

**1 April 2011, N°92**

## 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](mailto:crisiswatch@crisisgroup.org).

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## March 2011 Trends



### Deteriorated Situations

Bahrain (p.10)      Libya (p.11)  
Benin (p.4)      Nigeria (p.4)  
Bosnia (p.7)      Syria (p.10)  
Burkina Faso (p.4)      Yemen (p.11)  
Côte d'Ivoire (p.4)



### Improved Situations

Niger (p.4)



### Unchanged Situations

Afghanistan (p.5), Albania (p.7), Algeria (p.11), Armenia (p.8), Azerbaijan (p.8), Bangladesh (p.6), Basque Country (Spain) (p.8), Belarus (p.8), Bolivia (p.9), Burundi (p.2), Cameroon (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), Egypt (p.11), Ethiopia (p.2), 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.11), Israel/Occupied Palestinian Territories (p.10), Jordan (p.11), Kashmir (p.6), Kazakhstan (p.5), Kenya (p.3), Kosovo (p.7), Kuril Islands/Northern Territories (Russia/Japan) (p.5), Kyrgyzstan (p.5), Lebanon (p.10), Liberia (p.4), Macedonia (p.8), Madagascar (p.3), Mauritania (p.12), Mexico (p.9), Morocco (p.12), Myanmar/Burma (p.6), Nagorno-Karabakh (Azerbaijan) (p.8), Nepal (p.6), Nicaragua (p.9), North Caucasus (Russia) (p.8), North Korea (p.5), Oman (p.11), Pakistan (p.6), Philippines (p.7), Rwanda (p.2), Saudi Arabia (p.11), Somalia (p.3), Sri Lanka (p.6), Sudan (Northern) (p.3), Sudan (South) (p.3), Tajikistan (p.5), Thailand (p.7), Timor-Leste (p.7), Tunisia (p.12), Turkey (p.9), Turkmenistan (p.5), Uganda (p.3), Uzbekistan (p.5), Venezuela (p.10), Western Sahara (p.12), Zimbabwe (p.3)

## April 2011 Watchlist



### Conflict Risk Alerts

Côte d'Ivoire      Syria  
Libya      Yemen  
Nigeria



### 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** Ruling CNDD-FDD 12 March expelled Manasse Nzobonimpa, member of executive council, for accusing senior party members of corruption and embezzlement late Feb regarding \$13mn Ugandan loan; accusations exacerbated internal tensions in opposition UPRONA as party militants claim UPRONA president manipulated by CNDD-FDD; members of UPRONA executive committee 20 March signed declaration calling for departure of president. At least 30 Burundian peacekeepers deployed to AU mission in Somalia killed during end Feb operations in Mogadishu (See Somalia). Police position attacked 27 March in Bujumbura rural commune. 3 FNL members killed 28 March; victims' families accuse intelligence services of responsibility.

- "Burundi sends more troops for AU Somali force", AFP, 14 March 2011.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Africa Report N° 169, *From Electoral Boycott to Political Impasse*, 7 Feb. 2011.

➤ **Cameroon** Govt 8 March suspended Twitter, SMS, citing concerns that social networks could spark popular uprising. Govt 11 March agreed to joint cross border mineral exploitation with Nigeria in Bakassi peninsula.

- "Cameroon suspends Twitter for 'security reasons'", AFP, 16 March 2011.

➤ **Central African Republic** President Bozizé inaugurated 15 March after re-election in Jan poll. Opposition continued to refute outcome of presidential, legislative elections. Despite opposition boycott threats, voting took place 27 March in second round legislative poll; opposition claimed turnout low. Military sources said at least 6 killed, dozens injured, some 100 taken hostage during 13 March LRA attacks in mining town of Nzako. Rebel Convention de patriotes pour la justice et la paix (CPJP) 21 March reportedly attacked 2 villages near Ndélé, north east; 7 killed, 150 houses burned.

- "Central African Republic chooses new parliament", AFP, 27 March 2011.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Africa Report N° 167, *Dangerous Little Stones: Diamonds in the Central African Republic*, 16 Dec. 2010.

➤ **Chad** Constitutional Council 22 March confirmed victory of President Déby's Patriotic Movement of Salvation (MPS) in Feb parliamentary elections. State media 18 March announced 3-week postponement of presidential poll from 3 to 24 April by electoral commission to allow better organisation of vote. 3 opposition candidates 22 March announced plans to boycott poll claiming vote will not be credible; 3 opposition members 25 March withdrew from election commission, posing risk of delayed poll. Defence Minister General Bushara Issa and Sudanese counterpart Major-General Abdelrahim Hussein 17 March agreed to extend joint-border security operations for further 12 months. Déby 28 March claimed al-Qaeda in the Islamic Magreb suspected to be seizing surface-to-air missiles in Libya, smuggling arms to Chad-Niger border areas.

- "Al-Qaeda snatched surface-to-air missiles from Libyan arsenal", AFP, 25 March 2011.

- For latest report, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°78, *Chad's North West: The Next High-risk Area?*, 17 Feb. 2011.

➤ **Democratic Republic of Congo** Preparations for Nov elections continued as newly appointed election commission members sworn in end Feb; new chairman Ngoy Mulunda 4 March announced commission preparing new electoral calendar to ensure fair process. Month also saw focus on mining sector: govt 10 March lifted mining ban in east, in place since Sept 2010, aimed at minimising role of mineral exploitation in conflict. Officials, mining stakeholders early March adopted new code of conduct; analysts, NGOs said code failed to address military, armed group involvement in mining sector. President Kabila 14 March led state security meeting in Kinshasa, reported peace deal with FDLR in pipeline. Insecurity continued in east as LRA 4 March attacked civilians near Dungu, 10 March clashed with FARDC near Bando, Ango Territory. Ugandan army 29 March said LRA leader Joseph Kony back in DRC. Following 27 Feb "attempted coup d'état" in Kinshasa authorities 8 March listed 126 suspects, said 44 already before judiciary.

- "Wanted rebel leader returns to eastern DRC", Reuters, 29 March 2011.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Africa Report N° 165, *No Stability in Kivu despite Rapprochement with Rwanda*, 16 Nov. 2010.

➤ **Rwanda** International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) 29 March sentenced former mayor Jean Baptist Gatete to life in prison for role in 1994 genocide, found Gatete responsible for deaths of perhaps thousands of Tutsi civilians. Belgian authorities 25 March arrested 2 suspected Interahamwe, "Comrade" and "Bomboko" accused of participating in genocide. Grenade detonated 1 March in Kigali injuring 12 people; police arrested 5 claiming FDLR and former security officers in exile in South Africa responsible. Security issues topped 8-9 March Great Lakes economic cooperation meeting in Kigali; participants adopted new declaration including formal joint DRC-Rwanda-Burundi military force.

- "Rwanda genocide: Ex-mayor Gatete sentenced to life", BBC, 29 March 2011.

## HORN OF AFRICA

➤ **Djibouti** Authorities ordered opposition to postpone anti-govt protests set for 4 March after previous 18 Feb demonstration calling for departure of President Guelleh turned violent; opposition said govt intent on denying free and fair 8 April election. Authorities 2 March declared U.S. election observer group Democracy International "illegal"; other groups including AU, Arab League, EU invited to observe elections.

- "Election observers quit Djibouti", *Financial Times*, 15 March 2011.

➤ **Ethiopia** At least 130 arrested following early month reports some 60 churches, at least 28 houses burned in western Oromiya; PM blamed Islamist extremists trying to fuel communal tensions. In series of mid-March interviews media reported govt actively advocating overthrow of govt in neighbouring Eritrea, accused Eritrea of supplying explosives to radical elements in attempt to destabilise Djibouti ahead of April election. Following Feb report of govt troops involved in fighting on Somali border against Islamic militant al-Shabaab, govt forces and Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama'a (ASWJ) militia early month, advanced towards other al-Shabaab strongholds in central and southern Somalia.

- "Moderate Ahlu Sunna, al Shabaab battle rages in central Somalia", AHN, 11 March 2011

➤ **Kenya** International Criminal Court (ICC) 8 March issued summonses for 6 suspects accused of organising 2007-2008 post-election violence to appear 7 April: ICC 29 March confirmed they would not be arrested. President Kibaki 22 March addressed parliament, declared 2012 general elections would proceed as planned, pressed for electoral reform in line with new constitution; said ICC cases against deputy PM and finance minister Uhuru Kenyatta and Eldoret North MP William Ruto would not affect election process. Govt 18 March failed to win support from UNSC members for deferral of ICC prosecution. Unconfirmed reports emerged 24 March that Kenyan forces, with Somali proxy forces, crossed into Somali territory to fight al-Shabaab militants.

- “Kenya seeks AU help to defer ICC cases, again”, *Daily Nation*, 28 March 2011.

➤ **Somalia** Heavy clashes between govt forces supported by AU peacekeepers (AMISOM) and militant Islamist al-Shabaab continued in Mogadishu. 4, 15 March al-Shabaab attacks against govt and AU bases triggered heavy shelling of militant-controlled areas; casualties on both sides including civilians. Reports 5 March indicated at least 50 AMISOM troops killed, some 150 injured during major offensive against militants in Mogadishu in Feb. Burundi deployed additional troops to AMISOM in line with pledges. Fighting intensified in towns bordering Ethiopia and Kenya, with unconfirmed reports 24 March that Kenyan troops crossed border, engaged in fighting. Political dispute between parliament speaker Sharif Hassan Aden and President Sharif Ahmed re-escalated: Parliament rebuffed calls from President Ahmed to reverse its Feb decision to extend Transitional Federal Government (TFG) mandate; meanwhile cabinet 27 March extended mandate of President Ahmed and cabinet ministers for further 12 months beyond Aug; said extension necessary to continue governing through current military offensive.

- “Somali government future clouded as mandate nears expiration”, VoA, 30 March 2011.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°170, *Somalia: The Transitional Government on Life Support*, 21 Feb. 2011.

➤ **Sudan (Northern)** Ruling National Congress Party (NCP) and Sudanese People’s Liberation Movement met 1-6 March in Addis Ababa to discuss post-referendum arrangements; AU High Implementation Panel (AUHIP) said parties focused on maintenance of 2 economically viable states including shared oil and petroleum infrastructure; negotiations to continue 5 April. Renewed fighting 2 March in Abyei prompted some 20,000 to flee; UNMIS 4 March convened meeting of North and South representatives, agreed on establishing standing committees to address security situation. Presidency called for follow-up meeting, 10 March adopted working plan for resolution of border demarcation dispute. Darfur developments centred on latest round of peace talks in Doha, where Liberation and Justice Movement and Justice and Equality Movement rebel groups 24 March opposed govt initiative to hold referendum before July on administrative status of Darfur; said widespread insecurity would prevent free, fair vote. Despite objections President Bashir 29 March issued decree paving way for referendum. Demonstrators in Khartoum suburb met with brutal police response 8 March as 40 of 60 women protesting violence against women were beaten, arrested by police. More than 500 riot police, security service agents forcibly dispersed dozens of opposition activists 9 March during anti-govt demonstration in central Khartoum. U.S. appointed new special envoy to Sudan Princeton Lyman.

- “Darfur referendum aims to contain rebel demands”, *Sudan Times*, 7 March 2011.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°76, *Negotiating Sudan’s North-South Future*, 23 Nov. 2010.

➤ **Sudan (South)** As constitutional review process continued, 9 opposition parties 8 March announced they will pull out of technical committee claiming decisions reached by majority votes rather than consensus, enabling SPLM to determine course of review. Early March clashes in Jonglei between Sudan People’s Liberation Army and forces loyal to renegade General Athon re-erupted 16 March forcing civilians to flee. At least 59 SPLA rebels reportedly killed 18 March during clashes army in Unity and Upper Nile. SPLA said North dropped bombs 21 March near SPLA base in Raja County, Western Bahr al-Ghazal, bordering Darfur.

- “South Sudan army-militia clashes kill 69: army”, Reuters, 18 March 2011.

➤ **Uganda** Following 18 Feb presidential and parliamentary elections, opposition demonstrations broke out 9 March protesting poll outcome; security forces responded, no casualties reported. Human Rights Watch 23 March released report urging govt to investigate special police unit, alleging unit responsible for cases of torture, extortion, extrajudicial killings.

- “Uganda, Burundi pledge additional 4,000 troops in Somalia”, VoA, 28 March 2011.

## SOUTHERN AFRICA

➤ **Madagascar** Political uncertainty prevailed as only 8 out of 11 political movements 9 March initialled road map to end political crisis prepared by Southern African Development Community (SADC) mediator. 3 main political opposition groups, with exception of some individual members, refused to sign proposal. In line with road map PM Camille Vital and govt resigned 10 March; de facto leader Rajoelina 16 March reappointed Vital, 26 March named new govt; rejected by opposition. Meanwhile Rajoelina escaped 3 March road side bomb attack unhurt; opposition leader Mamy Rakotoarivelo accused of instigating attack, arrested 17 March.

- “Madagascar opposition groups reject new government”, Reuters, 28 March 2011.

➤ **Zimbabwe** Month saw increasing rift within govt of national unity. MDC leader PM Tsvangirai denounced President Mugabe’s ZANU-PF attempts to remove MDC officials from office. Supreme Court 10 March rejected MDC Lovemore Moyo’s election as speaker of parliament; parliament 29 March decisively re-elected Moyo as speaker. Authorities 25 March re-arrested Energy Minister Elton Mangoma, initially arrested 10 March and charged with abuse of office over fuel purchase. Reacting, Tsvangirai 10 March declared ZANU-PF violence, arrests and total disregard for Global Political Agreement provisions had rendered govt impotent; stated road map prepared by President Zuma is only solution. Coalition of rights groups 23 March warned govt abuses were escalating and would intensify if elections held in 2011. Human Rights Watch 8 March accused security forces and ZANU-PF of beating, torturing, killing political opponents; criticised unity govt for failing to implement human rights reform. SADC troika 31 March called for end to political violence during meeting in Zambia.

- “Zimbabwe lawmakers pick Mugabe rival for post”, *New York Times*, 29 March 2011.

## WEST AFRICA

↓ **Benin** ECOWAS expressed “deep concern” over escalating tensions following 13 March presidential election. Opposition candidate Adrien Houngbedji rejected preliminary results announced 18 March, claiming fraud; 21 March declared himself winner of poll. Police 24 March forcibly dispersed opposition protestors in economic capital Cotonou who were rejecting preliminary results. Constitutional Court 30 March declared incumbent Thomas Boni Yayi winner of election with 53% of vote, despite attempts by opposition groups to prevent announcement of results.

- [“Benin opposition supporters, unions, protest Boni Yayi election victory”](#), Bloomberg, 24 March 2011.

↓ **Burkina Faso** Army unrest, dissatisfaction emerged 23 March as soldiers in capital Ougadougou protested arrest of 5 colleagues; some 12 people injured during 3 hour gun-fire. In separate incident soldiers 28 March blockaded eastern town Fada N’Gourma with tanks, 29 March fired rocket at courthouse. Head of armed forces 30 March imposed nationwide curfew; President Compaore same day offered to meet army officers to discuss grievances.

- [“Burkina Faso soldiers blast court with rocket”](#), AFP, 29 March 2011.

↓ **Côte d’Ivoire** Month saw slide into civil war as fighting intensified in Abidjan between forces loyal to incumbent President Gbagbo and those allied to president-elect Alassane Ouattara; also reports of sexual violence, summary executions, individuals burnt alive and heavy fighting across country. Gbagbo spokesman 29 March called for immediate ceasefire after pro-Ouattara rebels made rapid gains same day in east and west; rebels 30 March seized official capital Yamoussoukro, major cocoa port San Pedro. Gbagbo army chief defected same day. Pro-Ouattara rebels 31 March reached Abidjan, attacked Gbagbo’s presidential residence, seized state-owned television station. Heavy fighting also spread to at least 5 Abidjan districts over month. Gbagbo forces 3 March gunned down 7 women protesters, 17 March shelled market area in Abobo district, killing 25 civilians. Unidentified armed men 17 March attacked ministry of defence, repelled by Gbagbo forces. Ouattara same day announced creation of Forces Republicaines de Cote d’Ivoire (FRCI) comprising former Forces Nouvelles rebels, army defectors and in televised address urged Gbagbo to agree to national unity govt, fusion of armed forces, and truth and reconciliation commission. UNHCR 25 March estimated up to one million IDPs from renewed conflict. ECOWAS 24 March issued statement urging legitimate use of force to oust Gbagbo as previously referred to in its Dec decisions, called on UNSC to “facilitate immediate transfer of power”. UNSC 30 March unanimously approved resolution demanding end to violence; imposed additional sanctions on Gbagbo, also his wife and 3 associates; stopped short of ICC deferral.

- Comment by Rinaldo Depagne, Gilles Yabi (Crisis Group), [“Laurent Gbagbo is to blame for the crisis”](#), *Guardian*, 9 March 2011.
- [“Gbagbo faces choice: exit or bloodshed”](#), Reuters 31 March, 2011.

Crisis Group Africa Report N°171, [Côte d’Ivoire: Is War the Only Option?](#), 3 March 2011. Côte d’Ivoire is on the verge of a new civil war between the army loyal to the defiant Laurent Gbagbo, who refuses to acknowledge he lost the November 2010 presidential election, and the “Forces nouvelles” (FN), the ex-insurgency now supporting the winner, Alassane Ouattara.

↪ **Guinea** Interior Minister Alhassane Condé 14 March proposed late-2011 date for legislative elections, despite constitutional requirement that vote must take place within 6 months of presidential poll, held Nov 2010; said delay necessary due to irregularities in electoral register. At least 3 army recruits killed 8 March in riot at Kissidougou military training camp, reportedly over poor living conditions.

- [“Guinea junta army recruits in Kissidougou riot”](#), BBC, 10 March 2011.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°164, [Reforming the Army](#), 23 Sept. 2010.

↪ **Niger** Election commission 14 March declared opposition leader Mahamadou Issoufou winner of peaceful 12 March run-off presidential election, with 58% of vote. Opponent Seini Oumarou 16 March accepted defeat, ruled out legal challenges, citing need to work towards national reconciliation. ECOWAS 24 March commended election, lifted economic sanctions in place since Oct 2009.

- [“Man of compromise takes power after military return Niger to civilian control”](#), *Guardian*, 22 March 2011.

↪ **Liberia** UNHCR 24 March warned mounting violence in Côte d’Ivoire threatened stability in Liberia as estimated 90,000 refugees have fled across border since end-Nov start of crisis. UN SRSG Ellen LóJ 16 March warned security situation becoming “more complex”, 24 March announced increased UNMIL activity to prevent cross-border violence. Ahead of Oct 2011 presidential elections, electoral commission chairman James Fromoyan 23 March denied accusations of corruption; opposition earlier alleged Fromoyan favours incumbent President Sirleaf.

- [“Fears mount that Côte d’Ivoire conflict could spill into Liberia”](#), UN News, 24 March 2011.

↪ **Nigeria** Preparations for April general elections continued amid rise in politically-motivated communal and sectarian violence threatening peaceful and credible poll. At least 7 feared dead after 28 March clashes between rival supporters of ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and Labour Party (LP) in Nembe, Bayelsa state. Authorities said more than 12 killed, 50 injured 22 March in fight between PDP and opposition Action Congress supporters during political rally in Uyo, Akwa Ibon state in South. Dozens injured, at least 5 reportedly killed during 21 March political rally of General Buhari’s Congress for Progressive Change in Jos, Plateau state. Boko Haram 13 March killed Maiduguri cleric famous in Borno state for anti-radicalisation sermons, also suspected of killing All Nigerian People’s Party youth leader in Maiduguri 26 March. 2 unidentified men killed 20 March in Jos when bomb they were transporting detonated prematurely. Prior to latest attacks Human Rights Watch 13 March urged authorities to establish special panel to investigate and prosecute election-related abuses and violence. Movement for Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND) 14 March issued statement criticising president’s failure on Niger Delta issues, threatened to bomb Lagos, Abuja, oil installations in Delta. President Jonathan 31 March ordered country-wide troop deployment ahead of 2 April Senate elections.

- [“A three-way contest”](#), *Economist*, 10 March 2011.
- For latest briefing, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°79, [Nigeria’s Elections: Reversing the Degeneration?](#), 24 Feb. 2011.



## Asia/Pacific

### CENTRAL ASIA

➤ **Kazakhstan** Alga and Communist opposition parties 4 March called for boycott of upcoming presidential election, resignation of President Nazarbaev. Demonstration for boycott in NE city Pavlodar disrupted 11 March by 5 men, reportedly wielding knives and thought by some observers to support govt; 3 of 5 convicted of hooliganism 29 March. Rape, murder of Kazakh woman in Almaty region sparked protests against local Kurdish community 10 March. Nazarbaev mid-month declared opposition to hijab.

- "Kazakhstan's election campaign that wasn't", RFE/RL, 26 March 2011.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°201, *Central Asia: Decay and Decline*, 3 Feb. 2011.

➤ **Kyrgyzstan** Dysfunctional three-party coalition govt came close to collapse early March after failed powerplay by radical nationalist faction, whose grievances included allegations of blatant corruption on part of first deputy premier. Situation deteriorated in south following 1 March contract killing of local tax official in Noorkat, allegedly on orders of local ethnic Uzbek businessman; incident sparked mob violence against suspected perpetrators, observers warned incident could reignite ethnic violence especially in predominantly Uzbek towns Uzgen, Kara-Suu. Jalalabad appellate court 10 March upheld verdicts against 18 ethnic Uzbeks convicted of murders at Sanpa cotton factory in June 2010 ethnic violence. Political pressure reportedly being exerted on mining sector, with several attacks including 10 March ransacking of company facilities in NW. PM Atambayev visited Moscow late-month, secured promise of \$30 million credit, deal to suspend duties on Russian fuel. Riots, escape attempts in 3 prisons mid-March, hunger strikes in at least 6 facilities end-March; prisoners' demands include govt ending crackdown on organised crime figures.

- "Rising nationalism risks renewed violence – report", Eurasianet, 10 March 2011.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°193, *The Pogroms in Kyrgyzstan*, 23 Aug. 2010.

➤ **Tajikistan** Tensions with Moscow increased after negotiations over deployment of Russian border patrol mission to Tajik-Afghan border ended in stalemate 5 March. Russia late month increased custom duties for oil exports to Tajikistan; analysts suggest Russia seeking military base in Tajikistan. Mirzokhuja Akhmadov, UTO veteran and former police colonel in Rasht, 1 March said govt still conducting anti-terrorist operations in Tajikabad, Nurabad; was reportedly questioned by authorities 8 March over suspected involvement in Sept 2010 attack on military convoy in Kamarob Gorge. Tajikistan 14 March cancelled Dushanbe-Khujand train route that runs thorough Uzbek territory, deepening transport blockade between countries. Uzbekistan 13 March declared opposition to Pakistan's plan to import hydropower from Tajikistan through Afghanistan, claiming violation of international laws as it ignores demands of downstream states in region. Amid fears of imminent energy crisis govt 20 March reintroduced widespread electricity rationing. In 28 March meeting with President Rahmon, Iranian President Ahmadinejad pledged to help complete Sangtuda-2 hydropower plant.

- "Tajikistan reimposes electricity rationing", RFE/RL, 21 March 2011.

➤ **Turkmenistan** President Berdymukhamedov 19 March said govt to recognise foreign educational qualifications, marking reversal of policy preventing students from studying abroad, banning graduates of foreign institutions from working for govt. Opposition website claims high school students still strongly discouraged by school officials, local authorities to take part in U.S. exchange program.

- "Turkmenistan eases conditions for graduates abroad", RFE/RL, 20 March 2011.

➤ **Uzbekistan** Parliament 3 March passed constitutional amendments to reduce president's powers in favour of PM, change order of succession; President Karimov described decision as step toward democracy, but analysts claim unlikely to produce meaningful change while Karimov in power. Govt reportedly ordered private telecoms companies to turn off networks if demanded by govt, inform govt of suspicious mass text messaging. Human Rights Watch announced closure of Tashkent office after govt refused to accredit its country representative. New figures disclosed German lease of Uzbek air base in Termez, on Afghan border; showed Berlin paid €67.9mn to Tashkent 2005-2009 while country under EU sanctions.

- "Uzbekistan: veil is lifted on German payments for Termez base", EurasiaNet, 24 March 2011.

### NORTH EAST ASIA

➤ **North Korea** N Korea late March stated that Libya's 2004 dismantling of nuclear weapons program made it vulnerable to military intervention by West; comment seen by analysts as reinforcement of North's refusal to end its nuclear program. Statement comes despite N Korean official's 15 March comment to Russian FM that North "ready to discuss nuclear enrichment". S Korean FM visited China 29 March for talks on N Korea's nuclear enrichment program; S Korea and U.S. have previously called on China to support UN condemnation of program but Beijing 25 March blocked UNSC adoption of expert panel report. South, North Korean specialists 29 March discussed joint research project into volcanic activity on N Korea's Mt Paektu; first attempt at dialogue since Feb failed military talks. Pyongyang 27 March accepted repatriation of 27 out of 31 citizens whose boat drifted into S Korea last month; 4 will stay in South. N Korea's food crisis continuing to worsen following shrinking international aid, harsh winter, foot-and-mouth disease. UN report late-month said 6 million (25%) of population at risk in coming weeks.

- "North Korea suggests Libya should have kept nuclear program", *New York Times*, 24 March 2011.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°200, *China and Inter-Korean Clashes in the Yellow Sea*, 27 Jan. 2011.

➤ **Kuril Islands/Northern Territories (Russia/Japan)** In latest move to shore up presence on disputed islands, Russia 1 March announced instalment of modern anti-ship, anti-aircraft missiles, 25 March announced plan to build airport.

- "Russia to boost Kurils defenses", *Wall Street Journal*, 2 March 2011.

### SOUTH ASIA

➤ **Afghanistan** President Karzai 22 March announced Afghan security forces will take over from ISAF troops in 7 regions;

NATO, U.S. welcomed announcement, but analysts called it mainly symbolic as regions relatively violence-free. Karzai 8 March rejected petition from 38 MPs to close allegedly pro-govt special tribunal charged with recounting votes from Sept 2010 parliamentary elections; tribunal yet to announce results of recount. Taliban suicide blasts 14 March killed 36 at army recruitment centre in Kunduz; 28 March killed 23 in Paktika. UN 9 March reported 2,777 civilians killed during 2010, 75% by Taliban; highest yearly death toll since 2001 invasion, 15% increase on 2009. Marc Grossman, new U.S. envoy for Afghanistan and Pakistan, held first meeting with Karzai in Kabul 1 March. At least 7 foreign UN workers killed in Mazar-e Sharif 1 April after protesters demonstrating against Koran burning in U.S. church stormed UN compound.

- ["Afghan forces to take lead in securing 7 areas"](#), AP, 22 March 2011.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°117, [Afghanistan's Elections Stalemate](#), 23 Feb. 2011.

➡ **Bangladesh** Abdul Alim, prominent member of opposition BNP party, arrested 28 March on war crimes charges, including genocide, in 1971 independence war; BNP criticised charges as politically motivated.

- ["War crimes and misdemeanours"](#), Economist, 24 March 2011.

➡ **India (non-Kashmir)** Police 11 March killed Maoist commander Sasadhar Mahato in West Bengal, wanted for May 2010 train attack that killed some 150. 8 paramilitary troops killed in Assam 15 March, same day as bomb attack on local Congress party headquarters; police suspected Assamese separatist group NDFP, but no claim of responsibility.

- ["Internal differences mar 'action plan' for Maoist areas"](#), Hindu, 22 March 2011.

➡ **Kashmir** Following 2-day bilateral meeting in New Delhi, Pakistan 28 March agreed to long-standing Indian demand that its investigators be allowed to visit Pakistan as part of probe of 2008 Mumbai terror attack. Amnesty International 21 March criticised Indian Public Safety Act allowing security forces to detain suspects without charges for up to 2 years in Kashmir. Govt-appointed negotiation panel 13 March called for independent investigation of violations by all parties; expected to submit final report April. State govt 15 March said will pay \$1.15mn to relatives of some 100 civilians killed by security forces during 2010 protests. Indian police 10 March killed Sajjad Afghani, head of Pakistani militant group Jaish-e-Mohammad, in Srinagar.

- ["Indian investigators to visit Pakistan in Mumbai probe"](#), Reuters, 29 March 2011.

➡ **Nepal** Maoists 5 March agreed to join UML-led govt; power-sharing deal sees Maoists get 11 ministries, but only 4 sworn in by end of month. Supreme Court early month ruled Constituent Assembly's (CA) May 2010 extension by 1 year constitutional, possibly opening for another CA extension if new constitution not completed by 28 May deadline. Following late-month visit by Chinese army chief General Chen Bingde, China 24 March committed \$20mn in military aid to Nepal.

- ["Nepal's ex-rebels finally join new government"](#), AP, 4 March 2011.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N° 199, [Nepal: Identity Politics and Federalism](#), 13 Jan. 2011.

➡ **Pakistan** Shahbaz Bhatti, Christian minister for minorities, killed by gunmen in Islamabad 2 March; "Punjabi Taliban" claimed responsibility, said murder due to Bhatti's opposition to blasphemy law. Govt 16 March freed Raymond Davis, U.S. CIA contractor charged with killing 2 Pakistanis in Feb, after victims' families were paid \$2.3mn compensation. Army chief General Ashfaq Kayani

17 March condemned U.S. drone attack that allegedly killed 38 in N Waziristan, including civilians and members of military-aligned Hafiz Bahadur militant group; govt 18 March said will withdraw from late-month talks with U.S. over Afghanistan in protest against attack. Taliban killed 36 in 9 March Peshawar suicide attack on funeral of wife of anti-Taliban militiaman; dozens more killed in Taliban attacks in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) during month. 31 March suicide attack in KP targeting Fazlur Rehman, head of Islamist JUI-F party, killed 10, but Rehman unharmed. State prosecutor 26 March said will seek international arrest warrant for ex-President Musharraf over his alleged role in Benazir Bhutto's assassination. At least 16 killed 19-20 March in clashes between supporters of MQM and ANP parties in Karachi.

- ["Things fall apart"](#), Economist, 3 March 2011.

Crisis Group Asia Report N°203, [Reforming Pakistan's Electoral System](#), 30 March 2011. Electoral rigging has hampered Pakistan's democratic development, eroded political stability and contributed to the breakdown of the rule of law. International Crisis Group

➡ **Sri Lanka** Ruling UPFA coalition won 203 of 234 councils in 14 March local govt elections; main Tamil party TNA won most seats in Tamil northern and eastern areas. Opposition UNP party claimed fraud, violence favouring govt, including 7 March grenade attack against Tamil MP in Nochiyagama town. Attorney General 3 March said govt would suspend registration of Tamil civilians in north, but group of TNA MPs 14 March claimed registration continues, requested hearing by Supreme Court. PM Jayaratne 11 March retracted claim, made earlier in March, that LTTE regrouping in training camps in Indian state Tamil Nadu, said he relied on false information. U.S. Senate 1 March passed unanimous resolution calling for independent international investigation into possible war crimes committed during final months of civil war; U.S. Asst Sec State Robert Blake said Sri Lankan govt could "force" independent investigation if its own panel probing civil war (LLRC) fails to meet international standards.

- ["Sri Lanka PM retracts India rebel training camp claim"](#), BBC, 11 March 2011.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N° 191, [War Crimes in Sri Lanka](#), 17 May 2010.

## SOUTH EAST ASIA

➡ **Indonesia** Series of mail bombs against individual targets from 15 March prompted calls for increased intelligence capacity; police suspect old jihadi networks. Several local govts announced bans on Ahmadiyah sect during month, increasing pressure on central govt to do same. In Papua, journalist who revealed sexual abuse by police of prison inmate stabbed in Jayapura 3 March; protesters 3 March set fire to Yahukimo district govt office. Umar Patek, suspected member of Jemaah Islamiyah behind 2002 Bali bombing, arrested in Pakistan 30 March.

- ["Power to the people! No, wait ..."](#), Economist, 17 March 2011.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N° 197, [Indonesia: Preventing Violence in Local Elections](#), 8 Dec. 2010.

➡ **Myanmar/Burma** Junta, or State Peace and Development Council, officially disbanded 30 March as it handed over power to new govt and President Thein Sein; new govt, parliament nominally civilian but overwhelmingly dominated by junta proxy party USDP. Main parliamentary opposition parties 11 March called on EU to lift all sanctions, comes in context of annual EU review of Myanmar policy. NLD, banned party of

opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi, had supported continuation of sanctions, and on 27 March called for “urgent dialogue” with junta. Junta during month for first time made state budget publically available: 19.5% of budget spent on military, lower than previous estimates; NLD 4 March criticised new “Special Funds Law” allowing army chief to spend state money without parliamentary oversight.

- “Myanmar’s junta is ‘dissolved’ as govt sworn in”, AP, 30 March 2011.

Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°118, *Myanmar’s Post-Election Landscape*, 7 March 2011. The November 2010 elections in Myanmar were not free and fair and the country has not escaped authoritarian rule.

➤ **Philippines** Govt-MILF talks postponed from late March to 27-28 April; MILF leadership said it will resolve issue of breakaway commander Ameril Umbra Kato before next round. House of representatives passed bill postponing Aug elections in Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao to 2013; senate yet to approve. With temporary ceasefire during Feb talks over, govt-NPA clashes resumed: 1 police, 3 rebels killed in Zambales 2 March; 3 rebels killed in Negros Oriental 16 March; several clashes in Mindanao during month. Philippine research vessel approached by 2 Chinese patrol boats close to disputed Spratly Islands 2 March; Beijing includes area in its territorial claims in South China Sea. In response to senate enquiry into corruption in army, President Aquino 6 March appointed Lt-General Eduardo Oban new army chief of staff.

- “Filipino rebels: Radical commander faces expulsion”, AP, 27 March 2011.

Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°119, *The Philippines: Back to the Table, Warily, in Mindanao*, 24 March 2011. Peace talks between the Philippine government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) are back on track, with one round of talks in Kuala Lumpur in February 2011 and another scheduled for late April.

➤ **Thailand** PM Abhisit 11 March said he will dissolve parliament in first week of May, elections likely early July. Some 30,000 anti-govt “red shirt” activists demonstrated in Bangkok 12 March. Parliament 19 March rejected no-confidence vote against Abhisit and 9 ministers. Thai army chief 23 March said Indonesian observers “not wanted” in disputed border region with Cambodia, despite Feb agreement. In southern Pattani province, gunmen 3 March killed 1 imam; 5 March killed 1 Buddhist monk. National Security Council SG 8 March said violence in south intensifying, insurgents focused on larger attacks.

- “Thai PM says polls could end ‘cycle of violence’”, AFP, 22 March 2011.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°113, *Stalemate in Southern Thailand*, 3 Nov. 2010.

➤ **Timor-Leste** UNMIT 27 March formally handed over all policing responsibilities to Timorese police; UN will continue in supporting role until after 2012 presidential elections. Govt 4 March formally applied to join ASEAN.

- “Timorese force assumes full policing duties from UN mission”, UN News, 27 March 2011.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N° 116, *Time for the UN to Step Back*, 15 Dec. 2010.



## Europe

### BALKANS

➤ **Albania** 3 National Guard members cleared by Court of Appeals 2 March of responsibility for 21 Jan protester deaths. OSCE warned of deeply polarized political environment, harsh rhetoric ahead of 8 May local elections. EU Enlargement Commissioner Stefan Fuele warned political crisis affecting country’s EU progress.

- “Albania opposition demands election safeguards”, Balkan Insight, 24 March 2011.

➤ **Bosnia** Struggle for control of state and entity govts continued. After over 5 months of failed coalition-building talks, and boycott of Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH) upper house by 2 largest Croat parties HDZ and rival HDZ 1990, parliament finally met 17 March. Amid accusations of illegality of process, 2 largest FBiH parties, predominantly Bosniak Social Democrat (SDP) and Party for Democratic Action (SDA), joined by small Croat parties, elected Croat Party of Right (HSP) leader Živko Budimir as FBiH President, and SDP general secretary Nermin Nikšić PM. Election commission 24 March ruled election of FBiH president, VP illegal, but High Representative Valentin Inzko 27 March suspended decision pending final Constitutional Court ruling. HDZ 29 March withdrew appeal to Constitutional Court, leaving issue in limbo. HDZ also threatening to block state-level govt, raising prospect of paralysis of state institutions. HDZ parties 21 March launched initiative for formation of a Croat national assembly; Republika Srpska (RS) President Dodik voiced support for initiative. Peace Implementation Council 30 March urged parties to form govt. Retired Bosnian Army general Jovan Divjak arrested 3 March on Serbian Interpol warrant in Vienna, charged with 1992 ceasefire violation. Provision of bail by Sarajevo govt prompted angry RS reaction. EU FMs identified 3 steps needed before Bosnia can make EU membership application.

- “The problem that won’t go away”, *Economist*, 28 March 2011.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°59, *Europe’s Time to Act*, 11 Jan. 2011.

➤ **Kosovo** Country thrown back into political crisis by Constitutional Court’s 28 March ruling that 22 Feb election in parliament of Behgjet Pacolli as president breached constitution due to lack of two thirds quorum of MPs and need for more than one candidate in vote. Pacolli 30 March left office, announced he would stand for election again. First round of EU-mediated Kosovo-Serbia talks took place in Brussels 8-9 March, resumed 28 March; sides reported some progress on land registers, energy supply. Next meeting expected mid-April. Parliament 10 March approved draft resolution proposed by govt coalition on acceptable content for talks, despite lack of opposition support. Thousands rallied across Kosovo protesting EULEX’s mid-month arrest of a number of former Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) soldiers on war crime charges, including former transport minister and KLA leader Fatmir Limaj; govt, opposition also condemned arrests. Local police and Kosovo riot police 16 March refused access to EULEX forces attempting to arrest senior Kosovo police officer Nexhmi Krasniqi, who later surrendered.

- “Kosovo court orders president to step down”, *Washington Post*, 30 March 2011.

Crisis Group Europe Report N°211, North Kosovo: *Dual Sovereignty in Practice*, 14 March 2011. The dispute between Kosovo and Serbia is most acute in Kosovo's northern municipalities.

International Crisis Group

➡ **Macedonia** PM Gruevski 30 March called for early elections to be held 5 June, after opposition SDSM dropped its preconditions for poll. Hearings on Macedonia's case against Greece began at International Court of Justice 21 March. Macedonia charges Greece violated 1995 Interim Accord committing Greece not to oppose Macedonian membership in international organizations under provisional name "former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia". Democratic Party of Albanians returned to parliament 28 March, ending 20-month boycott.

- "Macedonian Prime Minister calls for June elections", Balkan Insight, 30 March 2011.

## CAUCASUS

➡ **Armenia** President Sargysan facing increased opposition political mobilization in form of street protests organized by former President Levon Ter-Petrossian, campaigning for immediate presidential, parliamentary elections. Over 10,000 people rallied in Yerevan 1, 17 March. Recent demonstrations largest since 2008, despite ban on anti-govt protests. Ter-Petrossian's HAK party issued series of demands to govt including release of all political prisoners, ceasing of prosecution of opposition activists for alleged political purposes, and firing of PM and ministers accountable for weak economy. Ahead of protests authorities summoned several opposition activists to police stations, blocked public transport to Yerevan, released 2 Ter-Petrossian loyalists from jail 17 March. Next rally scheduled 8 April.

- "Opposition bypasses police, stages rally in Freedom Square", EurasiaNet, 17 March 2011.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°60, *Armenia and Azerbaijan: Preventing War*, 8 Feb. 2011.

➡ **Azerbaijan** Azerbaijani youth groups and long-dormant opposition staged 2 well-publicized but sparsely attended rallies in downtown Baku 11, 12 March. First rally attended by non-partisan young Facebook activists, who named it "Great People's Day". Authorities took preventive measures including arrest of several activists. Second rally organized by activists from opposition Musavat party, drew several hundred protesters calling for greater freedoms, resignation of President Aliyev. Police detained several dozen protesters; 9 given 10-day jail sentences. Musavat and Popular Front announced plans to stage joint protest 2 April. OSCE told govt to respect right to free assembly. Authorities started taking action to limit activities of foreign/foreign-sponsored NGOs; govt 17 March adopted restrictive decision concerning the registration procedures of foreign NGOs.

- "Is Azerbaijan ready for its own revolution?", RFE/RL, 11 March 2011.

➡ **North Caucasus (Russia)** Moscow 28 March announced it had killed 17 militants with airstrike and helicopter gunship attack on Islamist base in Ingushetia, including 2 major field commanders Khamzat and Supyan; 2 more militants killed 30 March, 3 security forces also killed in operation. Warlord Doku Umarov and another militant charged 29 March with organizing Jan Domodedovo airport attack, 2 also detained in Ingushetia. 10 members of Kabardino-Balkar-Karachai (KBK) wing of NC insurgency killed by security forces during month. Islamist website 5 March allegedly identified leader of Kabardino-Balkaria

Republic (KBR) informal anti-wahhabi militia "Black Hawks" as FSB officer. Russian ombudsman issued report to State Duma condemning extrajudicial killings of members of illegal armed formations in NC. Skiing and tourist areas around Mt Elbrus in KBR remain closed following Feb attack on Moscow tourists. Protests over disappearances of young men in Nazran, Ingushetia broken up by police 23 March. Continued insurgent activity in Dagestan and Ingushetia saw several people killed, including members of security forces.

- "Russia 'kills 17 North Caucasus militants'", BBC, 29 March 2011.

➡ **Georgia** Joint Abkhaz-Russian commission held border talks 28 March-1 April. Reports suggest Russia seeks to acquire 160km<sup>2</sup> of Abkhazian territory; Tbilisi 18 March condemned talks as illegitimate. 15th round of Geneva talks on 2008 Georgia-Russia conflict 4 March ended in deadlock; issues include international peacekeeping in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, pledges on non-use of force. Follows Feb allegations by senior Russian official of Georgian involvement in Jan Domodedovo airport bombing. Senior opposition figure Nino Burjanadze 15 March called for peaceful revolution; opposition group People's Assembly same day promised "concrete action" beginning early May. Russia 11 March detained 9 Georgian citizens for "illegally crossing the South Ossetian state border". Tbilisi 22 March alleged Russian agents commissioned May 2010 assassination of interior ministry official Dimitri Kordzadze. Religious tensions rose in Abkhazia after suspected poisoning late March of local Mufti and his wife; followed earlier reports of young Muslim killed by mercury poisoning.

- "Russia may have recognized Abkhazia, but not its borders", EurasiaNet, 29 March 2011.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°58, *Securing a Stable Future*, 13 Dec. 2010.

➡ **Nagorno-Karabakh (Azerbaijan)** Armenian, Azerbaijani, Russian presidents 5 March held talks in Sochi, Russia; agreed again to finalise exchange of prisoners, investigate recent skirmishes along ceasefire line under aegis of Minsk Group, "resolve all controversial questions in a peaceful manner". As part of agreement Armenia and Azerbaijan 17 March exchanged prisoners. However situation on frontline remains deadly: Armenian soldiers killed 4, 17 March on frontline, reportedly from sniper fire. Azeri boy killed 7 March in frontline Agdam district, reportedly from Armenian sniper fire, Azerbaijan servicemen killed 21 and 23 Mar by Armenian fire. Azerbaijan 15 March threatened to shoot down civilian planes flying to N-K if Karabakh govt proceeds with planned May reopening of civilian airport in region, closed since 1991.

- "Azerbaijan reports casualties as Karabakh skirmishes continue", RFE/RL, 24 March 2011

## EASTERN EUROPE

➡ **Belarus** EU FMs 22 March agreed to expanded list of Belarusian officials subject to visa bans, asset freezes. Several people sentenced to jail, hard labour for role in 19 Dec post-election protests; authorities late month softened charges against 2 former presidential candidates for their role in protests.

- "EU expands sanctions list against Belarus", RFE/RL, 21 March 2011.

## WESTERN EUROPE/MEDITERRANEAN

➡ **Basque Country (Spain)** Supreme Court 24 March voted 9-7 to deny legal status to new political party Sortu, formed to succeed banned political wing of ETA Batasuna. ETA 27 March



said prepared to allow observers to verify its call for permanent ceasefire. Suspected head of ETA Alejandro Zobarán Arriola arrested in N France 11 March.

- [“Basque group fails to sway Spanish court on legal status”](#), *Irish Times*, 25 March 2011.

➤ **Cyprus** Leaders of the two communities 18 March held hundredth meeting since 2008. Greek Cypriot President Christofias 9 March admitted “huge gap” existed on citizenship issue. After briefing UNSC on latest developments in negotiations, UN Special Adviser Downer 15 March said UNSG Ban would contact leaders to see if they should have another trilateral meeting. Around 30 trade unions and NGOs took part in protests in north 2 March against economic austerity measures imposed by Turkey. Many also complained about increasing number of Turkish immigrants. Turkish Cypriot authorities 12 March briefly arrested 8, including 4 MEPs (including Cypriot MEP) and 2 Cypriot clergymen, for illegally entering Varosha, under Turkish military control since 1974.

- [“Turkish Cypriots unhappy with isolation, austerity measures”](#), *SE Times*, 10 March 2011.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°61, [Six Steps toward a Settlement](#), 22 Feb. 2011.

➤ **Turkey** Thousands protested 13 March in Istanbul against arrest of journalists including 7 for alleged involvement in “Ergenekon” coup-plot case. PM Erdoğan 14 March accused international press of “defamation campaign” against Turkey over coverage of media freedom. European Parliament 9 March adopted critical resolution on progress in Turkey’s EU accession, warned about deterioration in press freedom, urged constitutional reform; foreign ministry described report as one-sided and unacceptable. 3 PKK rebels killed 15 March in shootout with soldiers in southeastern Şırnak province. In first significant attack since Feb end of ceasefire, PKK militants 25 March fired rocket at police station in Diyarbakır province. Pro-Kurdish party BDP 23 March called on Kurds to stage collective acts of civil disobedience in southeast. Parliament 3 March approved parliamentary elections for 12 June. After expressing initial concern over military intervention in Libya gov’t 24 March announced backing for NATO command of operations (see Libya).

- Comment by Hugh Pope (Crisis Group), [“El modelo turco”](#), *El País*, 28 March 2011.
- [“A dangerous place to be a journalist”](#), *Economist*, 10 March 2011.



## Latin America / Caribbean

➤ **Bolivia** Following weeks of social unrest due to rising food and fuel prices, gov’t 2 March reached deal with main umbrella union COB, passed decree raising minimum wage by 20%. President Morales 11 March dismissed national police chief for allowing corruption in police force; followed late Feb high-profile arrest of police general in Panama for drug trafficking.

- [“Bolivia anuncia alza de 20 por ciento en salario mínimo”](#), *Infolatam*, 2 March 2011.

➤ **Colombia** Army 15 March killed “Oliver Solarte”, FARC’s key contact with Mexican drug cartels, in Putumayo; 22 March killed “Jerónimo Galeano”, in charge of security for FARC commander Alfonso Cano, in Huila. FARC 7 March kidnapped 23 oil workers in Vichada, but 22 were released hours later due to army pressure. Regional body UNASUR 11 March appointed former

Colombian FM María Emma Mejía as new secretary-general for 1 year. In Arauca, unidentified gunmen late month murdered 3 land restitution activists and judge investigating killing of 3 children.

- [“Cayó ‘Oliver Solarte’, importante ‘narco’ de las FARC”](#), *Semana*, 15 March 2011.

➤ **Ecuador** Esmeralda state prosecutors 14 March issued arrest warrant for Deputy Interior Minister Gregorio Tello for corruption; Tello is third high-ranking gov’t official to be charged with corruption recently. National electoral council 9 March scheduled referendum on constitutional and judicial reform, backed by President Correa, for 7 May.

- [“El ‘Sí’ oficialista y el ‘No’ opositor abren campaña de consulta”](#), *Infolatam*, 26 March 2011.

➤ **Guatemala** First lady Sandra Torres de Colom 8 March announced candidacy for Sept presidential elections; 21 March announced she will divorce husband President Álvaro Colom to clear constitutional hurdle prohibiting family of incumbent to run. In 17 March visit to Guatemala, UNSG Ban pledged increased UN support for fight against organised crime in Central America, made public his Jan decision to extend UN-backed commission against impunity (CICIG) for 2 years. Colom 2 March said joint Central American security plan against crime and drug trafficking “similar to Plan Merida” will be created at June summit in Guatemala.

- [“Divide and rule”](#), *Economist*, 24 March 2011.

➤ **Haiti** Delayed presidential runoff vote held 20 March; international observers said vote free and fair despite “isolated” violence that killed at least 2; preliminary results delayed until 4 April; final results due 16 April. Ex-President Aristide 18 March returned to Haiti after 7-year exile; U.S. criticised return as disruptive of election process. Aristide said ban of his Fanmi Lavalas (FL) party unfair; FL now likely to contest partial senate, local elections due in 2011.

- [“Observers: Haiti’s elections on Sunday was much improved”](#), *Miami Herald*, 21 March 2011.

➤ **Mexico** President Calderón met U.S. President Obama in Washington 3 March amid growing bilateral tensions: U.S. continues to press for extradition of suspects in Feb murder of U.S. customs official outside Mexico City; U.S. Ambassador to Mexico Carlos Pascual resigned 19 March after criticising Mexican security forces in cable released by WikiLeaks. Julian Leyzaola 10 March named public safety secretary in Ciudad Juárez, where more than 3,000 people killed in 2010; Leyzaola earlier credited with bringing stability to Tijuana, but criticised for alleged use of torture. Suspected cartels 21 March killed Chihuahua state top anti-drugs investigator; same day in Michoacán killed mayor of Tzitzio, imprisoned on corruption charges, and prominent trade union leader. Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre 29 March said 230,000 displaced by drug violence in Mexico over recent years.

- [“Former Tijuana top cop takes on troubled Juárez”](#), *Washington Post*, 18 March 2011.

➤ **Nicaragua** Preliminary ruling by International Court of Justice called for Nicaragua and Costa Rica to remove all security forces from disputed border region; both sides accepted ruling. Final verdict on disputed region expected to take 4 years.

- [“Nicaragua, Costa Rica both see victory in Hague’s ruling on border standoff”](#), *Christian Science Monitor*, 8 March 2011.

➤ **Venezuela** OAS human rights body IACHR 1 March condemned law allowing gov’t to suspend public officials suspected of corruption from seeking office; opposition claims President Chávez uses law

to prevent their candidates from standing. Chávez strongly criticised internally for failing to denounce Libyan leader Gaddafi; Chávez condemned NATO intervention in Libya but toned down support for regime during month.

- "López testifica contra los abusos legales de Chávez", *El País*, 2 March 2011.



## Middle East / North Africa

### EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

**Israel/Occupied Palestinian Territories** Surge in cross-border violence between Israel and Gaza. Israel killed 2 Hamas fighters 16 March in response to earlier attack by unidentified group; Hamas and others responded 19 March with barrage from Gaza, heaviest since 2009. Israeli response killed at least 11 in following days. Militant groups 26 March signalled readiness to stop rocket fire if Israel halted strikes; Israeli PM Netanyahu 27 March said Israel has no desire to escalate situation; exchange of fire continued. Bomb blast 23 March killed 1, wounded dozens in Jerusalem; first in city since 2008. Jewish family of 5 murdered 11 March in Itamar settlement near Nablus; Israeli govt reacted by authorising construction of 550 residential units in settlement. Israel 15 March intercepted ship reportedly carrying surface-to-sea missiles from Iran to be smuggled into Gaza from Egypt; Iran denied report. Hamas cracked down on pro-unity protests during month; in West Bank 15 March demonstrations attracted only a few thousand. Netanyahu 28 March criticised Palestinian efforts for national unity, said "can not have peace with both Israel and Hamas".

- "Not immune", *Economist*, 24 March 2011.

Crisis Group Middle East Report N°104, **International Crisis Group** [Radical Islam in Gaza](#), 29 March 2011. The recent Israel-Hamas escalation returns a spotlight to Gaza and the Islamist movement's relationship with more militant organisations.

Crisis Group Middle East Briefing N°30, **International Crisis Group** [Gaza: The Next Israeli-Palestinian War?](#), 24 March 2011. Will the next Middle East conflagration involve Israelis and Palestinians?

**Lebanon** Early month 4 members of caretaker cabinet refused requests by Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL) prosecutor general to provide information and documents, breaching cooperation protocol signed with UN. Thousands protested 6 March in Beirut for end to sectarian political system. Tens of thousands of March 14 supporters demonstrated in Beirut 13 March demanding Hizbollah surrender its weapons. Tens of thousands 18 March attended rally organised by caretaker PM Saad Hariri's Future Current in Tripoli; Hariri warned Hizbollah's arms would lead to sectarian strife. 7 Estonian tourists kidnapped 23 March by masked gunmen in Bekaa Valley. Lebanon, backed by UK, France 15 March tabled UNSC resolution to impose no-fly zone over Libya; resolution endorsed 17 March by UNSC (see Libya).

- "Thousands in Lebanon demand Hezbollah be disarmed", *New York Times*, 13 March 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** Fears of further unrest after anti-regime protests spread across country over month, including to Damascus, from southern city Daraa, where at least 55 reported killed by security forces since 18 March. Dozens reported killed in other cities in violent crackdown by security forces; army deployed 27 March after 12 reportedly killed in northwestern port Latakia. In first public address since beginning of unrest, President Assad 30 March blamed foreign conspiracy; remarks seen as inflammatory. Assad 26 March reportedly released political prisoners, including lawyer Diana Jawabra; 31 March ordered study on replacing emergency laws, probe into civilian deaths. Cabinet resigned 29 March in face of protests. UNSG Ban 26 March phoned Assad to urge "maximum restraint", U.S. condemned govt "repression". Syria 2 March agreed to allow IAEA inspectors to examine Homs acid purification plant on 1 April; U.S. 9 March said insufficient, warned Syria cannot be allowed to "stonewall" IAEA investigations.

- Comment by Peter Harling (Crisis Group), ["Syria following the script"](#), *Foreign Policy*, 30 March 2011.
- ["Syria's Assad deploys army in port to keep order"](#), Reuters, 27 March 2011.

**Crisis Group Conflict Risk Alert: Syria**, 25 March 2011. Syria is at what is rapidly becoming a defining moment for its leadership. There are only two options: an immediate and inevitably risky political initiative that might convince the Syrian people that the regime is willing to undertake dramatic change; or escalating repression, which has every chance of leading to a bloody and ignominious end.

### GULF

**Bahrain** Violence flared mid-month in new security crackdown on ongoing anti-govt protests, despite govt late-Feb, early-March commitments to dialogue, reform. 2 killed, hundreds injured 15 March during clashes with security forces; at least 3 killed 16 March as troops, tanks cleared protesters' camp in Pearl Square in capital Manama. Hundreds of cyber activists arrested late month. King Hamad 15 March declared 3-month state of emergency; 1,500 Saudi, UAE troops, police 14 March entered Bahrain to help maintain order. Iran, opposition denounced moves by Sunni govt against mainly Shia protesters. Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) 21 March said Iranian interference would not be tolerated; King Hamad same day said "foreign" anti-govt plot had been foiled. Shia opposition bloc Al Wefaq 24 March claimed 100 people missing. 21 reported killed since 14 Feb start of protests.

- ["Calling in the big guns"](#), *Economist*, 17 March 2011.

**Iran** Head of IAEA 7 March criticised Iran for lack of cooperation; U.S. 9 March warned military aspects to Iran's nuclear work "increasingly apparent". Opposition 2 March said at least 79 arrested in 1 March rallies; security forces 8 March forcefully dispersed anti-govt demonstration in central Tehran. UNHCR 24 March established special rapporteur for Iran, Tehran criticised post as "politically motivated". Govt 21 March called for immediate withdrawal of all foreign forces from Bahrain (see Bahrain). NATO officials 9 March said weapons cache including 48 rockets intercepted in Afghanistan en route from Iran to Taliban; foreign ministry 15 March denied reports. Turkey 19 March confiscated material illegal under UN sanctions in cargo plane en route from Tehran to Syria. 2 police officers killed 24 March by suspected militants in Kurdistan province.

- ["A leadership neutered"](#), *Economist*, 10 March 2011.

➔ **Iraq** Demonstrations continued in semi-autonomous northern Kurdistan against regional gov't; 1 police officer killed, 10 wounded 22 March during protest in Halabja town. PM Maliki 3 March demanded immediate withdrawal of Kurdish troops from city of Kirkuk; President Talabani 7 March described Kirkuk as "Jerusalem" of Kurdistan, should be annexed into Kurdish region. Thousands of Shiites in Baghdad and Basra 19 March protested Saudi Arabia's military intervention in Bahrain; Maliki 25 March called for end of intervention (see Bahrain). U.S. 7 March demanded accountability over crackdown on demonstrators, journalists following Feb surge in anti-gov't protests. Sunni-backed Iraqiya leader Ayad Allawi 3 March rejected position intended specifically for him as head of yet-to-be-created National Council for Strategic Policy. At least 56 killed, 98 wounded 29 March after suspected al-Qaeda gunmen took hostages at provincial council HQ in Tikrit.

- "In Iraq protests, a younger generation finds its voice", *Wall Street Journal*, 21 March 2011.

Crisis Group Middle East Report N°103, **International Crisis Group**  
*Iraq and the Kurds: Confronting Withdrawal Fears*, 28 March 2011. Iraq's government was long in the making, but its inclusive nature and the way in which it was formed offer hope that it can make progress in the struggle between Arabs and Kurds.

➔ **Jordan** Pro-democracy protests continued, but on smaller scale than elsewhere in region. 1 killed, around 120 injured 25 March in clashes between pro- and anti-gov't groups and security forces in Amman.

- "Jordan protestors set up camp in Amman", *New York Times*, 24 March 2011.

➔ **Oman** Sultan Qaboos bin Said 13 March announced reforms in response to ongoing protests, including delegation of some legislative powers to partially-elected Majlis al-Shoura council, cabinet reshuffle, welfare increases.

- "Oman protesters demand corruption investigation", *Financial Times*, 15 March 2011.

➔ **Saudi Arabia** Sporadic pro-democracy rallies throughout month increased after military intervention in Bahrain, mainly by Shiite activists in east. King Abdullah 19 March announced \$93bn in handouts including welfare benefits and increased housing, ordered creation of 60,000 security jobs within interior ministry. Administration 23 March announced long-delayed Sept municipal elections.

- "Saudi Arabia to hold municipal polls", *Al Jazeera*, 23 March 2011.

➔ ➔ ➔ **Yemen** Over 90 protesters killed as nationwide anti-regime protests continued for seventh week; fears of possible outbreak of civil war, but hopes remain for possible reconciliation and formation of national unity gov't. Direct talks between president and opposition over gov't transition stalled 27 March, but indirect talks continue. Opposition demanded immediate resignation of President Saleh and ban on gov't positions for Saleh and family; Saleh vowed to make no more concessions. Security forces 17 March killed 52 protesters in capital Sanaa; series of defections to protestors by ambassadors, lawmakers, provincial governors, tribal leaders followed. Saleh 20 March fired cabinet, though retained as caretaker in interim. 11 military commanders including senior general Ali Moshen 21 March joined protest, promised to protect demonstrators; pro- and anti-gov't tanks deployed in Sanaa. Parliament 23 March enacted emergency laws suspending constitution, banning protests. Al-Qaeda in the Arab Peninsula

and other Islamic militant groups attacks increased, including 26 March seizure of southern town of Jaar. 150 killed after explosion in ammunition factory in Jaar; cause of explosion unknown.

- "Yemen ruling party, Saleh to meet for crisis talks", *Reuters*, 27 March 2011.

Crisis Group Conflict Risk Alert: Yemen, 23 March 2011. The political tide in Yemen has turned decisively against President Ali Abdullah Saleh. His choices are limited: he can fight his own military or negotiate a rapid and dignified transfer of power. **International Crisis Group**

Crisis Group Middle East/North Africa Report N°102, *Popular Protest in North Africa and the Middle East (II): Yemen between Reform and Revolution*, 10 March 2011. Even before the popular wave from Tunisia and Egypt reached Yemen, President Saleh's regime faced daunting challenges. **International Crisis Group**

## NORTH AFRICA

➔ **Algeria** Regular localised confrontations between police and protesters over social, economic conditions including violent clashes 23 March over demolition of illegal housing in Algiers; at least 20 officers injured. 10,000 auxiliary police 10 March demonstrated for higher wages. Heavy police presence in central Algiers 12, 26 March ended protests calling for immediate end of President Bouteflika's regime. Ruling National Liberation Front 10 March stated support for "profound" revision of constitution. Bouteflika 20 March said Feb lifting of state of emergency only first step, promised further reform. 5 killed 9 March by suspected Islamist militants' bomb in northern Djelfa province. FM Medelci 22 March called for "immediate cessation" of foreign intervention in neighbouring Libya.

- "Algerian protesters clash with riot police", *Wall Street Journal*, 24 March 2011.

➔ **Egypt** 77% voted for constitutional amendments in 19 March referendum, precursor to Sept parliamentary elections and later presidential vote. Ruling Supreme Council 30 March issued interim constitution until new head of state elected. Gov't 23 March passed laws easing formation of political parties and imposed prison sentences and fines for strikes, protests disrupting business. State security buildings stormed 4 March, secret police dissolved, renamed National Security, senior officers to face prosecution. Wildcat protests, labour strikes continued; hundreds of protesters reported detained, tortured. 13 Christians killed, 140 wounded 8 March in sectarian violence in outskirts of Cairo. Under pressure from protesters PM Shafiq and other Mubarak-linked cabinet members resigned 3 March. Former transport minister Essam Sharaf PM, new cabinet sworn in 7 March. Public prosecutor 23 March charged former interior minister and security officials with aiding killing of protesters during uprising that ousted former President Mubarak.

- "Yes they can", *Economist*, 24 March 2011.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Middle East/North Africa Report N°101, *Popular Protest in North Africa and the Middle East (I): Egypt Victorious?*, 24 Feb. 2011.

➔ ➔ **Libya** Clashes between rebel movement and security forces escalated into civil war, prompting international military action. Early month counter-offensive by pro-Qaddafi forces reversed previous rebel gains; gov't forces 10-14 March

recaptured several key towns, including Ras Lanuf, Zawiya, Brega. Qaddafi's son Saif al-Islam 10 March pledged to crush rebellion. Following 12 March call for intervention by Arab League, UNSC 17 March approved no-fly zone, authorised use of "all necessary measures" to protect civilians, whilst prohibiting foreign occupation. International coalition led by UK, U.S., France 19 March began missile, air strikes against military installations, aircraft; also targeted govt forces attacking Benghazi and other rebel-held towns. NATO 27 March assumed control of all international military operations. Situation unclear late month with continued heavy fighting following rebel counter-offensive, despite govt ceasefire declaration 18 March. FM Moussa Koussa 30 March arrived in UK, claimed to be defecting from regime; reports suggested other senior figures planned to defect. Reports late month suggested Libyan envoy in UK for discussions with govt. France 10 March recognised Benghazi-based National Libyan Council as legitimate Libyan govt; Council 23 March appointed Abdul Mahmoud Jebriil interim PM. UNHCR late month estimated 350,000 refugees had fled. ICC prosecutor 2 March announced probe into events in Libya following Feb UNSC referral.

- Comment by Alain Délétraz (Crisis Group), "[Que l'Europe se ressaisisse et vienne en aide aux Nord-Africains](#)", *Le Temps*, 8 March 2011.

- "[Allied airstrikes pound Libya ground forces](#)", *New York Times*, 23 March 2011.

➡ **Mauritania** Police 8 March clashed with protesters demanding political, economic and social reforms in central Nouakchott; at least 18 injured. Opposition parties condemned violence; authorities claimed demonstration unauthorised. Hundreds of youths attended peaceful anti-govt rally 18 March in Nouakchott.

- "[Violent clashes erupt in Nouakchott](#)", Magharebia, 10 March 2011.

➡ **Morocco** In first speech since 20 Feb widespread pro-democracy demonstrations, King Mohammed VI 9 March announced "comprehensive constitutional reform" to be put to voters in referendum. Estimated 35,000 people protested 20 March in major cities demanding greater civil rights, end to corruption. At least 17 injured 26 March during clashes with police at teachers wage protest in Rabat.

- "[Thousands in Morocco march for rights, end to graft](#)", Reuters, 20 March 2011.

➡ **Tunisia** Interim President Mebazaa 3 March announced constitutional assembly elections to be held by 24 July, confirmed interim govt would govern until then, despite constitutional 60-day term limit on caretaker leaders; claimed constitution no longer reflects "aspirations of the people". Interim PM Essebsi 7 March named new cabinet, following string of resignations early month. Court 9 March dissolved ousted President Ben Ali's Rally for Constitutional Democracy (RCD) party, major demand of continued protests; followed 7 March dissolution of State Security Department.

- "[Tunisia president Fouad Mebazaa calls election](#)", BBC, 3 March 2011.

➡ **Western Sahara** Sixth round of talks between Polisario Front and Moroccan govt 8-9 March in Malta under aegis of UN, no signs of progress; sides agreed to meet again late May. U.S. Sec State Clinton 23 March reiterated support for Moroccan autonomy plan in disputed territory.

- "[Morocco, Polisario agree to meet again](#)", Magharebia, 10 March 2011.

"The analysis of the International Crisis Group on Colombia constitutes an important source of reference that helps us better understand our reality, as well as how to sensitively address key issues such as progress and obstacles on human rights, and the enormous challenges of comprehensive victims' care in our country"

Angelino Garzón, Vice President of Colombia, February 2011

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

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