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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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February 2011 Trends



Deteriorated Situations

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Libya (p.11)	Thailand (p.7)
North Caucasus (Russia) (p.8)	Uganda (p.3)
	Yemen (p.11)



Improved Situations

Egypt (p.11)



Unchanged Situations

Albania (p.7), Algeria (p.11), Armenia (p.8), Azerbaijan (p.8), Bahrain (p.10), Bangladesh (p.6), Basque Country (Spain) (p.8), Belarus (p.8), Bolivia (p.9), Bosnia (p.7), Burma/Myanmar (p.6), Burundi (p.2), Central African Republic (p.2), Chad (p.2), Colombia (p.9), Cyprus (p.9), Democratic Republic of Congo (p.2), Djibouti (p.2), Ecuador (p.9), Georgia (p.8), Guatemala (p.9), Guinea (p.4), Haiti (p.9), India (non-Kashmir) (p.6), Indonesia (p.6), Iran (p.10), Iraq (p.10), Israel/Occupied Palestinian Territories (p.10), Jordan (p.11), Kashmir (p.6), Kazakhstan (p.4), Kenya (p.2), Kosovo (p.7), Kuril Islands/Northern Territories (Russia/Japan) (p.5), Kyrgyzstan (p.5), Lebanon (p.10), Liberia (p.4), Macedonia (p.7), Madagascar (p.3), Mauritania (p.12), Mexico (p.9), Morocco (p.12), Nagorno-Karabakh (Azerbaijan) (p.8), Nepal (p.6), Niger (p.4), Nigeria (p.4), North Korea (p.5), Oman (p.11), Pakistan (p.6), Philippines (p.6), Rwanda (p.2), Serbia (p.8), Sri Lanka (p.6), Sudan (Northern) (p.3), Sudan (South) (p.3), Syria (p.10), Tajikistan (p.5), Timor-Leste (p.7), Tunisia (p.12), Turkey (p.9), Turkmenistan (p.5), Uzbekistan (p.5), Venezuela (p.10), Western Sahara (p.12), Zimbabwe (p.3)

March 2011 Watchlist



Conflict Risk Alerts

Afghanistan	Libya
Côte d'Ivoire	Yemen



Conflict Resolution Opportunities

Yemen

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** Magistrates 17 Feb commenced 14-day strike calling for improved working conditions, salaries. Senate 9 Feb rejected 11 of 20 appointments to high-judiciary positions proposed by President Nkurunziza. Reports emerged 18 Feb govt has pressed charges against 2 former finance ministers for fraudulent management of \$32mn. Human Rights Watch and other rights groups welcomed late-Jan order by Interior Minister Edouard Nduwimana reversing Nov 2009 order banning Forum pour le Renforcement de la Société Civile (FORSC). Suspected FNL sympathisers 13, 17 Feb attacked police posts in Bujumbura and Bubanza province.

▪ [“Burundi charges ex-ministers for embezzlement”](#), AFP, 18 Feb. 2011.

Crisis Group Africa Report N° 169, *Burundi: From Electoral Boycott to Political Impasse*, 7 Feb. 2011. Burundi risks reversing the decade of progress it has enjoyed since its civil war ended unless the government resumes political dialogue with the opposition.



➡ **Central African Republic** Electoral commission 1 Feb announced preliminary results showing incumbent President Bozize re-elected 23 Jan, winning 66% of vote. Constitutional Court 12 Feb overruled opposition objections, confirmed result; opposition 26 Feb announced boycott of 20 March second round legislative elections in protest. Clashes early Feb between Convention of Patriots for Justice and Peace (CPJP) rebels and army near Bria in east left 7 dead. Army 14-15 Feb withdrew from Birao in northeast, having provided security in area since Nov 2010 CPJP attack.

- Comment by Ned Dalby (Crisis Group), [“The Dark Side of Diamonds”](#), AllAfrica, 21 Feb. 2011.
- [“Central African Republic president declared re-elected”](#), AFP, 12 Feb. 2011.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Africa Report N° 167, [Dangerous Little Stones: Diamonds in the Central African Republic](#), 16 Dec. 2010.

➡ **Chad** Legislative elections 13 Feb as opposition parties challenged President Deby's Patriotic Salvation Movement (PSM) for first time since flawed 2002 elections. Electoral commission 28 Feb announced preliminary results indicating absolute PSM majority, winning 133 out of 188 national assembly seats. EU observers said peaceful parliamentary elections marked “historic turning point”, highlighted minor irregularities to be addressed before April presidential poll.

▪ [“President's party wins absolute majority in February elections”](#), France24, 28 Feb. 2011.

Crisis Group Africa Briefing N° 78, *Chad's North West: The Next High-risk Area?*, 17 Feb. 2011. Chad's North West may become the next stage for insurgency, drug-running and religious extremism in the Sahel if the government continues to actively neglect the poorest of the violence-plagued country's poor regions.



➡ **Democratic Republic of Congo** Unidentified gunmen 27 Feb attacked residence of President Kabila, Kokolo military camp. Presidential guard responded killing 6; govt said “attempted coup d'état”, launched investigation. Pockets of insecurity continued in east: LRA carried out series of small scale attacks in Dungu, Ango territories in Province Orientale, FARDC 21 Feb killed 6 LRA, freed hostages during clashes in Faradje Territory; in North Kivu Rwandan rebel FDLR attacked 2 villages early Feb in Rutshuru Territory; suspected ADF-Nalu Ugandan rebels tortured, killed 11 people in Beni Territory, victims thought to be among 15 who disappeared during 27 Jan-5 Feb rebel attacks on Beni-Mbau villages near Ugandan border. Military court 21 Feb sentenced FARDC Lt-Col Kibibi Mutware to 20 years' jail for 1 Jan mass rape in Fizi, South Kivu. Meanwhile, following Kabila-led changes to constitution annulling provision for second-round presidential election, main opposition leaders Vital Kamerhe and Jean-Claude Vuemba advocated alliance behind one opposition candidate. Opposition leader Etienne Tshisekedi 16 Feb launched new party alliance “Dynamique Tshisekedi President”, refused to rally behind any other candidate.

- [“DR Congo Colonel Kibibi Mutware sentenced for mass rape”](#), BBC, 21 Feb. 2011.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Africa Report N° 165, [Congo: No Stability in Kivu despite Rapprochement with Rwanda](#), 16 Nov. 2010.

➡ **Rwanda** Kigali High Court 11 Feb handed down 4-year prison term to opposition leader Bernard Ntaganda for alleged “divisionism”, “endangering state security” and organising non-authorized demonstration June 2010. Opposition Forces démocratiques unifiées (FDU), Rwanda National Congress (RNC) 2 Feb established mechanism of coordination to counter govt repression; emphasised non-violent nature of endeavour. Court 4 Feb sentenced 2 journalists Agnès Uwimana Nkusi and Saidath Mukakibibi, arrested July 2010, to 17, 7 years respectively for “defaming top officials”, “stirring ethnic divisions” and “inciting civil disobedience”.

▪ [“Opposition leader in Rwanda sentenced to four years”](#), *New York Times*, 12 Feb. 2011.

HORN OF AFRICA

➡ **Djibouti** Anti-govt demonstrations 18 Feb calling for President Guelleh to step down at next election descended into violence as crowds swelled to thousands, protesters clashed with riot police; no casualties reported.

▪ [“Political protests spread to Djibouti”](#), VoA, 18 Feb. 2011.

➡ **Kenya** Month dominated by controversy surrounding implementation of judicial reforms required by Aug 2010 constitution. Parliamentary Speaker Kenneth Marende 17 Feb rejected judicial appointments made by President Kibaki Jan, ruled lack of consultation with PM Odinga violated National Accord and Reconciliation Act; Kibaki 22 Feb withdrew list of nominations, said would consult with Odinga on attorney general nomination. AU summit 31 Jan backed Kenya's effort to block International Criminal Court (ICC) prosecutions related to 2007-2008 post-election violence. Outgoing U.S. ambassador 12 Feb said Washington would not support delays to ICC action. ICC judges 11 Feb criticised Chief Prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo for publicly naming 6 key suspects in Dec 2010.

▪ [“Kenya's next presidential race in full swing”](#), VoA, 28 Feb. 2011.

☐ **Somalia** Intense fighting between govt-allied forces and militant Islamist Al-Shabaab inflicting casualties on both sides, dozens of civilians killed, injured. Transitional Federal Govt (TFG) forces and AMISOM 19 Feb attacked Al-Shabaab positions sparking 2 days intense fighting; at least 20 killed, dozens injured as stray mortars hit IDP camps. 6 AMISOM troops killed, 12 wounded in 23 Feb fighting in Mogadishu. AMISOM, TFG and allied groups 24 Feb launched coordinated attack in Mogadishu and along Ethiopian, Kenyan border; Ethiopian troops reportedly involved in fighting, Kenya closed border. In response, Al-Shabaab moved additional forces to Mogadishu and Beletweyn, 27 Feb warned of retaliation against Kenyan govt. In other violence suicide car bomber 21 Feb killed at least 10 people near police training camp in Mogadishu. At least 5 reported killed, 10 wounded 15 Feb when govt forces opened fire on civilian crowd protesting against Al-Shabaab. Human Rights Watch 14 Feb stated all parties to armed conflict responsible for indiscriminate attacks on civilians since May 2010, killing or injuring thousands. Parliament 3 Feb extended TFG mandate for further 3 years. AU signalled support for mandate renewal set to expire Aug 2011; U.S., UN, other donors criticised move citing lack of adequate consultation.

- [“Shifting battlefronts cut a long gash across Somalia”](#), *New York Times*, 24 Feb. 2011.

Crisis Group Africa Report N°170, [Somalia: The Transitional Government on Life Support](#), 21 Feb. 2011. If Somalia's Transitional Federal Government (TFG) - incompetent, corrupt and hobbled by weak leadership - does not reform within six months, the international community should withdraw support and concentrate on more effective local administrations.

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CONFLICT WORLDWIDE

☐ **Somaliland** Self-proclaimed Somaliland republic forces 7 Feb fought with rebel militia in Sool, Sanaag, Cayn (SSC) region, claimed by both Somaliland and Puntland. Local media reported more than 30 killed, 60 injured, over 3,000 displaced and at least 150 soldiers defected citing “clan massacres” of Harti sub-clan, Dhulbahante. Follows Dec reports Puntland hired private security firm to train forces.

- [“150 troops defect army, cite ‘clan massacres’”](#), Radio Garowe, 11 Feb. 2011.

☐ **Sudan (Northern)** President Bashir 8 Feb officially accepted final results of Southern Sudan Referendum with 98.83% in favour of independent state in region. At least 10 killed 27 Feb in fighting between Misseriya Arab nomads from North and pro-Southern Dinka Ngok in Abyei area; clashes come as talks stepped up between North and South to address post-referendum issues, with commitment to find solution to Abyei status before end March. In West Darfur Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) 25 Feb targeted Sudan Liberation Movement rebel positions in Jebel Marra sparking 2 days' clashes; 25 SLM, 2 SAF reported killed. UN-AU peacekeeping mission in Darfur (UNAMID) 16 Feb announced strategy of increased patrols, quick reaction force to improve civilian protection during heightened insecurity as rebels continue to clash with govt troops. Darfuri authorities 14 Feb expelled NGO Médecins du Monde accusing them of supporting rebel Sudan Liberation Movement. Meanwhile media 4 Feb reported claims that France, U.S. agreed during Jan AU summit to consider backing deferral of International Criminal Court indictment against Bashir. Security forces broke up series of demonstrations against rising prices and rights abuses in Khartoum. Senior

ruling National Congress Party (NCP) official 21 Feb claimed Bashir will not stand at next election as part of reform package aimed at democratising country; opposition said NCP trying to pre-empt mass protests fearing contagion from uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt.

- [“West considers reprieve for Bashir”](#), *Financial Times*, 4 Feb. 2011.

☐ **Sudan (South)** South Sudan Referendum Commission 7 Feb announced official results of Jan referendum confirming 98.83% voted to secede from north. Over 200 people killed 9-10 Feb including civilians during clashes in Fangak county, Jonglei state between Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and militia loyal to renegade SPLA General George Athor. In upper Nile State at least 50 people killed during 3 days' clashes after fighting broke out 3 Feb between Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) joint integrated units over ownership and relocation of weapons from south to north. As political talks focused on outstanding post-referendum arrangements Govt of South Sudan (GoSS) VP Reik Machar 10 Feb affirmed existing oil contracts will remain untouched; at same time Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) Sec Gen Pagan Amum 15 Feb said there will be no continuation of current oil-sharing arrangements under Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) when newly created South Sudan comes into effect in July. GoSS President Salva Kiir announced 3 days' mourning to mark death of Minister for Cooperative and Rural Development Jimmy Lemi Milla, murdered 9 Feb; death not thought politically motivated.

- [“Oil a contested but vital industry in both Sudans”](#), VoA, 17 Feb. 2011.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°76, [Negotiating Sudan's North-South Future](#), 23 Nov. 2010.

☐ **Uganda** Election Commission 20 Feb announced incumbent President Museveni winner of 18 Feb presidential election with 68% of vote. Main opposition leader Kizza Besigye won 26%, rejected results claiming election was “total farce”. Head of EU observer mission noted “severe compromise” of level playing field; U.S. 22 Feb noted diversion of govt resources for partisan campaigning and heavy deployment of security forces on election day but said polls “reflect will of the people”. Suspected National Resistance Movement sympathisers 23 Feb attacked at least 6 journalists covering Kampala mayoral election causing serious injury.

- [“Uganda's Yoweri Museveni wins disputed presidential election”](#), Reuters, 20 Feb. 2011.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°157, [LRA: A Regional Strategy beyond Killing Kony](#), 28 Apr. 2010.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

☐ **Madagascar** Opposition submitted amendments to SADC road map saying version presented end Jan favoured de facto authority; SADC mediation 18 Feb sent first revised roadmap to all parties, arrived in Antananarivo 21 Feb to continue negotiations. Ex-president Ravalomanana 15 Feb said he would return from exile to find solution to political crisis despite warrant for his arrest, but authorities 19 Feb prevented his attempted entry.



- [“Madagascar bars entry to president ousted in '09”](#), *New York Times*, 19 Feb. 2011.

☐ **Zimbabwe** President Mugabe continued to press for elections to be held in 2011 while PM and Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) leader Morgan Tsvangirai 18 Feb threatened to boycott election if Mugabe pushed ahead before referendum on constitution, key electoral reform. SADC facilitator South African


President Zuma 17 Feb condemned politically motivated violence, intimidation in Harare suburbs. EU, U.S. expressed deep concern, condemned upsurge in political violence. Amnesty International 11 Feb urged immediate govt reform of security, media institutions and criticised SADC, AU for “missing every opportunity to end human rights violations”. Meanwhile EU 15 Feb extended sanctions for further year saying further reform essential to create environment for credible elections, but also removed 35 people from sanctions list, including spouses of Mugabe’s allies. At least 50 activists arrested 19 Feb, charged with “plotting to subvert constitutionally elected govt” for discussing Egypt and Tunisia protests. Following Jan election of Welshman Ncube as president of faction of MDC, High Court 17 Feb ordered outgoing president Arthur Mutambara to step aside until court rules on petition brought by Mutambara supporters.

- [“Rising political violence reported in Zimbabwe”](#), VoA, 18 Feb. 2011.
- 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** Violence escalated in Abidjan and western regions as former president Laurent Gbagbo, losing candidate in Nov run-off election, refused for third month to cede power to Alassane Ouattara. UN peacekeeping mission UNOCI announced 6-year ceasefire broken 24 Feb, as pro-Gbagbo troops clashed with northern Forces Nouvelles rebels backing Ouattara in west, and fighting broke out for first time in Abidjan between troops loyal to Gbagbo and defectors now aligned with Ouattara. UN said fighting “changes the game”. UNHCR 18 Feb announced over 38,000 IDPs registered in western regions; 25 Feb said 5,000 refugees fled across border in 24 hours. Dozens injured 21 Feb as fresh clashes in Abidjan erupted between Gbagbo, Ouattara supporters; at least 6 killed when pro-Gbagbo troops fired at Ouattara supporters to disperse protests. Pro-Ouattara gunmen claimed responsibility for killing at least 10 soldiers during ambush on army convoy 22 Feb. UN experts came under fire 28 Feb while investigating reports of alleged violation of arms embargo; sanctions committee unable to confirm shipment, continue monitoring. Meanwhile, financial, economic difficulties increased as all major international banks suspended operations restricting both govt, public access to funds. Gbagbo 17 Feb announced plans to forcibly nationalise and re-open banks. Regional stock exchange suspended activities following 9 Feb seizure of Abidjan offices by Gbagbo forces. 4 African presidents on AU panel appointed in Jan met rival candidates 21-22 Feb, expected to meet again early March to define concrete proposals. UNSC 16 Feb approved 3-month extension for deployment of 2,000 additional peacekeepers drawn from UN mission in Liberia.


- [“Forces clash, raising civil war fears”](#), AP, 24 Feb. 2011.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°77, *Côte d’Ivoire: Finally Escaping the Crisis?*, 25 Nov. 2010.

 **Guinea** National Council of Guinean Civil Society Organisations 6 Feb accused President Condé of violating constitution by failing to define schedule for legislative, local elections; constitution stipulates polls should be held within 6 months of presidential election which Condé won in Nov second round.

- [“Guinea bankrupted by junta – President Alpha Condé”](#), BBC, 22 Feb. 2011.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°164, *Reforming the Army*, 23 Sept. 2010.

 **Liberia** Month saw arrival of estimated 15,000 refugees from Côte d’Ivoire (see Côte d’Ivoire); UNHCR figures indicate over 40,000 refugees registered in Liberia since end-Nov start of crisis. Ahead of Oct 2011 presidential, legislative polls, electoral commission announced 1.7 million registered to vote, fewer than anticipated 2.1 million.

- [“Liberia voter registration short of expectations”](#), VoA, 24 Feb. 2011.

 **Niger** Election Commission announced run-off presidential election to take place 12 March after Jan first round produced no clear winner; Mahamadou Issoufou, leader of opposition Niger Party for Democracy and Socialism (NPDS), led with 36% whilst ex-PM Seyni Oumarou, head of ex-President Tandja’s National Movement for the Development of Society (NMDS), won 23%. Third-placed Hama Amadou, leader of Niger Democratic Party (NDP), 9 Feb announced support for Issoufou in run-off, reversing pre-election pact with Oumarou. In 31 Jan legislative election NPDS won 39 of 113 seats, NMDS 26, NDP 24.

- [“Niger election: Issoufou to face Oumarou in run-off”](#), BBC, 4 Feb. 2011.

 **Nigeria** Election commission 21 Feb announced 20 presidential candidates to contest 9 April election with more than 67 million registered to vote. At least 11 killed, over 20 seriously injured during 12 Feb stampede at Peoples’ Democratic Party campaign rally in Port Harcourt. 7 people seriously injured 12 Feb during clash between Labour Party and Action Congress of Nigeria supporters in Idanre. Movement for Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND) 13 Feb criticised President Jonathan’s appointment of former Ondo State assembly member Kingsley Kuku as Niger Delta presidential adviser. Islamist sect Boko Haram early month claimed responsibility for Jan high profile assassination of Borno state gubernatorial candidate, threatened jihad against govt. Announcement followed by series of gun attacks in northeast states including 22 Feb deadly attacks on Rwang Fang village, Plateau State, 17 Feb attack on police station and bank in Bauchi state, and 15 Feb attack on church in Maidugri, Borno state. Police inspector general 18 Feb declared no negotiation with group. 6 killed and large weapons cache recovered in 21 Feb police raid on suspected Boko Haram members in NE town Damaturu, Plateau State.


- [“Religion a deadly tool in central Nigeria politics”](#), Reuters, 18 Feb. 2011.

Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°79, [Nigeria’s Elections: Reversing the Degeneration?](#), 24 Feb. 2011. Despite some encouraging preparations, huge challenges remain in the short weeks before the April general elections at which Nigeria’s international reputation and faith in its own democracy are at stake.



Asia/Pacific

CENTRAL ASIA

 **Kazakhstan** President Nazarbaev 11 Feb officially registered as candidate in forthcoming presidential election, scheduled for 3 April in presidential decree issued 4 Feb, 12 Feb passed mandatory Kazakh-language exam required to run. Opposition

Azat and Communist parties announced will boycott early elections, calling them breach of constitution and citing lack of time to prepare. Some 12 candidates declared intention to run. Key presidential advisor 14 Feb said no talk of successor necessary, and Nazarbaev will run again in subsequent election. Govt continued to support deportation of Uzbek refugees sought by Uzbekistan on radicalism charges; court 16 Feb denied appeal by 9 Uzbek men to remain in Kazakhstan. 4 arrested late Feb in connection with explosion outside prison in West. 4 Kazakhstani citizens reportedly detained mid-Feb in North Caucasus republic Dagestan during Russian anti-terror operations. Nazarbaev's late Feb China visit saw important deals including uranium export, Chinese loans.

- "Kazakhs deny poll move linked to Egypt", *Financial Times*, 17 Feb. 2011.

➡ **Kyrgyzstan** Organised crime, insecure border identified as leading threats by govt early month; officials predicted increased insurgent incursions from Tajikistan, claimed over 56 organised crime figures detained Jan-Feb. IMF early Feb raised alarm over rising inflation; govt, facing severe budget deficit and food shortages, announced cancellation of import tariffs on basic food items, plans to unseal strategic food reserves. Influential ethnic Uzbek preacher Rashod Kamalov, detained in Jan on charges of fraud, freed 4 Feb following small-scale protests in south. 8 alleged members of banned Hizb ut-Tahrir religious organisation detained in Osh 7 Feb. Bishkek mayor re-elected by city council in alleged attempt to secure ruling SDPK party control over capital; activists said procedure unconstitutional. Acting president Otunbayeva 21 Feb announced will not run in upcoming presidential election. Under new arrangement seen as U.S. concession to govt, fuel to be supplied to Manas air base by former supplier Mina Corp and joint Kyrgyz-Russian company. International Business Council said investment climate less attractive due to disregard for property rights and "opaque" nationalisation policy.

- "Inflation looms as possible trigger for fresh unrest in Bishkek", *EurasiaNet*, 15 Feb. 2011.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°193, *The Pogroms in Kyrgyzstan*, 23 Aug. 2010.

➡ **Tajikistan** Govt harassment of opposition, crackdown on religious extremism continued. At 11 Feb National Security Council meeting President Rakhmon identified Islamic radicalism as major threat, called for continued return of students studying at Islamic schools abroad, increased monitoring of mosques. Following 7 Feb beating of key party figure, opposition Islamic Renaissance Party accused govt of corruption, trampling on rights, attempting to intimidate opposition. Authorities 3 Feb reportedly detained suspects in series of Jan planned terror attacks on state security, police buildings in city Khujand. Interior Ministry official found dead in hotel room 5 Feb; amid speculation on possible causes govt reported heart failure, independent investigation said evidence of suicide.

- "Tajik leader orders crackdown on 'illegal' mosques", *Reuters*, 11 Feb. 2011.

➡ **Turkmenistan** Govt continued crackdown on freedoms, tightening attendance and curfew rules at schools and universities, jailing 2 singers after they appeared on Turkish TV channel.

- "Turkmenistan restricts school, university teachers and students", *RFE/RL*, 26 Feb. 2011.

➡ **Uzbekistan** In wave of counter insurgency trials 13 people sentenced 3 Feb to 6-10 years for alleged membership in

new militant group "Jihadists"; rights groups suggest dozens more practising Muslims await trial on similar grounds. Govt 1 Feb raised transit tariffs for goods crossing by railroad into Afghanistan, affecting NATO supply routes. U.S. mid-month announced Uzbekistan to receive \$100,000 in military financing aid, first such funding since 2005 Andijon massacre. Kazakhstan national energy provider 23 Feb accused Uzbekistan of illegal consumption of Kazakh electricity, threatening power supply in S Kazakhstan, N Kyrgyzstan.

- "Uzbeks sentenced for membership in alleged jihadist group", *RFE/RL*, 17 Feb. 2011.

NORTH EAST ASIA

➡ **Kuril Islands/ Northern Territories (Russia/Japan)** Amid strained Moscow-Tokyo relations over disputed territory, Russian President Medvedev 9 Feb ordered additional arms deployment on Kuril Islands to protect "inseparable part" of Russia.

- "Russia to deploy more arms on Kurils, claimed by Japan", *BBC*, 9 Feb. 2011.

➡ **North Korea** Relations with S Korea remained strained as first inter-Korean dialogue since Nov shelling of Yŏnp'yŏng Island broke down 9 Feb, following failure to reach consensus on agenda for higher-level talks. P'yŏngyang reacted angrily to breakdown of talks, claiming South made "unreasonable" demands, not interested in dialogue, trying to derail resumption of 6-party talks; N Korean official news agency 9 Feb reported nation no longer willing to participate in military talks with Seoul. S Korea, U.S. 28 Feb began annual large-scale military exercises, prompting harsh condemnation, warning of "all-out attack" from P'yŏngyang. South late month dropped leaflets in North spreading news of uprisings in the Arab world; P'yŏngyang 27 Feb threatened to open fire across border in retaliation. Satellite images published mid-month show completion of North's second long range missile launchpad near northwest border with China; reports suggest site more sophisticated than first. Tunnelling at nuclear test site reportedly continues. UN panel report late Jan said N Korea almost certainly has more undisclosed nuclear facilities; China reportedly said will block report from being published and sent to full Council.

- "Korea talks ended abruptly without any ease in strains", *New York Times*, 9 Feb. 2011.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°200, *China and Inter-Korean Clashes in the Yellow Sea*, 27 Jan. 2011.

SOUTH ASIA

➡ **Afghanistan** Month saw continued standoff between President Karzai and opposition following Sept elections, and spike in violence with several large-scale Taliban attacks. Lower House 12 Feb called on Karzai and Supreme Court to dissolve allegedly pro-govt special tribunal investigating elections fraud, set up by Karzai in Dec; Independent Election Commission 21 Feb said will not collaborate with tribunal's "unconstitutional" recount of vote in 24 of 34 provinces; analysts warned revising results could spark renewed violence. Lower house 27 Feb elected as new speaker ethnic Uzbek Abdul Ibrahim, seen as compromise candidate; ended deadlock preventing legislation in parliament. At least 38 killed, including several police, in 19 Feb Taliban raid on bank in Jalalabad, deadliest single attack since June 2010; 12 killed 18 Feb in 2 bomb attacks in eastern Khost and Nangarhar provinces. 19

killed, including 15 police, in 12 Feb Taliban attack on Kandahar police headquarters. Govt 25 Feb accused NATO of killing 65 civilians, including 29 children, in mid-month anti-Taliban offensive in Kunar; NATO denied civilian casualties. UN survey 3 Feb stated Afghan police reputation low in southern provinces due to corruption and abuses of power. President Karzai 6 Feb said will announce on 21 March transition plan for handing over security from NATO to Afghan forces. Taliban suicide bomber killed district governor in Kunduz province 10 Feb.

- “Afghan legislators pick leader”, *Wall Street Journal*, 28 Feb. 2011.

Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°117, *Afghanistan's Elections Stalemate*, 23 Feb. 2011.



The prolonged crisis over Afghanistan's parliamentary elections has substantially weakened President Hamid Karzai's government and could, if left unaddressed, drive disenfranchised Afghans into the arms of the Taliban, stoke ethnic tensions and increase the risks of civil war.

➡ **Bangladesh** Govt 7 Feb deployed 10,000 riot police across country after opposition BNP called national strike to protest govt handling of economy; dozens injured as protesters clashed with police in Dhaka. Police raided BNP headquarters, arrested several activists.

- “Dozens injured in clashes during Bangladesh strike”, AFP, 7 Feb. 2011.

➡ **Kashmir** India, Pakistan 10 Feb announced formal peace talks will resume, likely in July; direct talks suspended since Nov 2008 Mumbai terror attack. India 13 Feb reiterated plan to withdraw 10,000 of 70,000 paramilitary troops stationed in Kashmir by end 2011. Suspected Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) militants 1 Feb killed 2 teenage girls outside Srinagar; first suspected LeT attack in 2011. Thousands protested across Valley 5 Feb after Indian troops 4 Feb killed student in Handwara.

- “India and Pakistan to resume talks”, *Guardian*, 10 Feb. 2011.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°106, *Steps Towards Peace: Putting Kashmiris First*, 3 June 2010.

➡ **India (non-Kashmir)** Govt halted offensive against Maoists in Orissa after rebels 17 Feb kidnapped 2 state officials; 1 official released 25 Feb after govt-Maoist negotiations. Paramilitary troops 8 Feb killed 1 Maoist local commander in Orissa. Home Minister Chidambaram 1 Feb said govt at “stalemate” with Maoists despite launch of large-scale anti-Maoist operation late 2009. Assam separatist militant group ULFA 6 Feb called for “unconditional” peace talks with govt; preliminary talks started 10 Feb.

- “Maoists will ‘not harm’ kidnapped Indian officials”, BBC, 21 Feb. 2011.

➡ **Nepal** Step taken towards ending 7-month political deadlock as Constituent Assembly 3 Feb elected Jhala Nath Khanal of UML party as new PM, but Khanal still unable to form new govt. Maoist leader Prachandra had earlier agreed to support UML, rescind own candidacy. Khanal 11 Feb named 3 UML ministers to new govt, but yet to form full cabinet as negotiations continue with Maoists over key portfolios.

- “Nepal's new PM urges political consensus”, AFP, 18 Feb. 2011.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°199, *Nepal: Identity Politics and Federalism*, 13 Jan. 2011.

➡ **Sri Lanka** Thousands rallied in Colombo 8 Feb to mark 1-year anniversary of detention of opposition leader Sarath Fonseka;

similar opposition protests 4 Feb attacked by govt supporters. UN 18 Feb said some 5,000 suspected LTTE members still held in camps without access to lawyers or ICRC. Opposition UNP 14 Feb said considering legal action against govt over restriction placed on opposition campaigning in north ahead of March local council elections. UNSG Ban 8 Feb said panel of experts advising him on accountability options for alleged war crimes will visit Sri Lanka, but no sign trip would happen as panel reached end of month reporting deadline.

- “Election Commissioner ‘helpless’”, BBC, 14 Feb. 2011.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°191, *War Crimes in Sri Lanka*, 17 May 2010.

➡ **Pakistan** UN 4 Feb said some 20,000 fled violence in Mohmand Agency where army launched new offensive against militants early month. Suspected Taliban suicide bomber killed 31 soldiers in Mardan 10 Feb. U.S.-Pakistani tensions increased after U.S. citizen Raymond Davis 27 Jan shot 2 Pakistanis dead in Lahore. U.S. initially claimed Davis had diplomatic immunity, later admitted he was CIA operative; Pakistan refused U.S. requests for Davis to be allowed to leave the country. Anti-terrorism court 12 Feb issued arrest warrant for ex-president Musharraf over his alleged involvement in 2007 assassination of ex-PM Benazir Bhutto; court says Musharraf failed to provide adequate security. Rawalpindi court 14 Feb charged police commando with Jan murder of Punjab Governor Salman Taseer. PM Gilani 9 Feb dissolved cabinet, replaced with a smaller body to reduce costs. Unknown gunmen 2 Feb kidnapped local official, killed 5 police in Balochistan. PPP party liberal MP Sherry Rehman 3 Feb dropped attempt to repeal controversial blasphemy law after govt reiterated support for law.

- “American held in Pakistan worked with C.I.A.”, *New York Times*, 21 Feb. 2011.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°196, *Reforming Pakistan's Criminal Justice System*, 6 Dec. 2010.

SOUTH EAST ASIA

➡ **Burma/Myanmar** Parliament 4 Feb elected ex-PM Thein Sein new President, 2 high-ranking ex-military officials as VPs; all 3 members of junta proxy party USDP. U.S. State Dept 16 Feb voiced concern for opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi's safety after threats against her published in state media for her support of sanctions. Suu Kyi's NLD party 7 Feb called on West to maintain sanctions.

- “Suu Kyi party presses for sanctions”, Al Jazeera, 7 Feb 2011.

➡ **Indonesia** String of attacks by hardline Muslim groups on religious minorities during month: 3 members of Ahmadiyah sect killed in Cikeusik town outside Jakarta 6 Feb; in Java, mob 8 Feb burned 2 churches after Catholic writer sentenced to 5 years' prison for blasphemy. Terrorism trial against JI leader Abu Bakar Ba'asyir started 14 Feb; Ba'asyir denied all charges. Govt 16 Feb announced new plan to boost economic growth in Papua. Partai Aceh, political party of ex-rebel group GAM, selected 2 former GAM leaders as candidates for Dec gubernatorial elections.

- “Feet of clay”, *Economist*, 17 Feb. 2011.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°197, *Indonesia: Preventing Violence in Local Elections*, 8 Dec. 2010.

➡ **Philippines** In line with President Aquino's election pledges, govt resumed formal peace talks with 2 major rebel groups during month. Govt-MILF talks held in Malaysia 9-10 Feb, next

round scheduled for 29-30 March; both sides said optimistic of reaching peace deal within a year. Malaysian facilitator Othman Razak, who govt accused of pro-MILF bias, to be replaced, but no successor named. MILF 5 Feb confirmed “renegade” commander Ameril Umbra Kato, implicated in Aug 2008 attacks on civilians, had formed own group Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters, but said problem “manageable”; govt expressed concern split could harm peace talks. Army 2 Feb said at least 13 killed in month-long land dispute in North Cotabato where MILF and rival MNLF clashed; further 6 civilians killed 7 Feb. Formal govt negotiations with Communist NPA resumed in Oslo 15 Feb: sides 21 Feb announced road map to peace settlement by June 2012, but rebels called for release of high-level communist party official arrested on eve of talks. 2 soldiers, 5 Abu Sayyaf militants killed 13 Feb in Basilan clash.

▪ “Long-awaited Philippine peace talks resume”, AFP, 15 Feb. 2011.

Crisis Group Asia Report N°202, *The Communist Insurgency in the Philippines: Tactics and Talks*, 14 Feb. 2011. Peace talks beginning 15 Feb in Oslo may be the best hope in years for halting an insurgency that has prevented development in large parts of the Philippines.



➡ **Thailand** Hostilities broke out along Cambodian border near disputed Preah Vihear temple after Cambodian court sentenced 2 Thais to prison for espionage: at least 3 Thai, 5 Cambodian soldiers killed as forces exchanged fire 4-7 Feb. UNSC 14 Feb called for permanent ceasefire; both govts 22 Feb accepted Indonesian observers in area following informal meeting of ASEAN FMs. In face of rising “yellow shirt” demonstrations calling for PM Abhisit’s resignation, govt 9 Feb invoked Internal Security Act in Bangkok, granting security forces more power to control protests. Deputy PM Suthep 17 Feb said general election will be held “before June”. In southern Pattani province, suspected Islamist militants 3 Feb killed 5 Buddhist villagers, 10 Feb killed 3; car bomb in Yala town 13 Feb injured 17.

▪ “Thailand, Cambodia agree to border observers”, AFP, 22 Feb. 2011.

▪ For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°113, *Stalemate in Southern Thailand*, 3 Nov. 2010.

➡ **Timor-Leste** UNSC 24 Feb extended mandate of UNMIT peacekeeping mission by 1 year.

▪ “Security Council extends UN mission in Timor-Leste for another year”, UN News, 24 Feb. 2011.



BALKANS

➡ **Albania** Following deadly violence at 21 Jan anti-govt protests, several further days of demonstrations passed without incident. President Topi 9 Feb condemned PM Berisha’s attempted blocking of prosecutor’s probe into Jan violence, 23 Feb urged political parties to cooperate. First parliament session after demonstrations 10 Feb degenerated into fistfights. Parliament lifted immunity from prosecution for former deputy PM Ilir Meta and former economy minister Dritan Prifti, paving way for corruption charges against them. Republican guard

retaliated against state prosecutor Ina Rama, who brought charges against 6 of its members over Jan protester deaths, by replacing her handpicked bodyguards – widely seen as attempt at intimidation.

▪ “US sees local elections as key to Albania’s future”, Balkan Insight, 23 Feb. 2011.

➡ **Bosnia** Leaders of 12 parties that won seats in Oct elections met 11 Feb, failed to agree on date for resumption of parliament. Provisional speaker reported main obstacle is future role of 2 leading Bosnian Croat parties opposed to bloc comprising Social Democratic Party, Bosniak Party of Democratic Action and 2 small Bosnian Croat parties. EU envoy Miroslav Lajcak visited late Feb for new round of negotiations. Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina president Borjana Krišto 3 Feb appointed judges to entity constitutional court in apparent violation of constitution which requires that appointments to be nominated by state-level High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council (HJPC). Republika Srpska president Milorad Dodik continued rhetorical attacks on HJPC and state level judicial institutions. Sporadic protests throughout country, including rail workers strike and veterans’ protest.

▪ Comment by Sabine Freizer (Crisis Group), “Europe’s Time to Act in Bosnia”, *European Voice*, 1 Feb. 2011.

▪ “Bosnia’s top envoy, EU renew call for govt formation”, AFP, 24 Feb. 2011.

▪ For latest Briefing, see Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°59, *Bosnia: Europe’s Time to Act*, 11 Jan. 2011.

➡ **Kosovo** New Kosovo Assembly met for first time 21 Feb following Dec elections, 22 Feb approved new govt under PM Thaci, elected billionaire construction mogul Behgjet Pacolli as president after 3 rounds of voting with 62 votes out of 120 members. Opposition parties boycotted vote, denounced break before third round as unconstitutional, filed complaint with constitutional court. Govt coalition consists of Thaci’s PDK, Pacolli’s AKR and several Serb and minority parties, comprising 65 assembly seats; strains already appearing in both main parties. U.S. ambassador Dell accused by media of interfering in president vote. Govt 23 Feb said ready for dialogue with Serbia, announced deputy PM Edita Tahiri to lead delegation. PM Thaci early month forced to suspend 50% salary rise for public sector employees following international pressure.

▪ “Thaci pledges Kosovo government will work for all”, Balkan Insight, 23 Feb. 2011.

▪ For latest report, see Crisis Group Europe Report N°206, *Kosovo and Serbia after the ICJ Opinion*, 26 Aug. 2010.

➡ **Macedonia** Growing tensions and fears over possibility of renewed ethnic crisis as 8 people injured 13 Feb during clashes between ethnic Macedonians and Albanians at site of museum being built at Skopje fortress. Conflict between ruling VMRO-DPMNE and opposition Social Democrats continued following opposition’s late-Jan walkout of parliament. PM Gruevski 20 Feb said would agree to opposition call for early elections. Opposition accepted but with preconditions including improvements in election law, reform of voters’ list; Gruevski rejected conditions. Meanwhile ruling VMRO-DPMNE party continued with legislative agenda, with several controversial laws including alleged law restricting media freedom. UN mediator in Macedonia-Greece name dispute Matthew Nimetz 9 Feb met with both sides in New York, said no agreement on name proposal.

▪ “Scandal, tension and turbulence”, *Economist*, 24 Feb. 2011.

➤ **Serbia** Governing coalition underwent internal crisis after economy minister Mladjan Dinkić called on PM Cvetković to resign. Ruling DS began proceedings to remove Dinkić, who then resigned. Serbia 31 Jan submitted answers to EU questionnaire, on basis of which EU to assess country's readiness for candidate status.

- "PM: government's authority restored", B92, 20 Feb. 2011.

CAUCASUS

➤ **Armenia** Constitutional Court 15 Feb ratified agreement signed Aug 2010 with Russia extending Russian military base in Armenia to 2044. Leading opposition newspaper Haykakan Zhamanak found guilty of libel for Oct report alleging 3 businessmen engaged in criminal activity in Russia; editor denounced verdict as politically motivated. Over 10,000 opposition supporters participated in anti-govt rally in Yerevan 18 Feb.

- "Armenian opposition leader insists on early polls, warns of 'Egypt-like' unrest", RFE/RL, 19 Feb. 2011.

Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°60, *Armenia and Azerbaijan: Preventing War*, 8 Feb. 2011. Escalating front-line clashes, a spiralling arms race, vitriolic rhetoric and a virtual breakdown in peace talks increase the chance Armenia and Azerbaijan will go back to war over Nagorno-Karabakh, with devastating regional consequences.



➤ **Azerbaijan** Increased govt efforts to implement anti-corruption measures, including late Jan meeting of anti-corruption commission, firing of several officials and civil servants and 9 Feb speech by President Aliyev, described by observers as measures to prevent moves by opposition to emulate protests in Egypt. Leaders of opposition parties comprising civil movement "For Karabakh and Republic" met 11 Feb for first time in a year; follows late Jan petition to govt by over 100 non-partisan and opposition candidates to hold elections or prepare for protests. Govt crackdown on 2 opposition activists drew media attention over month.

- "Cairo unrest spurring anti-graft effort in Baku", Eurasianet, 7 Feb. 2011.

➤ **North Caucasus (Russia)** Guerrillas 18 Feb killed 3 Muscovite tourists, 19 Feb attacked ski resort near Mount Elbrus, Kabardino-Balkaria Republic (KBR), causing govt to suspend plans to develop region and triggering anxiety over 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics security. Presumed attackers later inflicted casualties on pursuing security forces. Attack one of several during Feb in formally quite peaceful KBR, underlining degree to which it has become major area of Islamic guerrilla activity. Earlier in month KBR president Arsen Kanokov said security forces unable to contain insurgents, local group described as informal anti-wahhabi militia attacked prominent Islamic militant's home. Russian President Medvedev 22 Feb made surprise visit to North Ossetia. In video released 7 Feb insurgent leader Doku Umarov claimed responsibility for 24 Jan bomb attack on Domodevo airport, threatened further attacks. 2 high-level officials sacked 8 Feb over Domodevo attack. Authorities 8 Feb detained as suspected accomplices family members of 20 year-old Ingush man accused of involvement in bombing. Violence continued elsewhere in North Caucasus, including suicide bombings in Dagestan 14 Feb and thwarted suicide attack in Chechnya 15 Feb. Moscow mid-Feb estimated over

1,000 insurgents in North Caucasus, significantly higher than previous year, but observers suggest well below actual figure.

- "Russian leadership prepares for a protracted war with the North Caucasus insurgency", EDM, 23 Feb. 2011.

➤ **Georgia** Parliament 18 Feb began discussing draft new National Security Concept, which identifies "Russian aggression" as major threat to Georgian security. Parliament also discussed "Freedom Charter", law increasing surveillance and police powers. Interior Ministry 16 Feb said it had arrested 3 further suspects in relation to late-2010 bomb blasts in Tbilisi including suspected key figure Merab Kolbaia; brings total arrests to 9. UNHCR 3 Feb reported no "major violations" of international standards occurred during Jan evictions of IDPs from Tbilisi; group of Georgian NGOs condemned report. Abkhaz local elections 12 Feb saw 39% turnout following opposition boycott; Tbilisi condemned vote as "pseudo-democratic". Tbilisi, South Ossetia 20 Feb exchanged 14 prisoners, 7 from each side, held since 2008 war.

- Comment by Medea Turasvili (Crisis Group), "Restoring Freedom of Movement", *IJSS Caucasus Security Insight*, 16 Feb. 2011.
- "New security concept lists 'serious challenges' for Georgia", Messenger, 21 Feb. 2011.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°58, *Georgia: Securing a Stable Future*, 13 Dec. 2010.

➤ **Nagorno-Karabakh (Azerbaijan)** Minsk Group co-chairs met with Azerbaijani President Aliyev and Defence Minister Abiyev 11 Feb; Abiyev stated Azerbaijan is making serious preparations for "liberation of the occupied territories", but emphasized need to resolve conflict according to existing international norms. Azerbaijan 14 Feb launched unprecedented Command Post Exercises in region, involving regular army, all supplemental military and reserve agencies. Armenian armed forces also launched large-scale anti-sniper trainings, following Azerbaijan's sniper attacks and acquisition of sniper guns and planned trainings with the assistance of foreign contractors. Azerbaijan reported 200 ceasefire violations 30 Jan - 5 Feb. Armenian opposition parties and head of delegation to Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly criticised body's late Jan decision to resume work of N-K subcommittee, suspended 2008.

- "EU envoy warns of Karabakh escalation", Armenialiberty.org, 24 Feb. 2011

EASTERN EUROPE

➤ **Belarus** Trials of 42 opposition activists detained in crackdown on 19 Dec post-election demonstrations started 17 Feb; activist Vasil Parfyankou sentenced to 4 years' jail for participating in mass demonstration. 2 Russian citizens among defendants. International condemnation of post-election crackdown continued, including OSCE, UN. Russian FM Lavrov 2 Feb said post-election crackdown "unacceptable", also criticised Western sanctions. 1 Feb donor conference hosted by Poland secured EUR 87mn in pledges to aid Belarusian human rights, democracy.

- "From the street to the courtroom, first anti-Lukashenka protester jailed", RFE/RL, 17 Feb. 2011.

WESTERN EUROPE/MEDITERRANEAN

➤ **Basque Country (Spain)** Basque separatists 7 Feb launched new political party "Sortu" rejecting use of violence,

ahead of May regional elections. Attorney general 18 Feb said Sortu is continuation of banned Batasuna party, will ask Supreme Court to deny it legal status. PM Zapatero 22 Feb said ETA "in its final phase".

▪ "Spain's Basques on the verge of peace", BBC, 23 Feb. 2011.

➡ **Cyprus** Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaders met 3 times during month: 9 Feb agreed on procedure to move forward by intensifying process and meeting weekly; 17 Feb confirmed progress already made on chapters on economy and EU matters. Turkish Cypriots late Jan, early Feb protested austerity measures introduced by Ankara 1 Jan, including cuts in public sector salaries, sale of state-owned enterprises; over 10,000 Turkish Cypriot state employees and unionists in anti-Turkey rally 28 Jan. Turkish PM Erdoğan condemned event as "collaboration" with Greek Cypriots, replaced Turkey's ambassador to island with bureaucrat in charge of reining in Turkish Cypriot budget deficit. Christofias's govt partner DIKO split with coalition to join 24 Feb parliament vote supporting joining NATO's Partnership for Peace; Christofias vowed to veto proposal, raising coalition tensions to new high.

▪ "Cyprus issue moving to forefront", EurasiaNet, 18 Feb. 2011.

Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°61, *Cyprus: Six Steps toward a Settlement*, 22 Feb. 2011. With stalemate looming in the UN-sponsored Cyprus reunification negotiations, parties to the dispute need to take dramatic, unilateral steps to break the decades-long distrust that is suffocating them.



➡ **Turkey** Police used tear gas, water cannons 3 Feb to disperse about 10,000 people protesting labour law; several people injured. 17-year old Kurdish student burned himself to death 14 Feb in protest against PKK founder Abdullah Ocalan's 1999 detention. Mass protests by pro-Kurdish supporters 15 Feb to mark anniversary of Ocalan's detention turned into clashes with police in southeast; unrest and clashes between demonstrators and police continued 17-20 Feb. PKK 28 Feb ended unilateral ceasefire due to ruling AKP's "unwillingness" to solve Kurdish issues. U.S. State Dept 17 Feb expressed "ongoing concerns" about treatment of journalists following 4 Feb arrest of 4 anti-govt journalists for questioning in "Ergenekon" plot to overthrow govt. PM Erdoğan 15 Feb rejected opposition allegations that his govt was interfering in Ergenekon coup trial after Istanbul court jailed at least 155 officers for their role in plot. French President Sarkozy during Ankara visit 25 Feb said Turkey unfit for EU membership. FM Davutoğlu 26 Feb said Turkey will not sign readmission agreement with EU unless talks begin on visa liberalisation.

▪ "A Muslim democracy in action", *Economist*, 17 Feb. 2011.

▪ For latest report, see Crisis Group Europe Report N°208, *Turkey's Crises over Israel and Iran*, 8 Sept. 2010.

Latin America / Caribbean

➡ **Bolivia** Large-scale protests over food shortages, rising prices continued; President Morales 15 Feb reshuffled cabinet for second time in 5 weeks in response.

▪ "Aliados y enemigos de Morales en protestas contra inflación", BBC, 18 Feb. 2011.

➡ **Colombia** FARC unilaterally released 6 hostages; govt welcomed move, but continues to condition peace talks on release of 16 remaining "political" hostages and ceasefire. President Santos 10 Feb accused FARC of double standards after rebels 9 Feb kidnapped 2 contractors in Cauca. Colombian NGO 7 Feb reported 32% increase in kidnappings in 2010; first annual increase since 2002. Military late month intensified campaign against FARC in southern Cañón de las Hermosas region, where rebel commander Alfonso Cano believed to be in hiding. Govt 7 Feb announced new "unprecedented" military operation against paramilitary successor groups ("bacrim"); UNHCHR 25 Feb reported bacrim massacres up 40% in 2010.

▪ "FARC releases two more hostages in Colombia", AFP, 16 Feb. 2011.

▪ For latest report, see Crisis Group Latin America Briefing N°23, *Improving Security Policy in Colombia*, 29 June 2010.

➡ **Ecuador** Constitutional Court 15 Feb approved President Correa's proposed referendum on constitutional and judicial reform, likely to be held May; opposition and factions of Correa's own ruling AP party say reform will unconstitutionally strengthen role of president, but opinion polls indicate popular support.

▪ "Luz verde para referendo de Correa", BBC, 16 Feb. 2011.

➡ **Guatemala** Govt human rights ombudsman Sergio Morales 14 Feb warned of potential violence in at least 18 of 22 departments ahead of Sept general elections; 21 of 25 political parties 7 Feb signed "ethics pact" to prevent violence leading up to vote. U.S. 9 Feb announced further \$200mn in aid to "regional effort" combatting drug trafficking in Central America. Govt 18 Feb lifted 2-month state of siege in Alta Verapaz; claimed operation successful, at least 20 members of Mexican cartel Los Zetas arrested.

▪ "Mexican drug cartels draws Guatemalan army to jungles where it fought civil war", *Washington Post*, 9 Feb. 2011.

▪ For latest report, see Crisis Group Latin America Report N°33, *Squeezed between Crime and Impunity*, 22 June 2010.

➡ **Haiti** Provisional electoral council 3 Feb announced official results from 28 Nov presidential elections: Michel Martelly and Mirlande Manigat to contest 20 March run-off, leaving out governing Inite party candidate Jude Célestin, who accepted ruling; U.S., OAS praised decision. Analysts warned of possible renewed fraud in run-off unless technical capacity to organise election strengthened. Govt 7 Feb confirmed 3-month extension of President Preval's term to 14 May. Govt 9 Feb issued diplomatic passport to ex-President Aristide, ousted in 2004 popular revolt; U.S. said Aristide's return before run-off vote could be "distracting".

▪ "Campaign opens for Haiti's presidential runoff", *Miami Herald*, 21 Feb. 2011.

➡ **Mexico** 8 killed in 13 Feb shootout in outskirts of Mexico City; sixth massacre around capital in 6 months, area previously considered relatively free of violence. At least 27 killed 14 Feb in 2 separate suspected cartel attacks on civilians in Tamaulipas. Suspected Los Zetas members 14 Feb killed Nuevo Leon state police chief in Monterrey. After U.S. announced \$250mn aid reduction to Mexico in 2012, opposition PRI party 15 Feb called on Mexico to pull out of U.S.-backed "Plan Merida" to tackle organised crime. U.S. Homeland Security Secretary Napolitano 23 Feb criticised President Calderón for saying lack of coordination between U.S. security agencies harming fight

against drugs. Gunmen 16 Feb killed 1 U.S. customs official in San Luis Potosí.

- [“Deadly grenade attack in Mexico”](#), Al Jazeera, 13 Feb. 2011.

➡ **Venezuela** Govt 9 Feb confirmed Venezuela’s homicide rate at 48 per 100,000 citizens; has previously refused to release homicide statistics. Opposition parties boycotted 15 Feb National Assembly session to protest key-note speech by general with alleged links to drug trafficking, pro-govt bias. 23-day student anti-govt hunger strike ended 22 Feb after gov’t promised to review cases of alleged political prisoners, start dialogue with OAS.

- [“Criminals or dissidents?”](#), *Economist*, 17 Feb. 2011.



Middle East / North Africa

EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

➡ **Israel/Occupied Palestinian Territories** PA 1 Feb set local elections for 9 June, 12 Feb declared Sept parliamentary and presidential elections; Hamas rejected calls, said national reunification must precede elections. PA’s cabinet dissolved 14 Feb; Salam Fayyad retained as PM. U.S. 18 Feb vetoed UNSC resolution condemning Israel’s settlement policy, all 14 other members backed measure; Obama administration said veto not support for further settlement construction. Saeb Erekat, PLO’s chief negotiator, 12 Feb resigned taking responsibility for Palestinian Papers leaked from his office. Israeli PM Netanyahu 12 Feb welcomed declaration by Egypt’s new military rulers that they would honour peace treaty; but 16 Feb said Israel had to “prepare for the worst” (see Egypt). Increased clashes along Gaza border late month, including 23 Feb rocket attack on southern city of Beersheba, first attack on city since 2009 Gaza war; Israeli PM Netanyahu 24 Feb warned Hamas not to test Israel’s resolve. Netanyahu 19 Feb accused Iran of exploiting Mideast unrest to increase its influence by sending 2 naval ships to Syria through Suez Canal (see Iran).

- [“U.S. blocks Security Council censure of Israeli settlements”](#), *New York Times*, 18 Feb. 2011.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Middle East Report N°98, [“Squaring the Circle: Palestinian Security Reform under Occupation”](#), 7 Sept. 2010.

➡ **Lebanon** Caretaker PM Saad Hariri 27 Feb announced March 14 coalition will boycott PM-designate Mikati’s gov’t, accused Hizbollah of staging “coup”. Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL) judges 16 Feb ruled court would use Lebanon’s definition of terrorism as act “intended to spread terror” but also apply broader international interpretation of the “means” of attack. Mikati 16 Feb assured EU foreign policy chief Ashton new gov’t will respect international resolutions including UN Resolution 1701 that ended 2006 war with Israel. Hizbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah 16 Feb warned forces will invade Israel’s northern Galilee region if conflict resumes; day earlier Israeli Defence Minister Barak told soldiers they may have to invade Lebanon again.

- [“Lebanon’s outgoing PM Hariri goes into opposition”](#), Reuters, 14 Feb. 2011.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Middle East Report N°100, [“Trial by Fire: The Politics of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon”](#), 2 Dec. 2010.

➡ **Syria** Third peaceful protest in 3 weeks in Damascus violently dispersed 23 Feb by police; planned 5 Feb “Day of Rage” protests failed to draw any protesters. Govt 9 Feb allowed access to Facebook and YouTube 3 years after blocking websites. Higher State Security Court 14 Feb sentenced teenage blogger to 5 years in prison on charges of spying for CIA; U.S. criticised secret trial, appealed for release. Turkey PM Erdoğan 6 Feb praised booming ties with Syria at launch of public works on “friendship dam” at border between countries. 2 Iranian war-ships 23 Feb docked at Latakia, first Iranian navy vessels to pass through Suez Canal since 1979 revolution (see Iran).

- [“Syria clamps down on dissent with beatings and arrests”](#), *Guardian*, 24 Feb. 2011.

GULF

➡ **Bahrain** Month saw unprecedented anti-govt protests, inspired by events elsewhere in Arab world. Protests by Shia majority against Sunni absolute monarchy began 14 Feb outside capital Manama; 1 protester killed by police. Unrest escalated over following days. Military crackdown began 17 Feb, peaked 18 Feb as troops, helicopters fired on protesters; 7 killed, hundreds injured, further gatherings banned. Shia opposition bloc Al Wefaq 15 Feb announced it would boycott parliament following protester deaths, 26 Feb announced members’ resignation from parliament. Crown Prince Salman bin Hamad al-Khalifa 19 Feb ordered withdrawal of security forces following international condemnation, offered dialogue with opposition. Opposition groups, protesters 20 Feb demanded resignation of gov’t, investigation of deaths and commitment to reform. King Hamad ibn Isa Al Khalifa 22 Feb released number of political prisoners, 27 Feb reshuffled cabinet, allowed return of exiled opposition leader Hassan Mashaima. Hundreds of thousands continued protests late month.

- [“Protests in Bahrain become test of wills”](#), *New York Times*, 22 Feb. 2011.


➡ **Iran** Several activists and journalists detained ahead of 14 Feb anti-govt rallies, opposition leaders Mehdi Karubi and Mir Hossein Mousavi late month placed in “safe house” by authorities for “own safety”. Security forces 14-15 Feb clashed with thousands of anti-govt protesters supporting successful uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt in Tehran; 2 killed, dozens wounded, hundreds detained in first mass opposition demonstration since Dec 2009. Pro-govt supporters clashed with opposition members 16 Feb at funeral of student killed in 14 Feb protests. Tens of thousands in 18 Feb pro-regime “hatred” rally in Tehran, demanded opposition leaders be sentenced to death for “rebellion”. 2 naval ships 22 Feb entered Suez Canal, first time since 1979 Islamic Revolution, bound for Syria on training mission; Israel denounced move as provocation (see Israel/OPT).

- [“Iran squelches protest attempt in capital”](#), *New York Times*, 20 Feb. 2011.


➡ **Iraq** Ongoing nationwide protests over corruption, poor services, food shortages; at least 29 killed so far in clashes with security forces. 25 Feb “Day of Rage” protests largest in month; most violent clashes in Hawija, Mosul in north and Basra in south. PM Maliki made series of announcements to forestall mass protests, including personal 50% pay cut, promise not to seek third term in office, increasing food rations. Maliki 27 Feb gave cabinet 100 days to improve or face “changes”. Provincial governors of Kut, Basra and Babil stepped down in face

of protests; Maliki 28 Feb called for early provincial elections to meet people's demands for change. Shiite religious leader Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani 26 Feb called for political reforms. Parliament 13 Feb approved several more ministers but key posts remain unfilled including defence and interior, both held by Maliki in interim. At least 48 killed, 80 injured 12 Feb by suicide bombing of Shiite pilgrims near city of Samarra.




- Comment by Joost Hiltermann (Crisis Group), "Deep Traumas, Fresh Ambitions: Legacies of the Iran-Iraq War", *Middle East Report*, 1 Feb. 2011.
- "After Iraq's Day of Rage, a Crackdown on Intellectuals", *Washington Post*, 27 Feb. 2011.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Middle East Report N°99, *Loose Ends: Iraq's Security Forces Between U.S. Drawdown and Withdrawal*, 26 Oct 2010

 **Jordan** Following weeks of protests in Jan, King Abdullah II 1 Feb made several concessions including replacement of PM, commitment to reform. New cabinet sworn in 9 Feb; foreign, interior and finance ministers retained posts. Weekly Friday protests continued, but without main opposition group Muslim Brotherhood. 8 protesters injured 18 Feb in clashes with pro-govt demonstrators; reports said police present but did not intervene. Muslim Brotherhood 22 Feb announced it would rejoin protests, citing govt failure to fulfil reform promises; "day of anger" protest 25 Feb attracted 6,000 protestors.

- "Jordan's King Abdullah seeks rapid change from new government amid protest", Bloomberg, 21 Feb. 2011.


 **Oman** Protests demanding political reform starting 26 Feb in main industrial town Sohar, 28 Feb spread to capital Muscat; at least 2 killed 27 Feb by police. Sultan Qaboos bin Said 26 Feb replaced 6 cabinet members, increased minimum wage by over 40%.

- "Protests in Oman spread from port city to capital", *New York Times*, 28 Feb. 2011.

   **Yemen** Escalating nationwide deadly protests demanding regime change, mainly in Sanaa, Taiz, Aden: at least 24 people killed in daily clashes with security forces since 16 Feb. Troops 25 Feb fired on protesters in southern city Aden, killing around 10, despite President Saleh's 24 Feb order for security forces to protect demonstrators. Protesters demanded President Saleh's resignation and immediate regime change; Saleh 27 Feb vowed to fight "with every drop of blood" to remain in power, although earlier in month offered to form national unity govt, promised not to run in 2013 elections, not to pass authority to son. Main political opposition group Joint Meeting Parties (JMP) 28 Feb refused offer of unity govt, planned 1 March "Day of Rage", but hopes for dialogue remain. Several leaders of country's 2 most important tribal confederations, Hashid and Baqil, 26 Feb joined anti-regime protests. Late-month spike in violence against security forces, mainly in south; unclear who is behind attacks.

- "Yemen opposition spurns offer of unity government", Reuters, 28 Feb. 2011.

NORTH AFRICA

 **Algeria** Thousands of police dispersed 12 Feb, 19 Feb rallies demanding political reform organised by opposition coalition National Coordination for Change and Democracy (CNCD) in May 1 Square, central Algiers. In defiance of ban on public gatherings opposition groups 13 Feb vowed to hold weekly

rallies until govt is changed. President Bouteflika 24 Feb lifted 19-year state of emergency but restrictions on public protests remain in place; new rules also adopted allowing military to continue involvement in domestic security. Italian tourist kidnapped 2 Feb by AQIM, audio message purportedly from hostage broadcast 18 Feb. Security forces 6 Feb arrested 16 al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) suspects in Batna.

- "Protesters face riot police in Algerian capital", AFP, 19 Feb. 2011.


 **Egypt** President Hosni Mubarak stepped down 11 Feb following 18 days of massive protests; up to 365 civilians and 32 police killed, 5,500 and 1,000 injured respectively. Supreme Military Council assumed control until promised presidential and parliamentary elections within 6 months; 13 Feb dissolved parliament and suspended constitution. Reformists continue to press for purge of all those linked to Mubarak, lifting of 30-year emergency law. Military council 18 Feb warned it will not tolerate further protests or strikes due to disastrous effect on economy following post-Mubarak wave of strikes over economic conditions. New civilian cabinet sworn in 22 Feb with 11 new ministers, including opposition and independent members; however, former Mubarak loyalists retained key PM, FM and justice minister posts. Army 25 Feb forcefully dispersed activists from Tahrir Square; military council 26 Feb apologised, said violence was "unintentional". Ruling military council 26 Feb proposed constitutional amendments to be put to referendum before planned elections, including term limits on presidency, stronger judicial oversight of elections, restriction of govt power to retain emergency laws. Public prosecutor 28 Feb issued travel ban, freeze of assets on Mubarak.

- Comment by Robert Malley (Crisis Group) and Hussein Agha, "In post-Mubarak Egypt, the Rebirth of the Arab World", *Washington Post*, 11 Feb. 2011.

- "President Hosni Mubarak resigns as leader", BBC, 12 Feb. 2011.

Crisis Group Middle East/North Africa Report N°101, *Popular Protest in North Africa and the Middle East (I): Egypt Victorious?*, 24 Feb. 2011. If Egypt's popular uprising is to achieve its aspirations for a truly democratic society, street activism will need to be converted into inclusive, institutional politics.

International Crisis Group
WORKING TO PREVENT
CONFLICT WORLDWIDE

  **Libya** Hundreds feared killed, thousands injured during ongoing violent unrest after demonstrations against Muammar Qaddafi's 41-year rule began 16 Feb in Benghazi. Tens of thousands protested throughout country over following days, despite govt 17 Feb announcing release of political prisoners, formation of committee to consider reforms. Tensions escalated starting 17 Feb as security forces and mercenaries reportedly attacked protesters; worst violence reported in Benghazi, Tripoli. Qaddafi's son Saif al Islam 21 Feb warned of civil war as unrest spread to Tripoli; aerial attacks on protesters started same day. Several top officials, high-level diplomats, military officers 22 Feb onward defected. Qaddafi 22 Feb appeared on state television defying calls to quit. Leaders worldwide denounced violence; UNSC 23 Feb strongly condemned crackdown, 27 Feb voted unanimously to impose sanctions, refer Libya to ICC. Late-month reports of full-scale rebellion with large parts of country under opposition control. Self-appointed opposition leaders 26 Feb declared interim govt, National Libyan Council,

to be headed by former justice minister Mustafa Abd el-Jalil. UNHCR 27 Feb estimated 100,000 refugees had fled Libya, most to Egypt or Tunisia.

- Crisis Group Statement: [“Immediate International Steps Needed to Stop Atrocities in Libya”](#), 22 Feb. 2011.
- [“Time to leave”](#), *Economist*, 22 Feb. 2011.

➡ **Mauritania** 7 soldiers, 3 al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) militants killed 2 Feb in foiled bomb attack on Nouakchott; 2 arrested. AQIM 7 Feb threatened to assassinate President Abdel Aziz for waging “proxy war” on behalf of France. 3 of largest unions 13 Feb demonstrated against social conditions in capital Nouakchott, warned of strikes unless govt opens negotiations. Security forces violently dispersed 18 Feb protest against water shortages and rising food prices in southeastern town Fassala; main opposition Rally for Democratic Forces 19 Feb denounced govt for using security solution. Sit-in protest 25-26 Feb for social and political reforms by hundreds of youth activists in Blocat Square, central Nouakchott.

- [“Al Qaeda suspects killed in Mauritania car blast”](#), Reuters, 2 Feb. 2011.

➡ **Morocco** More than 10,000 protested 20 Feb in major cities, including capital Rabat, Casablanca demanding political reform and limits on powers of King Mohammed VI; some scattered violence, clashes with police in Marrakech and northern town of Larache. King 21 Feb said he would not cede to “demagoguery”, announced creation of Social and Economic Council to revisit social charter. PM Fassi 14 Feb met leaders of main political parties: promised social, economic, political issues would be tackled; 15 Feb announced govt will double food and energy subsidies. Banned Islamist group Justice and Charity 6 Feb

demanded end of “Benalisation” of politics and economy.

- [“Fears of chaos temper calls for change in Morocco”](#), *New York Times*, 20 Feb. 2011.

➡ **Tunisia** Month saw attempts to restore stability following Jan ousting of President Ben Ali. UN OHCHR team 1 Feb said at least 219 killed during Jan uprising. Interim PM Mohammad Ghannouchi, formerly of Ben Ali’s Constitutional Democratic Rally (RCD) party, 27 Feb announced resignation, following mounting protests against ties to ousted regime. 3 protesters killed, scores injured by security forces in 24-27 Feb demonstrations. UNHCR 27 Feb warned of impending humanitarian crisis following massive influx of refugees from Libya (see Libya). Interior Ministry 6 Feb announced suspension of RCD party, pending formal dissolution. Senate 9 Feb granted decree-rule powers to interim President Mebazaa, in move intended to expedite reforms. Govt 20 Feb issued formal request to Saudi Arabia for extradition of Ben Ali; seeks trial relating to killing of protesters.

- [“Now what?”](#), *Economist*, 10 Feb. 2011.

➡ **Western Sahara** Violent clashes 26 Feb in Dakhla between local Sahrawis and Moroccan youths; at least 2 killed. Morocco FM Taieb Fassi Fihri 15 Feb said Algeria and Polisario Front may use political upheavals in Arab countries to stir unrest. Representatives from Polisario Front, Moroccan govt 9-10 Feb discussed humanitarian conditions at Tindouf refugee camps at Geneva meeting.

- [“Riots erupt after Western Sahara concert”](#), *Magharebia*, 28 Feb. 2011.

“Crisis Group has been invaluable in presenting real-world policy options before conflict situations become front page news. I have gained tremendously from their early-warning, insight and good advice in working for the prevention and resolution of conflicts in Africa since I joined the UN.”

Haile Menkerios, SRS to Sudan, 17 February 2011.

Advocacy Offices

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

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