News Service, 8 Dec. 2010.

➡ **Chad** Ahead of 2011 elections President Déby 10 Dec secured support of 2 key opposition leaders Lol Mahamat Choua and Kassire Coumakoye. Amid allegations that 8 candidates added to parliamentary lists at president's request, election monitoring committee 29-30 Dec held emergency meeting, announced sacking of head of election commission Ngarmajiel Gami. Senegalese President Abdoulaye Wade 17 Dec cancelled Nov agreement to proceed with trial of former President Hissène Habré, deposed in 1990 and now in exile in Senegal. In line with scheduled MINURCAT withdrawal, UN SRSG 14 Dec confirmed all administrative, operational civilian protection

responsibilities have been handed over to govt integrated security unit; MINURCAT liquidation of assets began 1 Jan.

- [“Chad sacks electoral body head amid fraud allegations”](#), Reuters, 31 Dec. 2010.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°162, [Chad: Beyond Superficial Stability](#), 17 Aug. 2010.

➡ **Democratic Republic of Congo** Month dominated by 2011 election-related developments including 8 Dec return of former exiled opposition Union pour la démocratie et le progrès social (UDPS) leader Etienne Tshisekedi, endorsed by party as its presidential candidate during UDPS congress 10-14 Dec. Former national assembly president Vital Kamerhe 14 Dec officially announced creation of Union pour la nation Congolaise (UNC), signifying his breakaway from President Kabila's Parti du peuple pour la reconstruction et le développement (PPRD) and intent to run for elections. Kamerhe's unofficial 15 Dec campaign visit to Kivus prompted confrontation between his supporters, PPRD and police; 20 wounded. On heels of Kabila's 8 Dec state of nation address, political party Congrès national pour la defense du peuple (CNDP) 11 Dec pledged allegiance to umbrella Alliance de la majorité présidentielle (AMP) on condition ex-CNDP combatants integrated into FARDC following 2009 deal with Rwanda given military ranks. International Conference of Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) 15 Dec agreed on certification process for minerals, endorsement of OECD due diligence guidelines and mineral trade reform agenda. Human Rights Watch 20 Dec declared rogue army officers, including ICC indictee Bosco Ntaganda and FDLR in east, responsible for forced recruitment of hundreds of children during campaign over past 4 months; called on govt to stop recruitment, prosecute those responsible.

- [“Former Congolese rebels mobilising new recruits, child soldiers, HRW says”](#), Bloomberg, 20 Dec. 2010.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°165, [Congo: No Stability in Kivu despite Rapprochement with Rwanda](#), 16 Nov. 2010.

➡ **Rwanda** Following Nov summons to appear before military court, exiled former allies of ruling Rwandan Patriotic Front and military officers General Kayumba Nyamwasa and Colonel Patrick Karegeya 11-12 Dec established new political party Rwanda National Congress during meeting in U.S.. Pro-govt media 6 Dec quoted excerpts of UN Expert Panel 29 Nov report linking Nyamwasa, Karegeya to east Congo-based armed groups; both men 29 Dec denied allegations. During early Dec visit to Belgium, President Kagame 6 Dec boycotted European development conference, cancelled appointments with PM Yves Leterme, govt members after Belgian King Albert II refused to meet him.

- [“Exiled RPF officials fight back”](#), *Independent (Kampala)*, 28 Dec. 2010.

HORN OF AFRICA

➡ **Ethiopia/Eritrea** AU panel meeting 12-14 Dec in Addis Ababa urged launch of new approach to settle Ethiopia-Eritrea dispute, recognising Algiers Peace Agreement signed 2000 remains stalled.

- [“AU panel urges new approach to settle Ethiopia-Eritrea border dispute”](#), *Sudan Tribune*, 17 Dec. 2010.

➡ **Ethiopia** Rebel Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) 22 Dec claimed govt forces killed more than 20 civilians in mainly Somali-dominated region in east.

- [“ONLF charges Ethiopia of killing more civilians”](#), Shabelle Media Network, 22 Dec. 2010.

➡ **Kenya** International Criminal Court (ICC) prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo 15 Dec requested Court issue summons for 3 ministers and 3 other prominent figures allegedly responsible for organising serious crimes against rival supporters during 2007-2008 post-election violence. Suspects include deputy PM, finance minister Uhuru Kenyatta, suspended education minister William Ruto, former police chief Mohammed Hussein Ali and radio executive Joshua Arap Sang. MPs 22 Dec overwhelmingly voted to withdraw from Rome Statute; commentators noted vote will not halt active cases. Local opinion poll 14 Dec indicated 85% in favour of ICC prosecution. 2 killed, more than 40 injured 20 Dec by bomb targeting Nairobi-Kampala bus, blamed on Somali militant al-Shabaab.

- [“Kenya and the international court: will they go quietly?”](#), *Economist*, 29 Dec. 2010.

➡ **Somalia** Insurgent faction Hizbul Islam 19 Dec announced decision to surrender to al-Shabaab militants, join forces; al-Shabaab 23 Dec warned strengthened force would redouble attacks against Uganda and Burundi. 1 Jan and 27, 28 Dec attacks against govt forces, AMISOM left at least 35 dead, more than 50 injured including civilians; followed heavy fighting between al-Shabaab and govt forces in Mogadishu 12-14 Dec killing over 25. Suspected al-Shabaab bomb targeting Kampala-bound bus from Nairobi detonated early 20 Dec; 2 killed, more than 40 injured. During Mogadishu press conference al-Shabaab 24 Dec called on al-Qaeda to “expand East African Jihad”, 27 Dec threatened attacks on U.S. soil. Analysts claim announcements propaganda, militants still divided. UNSC 22 Dec announced 4,000 AMISOM troop increase, extended mandate until 30 Sept 2011. Somaliland authorities 11 Dec seized plane carrying military supplies destined for Puntland; court 30 Dec sentenced 6 Russian crew to 12 months’ prison for violating UN arms embargo.

- [“Somaliland to charge 8 over weapons laden plane”](#), Reuters, 19 Dec. 2010.

➡ **Sudan** Extended voter registration period ended 8 Dec with authorities reporting over 3.2 million registered for 9 Jan South Sudan self-determination referendum; UN, international observers 16 Dec commended process despite “a few weaknesses”. South Sudan Referendum Commission 20 Dec said notification from Constitutional Court regarding two legal challenges raising fears of delay. In speech broadcast live on state television, President Bashir 28 Dec pledged support to south’s secession if 9 Jan vote is free and fair. UN and others 9 Dec launched early warning atrocity prevention project through satellite imagery monitoring of referendum. Preparation for simultaneous Abyei self-determination vote irretrievably behind schedule as parties to Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), Sudan People’s Liberation Movement (SPLM) and ruling National Congress Party (NCP), failed to break stalemate over terms of Abyei vote. AU High Level Implementation Panel 6, 8 and 18 Dec failed to facilitate NCP-SPLM breakthrough on post-referendum arrangements. Situation in Darfur deteriorated as Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) 10, 11 Dec attacked Khor Abeche village, S Darfur. Estimated 12,000 fled fighting 17 Dec in same location between SAF and rebel Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM); SAF 24 Dec killed 40 Justice and Equality Movement, SLM rebels. Meanwhile, joint ceasefire commission confirmed air attacks took place 6, 8, 9 Dec in Western Bahr al-Ghazal

state bordering S Darfur. Bashir 29 Dec said will withdraw from Doha peace talks if no deal reached with Liberation and Justice Movement rebels by 30 Dec; UN-AU mediator to Darfur Djibril Bassole said ultimatum threatened whole process; mediators handed compromise proposals to govt 1 Jan.

- [“Clooney joins Sudan spy poll mission”](#), *Financial Times*, 29 Dec. 2010.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°76, [Negotiating Sudan’s North-South Future](#), 23 Nov. 2010.

➡ **Uganda** Security stepped up as suspected al-Shabaab bomb blast 20 Dec targeting Kampala-bound bus from Nairobi left 2 dead, several injured; President Museveni 21 Dec vowed terrorist attacks would not deter AMISOM troop role in Somalia.

- [“Security beefed up in Kampala”](#), *New Vision*, 24 Dec. 2010.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°157, [LRA: A Regional Strategy beyond Killing Kony](#), 28 Apr. 2010.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

➡ **Comoros** Electoral commission 29 Dec announced ruling party candidate Ikililou Dhoinine won 26 Dec presidential election with 61% of vote; main challenger Mohamed Said Fazul gained 33%. Opposition, international observers said poll marred by irregularities, fraud. Govt 30 Dec banned public rallies until 15 Jan.

- [“Comoros bans rallies as election tensions heat up”](#), Reuters, 30 Dec. 2010.

➡ **Madagascar** De facto leader Andry Rajoelina 11 Dec promulgated new constitution, “fourth republic” following Nov referendum, still not recognised by international community and rejected by 3 main opposition groups. Mid-month SADC mission attempting to reactivate negotiations between de facto authorities and opposition, and commission an international mediation local liaison office, declined to comment on new constitution. World Food Programme 11 Dec warned 720,000 people at risk of starvation in south following 2-year drought. U.S. cable dated June 2009 published by WikiLeaks reported former president Ravalomanana recruiting mercenaries in France 3 months after being deposed by Rajoelina.

- [“Deposed president ‘recruited mercenaries’ – diplomatic cable”](#), AllAfrica, 6 Dec. 2010.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°166, [Madagascar: Crisis Heating Up?](#), 18 Nov. 2010.

➡ **South Africa** Concerns over possible mass deportation of Zimbabweans living in South Africa illegally, after only 251,000 immigrants out of estimated more than 1 million applied for proper documentation by 31 Dec deadline.



- [“Zimbabweans lack time”](#), *New Age*, 21 Dec. 2010.

➡ **Zimbabwe** Ahead of expected 2011 elections, military, intelligence and police chiefs summoned to appear before Joint Monitoring and Implementation Committee 10 Dec over reported comments they will not accept election results if President Mugabe does not win. PM Tsvangirai criticised reported deployment of state security agents in rural areas to bolster support for Mugabe ahead of polls. South African President Zuma took over lead role drafting elections roadmap due to lack of agreement in unity govt, ahead of Jan meeting of SADC Troika. Constitution-drafting committee 23 Dec said expects referendum on draft constitution Sept 2011. Amid ongoing tensions in unity govt, PM Tsvangirai 6 Dec ordered MDC senators


back to work following protest against presence of provincial governors they say illegally appointed by Mugabe. Mugabe 18 Dec told ZANU PF conference will in future expel ambassadors and organisations interfering in country's internal affairs. U.S. 21 Dec imposed sanctions on attorney general Johannes Tomana for threatening rule of law; comes after U.S. removed sanctions on ZAPU president and member. Human Rights Watch issued report 29 Dec saying diamonds from Marange field funding Mugabe's ZANU PF. U.S. cable from Nov 2008 published by WikiLeaks reported Mugabe's wife, reserve bank head Gideon Gono, military leaders and others in political elite profited from illegal diamond trading. Attorney general threatened treason charges against Tsvangirai and others over their leaked comments to U.S. diplomats. International donors pledged over \$500mn in aid, called for reforms and election preparations.

- ["Fears growing of Mugabe's iron grip over Zimbabwe"](#), *New York Times*, 25 Dec. 2010.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°70, [Zimbabwe: Political and Security Challenges to the Transition](#), 3 March 2010.

WEST AFRICA

  **Côte d'Ivoire** Month-long political crisis over runoff election, violent clashes with more than 170 killed raising fears of return to civil war. Situation deteriorated dramatically 2 Dec as then-incumbent President Laurent Gbagbo refused to accept electoral commission (CEI) declaring former PM Alassane Ouattara winner of second round presidential election with 54% of eligible votes. Constitutional Council 3 Dec overruled commission, prompting both candidates next day to hold separate inauguration ceremonies, 6 Dec name respective cabinets. Violence erupted 16 Dec as Ouattara demonstrators fired upon by security forces backing Gbagbo. More than 170 killed in ensuing clashes between rival supporters; UNHCR 29 Dec said at least 15,000 fled to neighbouring Liberia, UN blocked from investigating sites of 2 alleged mass graves. Ouattara spokesperson 20 Dec accused Gbagbo of recruiting troops from Liberia, Angola. Regional bloc, international community declared unequivocal support for Ouattara: UNSC 8 Dec affirmed CEI results; AU, ECOWAS 9 Dec called for Gbagbo to step down, suspended Ivory Coast membership with immediate effect; EU 13 Dec imposed sanctions, 20 Dec travel ban on Gbagbo, wife, 17 allies; World Bank 22 Dec suspended financing, Central Bank of West Africa 23 Dec handed Ouattara control of state reserves. UNSC 20 Dec extended peacekeeping mission UNOCI mandate until 30 June 2011, defying demands by Gbagbo for UN withdrawal. UNSG Ban 21 Dec highlighted increasing human rights violations, warned country risks return to civil war. AU statement 27 Dec named Kenya PM Raila Odinga as AU lead in solving political crisis. 3 ECOWAS envoys, presidents from Benin, Sierra Leone and Cape Verde, 28 Dec delivered ultimatum to Gbagbo warning him to step down or face removal by force; Gbagbo said civilians at risk if regional forces intervened.


- Comment by Alain Délatroz (Crisis Group), ["Côte d'Ivoire: Gbagbo doit partir"](#), On the African Peacebuilding Agenda, 7 Dec. 2010.
- ["UN points to Ivory Coast 'extra-judicial killings'"](#), BBC, 3 Jan. 2011.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°77, [Côte d'Ivoire: Finally Escaping the Crisis?](#), 25 Nov. 2010.

 **Guinea** Supreme Court 3 Dec announced final results of 7 Nov run-off presidential election, confirming opposition leader Alpha Condé victor with 52.2% of vote. Rival candidate former PM Cellou Diallo conceded defeat, urged supporters to remain calm. President Condé officially inaugurated 21 Dec as former interim leader General Sékouba Konaté previous week officially retired from army. AU 9 Dec reinstated Guinea's membership, suspended since 2008 military coup. UN SRSG for West Africa Said Djinnit 17 Dec told UNSC Guinea to be commended for "historic achievement".


- ["A historic inauguration"](#), AP, 21 Dec. 2010.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°164, [Guinea: Reforming the Army](#), 23 Sept. 2010.

 **Guinea-Bissau** EU 30 Dec announced decision to open consultations with govt over governance concerns, suggested lack of progress in addressing key human rights, rule of law issues could lead to suspension of EU aid package. Move follows IMF, World Bank 16 Dec announcement of \$1.2bn debt relief package, aimed at sending positive signal to donors, potential investors.

- ["EU launches moves to block Guinea-Bissau aid"](#), VoA, 20 Dec. 2010.

 **Niger** Military junta 19 Dec announced decision to lift presidential immunity of ex-President Mamadou Tandja allowing attorney-general to pursue financial crimes, alleging \$28mn misappropriated funds.

- ["Niger probe alleges massive embezzlement under Tandja regime"](#), AFP, 29 Dec. 2010.

 **Nigeria** Country hit by several bomb blasts over month including at least 80 people killed, dozens wounded 24 Dec in bomb attacks claimed by Islamist sect Boko Haram in Plateau State capital Jos. Attacks sparked clashes 26 Dec between Christian and Muslim groups; riot police deployed to contain violence. At least 4 people killed in explosion in Abuja market 31 Dec, blamed on Boko Haram. Blasts come amid continuing Islamist militant violence in which several killed in separate incidents in northeast city Maiduguri, including 6 people killed in attacks on churches 24 Dec, and at least 5 killed in 29 Dec attack; 92 suspected sect members arrested next day. Police chief 16 Dec criticised officers for failing to stop attacks, suggested police may be tipping off sect. Political rally in Bayelsa State hit by 2 bombs 29 Dec. 18 of 36 governors 17 Dec said will back President Jonathan at People's Democratic Party primaries 13 Jan, ahead of April presidential election. Military operation launched in Delta State early Dec to find militant leader John Togo after he quit govt amnesty program. Activist groups said 150 people killed in operation; military denied. Army 12 Dec said it had taken control of 8 camps belonging to Niger Delta militant leader Ateke Tom in Rivers State; 14 Dec reported 8 soldiers and 6 civilians killed during operation targeting gang leaders in Niger Delta village; activist groups claimed civilian death toll higher. Army 13 Dec reported had shot dead Obioma Nwankwo, leader of kidnapping gangs in Abia state. 15 Muslim herdsmen sentenced to 10 years prison over sectarian violence between Muslim Fulanis and Christian farmers in Jos Jan 2010.

- ["Violence shows Christian, Muslim split in Nigeria"](#), AP, 3 Jan 2011.
- ["The president is threatened by a fraying amnesty"](#), *Economist*, 29 Dec. 2011.

Crisis Group Africa Report N°168, *North-ern Nigeria: Background to Conflict*, 20 Dec. 2010. Violence in northern Nigeria has flared up periodically over the last 30 years. Mainly in the form of urban riots, it has pitted Muslims against Christians and has seen confrontations between different Islamic sects.

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Asia/Pacific

CENTRAL ASIA

- **Kazakhstan** Parliament 29 Dec approved plan to hold referendum to extend Nazarbayev presidency until 2020 and cancel next 2 presidential elections. Trial opened 9 Dec against opposition presidential hopeful Zhasaral Quanyshalin on libel charges; investigation of tax evasion continued against other opposition presidential candidate Vladimir Kozlov. In capacity as OSCE chair gov't 1-2 Dec hosted first OSCE summit in decade, marred by watchdogs' allegations of rights abuses in Kazakhstan. Summit failed to adopt Action Plan due to disagreement over references to regional conflicts including issue of Moldova's Transnistria region, Georgia's break-away territories, and Armenia-Azerbaijan dispute over Nagorno-Karabakh. Almaty court 14 Dec declined to grant refugee status to 3 Uzbek citizens; some 29 Uzbek asylum seekers claiming religious persecution in home country face extradition to Uzbekistan on religious radicalism charges.
- "Kazakh parliament backs president ruling to 2020", AFP, 31 Dec. 2010.
 - For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°97, *Islamists in Prison*, 15 Dec. 2009.

- **Kyrgyzstan** 9 arrested in connection to 25 Dec alleged foiled bombing in Bishkek, 30 Nov blast in capital that killed 4. Gov't claimed all belonged to radical Islamic group. Gov't launched criminal investigation into 7 Dec graffiti calling for killing of ethnic Uzbeks in north-eastern city of Karakol. Most ethnic Kyrgyz perpetrators of deadly violence against Meskhetian Turks in Mayevka village during Apr 2010 unrest that ousted President Bakiyev released on parole 13 Dec; 1 to serve less than year due to amnesty. Trials continued over June violence in south amid allegations by rights groups of grave procedural violations, strong bias against ethnic Uzbeks. In investigation national ombudsman 13 Dec blamed Uzbek community leaders for June violence, said they aimed at creating Uzbek autonomy, overthrowing President Karimov in Uzbekistan. Ministry of Interior 15 Dec denied recent reports by rights activists of kidnappings, rape of up to 7 ethnic Uzbek women in south. New governing coalition confirmed by Parliament 17 Dec between Respublika party, pro-gov't Social Democratic party (SDPK) and nationalist Ata-Jurt, election frontrunner with strong following in south. Followed split of previous coalition over failure to elect parliamentary speaker. SDPK leader Almazbek Atambaev appointed PM, Ata-Jurt leader Akhmatbek Keldibekov speaker of parliament, and Respublika founder and oil magnate Omurbek Babanov first deputy PM. 2 weapons caches discovered 12, 14 Dec near Osh; several suspects arrested, including 1 Uzbek citizen. U.S. Congressional report 21 Dec revealed companies handling

U.S. Manas base fuel supplies ran scheme of false end-user certifications to allow export of Russian fuel for military use. Pentagon to review bids for Manas tender.

- "Muslims bracing for a new round of repression", EurasiaNet, 3 Dec. 2010.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°193, *The Pogroms in Kyrgyzstan*, 23 Aug. 2010.

- **Tajikistan** Continued crackdown on banned radical Islamic organizations in northern Sughd province. 15 suspected members of Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) arrested over month, 10 alleged Hizb-ut Tahrir activists arrested early month. Troops launched reconnaissance operation in village in Baljuvon region south of Dushanbe and close to volatile Rasht valley after 3 law enforcement officers killed in 1 Dec clash with armed militants in area. 8 fugitives of Aug high-security prison break arrested in northern Afghanistan 19 Dec.
- "IMU's evolution branches back to Central Asia", RFE/RL, 6 Dec. 2010.
 - For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°162, *Tajikistan: On the Road to Failure*, 12 Feb. 2009.

- **Turkmenistan** After 15 years' of negotiations, Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India 11 Dec signed agreement on gas pipeline (TAPI) to bring Turkmen gas to India and Pakistan; concerns voiced over TAPI's security. President Berdymukhammedov 1 Dec attended OSCE summit in Astana after OSCE chair Kazakhstan agreed to block Turkmen rights activists' attendance.
- "Presidents sign accord in Ashgabat on TAPI pipeline", RFE/RL, 11 Dec. 2010.

- **Uzbekistan** Increased tensions between Uzbekistan and Tajikistan over regional water distribution after Uzbekistan claimed 28 Nov opening of Sangtuda-2 hydropower plant in Tajikistan temporarily blocked its fresh water supply. Countries also failed to agree on terms of new bilateral air-traffic deal following Tashkent's June termination of 16 year-old agreement. At 1-2 Dec OSCE summit gov't harshly criticised organisation for inability to prevent and stop June violence in southern Kyrgyzstan, claimed current international investigation headed by Finnish MP and OSCE Parliamentary Assembly special envoy Kimmo Kiljunen lacked proper mandate.
- "Uzbekistan vs. Tajikistan: competition over water resources intensifying", EurasiaNet, 8 Dec. 2010.

NORTH EAST ASIA

- **North Korea** Tensions on peninsula remained high as S Korea intensified military drills following Nov shelling of Yönp'yöng Island by N Korea. Tensions peaked as Seoul 20 Dec held live-fire artillery drills on Yönp'yöng Island, backed by U.S.; N Korea 18 Dec threatened "brutal consequences beyond imagination" if drills went ahead, 20 Dec said artillery exercise "not worth a response". Russia, China 18 Dec called on Seoul to cancel 20 Dec drills, but Seoul refused to back down amid domestic pressure to stand firm against North. 19 Dec emergency meeting of UNSC failed to agree on common statement, with China opposed to criticising Pyongyang. Seoul 22 Dec launched 3-day naval drill in Sea of Japan, 23 Dec held largest drills ever near North-South demilitarised zone. Pyongyang 23 Dec called exercises a preparation for war, claimed ready for "sacred war of justice" using nuclear deterrent; 1 Jan delivered New Year message calling for "lasting peace" but warning

against war. U.S. Governor Bill Richardson made private visit to N Korea 17-21 Dec aimed at reducing tensions on peninsula, hours before 20 Dec drills reported Pyongyang willing to make "concessions" toward reopening 6-party nuclear talks, including to allow international nuclear inspectors into Yongbyon nuclear complex, sell 12,000 uranium fuel rods to S Korea thus removing potential bomb-making material from North.

- "China's North Korea shift helps U.S. relations", *New York Times*, 23 Dec. 2010.

Crisis Group Africa Report N° 198, *North Korea: The Risks of War in the Yellow Sea*, 23 Dec. 2010. The sinking of a South Korean naval vessel and artillery attack against a South Korean island highlight that stability on the peninsula is threatened by more than the nuclear issue.



SOUTH ASIA

➡ **Afghanistan** In 17 Dec policy assessment, U.S. President Obama claimed troop increase from Jan 2010 had led to security improvement in Afghanistan, "responsible reduction" in U.S. troops planned from 2011. Wave of Taliban attacks leading up to announcement, including 15 killed in 11 Dec roadside bomb in Kandahar, 6 ISAF troops killed in 12 Dec suicide blast also in Kandahar. Govt 20 Dec said President Karzai to inaugurate new parliament 20 Jan despite continued controversy over fraud in Sept elections. Richard Holbrooke, U.S. envoy to Afghanistan and Pakistan, died 14 Dec from heart problems. 2010 ISAF death toll close to 700, up from 521 in 2009. UN 23 Dec reported 2010 civilian casualties up 20% from 2009, but drop in number killed by ISAF troops.

- Comment by Louise Arbour (Crisis Group), "Get Real: That's the Road to Afghan Peace", *Globe and Mail*, 22 Dec. 2010.
- "No decisive victory one year into Afghan surge", AP, 13 Dec. 2010.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N° 115, *Afghanistan: Exit vs Engagement*, 28 Nov. 2010.

➡ **Bangladesh** Influential opposition BNP party MP Salauddin Quader Chowdhury charged 15 Dec with war crimes during 1971 independence war, arrested 16 Dec on unrelated murder charges; BNP claimed politically motivated.

- "Bangladesh arrests MP accused of war crimes", AFP, 16 Dec. 2010.

➡ **Kashmir** India Home Minister Chidambaram 9 Dec said "contours" of political solution to Kashmir issue to be ready within "a few months", but civil society groups criticised govt exclusion of main separatist groups in dialogue. U.S. diplomatic cable released by WikiLeaks alleged ICRC accused Indian police of systematic torture of detainees 2002-2004.

- "India says solution to ending Kashmir protests in sight", Reuters, 9 Dec. 2010.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N° 106, *Steps Towards Peace: Putting Kashmiris First*, 3 June 2010.

➡ **Nepal** President Yadav called special parliamentary session for 23 Dec to break 6-month political deadlock in which Constituent Assembly has repeatedly failed to elect new PM, but session postponed. Supreme Court 18 Dec declared it illegal for MPs to abstain or remain neutral in PM vote. UNSG Ban 31 Dec expressed concern about political impasse and stalled peace process, urged all parties to resolve issue of reintegrating ex-Maoist combatants into National Army ahead of 15 Jan UNMIN

departure; UNMIN currently monitoring integration process.

- "Nepal MPs cannot be neutral or desist from voting: Top court", PTI, 18 Dec. 2010.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N° 194, *Nepal's Political Rites of Passage*, 29 Sept. 2010.

➡ **India (non-Kashmir)** Maoists 17 Dec killed 7 supporters of pro-govt Forward Bloc party in West Bengal. Govt 14 Dec announced army will be deployed to new base in Chhattisgarh to assist police with anti-Maoist training. Govt 1 Jan released Assam separatist group ULFA leader Arabinda Rajkhowa from jail; Rajkhowa said open to "unconditional" peace talks with govt once rest of ULFA leadership released from prison.

- "Formation of PLGA a turning point in the Maoist movement", *Hindu*, 5 Dec. 2010.

➡ **Pakistan** Female suicide bomber killed at least 45 in 25 Dec attack on WFP aid centre in Bajur Agency. At least 43 killed in 6 Dec suicide attack on Mohmand Agency govt compound; Taliban claimed responsibility. Suicide blasts in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa 8 Dec killed 17, 10 Dec killed 11; anti-Taliban militia leaders apparently targeted. Federal coalition govt could lose parliamentary majority after Karachi-based MQM party 2 Jan announced it will join the opposition over "differences" with largest party PPP; PPP likely to lead minority govt despite some opposition factions calling for vote of no-confidence. MQM 27 Dec had withdrawn its 2 ministers from cabinet, but said it will remain part of coalition in Sindh province. Islamic party Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Fazl (JUI-F) 14 Dec withdrew from coalition after PM Gilani sacked JUI-F minister who accused another minister of corruption. Balochistan Chief Minister Aslam Khan Raisani escaped 7 Dec attempted suicide blast in Quetta. U.S. intensified drone strikes in northwest: at least 25 alleged militants killed in Khyber 17 Dec. Pakistan, China signed \$20bn trade deal 18 Dec during PM Wen's late month visit to Islamabad.

- Comment by Samina Ahmed (Crisis Group), "Pakistan: The Hidden War", *Foreign Policy*, 23 Dec. 2010.
- "Major party walks out of coalition in Pakistan", *New York Times*, 2 Jan. 2011.

Crisis Group Asia Report N° 196, *Reforming Pakistan's Criminal Justice System*, 6 Dec. 2010. The ineffectiveness of Pakistan's criminal justice system has serious repercussions for domestic, regional and international security.



➡ **Sri Lanka** President Rajapaksa 1 Dec forced to cancel speech at Oxford University after Tamil groups threatened large-scale protests; attempts to have UK court arrest senior military officer in president's entourage for war crimes failed after target left UK early. UN 7 Dec said most of some 300,000 displaced during end of civil war now resettled, but some 20,000 remain in camps in north. Govt 17 Dec said will allow UN war crimes investigation panel to visit Sri Lanka, reversing previous ban; 30 Dec said panel only allowed to testify before govt's own commission investigating civil war (LLRC), not conduct own investigation. LLRC hearings continued: doctor present in war zone testified half of families in Vanni had at least 1 family member killed.

- "Sri Lanka says U.N. panel can not conduct own war crimes probe", Reuters, 30 Dec. 2010.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N° 191, *War Crimes in Sri Lanka*, 17 May 2010.

SOUTH EAST ASIA

➤ **Burma/Myanmar** UN human rights expert on Myanmar 13 Dec called on govt to release estimated 2,200 remaining political prisoners; followed 8 Dec death of imprisoned monk, 145th prisoner to die in captivity since 1988. State media 8 Dec reported turnout in Nov election 77%; junta leader Than Shwe 2 Dec hailed widely-criticised election as “successful”, said Burma on course to complete “roadmap to democracy” in 2011. Clashes between army and Karen ceasefire groups continued during month: 1 officer reportedly killed in Phaluu early month; hundreds displaced across border into Thailand.

- “[KNU calls on Burma army to withdraw](#)”, Irrawaddy, 2 Dec. 2010.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°112, [China’s Myanmar Strategy: Elections, Ethnic Politics and Economics](#), 21 Sept. 2010.

➤ **Indonesia** Police 17 Dec submitted case dossier for prosecution of radical cleric Abu Bakar Ba’asyir, trial on terrorism charges expected to start Jan. Court 20, 30 Dec jailed 16 others linked to Aceh terrorist camp discovered Feb. Police 10 Dec arrested Abu Tholut, ex-head of JI special forces and one of country’s most wanted fugitives. Batak Christians 13 Dec appealed to govt for protection as hardline Muslim vigilante groups continued attacks near Bandung. String of violent incidents in Papua around 1 Dec “national day” for independence movement: police 3 Dec killed 1 of 5 escaped Abepura prison inmates, prompting riots in prison.

- “[Indonesia police say aged cleric was terror chief](#)”, AFP, 14 Dec. 2010.

Crisis Group Asia Report N° 197, [Indonesia: Preventing Violence in Local Elections](#), 8 Dec. 2010. Indonesia needs to learn promptly the lessons from the sporadic violence witnessed in its local elections during 2010 as there is some evidence these easily preventable incidents could be increasing in frequency since the last cycle.

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➤ **Philippines** Govt-MILF talks faced continued delays. Mandate of Malaysian-led peace process monitoring team extended 8 Dec by 3 months, but could not be renewed for full term as govt still seeking removal of Malaysian facilitator Othman Razak due to his alleged pro-MILF bias. 3 soldiers killed in 7 Dec clash with MILF in Zamboanga Sibugay. Representatives of govt and communist New People’s Army (NPA) 2 Dec agreed to 16 Dec-3 Jan ceasefire, longest such ceasefire in more than 10 years; formal talks expected to resume Feb 2011. NPA 14 Dec killed 12, including 10 soldiers and 1 child, in Northern Samar; govt denounced attack as “treacherous”. NPA 26 Dec said will continue “revolt” despite ceasefire.

- “[MILF blames PH gov’t for delay in restart of talks](#)”, *Inquirer*, 22 Dec. 2010.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°103, [Philippines: Pre-election Tensions in Central Mindanao](#), 4 May 2010.

➤ **Thailand** Govt 21 Dec lifted state of emergency in Bangkok and 3 other provinces, in effect since Apr, citing improved security situation. Constitutional Court 9 Dec dismissed second and final electoral misconduct charge against ruling Democrat Party (DP), defusing fears it could be dissolved. Court 30 Dec jailed 84 pro-govt “yellow shirt” protesters for storming state TV station in 2008. String of attacks by suspected Islamist militants in restive south: 5 killed 4 Dec in separate attacks; 5 killed, including 2 soldiers, 18 Dec in Yala province; 2 paramilitary rangers

killed in Narathiwat province 23 Dec. Border tensions with Cambodia continued: Phnom Penh 30 Dec charged 7 Thais, including MP from DP, with illegal entry; PM Abhisit called for their immediate release.

- “[Beware the watermelons](#)”, *Economist*, 29 Dec. 2010.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N° 113, [Stalemate in Southern Thailand](#), 3 Nov. 2010.

➤ **Timor-Leste** PM Gusmão 21 Dec reportedly told high-level meeting of security force leaders that time had come for international forces maintaining security in country to leave

- “[Time for the UN to withdraw from East Timor?](#)”, *Atlantic*, 21 Dec. 2010.

Crisis Group Asia Briefing N° 116, [Timor-Leste: Time for the UN to Step Back](#), 15 Dec. 2010. The policing contingent of the UN Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) should be sharply reduced in size to reflect improvements in security since the 2006 crisis and to support future stability.

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Europe

BALKANS

➤ **Bosnia** Establishment of govts at state level and Federation of BiH remains stuck due to continued political polarization following Oct elections. Predominantly Bosniak bloc led by multiethnic Social Democratic Party issued platform for formation of new govts 20 Dec, rejected by second bloc led by Republika Srpska (RS) ruling party League of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD) and nationalist Serb Democratic Party (SDS). Representatives of Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ), offshoot HDZ1990, SNSD and SDS 22 Dec blocked inauguration of state House of Representatives until coalition agreement is put in place. Continuation of parliamentary session scheduled for 11 Jan. In RS, PM Džombić’s govt confirmed by lawmakers 29 Dec. Peace Implementation Council met early month to encourage progress in govt formation, 23 Dec urged authorities to increase efforts to harmonize constitution and electoral legislation with European Convention on Human Rights. Starting 15 Dec, Bosnians free to travel to EU Schengen Zone without visas.

- “[Bosnia’s post-election future bleaker than ever](#)”, ISN, 6 Dec. 2010.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Europe Report N°209, [Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina – A Parallel Crisis](#), 28 Sept. 2010

➤ **Kosovo** Incumbent PM Thaci’s Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK) won 12 Dec snap parliamentary elections necessitated by Oct collapse of coalition, first general election since 2008 declaration of independence. PDK leading party with 33.5% of vote, Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) 23.6%, pan-Albanian Vetevendosje (self-determination) party came third. Electoral commission reported 48% turnout; poll marred by extensive allegations of fraud, with some 40% of ballots to be recounted, vote to be repeated in 5 municipalities 9 Jan. Turnout among Kosovo Serbs south of Ibar comparable with Kosovo average despite some problems with outdated, missing voter rolls; no Serbs voted north of Ibar amid intimidation campaign by nationalist Serbs. Bosniak electoral commission worker shot 8 Dec in north. Kosovo Serb Independent Liberal Party 28 Dec said

ready to form a coalition with PDK. Council of Europe rapporteur Dick Marty released report mid month alleging Thaci and other former KLA commanders ran murder and organ trafficking ring during 1998-99 conflict with Serbia. Pristina said report "slanderous", Thaci 20 Dec said will sue Marty for defamation. Serbian President Tadic 21 Dec said Belgrade-Pristina talks on technical issues should start despite report; Thaci said report threatens talks.

- "Thaci camp hits back at organ trafficking allegations", *EU Observer*, 21 Dec. 2010.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Europe Report N°206, *Kosovo and Serbia after the ICJ Opinion*, 26 Aug. 2010.

➡ **Macedonia** Thousands rallied in Skopje 5 Dec calling for early elections. MPs 14 Dec rejected opposition Social Democrat motion calling for dissolution of parliament, early elections. FM Milososki 30 Dec said expects resumption of name talks with Greece in Jan. Media organisation owner Velija Ramkovski arrested 23 Dec as part of investigation into fraud, organised crime; supporters claim arrest politically motivated.

- "No snap polls in Macedonia, ruling party says", *Balkan Insight*, 9 Dec. 2010.

➡ **Serbia** European Parliament Foreign Affairs Committee 1 Dec approved EU's Stabilisation and Association Agreement with Serbia in draft resolution.

- "The Balkans look to 2011 with cautious optimism", *RFE/RL*, 14 Dec. 2010.

CAUCASUS

➡ **Armenia** National Security Council (NSC) 11 Dec approved 2011-2015 military modernisation program including acquisition of long-range, precision-guided weapons and development of domestic defence industry. NSC head said program will neutralize all possible threats to national security; also recalled Aug Armenian-Russian agreement to set up joint military ventures. U.S. diplomatic cables released by Wikileaks revealed U.S. claims Armenia transferred weapons to Iran in 2003.

- "Armenia approves army modernization plan", *RFE/RL*, 14 Dec. 2010.

➡ **Azerbaijan** Widespread demonstrations by Shiite Muslims after Education Minister 9 Dec stated wearing hijab at school against rules. Hundreds gathered 10 Dec in front of education ministry; several thousand protested 16 Dec in village near Baku. Despite Apr ruling by European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) for immediate release and payment of damages to journalist Eynulla Fatullayev, Supreme Court 6 Dec upheld new charges of fraud and drug possession, introduced new 2 year sentence on libel charges. Council of Europe 7 Dec gave Baku until March 2011 to comply with ECHR's ruling.

- "In Azerbaijan, hijab debate a mounting challenge for government", *RFE/RL*, 23 Dec. 2010.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Europe Report N°207, *Azerbaijan: Vulnerable Stability*, 3 Sept. 2010.

➡ **Chechnya (Russia)** Violent Russian nationalist riots in Moscow directed at North Caucasians as inter-ethnic tensions spiked (see North Caucasus). In Chechnya, several shootings of law enforcement personnel reported over month.

- "Nationalist uprising in Moscow has serious implications for the North Caucasus", *EDM*, 15 Dec. 2010.

➡ **North Caucasus (non-Chechnya)** Spike in inter-ethnic tensions between North Caucasians and Russians as 6 Dec killing of ethnic Russian soccer fan in row with North Caucasians in Moscow prompted Russian nationalist riots 11 Dec. In largest protest in recent years, some 5,000 clashed with police in central Moscow shouting anti-Caucasian slogans and assaulting non-ethnic Russian passersby. Renewed violence in Moscow 15 Dec between ethnic Russian and non-Russian rioters with 1,300 reportedly detained, 30 injured. Smaller scale nationalist protests and clashes in Rostov-on-Don, St. Petersburg, Samara. President Medvedev acknowledged police response to riots muted, ineffective; ordered new commission to oversee work of law enforcement agencies. Steady violence continued in Dagestan over month with several attacks on police posts and shootouts between security forces and rebels. Top Muslim cleric killed 15 Dec in Kabardino-Balkaria reportedly for preaching against Islamic radicalism. 4 militants killed in special operation in Ingushetia.

- "Putin and Medvedev regime challenged by nationalist football fans", *EDM*, 20 Dec. 2010.

➡ **Georgia** Following President Saakashvili's 23 Nov pledge not to use force to restore Georgian territorial integrity, Abkhazian and South Ossetian (SO) de facto leaders 6 Dec in separate statements expressed doubt in Saakashvili's sincerity, but affirmed own commitment to non-use of force. Russia greeted overtures as sign of "equal relations", continued to insist it is not party to conflict and will not make similar pledges as demanded by Tbilisi. EU, UN and OSCE co-chairs of Geneva international discussions cautiously welcomed declarations as creating "new context", but achieved no substantial outcomes at fourteenth round of talks 16 Dec. Police 6 Dec arrested 6 for series of explosions in Tbilisi and west over past months; said suspects acted on instructions of Abkhazia-based Russian military officer. Reports early month of Russian Smerch rocket artillery unit deployed in SO, new FSB border base opened in Gali (Abkhazia). Russia announced plans to open total of 18 similar bases. De facto SO leader Kokoity 7 Dec adopted decree invalidating property rights of ethnic Georgians in Akhalgori district; dozens reportedly requested to vacate houses.

- "'New context' for Geneva talks after non-use of force pledges", *Civil.ge*, 15 Dec. 2010.

Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°58, *Georgia: Securing a Stable Future*, 13 Dec. 2010. Two and a half years after the war with Russia, Georgia's political life is increasingly turning towards preparations for the 2012-2013 elections and debates around divisions of power after a recent overhaul of the constitution.

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➡ **Nagorno-Karabakh (Azerbaijan)** At 1-2 Dec OSCE summit in Astana, presidents of Armenia, Azerbaijan exchanged accusations over stalemate in NK peace talks. Speaking at summit Armenian President Sarkisian threatened to recognize NK in case of Azerbaijani attack; reiterated statement 10 Dec at meeting of heads of state from Russian-led Collective Security Treaty Organization. Despite rhetoric, minor progress achieved after Armenia and Azerbaijan 1 Dec signed joint statement under OSCE Minsk Group mediation committing to more decisive efforts to resolve issue, saying peaceful, negotiated settlement only way to "real reconciliation."

- “Prospects for Karabakh Peace recede after OSCE summit”, EDM, 15 Dec. 2010.
- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°55, *Nagorno-Karabakh: Getting to a Breakthrough*, 7 Oct. 2009.

EASTERN EUROPE

↳ **Belarus** Govt crackdown on opposition protesters following flawed presidential election saw dozens injured by police, hundreds arrested. Lukashenka declared victor over 9 other candidates in 19 Dec poll, reelected to fourth term with 79.6% of vote. Tens of thousands protested in Minsk same day accusing authorities of massive electoral fraud, tried to storm govt. Police forcibly dispersed crowd, detained over 600 including 7 presidential candidates, later charged with organizing disorder. Crackdown on protesters widely condemned by international community; U.S., EU said reviewing relations with Minsk. OSCE 20 Dec reported serious flaws in vote, said govt must account for arrests of candidates, journalists, rights activists, said electoral commission “lacked impartiality”, criticised “flawed vote count”, “heavy-handed response” to opposition protest. Govt 31 Dec announced OSCE office in Minsk to close as its mandate “had been fulfilled”. Run-up to poll marred by attacks on opposition campaign workers, detention of activists. Lukashenka 28 Dec appointed Mikhail Mlasnikovich new PM. Lukashenka and Russian President Medvedev 9 Dec scrapped duties on Russian oil exports to Belarus, signed economic agreements. In sidelines of OSCE summit Belarus 1 Dec agreed to give up its stockpile of highly enriched uranium by 2012.

- “European police state”, RFE/RL, 24 Dec. 2010.

↳ **Moldova** Constitutional Court 10 Dec ordered recount of 28 Nov parliamentary election votes in response to request from Communist Party, which alleged errors in count, “massive irregularities” in vote; international observers said ballot free and fair. Democratic Party, Liberal Party and Liberal Democratic Party 30 Dec agreed to establish pro-Western alliance in parliament; still short of 61 votes needed to elect new president. New session of parliament same day elected Democratic Party leader Marian Lupu as speaker, acting president. Lupu 1 Jan designated former PM Vlad Filat to form new govt. U.S. cable published by WikiLeaks reported attempt by former president Voronin Sept 2009 to bribe Lupu \$10mn to form coalition. Court in separatist Transdniestria sentenced journalist Ernest Vardanean to 15 years prison for spying.

- “Moldova court orders ballot recount”, Balkan Insight, 13 Dec. 2010.

↳ **Ukraine** Spate of investigations, arrests of members of govt under former PM and current opposition leader Yulia Tymoshenko for alleged abuse of power and embezzlement of funds, including investigation of Tymoshenko herself, charged with embezzlement; former interior minister Yuriy Lutsenko arrested 26 Dec; also former environment minister, economy minister, and investigation into former deputy justice minister. Opposition said probes politically motivated, U.S. embassy in Ukraine 30 Dec expressed concern over “selective or politically motivated” prosecutions. Fight broke out in parliament 16 Dec after ruling party MPs stormed podium, blocked by MPs from opposition Fatherland party protesting investigation of Tymoshenko; 6 opposition MPs reportedly injured. Opposition 17 Dec called for dismissal of speaker, investigation, before walking out of parliament.

- “More join list of former Ukrainian officials in trouble with the law”, RFE/RL, 27 Dec. 2010.

WESTERN EUROPE/MEDITERRANEAN

↳ **Basque Country (Spain)** Leader of ETA political wing Arnaldo Otegi in interview from jail 28 Dec said group ready to give up arms. Statement comes amid speculation that major ETA announcement imminent; interior minister Alfredo Perez Rubalcaba expressed caution. 3 suspected ETA members 20 Dec carried out armed robbery in SE France, taking electronic material including blank ID cards. 4 police jailed 30 Dec for torturing 2 ETA suspects in 2008.

- “Basque group makes peace offer”, *Wall Street Journal*, 28 Dec. 2010.

↳ **Cyprus** Ahead of planned meeting with Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaders in Geneva 26 Jan, UNSG Ban 17 Dec said leaders had accelerated negotiations since their 18 Nov meeting with him in New York, expressed hope of “much more substantive progress on core issues” before Jan meeting. Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaders met 6 Dec to discuss procedural issues, 15 Dec to discuss chapters on economy, governance, powersharing; no substantial progress or breakthrough announced. UN envoy Alexander Downer 19 Dec reported “momentum has been restored to the negotiations” following meetings with Ban – statement dismissed by Greek Cypriot politicians, media. Talks planned for 21 Dec postponed after Turkish Cypriot leader Eroglu underwent successful heart surgery 19 Dec. Early Dec poll suggested both communities desire settlement, but lack trust, fear dominance by other. UNSC 16 Dec extended UNFICYP mandate until 15 June, hinted UN may wind down operations if no settlement soon; Turkey cast lone negative vote. Greek Cypriot fans’ attacks on Turkish players after basketball game in south 21 Dec resulted in minor injuries to Turkish team members.

- “UN claims progress in Cyprus talks”, *Sofia Echo*, 15 Dec. 2010.

Crisis Group Europe Report N°210, *Cyprus: Bridging the Property Divide*, 9 Dec. 2010. The property issue is one of the most intractable knots in the settlement of the Cyprus dispute, without which stability in the Eastern Mediterranean remains fragile.

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↳ **Turkey** Controversial trial of 197 active and retired military officers accused of 2003 plot to overthrow govt began 16 Dec. Police and students clashed throughout month during protests against govt higher education reforms. Senior officials from Turkey and Israel 5-6 Dec met in Geneva in attempt to thaw relations; no breakthrough announced. PM Erdogan 20 Dec repeated call for official Israeli apology for deadly raid on Gaza-bound aid flotilla; Israeli PM Netanyahu 27 Dec said Israel would not apologise but willing to express regret at loss of life. Abdullah Ocalan, jailed PKK leader, 9 Dec said group would honour unilateral ceasefire through June 2011. Suspected PKK militant killed 11 Dec in clashes with security forces in south-eastern Batman province; 3 PKK rebels killed 29 Dec in southeast. Annual enlargement debate 14 Dec between EU states criticised Turkey for failure to normalise relations with and open ports to EU member Cyprus but praised Ankara for recent constitutional reform package.

- [“Trial is next chapter in clash between Turkey’s Muslim leaders, secular elite”](#), *Washington Post*, 17 Dec. 2010.



Latin America / Caribbean

➡ **Bolivia** Pro-opposition governor of Tarija department Mario Cossío removed by govt-controlled regional assembly 16 Dec on corruption charges, replaced by govt loyalist; opposition claimed charges politically motivated. Cossío fled to Paraguay, govt considering international arrest warrant. La Paz attorney 20 Dec charged 39 in context of alleged 2009 plot to assassinate President Morales. Morales 31 Dec cancelled 82% price hike on petrol that had provoked large-scale union-led protests across country from 26 Dec.

- [“Temen que Suárez y Costas sean los próximos en caer”](#), *El Diario*, 17 Dec. 2010.

➡ **Colombia** Supreme Court 2 Dec elected Viviane Morales new attorney general; post had been vacant for 16 months. FARC 8 Dec announced unilateral release of 5 hostages; President Santos accepted ex-senator Piedad Cordoba as facilitator along with govt representative to coordinate release. Govt 10 Dec suspended governor of Magdalena department in context of corruption investigation; Santos 20 Dec appointed ex-army chief to fill position. House of Representatives 13 Dec approved Victims Law providing reparations to victims of guerrillas, paramilitaries and state agents; law yet to be approved by Senate. Relations with Ecuador formally restored (see Ecuador); U.S. 23 Dec extended trade preferences for Colombia, Ecuador for 6 weeks.

- [“Colombia elects woman attorney general”](#), EFE, 2 Dec. 2010.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Latin America Report N°34, [Colombia: President Santos’s Conflict Resolution Opportunity](#), 13 Oct. 2010.

➡ **Ecuador** President Correa 15 Dec met Colombian counterpart Santos in Cali; bilateral relations formally restored 22 Dec as ambassadors reinstated. Interior and security ministers resigned 15, 16 Dec, citing lack of security and justice reform; replacements sworn in 17 Dec.

- [“Correa renueva el gabinete y fija la seguridad como tarea principal de su Gobierno”](#), EFE, 17 Dec. 2010.

➡ **Guatemala** Congress 8 Dec approved law allowing govt to confiscate property bought with proceeds from illegal activities, despite earlier death threats to several MPs; decision hailed by UN-sanctioned commission against impunity (CICIG) as crucial tool in fight against organised crime. UNGA 20 Dec extended CICIG’s mandate until 2013. Govt 9 Dec requested extradition from Spain of former interior minister Carlos Vielmann, arrested Nov for supposed involvement in 2005 extrajudicial executions of prisoners. Govt 19 Dec declared state of siege in Alta Verapaz, province heavily affected by cartel-related violence.

- [“Ley de Extinción de Dominio es aprobada con más de cien votos”](#), *El Periodico*, 8 Dec. 2010.

➡ **Haiti** Post-election confusion continued amid widespread accusations of fraud against President Préval. Preliminary results 8 Dec showed Mirlande Manigat and pro-govt candidate Jude Celestin heading for Jan run-off vote, but final results yet to be announced as OAS-led international panel reviewing numerous claims of fraud. Panel arrived 26 Dec, findings

expected mid-Jan. At least 5 people killed in demonstrations against preliminary results 8 Dec, led by supporters of third-placed candidate Michel Martelly; Martelly trailed Celestin by 7,000 votes, despite preliminary and partial estimates showing him ahead of Celestin. Joint EU, OAS, UN statement 13 Dec urged govt to use “all legal means” to ensure credible election result. Close to 2,800 killed in cholera outbreak during month; UNSG Ban 17 Dec announced independent panel to investigate if disease originated with MINUSTAH peacekeepers.

- Comment by Mark Schneider (Crisis Group), [“For Haitian Voters, Clear Dispute Resolution Is Vital”](#), *Globe and Mail*, 2 Dec. 2010.
- [“International monitors confront Haiti stalemate”](#), AFP, 31 Dec. 2010.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Latin America/Caribbean Report N°35, [Haiti: The Stakes of the Post-Quake Elections](#), 27 Oct. 2010.

➡ **Mexico** Police 9 Dec killed Nazario Moreno, head of Michoacán-based La Familia cartel; govt said La Familia “systematically weakened” during year, but analysts warned that 2010 killing of several high-profile cartel leaders has failed to quell violence. Congress 14 Dec voted to end immunity for MP César Godoy Toscano, accused of ties to La Familia; first time immunity removed from public official. Attorney general 16 Dec said some 12,500 killed in drug violence Jan-Nov, up from 9,600 for 2009. In ongoing major offensive against Zetas, Gulf cartels in Tamaulipas, army 7 Dec killed 6 suspected Zetas in Gustavo Diaz Ordaz town.

- [“Falling kingpins, rising violence”](#), *Economist*, 16 Dec. 2010.

➡ **Nicaragua** Tensions continued to simmer over border dispute with Costa Rica, but both countries 17 Dec accepted Guatemalan offer to mediate; mediation to start Jan.

- [“Nicaragua y Costa Rica aceptan mediación de Guatemala y México”](#), *El Nuevo Diario*, 16 Dec. 2010.

➡ **Venezuela** Outgoing National Assembly (NA) 15 Dec approved law granting President Chávez broad decree powers for 12 months. U.S. called measure “subversion” of democracy; move comes before new NA with stronger opposition convenes 5 Jan. NA 9 Dec passed law defining role of “community councils”, critics claim at the expense of elected mayors and governors; 21 Dec approved bill banning NGOs, political parties from receiving foreign funding. 5 Dec regional elections in 2 departments resulted in 8 ruling party and 5 opposition candidates elected. Colombian ambassador 16 Dec announced Venezuela paid over 50% of debt owed to Colombian companies, in context of improved political and economic ties in recent months. U.S. 30 Dec revoked visa of Venezuelan ambassador, followed Caracas’s refusal to accept credentials of proposed U.S. ambassador to Venezuela.

- [“Chávez se hace con el poder absoluto”](#), *El País*, 26 Dec. 2010.



Middle East / North Africa

EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

➡ **Israel/Occupied Palestinian Territories** U.S. formally abandoned efforts to persuade Israeli PM Netanyahu to extend partial settlement freeze as basis for peace talks; Sec State Clinton 11 Dec announced Washington instead would pursue

proximity talks dealing with core issues towards a Framework Agreement. Fatah-PFLP joint statement 22 Dec said they would not hold talks with Israel, in any format, without complete halt to settlement activity and defined terms of reference. Brazil, Argentina, Ecuador and Bolivia recognised independent Palestinian state "on the 1967 lines". Other Latin American countries expected to follow; Israel 7 Dec warned unilateral recognition only hurts peace process. Israeli Security Cabinet 8 Dec decided to ease ban on exports from Gaza but not to Israel. Surge in cross-border violence during month; dozens of mortars fired from Gaza, in response IDF launched series of air raids including 18 Dec strike that killed 6 Palestinians in Central Gaza. Hamas senior leader Mahmoud Al-Zahar 24 Dec said group committed to ceasefire if Israel abided by it, though smaller groups continue to launch attacks.

- Comment by Robert Malley (Crisis Group) and Hussein Agha, "Nothing Left to Talk About", *International Herald Tribune*, 14 Dec. 2010.
- "Please, not again", *Economist*, 29 Dec. 2010.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Middle East Report N°98, *Squaring the Circle: Palestinian Security Reform under Occupation*, 7 Sept. 2010.

➡ **Lebanon** Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL) registrar Herman von Hebel 9 Dec said prosecutor will issue first indictment very soon, stressed court will indict individuals not organisations. Public figures continue to voice opposition to tribunal. Democratic Party leader Talal Arslan 19 Dec denounced STL as U.S.-Israeli plot; Iranian Supreme Leader Khamenei 20 Dec dismissed any verdict as "null and void". Army 15 Dec said it discovered 2 Israeli surveillance devices in mountains above Beirut, 18 Dec submitted official complaint to UNSC for breaking Resolution 1701. UNIFIL investigated 3 Dec blast reportedly caused by remote detonation of Israeli spy device near border, claimed by Hezbollah as further evidence of Israeli infiltration of Lebanese telecommunication networks. Senior FPM official ex-General Fayez Karam 9 Dec indicted for collaborating with Israel, could face 3-15 years hard labour. Israel 20 Dec voiced concerns over French agreement to send 100 anti-tank missiles to Lebanese army for fear weapons may fall into Hezbollah's hands. Ghandi Sahmarani, senior figure in Jund al-Sham and one of Lebanon's most wanted men, found dead 25 Dec in Ein el-Hilweh refugee camp.

- "Hariri assassination indictment coming very soon", AP, 9 Dec. 2010.

Crisis Group Middle East Report N°100, *Trial by Fire: The Politics of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon*, 2 Dec. 2010. It is hard to see who can emerge victorious in Lebanon's latest crisis.



➡ **Syria** Saudi-Syria mediation efforts to defuse tension in Lebanon ahead of Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL) decision on former PM Hariri's murder continued, but yet to produce anything tangible. During 9 Dec visit to Paris focusing on situation in Lebanon, President Assad said issue was an internal matter and solution could "only be Lebanese" (see Lebanon). IAEA Director General Amano 2 Dec said he had formally urged Damascus to provide inspectors with prompt access to remains of alleged nuclear weapons site al-Kibar; Syrian envoy 3 Dec dismissed claims as political, said should focus on Israel instead. UNSG Ban 3 Dec urged Israel-Syria to resume peace talks as soon as possible, recommended UN Disengagement Observer Force mandate to be extended by 6 months. U.S.

President Obama 29 Dec appointed Robert Ford ambassador to Syria, first since 2005.

- "Saudi-Syria seek Hariri trial calm", *Al Jazeera*, 6 Dec. 2010.

GULF

➡ **Bahrain** Trial of 25 Shiite activists accused of terrorism adjourned 24 Dec to 6 Jan after defendants refused to cooperate with state-appointed lawyers; original lawyers withdrew 10 Dec in protest at authorities' refusal to investigate alleged torture of suspects.

- "Government hits wall in terrorism case against dissidents", *Los Angeles Times*, 23 Dec. 2010.

➡ **Iran** 2 day nuclear talks 6-7 Dec in Geneva between Iran and P5+1 ended with agreement to hold more talks Jan in Istanbul; President Ahmadinejad 8 Dec said prepared to discuss possible nuclear fuel swap but no slowdown in atomic program. President Ahmadinejad 13 Dec fired FM Mottaki, 18 Dec named Salehi new FM; foreign ministry said nuclear and foreign policies will not change. 39 people killed 15 Dec in suicide bomb attack by Sunni Jundullah rebel group on mosque in southeastern city Chabahar; 11 people linked to group executed 20 Dec. Security forces 19 Dec deployed in Tehran for fear of repeat of 2007 rationing riots as fuel prices surged 400% following 18 Dec start of cuts to energy and food subsidies. U.S. 21 Dec imposed new sanctions on Iran aimed at 3 companies linked to Revolutionary Guards. Senior Revolutionary Guards commander 2 Jan announced 2 "Western drone reconnaissance" shot down.

- "Thank you and goodbye", *Economist*, 16 Dec. 2010.

🏠 **Iraq** Parliament 21 Dec unanimously approved new 42-member govt under incumbent PM Nouri al-Maliki, more than 9 months after election. 29 members of cabinet agreed, including retaining Kurdish FM Hoshiyar Zebari and making prominent Sunni leader Rafie al-Esawi finance minister; remaining 13 positions temporary due to ongoing disputes between coalition partners including defence, interior and national security posts. Parliament 18 Dec lifted ban on 3 Sunni politicians blocked from national elections over alleged Baath party links, one of whom, Saleh Mutlak, appointed deputy prime minister. PM Maliki 28 Dec said all U.S. troops must leave Iraq by end 2011, only way soldiers could remain is negotiation of new Status of Forces Agreement. UNSC 15 Dec ended number of Saddam-era sanctions aimed at, among others, preventing proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, thereby ending oil-for-food program. Insurgent attacks briefly peaked, targeting Shiite pilgrims as millions visited shrines across country for commemoration of Ashura; including series of bombs targeting Iranian pilgrims in Baghdad 4 Dec killing 14, injuring more than 80. 2 killed, 16 injured 30 Dec in series of bombings targeting Christians in Baghdad.

- "A tricky cocktail", *Economist*, 29 Dec 2010.

➡ **Yemen** Parliament 11 Dec unilaterally passed electoral reforms, announced scheduled 2011 elections to be held on time with or without opposition participation. Opposition 13 Dec threatened boycott of polls, take to streets in protest. President Saleh 26 Dec set 27 April as date for parliamentary elections, accepted international monitors and urged opposition to take part. Army late month deployed to southern town Habilayn to contain demonstrations by Southern Movement supporters after member killed 16 Nov by military; at least 5 soldiers killed. Southern secessionist sentenced to death 11 Dec for Oct deadly bombing of Aden sports club; sparked days of protests in Dalia,

kidnapping of 6 soldiers, released 15 Dec. Clashes ongoing in north between rebels and pro-govt tribesmen, at least 10 killed 11 Dec in fighting. Govt 30 Dec released 426 Northern Shia rebels as part of Feb peace deal. Al-Qaeda in Arab Peninsula (AQAP) continued attacks on security forces in south including killing 2 soldiers 17 Dec in Zinjibar. To combat AQAP govt 25 Dec announced establishment of 4 provincial anti-terrorism units based in restive southern provinces of Shabwa, Abyan, Hadramout and Maarib.

- [“Yemen election law change sparks outcry”](#), AFP, 13 Dec. 2010.

➡ **Saudi Arabia** Security forces deployed 16 Dec in Medina to break up clashes reportedly between minority Shiites commemorating Ashura and hardline Sunnis; 38 people arrested, 3 security officials injured. Wanted militant Mohammed Essam Taher Baghdadi with ties to al-Qaeda killed 25 Dec by security forces at checkpoint in southeast.

- [“Violence mars Shiite commemoration in Saudi Arabia”](#), AP, 18 Dec. 2010.

NORTH AFRICA

➡ **Algeria** Ongoing land and air military offensive began 9 Dec in Kabylie, at least 50 al-Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) militants reportedly killed. Repentant militant linked to AQIM 24 Dec sentenced to death for 2007 attempted suicide attack on President Bouteflika that killed 27 people, wounded 172. At least 53 people injured, 29 arrested during riots in Algiers over inadequate housing.

- [“Algerian forces attack allies of al-Qaida”](#), *Guardian*, 28 Dec. 2010.

➡ **Egypt** Ruling National Democratic Party (NDP) won 83% of seats in parliamentary election following 5 Dec run-off after main opposition parties Muslim Brotherhood and Wafd boycotted second round over alleged massive vote-rigging. Protests carried on for weeks, opposition and rights groups called for

results to be annulled. Gamal Mubarak, son of President, 27 Dec said presidential election will be held Sept 2011; NDP to meet July to choose candidate. Authorities 20 Dec said Israeli spy ring uncovered, charged Egyptian businessman, 2 Israelis with spying, trying to recruit operatives working for telecoms companies in region. 21 people killed, more than 90 injured in 1 Jan suspected suicide bombing of Coptic Christian church in Alexandria; police 2 Jan clashed with Christian protestors in Cairo, Alexandria demanding more protection. Security forces 28 Dec uncovered weapons stockpile in Sinai Peninsula, including anti-aircraft missiles, bound for Gaza Strip.

- [“Egypt’s Opposition Protests, Challenging Legislative Vote”](#), *New York Times*, 12 Dec. 2010.

➡ **Morocco** Latest round of UN-brokered talks 16-18 Dec between govt and Polisario Front ended in deadlock as both sides refused to accept other’s proposal as sole basis of negotiations. 2 sides agreed to meet again 21-22 Jan and in March. Interior Ministry 27 Dec said 6 member “cyber-terrorist” cell arrested for planning car bomb attacks on foreign interests, national security facilities.

- [“Morocco-W. Sahara rebels talks end in deadlock”](#), AFP, 18 Dec. 2010.

➡ **Tunisia** Ongoing nationwide riots and demonstrations against rising unemployment. 1 protester killed, several injured 24 Dec in violent clashes with police in central town of Menzel Bouzaiene. President Ben Ali 28 Dec criticised use of violence, warned protesters would be punished with “all firmness”.

- [“Tunisia struggles to end protests”](#), Al Jazeera, 29 Dec. 2010.

➡ **Western Sahara** Rights group 24 Dec said more than 150 people remain in detention following Nov police raid on protest camp near Laayoune, accused authorities of torture (see Morocco).

- [“Report of Torture”](#), *New York Times*, 24 Dec. 2010.

“Often-times Crisis Group is able to say what many here are too afraid to say. That in itself breaks political logjams and helps move the transition process forward.”

Morgan Tsvangirai, Prime Minister of Zimbabwe, March 2010

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