

102 1 February 2012

January 2012 Trends



Deteriorated Situations

Mali (p.4) Sudan (p.3)
Nigeria (p.4) Syria (p.10)
Pakistan (p.6)
Senegal (p.4)
South Sudan (p.3)



Improved Situations

Guatemala (p.9)
Myanmar/Burma (p.7)



Unchanged Situations

Afghanistan (p.5), Algeria (p.11), Armenia (p.8), Azerbaijan (p.8), Bahrain (p.10), Bangladesh (p.6), Belarus (p.8), Bolivia (p.9), Bosnia (p.7), Burundi (p.2), Cameroon (p.2), Central African Republic (p.2), Chad (p.2), China (p.5), Colombia (p.9), Côte d'Ivoire (p.4), Cyprus (p.9), Democratic Republic of Congo (p.2), Ecuador (p.9), Egypt (p.11), Eritrea (p.2), Ethiopia (p.2), Georgia (p.8), Guinea (p.4), Guinea-Bissau (p.4), Haiti (p.9), India (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.2), Kosovo (p.7), Kyrgyzstan (p.5), Lebanon (p.10), Liberia (p.4), Libya (p.11), Macedonia (p.8), Madagascar (p.3), Malawi (p.3), Mauritania (p.12), Mexico (p.10), Moldova (p.8), Morocco (p.12), Nagorno-Karabakh (Azerbaijan) (p.8), Nepal (p.6), Niger (p.4), North Caucasus (Russia) (p.8), Northern Ireland (p.9), North Korea (p.5), Papua New Guinea (p.7), Philippines (p.7), Rwanda (p.2), Saudi Arabia (p.11), Somalia (p.3), Somaliland (p.3), Sri Lanka (p.6), 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), Yemen (p.11), Zimbabwe (p.3)

February 2012 Watchlist



Conflict Risk Alerts

Syria (p.10)



Conflict Resolution Opportunities

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 140 staff members across five continents, who already report on some 60 of the situations listed here. Comments and suggestions can be sent to crisiswatch@crisisgroup.org.

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

Board of Trustees

Chair

Thomas Pickering

President and CEO

Louise Arbour

Executive Committee

Morton Abramowitz
Cheryl Carolus
Maria Livanos Cattau
Yoichi Funabashi
Frank Giustra
Ghassan Salamé
George Soros
Pär Stenbäck

Adnan Abu-Odeh
Kenneth Adelman
Kofi Annan
Nahum Barnea
Samuel Berger
Emma Bonino
Wesley Clark
Sheila Coronel
Uffe Ellemann-Jensen
Gareth Evans
Mark Eyskens
Joshua Fink
Joschka Fischer
Jean-Marie Guéhenno
Carla Hills
Lena Hjelm-Wallén
Swanee Hunt
Mo Ibrahim
Igor Ivanov
Asma Jahangir
Wim Kok
Ricardo Lagos
Joanne Leedom-Ackerman
Lord (Mark) Malloch-Brown
Lalit Mansingh
Jessica Tuchman Mathews
Benjamin Mkapa
Moisés Naím
Ayo Obe
Paul Reynolds
Güler Sabancı
Javier Solana
Lawrence Summers

Chairmen Emeritus

Marti Ahtisaari
George J. Mitchell

President Emeritus

Gareth Evans

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 chaired by 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.

AFRICA

CENTRAL AFRICA

➡ **Burundi** 16 sentenced 28 Jan for Sept 2011 bar massacre, 7 sentenced to life. UNSC 20 Dec renewed mandate of political mission in Burundi (BNUB) to Feb 2013, urged govt to prevent human rights violations, investigate and prosecute extrajudicial executions. Opposition Movement for Solidarity and Democracy (MSD) leader Alexis Sinduhije, accused in 30 Dec 2011 UN experts report on DRC of involvement in FNL covert armed activities, arrested in Tanzania 11 Jan on request of Burundi police, released 24 Jan.

- [“Burundi court jails 16 for bar killing of 36”](#), Reuters, 29 Jan. 2012.

➡ **Cameroon** Nigerian Islamist sect Boko Haram reportedly infiltrated Cameroon; govt deployed 600 soldiers near Nigeria border. Security forces deployed in Douala early Jan following clashes between motorbike taxi drivers and Deido district residents, reportedly over stabbing of resident by taxi driver 31 Dec.

- [“Cameroon region concerned about Islamist militants”](#), CameroonOnline, 20 Jan. 2012.

➡ **Central African Republic** Police 6 Jan arrested People’s Army for the Restoration of Democracy (APRD) leader and vice president of the DDR steering committee Jean-Jacques Demafouth, accused of planning to form coalition comprising APRD and 3 NE rebel groups - Convention of Patriots for Justice and Peace (CPJP), Union of Democratic Forces for Unity (UFDR) and Movement of Centrafrican Liberators for Justice (MLCJ); 3 UFDR members also arrested; APRD 12 Jan withdrew from peace process in protest. Members of diplomatic community including UN Peacebuilding Office (BINUCA) head 16 Jan visited Demafouth in prison. *Le Démocratie* newspaper editor Ferdinand Samba convicted 27 Jan for incitement to hatred, defamation and insult over articles criticising finance minister, alleging embezzlement. CAR, Chadian armies 23 Jan launched joint offensive in North Central against Chadian rebel group Popular Front for the Union (FPR).

- [“Arrestation de Jean-Jacques Demafouth en Centrafrique”](#), RFI, 7 Jan. 2012.

➡ **Chad** President Deby 20 Jan married daughter of Musa Hilal, Sudanese Janjaweed militia leader. Opposition 9 Jan announced formation of Coordination of Political Parties for the Defence of the Constitution (CPDC), agreed to field joint candidates in first local elections 22 Jan, held without incident. Deby 27 Jan sacked Planning Minister Mahamat Ali Hassa and Oil Minister Tabe Eugene following govt row with China over refinery deal. Senegalese court 12 Jan rejected Belgian extradition request for former Chad president Hissene Habré.

- [“Chad president weds Janjaweed chief daughter”](#), AFP, 20 Jan. 2012.

➡ **Democratic Republic of Congo** CENI 26 Jan published most results from Nov legislative elections, giving ruling PPRD lead with 57 seats followed by opposition UDPS with 34; fractious ruling coalition, including PPRD, believed to have won some 245 of 424 seats, as yet unconfirmed. Majority and opposition parties accused CENI of fixing results; Catholic Church called on CENI to correct results or resign; 40 deputies from parliamentary majority 18 Jan called

for cancellation of legislative election results. UDPS leader Etienne Tshisekedi maintained “no concession policy” amid increasing isolation. Month saw surge in violence by armed militants and rebel groups; UNHCR 20 Jan said fresh violence displaced 100,000 since Nov 2011. Over 40 killed, thousands displaced early-Jan by FDLR in South Kivu; Gedeon Mayi-Mayi attack 11 Jan displaced over 10,000 in Katanga; early Jan clashes between rival Walikale and Masisi militias left 22 dead, displaced 35,000.

- [“Over 100,000 flee fresh violence in eastern DRC since November”](#), Afrique en Ligne, 21 Jan. 2012.

➡ **Rwanda** 2 killed, 16 wounded 3 Jan in Kigali grenade attack; 10 injured 24 Jan in grenade attack in Muhanga district. 19 accused of links with FDLR found guilty 13 Jan of launching grenade attacks since 2008; 10 sentenced to life. French court report 11 Jan exonerated President Kagame from involvement in death of former president Habyarimana that sparked 1994 genocide. Trial of opposition leader Victoire Ingabire delayed 16 Jan until 13 Feb. Supreme Court appeal of 2 journalists jailed for genocide denial began 30 Jan. Four top officers, including head of military intelligence, placed under house arrest 17 Jan, accused of indiscipline, illegally plundering Congolese minerals.

- [“Rwandan journalists jailed for genocide denial launch supreme court appeal”](#), *Guardian*, 29 Jan. 2012.

HORN OF AFRICA

➡ **Eritrea** Govt 18 Jan denied accusations Eritrea “armed and trained” gunmen who killed 5 tourists in Ethiopia, 23 Jan requested UN investigation (see Ethiopia entry). Mid Jan UN report found insufficient evidence Asmara supplied Somali militants with weapons in 2011; Eritrean envoy to UN 17 Jan called for lifting of sanctions.

- [“Eritrea envoy urges UN to lift ‘unfair’ sanctions”](#), VOA, 17 Jan. 2012.

➡ **Ethiopia** 5 tourists killed, 4 abducted 16 Jan by gunmen in Afar region; govt said group “armed and trained” by Eritrea, would respond to Eritrean “terrorist” activity if international community failed; group said govt blocking hostage release. Court 24 Jan confirmed terrorism charges against opposition Unity for Democracy and Justice party leader Andualem Arage, dissident blogger Eskinder Nega and 6 others. Court 26 Jan gave sentences ranging from 14 years to life to 3 journalists, politician and aide for terrorism-related offenses. Suicide bomb killed unknown number of Ethiopian soldiers in central Somalia town Beledweyne, captured by Ethiopian forces and allied militias 31 Dec (see Somalia).

- [“3 journalists, politician found guilty on terror charges in Ethiopia”](#), AP, 19 Jan. 2012.

➡ **Kenya** ICC 23 Jan confirmed crimes against humanity charges against 4 Kenyans, including deputy PM and treasury minister Uhuru Kenyatta and former minister William Ruto, for roles in 2008 election violence. In surprise move, Kenyatta 26 Jan resigned from treasury. Gunmen 1 Jan killed 5 in attack on 2 Garissa bars; al-Shabaab attack on Gerille police camp killed 7, 3 kidnapped. Kenya-based al-Shabaab linked Muslim Youth Center 15 Jan announced leader appointed to represent al-Qaeda in Kenya. Tribal militia clashes in Moyale, NE, 26-28 Jan left at least 21 dead. Human Rights Watch 12 Jan accused security forces of abusing Somali refugees, Kenyan Somalis in Dadaab refugee camp and wider area;

forces denied allegations. High Court 13 Jan delayed elections to March 2013 unless coalition govt collapses, forcing earlier poll.

- [“Kenyatta resigns from finance role”](#), BBC, 26 Jan. 2012.

New Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°85, [Kenyan Somali Islamist Radicalisation](#), 25 Jan. 2012. Kenya’s proximity to and troubled relationship with Somalia and the militant al-Shabaab movement threaten its security and stability, necessitating sound strategies to combat Islamist radicalisation that go beyond counter-terrorism.

New Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°84, [Kenya: Impact of the ICC Proceedings](#), 9 Jan. 2012. While the International Criminal Court (ICC) has a chance to inaugurate a new era of accountability in Kenya, misperceptions could also amplify ethnic tensions ahead of the 2012 elections if its work and limitations are not better explained to the public.

➡ **Somalia** At least 60 killed, 50 injured 6 Jan in Kenyan air assault on al-Shabaab, southern Somalia; 14 killed 15 Jan in airstrike on al-Shabaab rebel base in Jilib. Reported U.S. drone strike 22 Jan killed senior al-Qaeda official near Mogadishu. Ethiopian troops continued to cross border into central region early Jan following 31 Dec capture of strategic town Beledweyne, Hiran region; suicide truck bomb exploded 24 Jan at military base in Beledweyne; al-Shabaab claimed 33 Ethiopian soldiers killed. AMISOM forces 20 Jan captured 3 al-Shabaab bases in Mogadishu. U.S. forces 25 Jan rescued 2 hostages, killed 9 kidnappers near Gadaado, central Somalia. Radio Shabelle director shot dead 28 Jan. Govt 5 Jan launched investigation after 3 MPs hospitalised 4 Jan in parliament fight over election of new speaker; 4 Jan election of Madobe Nunow denounced by president, parliamentary crisis far from over. UNSRSG Augustine Mahiga re-established UNPOS office in Mogadishu after 17 years absence. Govt Jan 31 requested UN lift arms embargo.

- [“Top U.N. official moves to Somalia as violence rages”](#), Reuters, 24 Jan. 2012.

➡ **Somaliland** Clashes mid to late Jan between troops and local militia near Buhodle left scores dead; Puntland called military action “naked aggression”. At least 2 anti-Somaliland demonstrators killed, 12 injured 21 Jan by govt forces in Las’anod. 21 journalists arrested 15 Jan, released day later, following protest at increasing press repression, closure of HornCable TV station accused of broadcasting anti-govt propaganda; 4 journalists arrested mid-month remain in jail.

- [“Massive rallies held across Somaliland for unity, recognition and sovereignty”](#), SomalilandPress, 22 Jan. 2011.

➡ **South Sudan** Relations with Khartoum further deteriorated; govt mid-Jan initiated shutdown of all oil production after AU-facilitated oil talks faltered and following additional seizures of South Sudan oil by Khartoum; “thefts” allegedly worth \$815m since Dec 2011. Air raid by Sudanese armed forces on Upper Nile State refugee camp 23 Jan wounded at least 1. Scores killed, thousands displaced in continuing violence between Murle and Lou Nuer; Murle retaliatory attacks launched throughout Jan in Akobo, Uror and Duk Padiet counties. At least 70 reported killed in attack on Tonj East County, Warrap state, by armed youths from Mayendit County; govt accused Khartoum of arming militia. UNSRSG Hilde Johnson 19 Jan called for “redoubling of efforts” to curb violence, emphasised role of UN in deterring even greater violence, pledged additional

UNMISS attention, called for additional troops. Govt 19 Jan said groups would be forcibly disarmed if necessary.

- [“Moving beyond violence in Jonglei”](#), IRIN, 23 Jan. 2012.

➡ **Sudan** Govt 15 Jan said S Sudan oil confiscated to meet unpaid transit fees, 29 Jan said impounded oil released (see S Sudan). AU panel 24 Jan put forward new proposal including financial compensations to solve ongoing oil dispute; direct talks with S Sudan on sidelines of AU summit and talks at IGAD extraordinary session failed to secure progress. 20 JEM rebel leaders 11 Jan defected, announced intention to join Doha peace agreement. President Bashir 10 Jan appointed governors to 5 Darfur states, including 2 new states, in accordance with peace agreement. UNAMID 11 Jan accused Khartoum of restricting Darfur peacekeeper movement; 1 peacekeeper killed, 2 wounded 21 Jan in ambush, south Darfur. U.S. 6 Jan decision to lift restrictions on defence sales to S Sudan perceived as threat by Khartoum. Senior ruling National Congress Party official 22 Jan criticised security forces for 14 Jan closure of Al-Wan newspaper after it published positive article on Khalil Ibrahim, former JEM leader. SPLM-N said strategic govt post taken in South Kordofan in 15 Jan clash; 28 Jan kidnapped 29 Chinese workers.

- Comment by Zach Vertin, [“African Union Must Pressure Sudan to Allow Food Aid into Kordofan and Blue Nile”](#), East African, 29 Jan. 2012.
- [“Sudan says taking some South Sudan oil but won’t close pipe”](#), Reuters, 15 Jan. 2012.

➡ **Uganda** Opposition leader Kizza Besigye arrested 19 Jan, held 6 hours; govt said arrest necessary to prevent his participation in anti-govt Activists for Change protest; Besigye 20 Jan claimed he was assaulted in custody, police officers taking drugs. Bagisu village in east attacked 12 Jan by Sabinu tribesmen from Kapchorwa district; 1 killed, hundreds displaced.

- Comment by Ned Dalby, [“Ending the LRA: Reason for Optimism and Political Commitment”](#), African Arguments, 10 Jan. 2012.
- [“Ugandan opposition leader arrested”](#), Al Jazeera, 19 Jan. 2012.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

➡ **Madagascar** Former president Ravalomanana 21 Jan failed to return from self-imposed exile in South Africa; political allies withdrew from consensus govt in protest. Regional mediators 26 Jan demanded Madagascar allow Ravalomanana to safely return by end of Feb.

- [“Madagascar’s Ravalomanana back in South Africa”](#), Reuters, 21 Jan. 2012.

➡ **Malawi** 30 arrested after Lilongwe’s illegal vendors 5 Jan clashed with police dismantling their stalls. Junior judicial workers 9 Jan went on strike over 6-year overdue pay rises, paralysing court system.

- [“Women protest attacks over skirts, pants”](#), IBN Live, 21 Jan. 2012.

➡ **Zimbabwe** Constitution drafters missed 19 Jan draft deadline; delay blamed on ZANU-PF reversal on death penalty. Electoral Commission Chairman Simpson Mtambanengwe 19 Jan said Registrar General Office, criticised for favouring ZANU-PF, should operate under Commission supervision for next elections. Following

11 Jan clashes with vendors, police raided Harare HQ of former opposition MDC-T arresting activists, employees; MDC accused ZANU-PF of using police to destabilize party ahead of elections.

- [“Zimbabwe’s unsavoury path to peace”](#), *New York Times*, 14 Jan. 2012.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°82, [Resistance and Denial: Zimbabwe’s Stalled Reform Agenda](#), 16 Nov. 2011.

WEST AFRICA

➡ **Côte d’Ivoire** Ivorian Popular Front rally in Yopougon attacked 21 Jan by alleged pro-Ouattara youths; 1 killed, dozens injured. President Ouattara 26 Jan met French President Sarkozy, signed agreement reducing French military personnel in country to 300. U.S. Sec State Clinton 17 Jan met Ouattara, reportedly requested PM Guillaume Soro be transferred to ICC to face crimes against humanity charges.

- [“Un meeting pro-Gbagbo attaqué, plusieurs blessés”](#), AFP, 21 Jan. 2012.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°83, [Côte d’Ivoire: Continuing the Recovery](#), 16 Dec. 2011.

➡ **Guinea** Political deadlock over legislative elections date continued; ex-Senegalese President and current Head of the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie Abdou Diouf 4-6 Jan held series of high-level meetings in attempt to mediate between opposition and govt. Clashes over repeated power cuts in mining town of Kamsar 16 Jan left 1 dead, 30 injured; 2 opposition UFDG members arrested 25 Jan for reported role in violence.

- [“Francophonie chief laments Guinea’s political deadlock”](#), AFP, 6 Jan. 2012.

➡ **Guinea-Bissau** Increased potential for political instability, civil, military unrest following death of President Sanhá 9 Jan, 26 Dec coup attempt. ECOWAS, UNSG Ban called for peaceful power transfer in accordance with constitution; despite initial rejection by some opposition parties, National Assembly president Raimundo Pereira appointed interim president, election scheduled for 18 March.

- [“Malam Bacai Sanhá morre”](#), *Gazeta de Noticias*, 9 Jan. 2012.

New Crisis Group Africa Report N°183, [Beyond Compromises: Reform Prospects in Guinea-Bissau](#), 23 Jan. 2012. The ability of the Bissau-Guinean authorities to withstand the 26 December 2011 coup attempt bears witness to the improvements since the previous military turmoil of 1 April 2010, but crucial political, military and judicial developments still lie ahead as the country prepares for presidential elections in March and parliamentary polls later this year.

➡ **Liberia** President Johnson Sirleaf inaugurated 16 Jan for 2nd 6-year term. Attendance of opposition Congress for Democratic Change (CDC) leader Winston Tubman sparked unrest in party ranks; angry CDC youths 15 Jan attempted to attack Tubman at party HQ. Liberian authorities 28 Jan arrested 70 “mercenaries” for alleged involvement in plans to destabilise Côte d’Ivoire.

- [“Liberia’s president stresses reconciliation in second inaugural speech”](#), *New York Times*, 16 Jan. 2012.

➡ **Mali** Fears regional spillover from Libyan conflict could spark new Tuareg rebellion as National Movement for Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) Tuareg rebels reportedly backed by Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and fighters who served in Libyan army staged series of attacks mid-late Jan on towns in north/north-east: govt responded by bombarding rebel position in Menaka 17 Jan; army said 45 rebels killed, 2 soldiers dead, 2,300 people fled into Mauritania. AQIM 12 Jan warned France, UK, Holland, Sweden not to attempt rescue operation for hostages in Mali, said seeking peaceful solution. Former PMs Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, Modibo Sidibe, and Mountaga Tall, announced candidacy in 29 April presidential poll.

- [“Ménaka aux prises avec la rébellion”](#), *Journal du Mali*, 17 Jan. 2012.

➡ **Niger** Security forces 7 Jan intercepted 4 heavily-armed vehicles on border with Algeria, exacerbating fears of Libyan conflict spillover. FM Mohamed Bazoum 30 Dec met with Nigerian President Jonathan, discussed recent Boko Haram attacks in Nigeria. Niamey Bishop Mgr Michel Cartatéguy 10 Jan said Boko Haram already infiltrated Niger, Chad, Cameroon. Court records destroyed 3 Jan in Justice Ministry fire; officials suspect arson provoked by President Issoufou’s 18 Dec request to lift immunity for 8 MPs suspected of embezzlement.

- [“L’enquête sur l’incendie du ministère de la Justice avance”](#), RFI, 10 Jan. 2012.

➡ **Nigeria** At least 211 killed 20 Jan in Kano in worst ever Boko Haram bomb attack, targeting police, immigration offices and markets; police late Jan arrested 160 Chadians reportedly suspected of involvement. At least 7 died 22 Jan in Boko Haram bombing of 2 churches, Bauchi state; 11 suspected Boko Haram insurgents killed 28 Jan in checkpoint gun battle, Maiduguri. Boko Haram 2nd in command Umar Kabir, allegedly behind Madalla Christmas bombings, 18 Jan escaped police custody. Following late-Dec state of emergency declaration, President Jonathan 8 Jan claimed Boko Haram sympathizers in govt, security agencies. In response to Boko Haram 1 Jan demand Christian southerners leave North, Niger Delta Indigenes Movement for Radical Change (NDIMRC) 10 Jan issued 21-day ultimatum calling on northerners to leave South. Govt 1 Jan announced complete withdrawal of fuel subsidies, prompting crippling strikes following 117% fuel price increase; govt 16 Jan reduced prices by 30%, deployed soldiers to Lagos and Kano to stop future pro-subsidy protest. Human rights groups 12 Jan petitioned ICC to investigate President Jonathan’s role in alleged killings of over 35 protestors.

- [“Under pressure, Nigerian leader relents on gas price”](#), *New York Times*, 16 Jan. 2011.

➡ **Senegal** Widespread protest over 27 Jan Constitutional Court ruling confirming legality of President Wade candidacy for 26 Feb election left 2 dead in Dakar, 2 in Podor, dozens injured countrywide. France 1 Feb warned Wade Senegalese army will not follow him if he tries to stay in power. Wade 11 Jan pardoned Malick Noël Seck, youth leader of opposition Socialist Party (PS) condemned 2 Jan for abusing Constitutional Council; Seck vowed to continue fight for release of Barthélémy Dias, other PS youth leader arrested after 23 Dec clashes with Wade supporters which left 1 dead. Situation in south remained tense: 1 killed during Casamance separatist MFDC attack on gendarmerie 3 Jan; 3 soldiers killed, 5 injured during operation in northern Casamance late Jan, landmine explosion wounded 7 near Diokadou 17 Jan.

- [“Faut-il s’attendre à une explosion?”](#), *Slate Afrique*, 18 Jan. 2012.

CENTRAL ASIA

➡ **Kazakhstan** President Nazarbaev's Nur Otan party won 80.7% of votes in 15 Jan parliamentary elections; pro-govt Ak Zhol and Communist People's Party received 7.47% and 7.19% respectively, gaining entry to parliament for first time. OSCE said election failed to meet "fundamental principles of democratic elections". Nazarbaev vetoed Constitutional Council decision to cancel polls in western town Janaozen due to Dec deadly unrest and state of emergency, saying it would limit citizens' rights; 4 Jan extended Janaozen state of emergency to 31 Jan. Some 200 opposition Azat party activists, supporters rallied in Almaty 17 Jan to protest election results; leaders fined for holding unsanctioned public gathering. Security services 23 Jan searched Almaty office of unregistered Algha party and homes of party leader Vladimir Kozlov and activists, arrested Kozlov and independent newspaper editor; govt 25 Jan announced they and 1 other opposition figure facing prosecution for "inciting violence" in Janaozen; 4 policemen to be charged with opening fire on protesters. Opposition 24 Jan renewed call for govt to halt "political repression". Several hundred opposition activists 28 Jan protested against Nazarbaev, election results in Almaty; 3 OSDP party officials later handed jail sentences, 1 fined for organising rally.

- "Astana casting government critics as Zhanaozen troublemakers", Eurasianet, 24 Jan. 2012.

➡ **Kyrgyzstan** Over 30 prisoners reportedly injured, 1 killed in 16 Jan raid on Bishkek detention facility by special security forces following outbreak of unrest. Several thousand inmates at 13 jails across Kyrgyzstan 17 Jan started hunger strike to support Bishkek inmates; over 1,000 sewed mouths shut protesting authorities' 23 Jan decision to force feed them. Authorities 28 Jan said hunger strike ended after govt agreed to improve living conditions, but rejected demands for greater freedoms. Russia 18 Jan delivered some EUR 12.5mn of military equipment to Kyrgyz border troops in good-will gesture to new govt. Ethnic tensions continued in south following 29 Dec burning of several buildings in clash between Tajiks and Kyrgyz in Batken region.

- "Prison riot in Kyrgyzstan", *Times of Central Asia*, 18 Jan. 2012.

➡ **Tajikistan** President Rahmon 5 Jan reshuffled govt, named new Interior Minister, Justice Minister, heads of Security Council and presidential administration, extended PM's powers. Exiled Tajik opposition leader Dodojon Atovullo seriously injured in 12 Jan stabbing in Moscow; attack thought to be politically motivated. Acting chief prosecutor of northern Sughd province 17 Jan announced arrest of 135 people in 2011 on charges of membership of religious extremist groups, 14 criminal proceedings begun. In rare development, Tajik authorities 26 Jan reportedly arrested son of highly-placed general for drug smuggling.

- "Tajik leader reshuffles staff, extends premier's powers", Central Asia newswire, 5 Jan. 2012.

➡ **Turkmenistan** President Berdymukhammedov registered 3 Jan as candidate for 2nd term in 12 Feb elections; vote only 2nd since independence allowing more than one candidate. Revised list has 7 candidates running against president; all from govt ministries, state bodies; all have expressed support for president's policies. Officials rejected application from independent candidate; no opposition parties. OSCE 3 Jan said will send limited assessment

mission but no observers. President 9 Jan started campaign, pledged to turn Turkmenistan into "industrial power", spoke of need for new political parties, independent media. Parliament 11 Jan passed law defining legal process for formation of political parties, rights, responsibilities.

- "Turkmen schoolteacher says presidential candidacy rejected", RFE/RL, 10 Jan. 2012.

➡ **Uzbekistan** President Karimov 13 Jan warned withdrawal of U.S. and coalition troops from Afghanistan will increase terrorist and extremist threat, possibility of prolonged instability throughout region; spoke of need to reform military. Uzbek Jamshid Muhtorov arrested at Chicago airport 25 Jan on charges of planning to fight for terrorist organisation overseas. Former editor of opposition newspaper Erk Muhammad Bekjon, jailed since 1999 on terrorism charges, scheduled to be released from prison mid-Dec, sentenced to another 5 years.

- "Karimov: US departure from Afghanistan to bring instability", Eurasianet, 16 Jan. 2012.

NORTH EAST ASIA

➡ **China** Govt reported 2 people killed by security forces confronting protesters in Tibetan areas of Sichuan province late month, tightened security measures in area.

- "China steps up security in Tibet following protests", BBC, 31 Jan. 2012.

➡ **North Korea** DPRK Joint New Year's Editorial emphasised unity, support for succession, adherence to "military first" policy line following 30 Dec warning it would not soften position on ROK govt. Top U.S., ROK, Japan officials 17 Jan met to discuss resuming stalled 6-party talks. Kim Jong-nam, brother of new leader Kim Jong-un, reportedly described succession as "joke", predicted new regime's collapse.

- Comment by Stephanie Kleine-Ahlbrandt, "North Korea: Open For Business?", Global Observatory, 13 Jan. 2012.
- "Will North Korea change under Kim Jong-un?", BBC, 19 Jan. 2012.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°130, *South Korea: The Shifting Sands of Security Policy*, 1 Dec. 2011.

SOUTH ASIA

➡ **Afghanistan** Proposals for accelerated withdrawal of U.S./NATO troops appeared to gain ground. France suspended military operations after 6 French soldiers killed 20 Jan by alleged Taliban infiltrator at Kapisa military base; 27 Jan announced decision to withdraw forces by 2013. NATO report leaked 31 Jan said Taliban, with Pakistan support, poised to retake control after NATO withdrawal. Taliban 11 Jan acknowledged opening of office in Qatar as part of confidence building measures agreed on with U.S., German govts'; presidential spokesman said govt would only support Afghan-led peace talks. President Karzai 5 Jan requested U.S. hand over Bagram military prison by end of Jan following report by Independent Commission for the Supervision of the Constitution detailing problems with detainee transfer regime agreed in 2010. Insurgent attacks continued: at least 19 killed in 2 Taliban bombings 17-19

Jan in Kandahar and Helmand; 3 killed 26 Jan by suicide bomber targeting NATO convoy in Helmand.

- Comment by Candace Rondeaux, “Obama’s Bagram Problem”, *Foreign Affairs*, 27 Jan. 2012.
- “Power struggle over Afghanistan”, Al Jazeera, 18 Jan. 2012.

➡ **Bangladesh** Army 20 Jan said coup attempt by former, serving officers foiled. 4 killed 29 Jan in clashes between police and anti-govt protestors during nationwide rallies called by opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party and Islamist ally Jamaat-e-Islami. Former Jamaat-e-Islami party chief Golam Azam jailed 11 Jan on war crimes charges.

- “Turbulent house”, *Economist*, 28 Jan. 2012.

➡ **India** Authorities 3 Jan reported 1,500 violent Maoist rebel incidents in 2011, most in East where over 100,000 additional police, soldiers deployed. 3 police killed 5 Jan by alleged Maoist landmine in Kandhamal; 3 police killed by landmine in Jharkhand. 7 Maoists surrendered 30 Jan in Chhattisgarh.

- “Maoist rebels kill 13 cops in eastern India”, *Washington Times*, 21 Jan. 2012.

➡ **Kashmir** 1 killed, 5 injured 7 Jan in shootout between police and suspected militants in Sopore; militant killed 19 Jan in gunfight near Line of Control, Poonch district. Police 4 Jan announced arrest of 6 suspected separatists affiliated with militant Islamic group Lashkar-e-Taiba. Hardline separatist group Hurriyat 2 Jan condemned civilian killing during protest against N Kashmir power cuts as “state terrorism”; senior Hurriyat member Ahammad Ashraf Sahrai put under indefinite house arrest 2 Jan.

- “Kashmir shuts to protest killing of student”, AP, 6 Jan. 2012.

➡ **Nepal** Opposition Nepali Congress 9 Jan accused ruling Maoists of attempting to establish dictatorship following demand for directly elected president vested with wide executive powers; Maoists warned guerrilla integration will halt if demands not met. Maoist hardline leader Mohan Vidya 8 Jan opposed guerrilla disarmament, integration into armed forces, govt plan to return property seized during civil war, accused party leadership of betraying principles; senior Maoist 29 Jan ruled out scrapping legalisation of civil-war era land transactions. Maoists 15 Jan set priorities as completing constitution and enduring dignified integration of Maoist combatants.

- “Nepal’s troubled peace process hits roadblock”, *Hindustan Times*, 8 Jan. 2012.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°131, *Nepal’s Peace Process: The Endgame Nears*, 13 Dec. 2011.

➡ **Pakistan** Tension between army and govt increased 11 Jan when PM Yousaf Raza Gilani fired defense secretary retired general Naeem Khalid Lodhi, replaced with civilian Nargis Sethi; military leadership warned of “serious ramifications with potentially grievous consequences” after PM Gilani publicly criticized them. PM Gilani 19 Jan appeared at Supreme Court accused of contempt for refusal to formally request Swiss authorities reopen corruption case against President Zardari, insisted Constitution grants presidential immunity. Judicial commission 9 Jan began investigating allegations former U.S. ambassador Hussain Haqqani sent memo requesting U.S. help to prevent military coup; Supreme Court 30 Jan lifted travel ban on Huqqani, easing civilian-military tensions. NATO report leaked 31 Jan said Pakistan aids, maintains close ties with

Taliban in Afghanistan; govt said allegations “ridiculous”. Former President Musharraf delayed plans to return after Interior Minister Rehman Malik 17 Jan said he would be arrested under outstanding warrant for killing of Baloch rebel leader. 4 people including pro-govt militia leader Haji Akhonzada killed 30 Jan by suicide bomb, Peshawar. 14 soldiers killed in Turbat district 10 Jan in suspected Baloch separatist ambush. 29 killed, 37 wounded 10 Jan by bomb reportedly targeting pro-govt Zakhakhel tribal militia in Jamrud, Khyber region. 16 killed, over 20 injured 15 Jan in blast targeting Shiite procession, Punjab. Govt 31 Jan said over 60 killed in clash between soldiers and Taliban in Kurram tribal area, NW. Taliban 17 Jan killed Pakistani Voice of America reporter, threatened further attacks on journalists. U.S. President Obama 31 Jan confirmed U.S. drone strikes in Pakistan; Pakistan Foreign Office termed strikes “unlawful, counterproductive and hence intolerable”.

- “Pakistan’s besieged government”, *New York Times*, 11 Jan. 2012.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°216, *Islamic Parties in Pakistan*, 12 Dec. 2011.

➡ **Sri Lanka** UK govt 12 Jan noted failure to address war crimes allegations in Lessons Learned Reconciliation Committee (LLRC) report, called for independent investigation and implementation of recommendations; Tamil National Alliance (TNA) 15 Jan reiterated call for war crimes inquiry. Govt 17 Jan cancelled 3-day talks with TNA, prompting fears progress indefinitely stalled. UK FCO recorded 13 disappearances, abductions or killings Nov to Dec 2011; additional abductions, disappearances reported this month. Govt supporters with police protection 25 Jan disrupted media rights protest in Colombo. Defence Secretary Gotabaya Rajapaksa 10 Jan defended increased military spending, said LTTE plans to rebuild abroad, support renewed militancy in Sri Lanka. Month saw unconfirmed reports of violent attacks on Tamil activists abroad by ex-militants working with govt.

- Comment by Louise Arbour, “Tamils await their peace dividend”, *Globe and Mail*, 30 Jan. 2012.
- “Sri Lanka ethnic Tamil party rejects war report”, AP, 16 Jan. 2012.
- For latest report, see New Crisis Group Asia Report N°217, *Sri Lanka: Women’s Insecurity in the North and East*, 20 Dec. 2011.


SOUTH EAST ASIA

➡ **Indonesia** Wave of shootings in Aceh Dec-early Jan left 13 dead; some claim attempt to force postponement of elections on security grounds. Under govt pressure, Constitutional Court 17 Jan re-opened candidate registration; Aceh provincial election commission 19 Jan postponed election for 5th time to 9 Apr. In Papua, new Papuan development policy unit (UP4B) 12 Jan meeting disrupted by demonstrators rejecting Unit’s goals. Security operations continued against Free Papua Movement HQ in Eduda, Paniai. Int’l criticism followed 30 Jan court treason indictment of 5 Papuan activists who raised flag in pro-independence rally last Oct. 2 workers shot dead 9 Jan in ongoing Freeport mine violence, despite end of 3-month strike. Govt pledged to revoke mining permit after thousands rioted, 2 killed 26 Jan in Bima, Sumbawa, over feared environmental degradation.


- Comment by Sidney Jones, “TNI and Counter-Terrorism: Not a Good Mix”, *Strategic Review*, 9 Jan. 2012.

- Comment by Sidney Jones, “Changing terrain of terrorism in South-East Asia”, *Straits Times*, 4 Jan. 2012.
- “Will the upcoming election deliver peace in Aceh?”, *Jakarta Post*, 13 Jan. 2012.


New Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°132, *Indonesia: From Vigilantism to Terrorism in Cirebon*, 26 Jan. 2012. Involvement in violent campaigns against vice and religious deviance has become one pathway to terrorism in Indonesia.

 **Myanmar/Burma** Significant progress in reform process as govt 12 Jan signed first ceasefire with main Karen rebel group, ending over 60 years of conflict; 13 Jan released 651 prisoners under new presidential pardon, some 300 political prisoners freed including most prominent political dissidents. Release followed 2 Jan amnesty for 900 mostly non-political prisoners. Amid continuing clashes in Kachin State, govt 18 Jan held inconclusive talks with Kachin Independence Army near Chinese border. Following prisoner release U.S. announced restoration of full diplomatic ties, exchange of ambassadors. EU 23 Jan agreed to suspend visa bans on leading politicians on basis of “remarkable” political reform; Australia 9 Jan announced easing of sanctions, removed some individuals from asset freeze list. Diplomatic visits included UK and French FMs, U.S. policy coordinator Derek Mitchell and U.S. envoy on human trafficking. Election Commission 30 Dec announced by-elections to be held 1 Apr; Aung San Suu Kyi 18 Jan submitted application to contest seat, 29 Jan started campaign tour.

- “Burma signs ceasefire with Karen rebels in step towards ending isolation”, *Guardian*, 12 Jan. 2012.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°214, *Myanmar: A New Peace Initiative*, 30 Nov. 2011.

 **Papua New Guinea** Army faction supporting former PM Michael Somare 26 Jan staged mutiny, put military commander under house arrest, demanded Somare’s reinstatement. O’Neill declared mutiny over when military commander released later that day.

- “Papua New Guinea soldiers’ mutiny stopped - Peter O’Neill”, BBC, 26 Jan. 2012.

 **Philippines** 9-11 Jan govt-MILF peace talks saw progress on governance issues, plans for interim period following settlement; further negotiations scheduled mid-Feb. MILF 21 Jan reported fighters from Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) defecting to MILF over lack of MNLF leadership. 4 injured 18 Jan in Bukidnon province clash between security forces and communist New People’s Army. Govt 19 Jan announced joint military drills with the US marines at oil rig in South China Sea, U.S.-Philippine strategic dialogue 26-27 Jan discussed increased U.S. regional presence.

- “Kidnappings point to security breakdown in southern Philippines”, *New York Times*, 5 Jan. 2012.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°213, *The Philippines: Indigenous Rights and the MILF Peace Process*, 22 Nov. 2011.

 **Thailand** Govt early-Jan began re-drafting 2007 constitution; debate on Constitution Drafting Committee selection ongoing. Key “Red Shirt” leader Natthawut Saikua appointed deputy agricultural minister 18 Jan in cabinet reshuffle; 1st UDD leader to receive ministerial post in Yingluck govt. Govt 10 Jan approved over \$60mn compensation for victims of 2006-2010 political violence. U.S. 13 Jan issued terrorist threat alert for Bangkok tourist

areas, prompting other embassies to issue similar warning. Police 13 Jan arrested Lebanese-born Swedish citizen, suspected of links to Hizbollah; 16 Jan found bomb-making materials during raid in Bangkok. Violent insurgency continued in South; explosion 3 Jan killed 2 soldiers attending New Year’s ceremony; suspected insurgents 6 Jan opened fire at defence volunteers outpost, Narathiwat province, killing 2. 4 suspected insurgents killed 30 Jan in gunfight with troops in Pattani province.


- “Thailand compensation for protest victims approved”, BBC, 11 Jan. 2012.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°215, *Waging Peace: ASEAN and the Thai-Cambodian Border Conflict*, 6 Dec. 2011.

 **Timor-Leste** President Ramos-Horta 13 Jan set 17 March date for presidential polls, set parliamentary polls for June, declared his candidacy 31 Jan.


- “East Timor to hold elections in March”, AFP, 14 Jan. 2012.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°129, *Timor-Leste’s Veterans: An Unfinished Struggle?*, 18 Nov. 2011.

EUROPE

Balkans

 **Bosnia** State presidency 5 Jan named HDZ candidate Vjekoslav Bevanda new PM, approved by parliament 12 Jan; other new ministers named by 6 main parties. Bevanda told parliament priorities would be fulfilling EU demands, improving economic situation, fighting corruption. New dispute emerged within Presidency and acting Council of Ministers over 2011 budget, blocking disbursement of tax proceedings to state institutions and foreign debt repayments; Republika Srpska (RS) repaid its part of foreign debt in apparent violation of law. Parliament 6 Jan agreed to pass law paving way for 2013 census, first since 1991. RS 9 Jan celebrated 20th anniversary of declaration of independence from Bosnia.

- “Bosnian PM optimistic on new government”, *Balkan Insight*, 17 Jan. 2012.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°66, *Brčko Unsuper-vised*, 8 Dec. 2011.

 **Kosovo** Situation in North calmed as KFOR stopped pressuring local Serbs to lift barricades, Serbs allowed EULEX to pass twice a day. Northern leaders scheduled advisory referendum for Kosovo Serbs mid Feb on whether they acknowledge Kosovo govt institutions, despite request by Belgrade to cancel vote, arguing it will hurt Serbia’s interests, chances of gaining EU candidate status. Dozens injured, including police, and 146 arrested 14 Jan as police tried to disperse protest by Self-Determination party activists near Serbian border, supporting 7 Dec parliamentary motion advocating trade ban with Serbia; further protest 22 Jan. Parliament passed new counter-motion welcoming agreements between Pristina and Belgrade, supporting technical dialogue. International Steering Group 24 Jan set end of 2012 as timeframe for full Kosovo independence, called on Serbia to withdraw security forces personnel; Serbia denied security forces present. EU launched visa liberalisation dialogue with Kosovo.

- “Kosovo Serbs urged to drop referendum”, *SE Times*, 23 Jan. 2012.

➡ **Macedonia** New round of UN-mediated talks on name dispute between Macedonia and Greece in New York mid Jan ended without result. Greece sent demarche to Macedonia 26 Jan alleging use of Greek motifs, irredentist content in new triumphal arch in Skopje. Orthodox church near Struga in SW set on fire 30 Jan, in apparent ethnically motivated incident.

- [“No breakthrough in Macedonia name talks”](#), Balkan Insight, 18 Jan. 2012.

Caucasus

➡ **Armenia** Ahead of scheduled 6 May parliamentary elections, 2 opposition parties 20 Jan tabled amendments to Electoral Code, 20 Jan held conference promoting holding elections solely on proportional party-list basis to reduce vote-rigging. Proposal supported by main opposition HAK coalition, opposed by ruling HHK. HAK announced street protests starting Feb. FM welcomed “historic” French law criminalising denial of Armenian genocide (see Turkey).

- [“Armenian opposition steps up push for voting reform”](#), RFE/RL, 21 Jan. 2012.

➡ **Azerbaijan** 5 extra-parliamentary opposition parties 12 Jan launched alliance Resistance Movement for a Democratic Society; aims include reforming election legislation. National Security Ministry 19 Jan announced had uncovered terror group plotting to assassinate public figures, detained 2 suspects. Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly special rapporteur on political prisoners in Azerbaijan voiced concerns over country’s refusal to grant him visa. Tensions with Iran continued amid reports of cyberhacking between countries. 2 men reportedly arrested in connection with alleged plot to kill Israeli ambassador.

- [“Is opposing Islam in Baku more dangerous than criticizing government?”](#), Eurasianet, 3 Jan. 2012.

➡ **North Caucasus (Russia)** New spiral of violent confrontation in Dagestan, with almost daily attacks, explosions and number of large-scale attacks, including 6 IEDs discovered along highway in Kizilyurt region, one engineer killed, 8 injured during clearing operation 11 Jan; 1 security serviceman injured, 1 insurgent killed in operation involving air component 11 Jan in Kizlar area; 3 insurgents killed in clash with security forces in Khasav’yurt region 19 Jan; 4 Russian servicemen, 5 suspected rebels killed in 27 Jan clash, Kizlyar; 3 children injured in IED explosions in Makhachkala 6, 28 Jan. Security servicemen reacted with heavy-handed military operations, rights abuses. At least 4 people reported abducted, tortured by state agents in Dagestan; police detained and tortured 14-year-old boy in Magaremkent’sky region. Counter-terrorist operation (KTO) regime launched in Gimry village 9 Jan; residents reported beatings, illegal actions against civilians by servicemen, 14 Jan held protest; regime lifted 19 Jan, freedom of movement still restricted. Security servicemen 20 Jan killed lawyer working on insurgency-related criminal cases Omar Saidmagomedov in Makhachkala, prompting widespread condemnation. Attacks continued elsewhere in region. 4 Russian troops killed, 16 injured in operation against insurgents in Chechnya 8 Jan; several rebels also reported killed. 2 militants, including regional insurgent leader, killed in 27 Jan shootout in Ingushetia. 3 armed men broke into school gym in Kabardino-Balkaria and killed Russian serviceman. KTO regime introduced in Prigorodny district, N Ossetia 11 Jan,

first time since 2004 Beslan hostage crisis; 1 ethnic Ingush alleged insurgent killed. Commission for Adapting Rebels to Civilian Life formed in Kabardino-Balkaria 24 Jan.

- [“Can Putin once again exploit the North Caucasus in 2012?”](#), *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 9 Jan. 2012.

➡ **Georgia** Situation stable in breakaway republic South Ossetia (SO) following Nov elections and standoff prompted by disqualification of apparent victor Alla Dzhioyeva. Dzhioyeva 18 Jan announced withdrawal from Kremlin-mediated 10 Dec agreement, requested acting president Brovtsev cede power to her, 21 Jan said planned 25 March repeat election illegal. Dzhioyeva and Brovtsev held “constructive” talks 23 Jan, Brovtsev replaced several ministers and advisers. Destabilisation and tensions in breakaway Abkhazia as Georgian, Abkhazian authorities exchanged accusations over 2 high-profile murders in Gali region 29 Dec, 9 Jan. In Tbilisi, new draft electoral code endorsed by parliament late Dec criticised by opposition and internationally for failing to incorporate opposition proposals, recommendations from international election observer missions; elections scheduled for Oct. Tbilisi expressed concern over news of Russian military drills “Kavkaz 2012” to be held Sept. President Saakashvili met with U.S. President Obama 30 Jan, discussed security cooperation, trade.

- [“New South Ossetian crisis averted?”](#), RFE/RL, 24 Jan. 2012.

➡ **Nagorno-Karabakh (Azerbaijan)** Following Russian-mediated talks 23 Jan, Armenia and Azerbaijan presidents issued joint statement stressing importance of confidence-building measures, agreeing to accelerate agreement on Basic Principles, further develop incident prevention mechanism. Ahead of meeting, Azerbaijani President Aliiev 16 Jan criticised international community for focusing on prevention of war, told media country is building up arms in order to rapidly regain control of N-K in case talks fail. Armenian President Sargsyan early Jan visited N-K to inspect military facilities, met with Karabakh Armenian army commanders. Aliiev visited troops in Goranboy district 24 Jan. Violations of line of contact reported.

- [“Armenia, Azerbaijan to speed up Karabakh settlement”](#), RT, 23 Jan. 2012.

Eastern Europe

➡ **Belarus** EU FMs 23 Jan widened scope of sanctions against President Lukashenko’s regime to include individuals responsible for serious rights violations, repression of civil society and opposition. Law tightening restrictions on internet use came into force 6 Jan.

- [“Outgoing European Parliament President criticises Ukraine, Belarus”](#), RFE/RL, 19 Jan. 2012.

➡ **Moldova** Foreign ministry lodged formal protest with Russian ambassador, demanded Moscow agree to transform Transdniestria peacekeeping mission to civil one with international mandate, after Russian peacekeeping soldier 1 Jan shot dead Moldovan man at checkpoint in separatist region. Moldovan, Transdniestrian, Russian representatives met 12 Jan to discuss tensions at checkpoints; issue reportedly to be discussed at Feb session of international talks aimed at resolving Transdniestria conflict. Constitutional Court annulled unsuccessful Dec parliamentary vote for new president. Thousands demonstrated in Chisinau 22 Jan demanding fresh elections, improved living standards, after govt announced referendum to change constitution to make it easier to elect president.

- [“Transnistria elects new leader for an old problem”](#), SE Times, 10 Jan. 2012.

Western Europe/Mediterranean

➡ **Cyprus** Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaders met 4, 9 Jan ahead of 22-24 Jan trilateral summit with UNSG Ban. UN envoy Downer 4 Jan said UN aiming to secure agreement on core issues, particularly governance and power-sharing, property, citizenship, at meeting with Ban; said failure would prompt UN to “rethink the process”. In 4 Jan letters to leaders Ban voiced concerns talks had hit “an impasse”. Turkey reiterated plans to seek international recognition for breakaway Turkish Cypriot state in north if no solution. After summit Ban 25 Jan announced limited progress, said possible multilateral conference to convene in April/May after envoy Downer assesses situation in March.

- [“Another ‘now or never’ saga at Cyprus talks”](#), SE Times, 26 Jan. 2012.

➡ **Northern Ireland** Dissident republicans blamed for 2 bombs exploded in Londonderry 19 Jan; no injuries.

- [“Dissidents blamed for twin blasts”](#), *Belfast Telegraph*, 20 Jan. 2012.

➡ **Turkey** Former chief of staff Gen Ilker Başbuğ arrested 6 Jan in connection with ongoing coup-plot case; public prosecutor 10 Jan accused opposition Republican People’s Party’s (CHP) leader Kılıçdaroğlu of “attempting to influence fair trial”, asked his parliamentary immunity be removed. 2 militants killed in 1 Jan raid on PKK Diyarbakir hideout; PKK blamed for 19 Jan Hakkari bombing that killed 1, wounded 28, but denied involvement. Over 40 detained 11 Jan in Kurdish Communities Union (KCK) investigation in southeast, Istanbul. 20 detained 13 Jan in 16 provinces during raid, including pro-Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) offices, home of Kurdish deputy Leyla Zana; 31 suspects arrested 17 Jan, including former BDP deputy. BDP 27 Jan petitioned ICC to investigate Jan air strikes that killed 35. Man sentenced 17 Jan to life in prison for 2007 murder of Armenian newspaper editor Hrant Dink; outcry after court dismissed allegations that an organisation was behind it, possibly linked to state entities, led to 19 Jan demonstration of 30,000 in Istanbul. FM Davutoğlu during early Jan Iran visit reiterated that NATO missile shield stationed in Turkey for defensive purposes only; announced 30 Jan will not bar Iranian oil imports unless UN sanctions imposed. Relations with France deteriorated after French Senate 23 Jan adopted bill criminalising denial of Armenian genocide; French politicians 31 Jan moved to rule law unconstitutional.

- [“French ‘genocide’ law infuriates Turkey”](#), Al Jazeera, 25 Jan. 2012.

Latin America/Caribbean

➡ **Bolivia** President Morales 23 Jan named 9 new ministers; 3 Jan appointed 56 judges, elected in Oct 2011 national ballot, to form country’s 4 highest courts. 4 killed 11 Jan in clashes between police and Yapacaní residents demanding mayor’s resignation. Protest march by supporters of highway construction, cancelled last Oct following widespread protest, through TIPNIS national park indigenous territory reached La Paz 30 Jan, clashed with police.

- [“4 muertos en enfrentamiento por Alcaldía de Yapacaní”](#), *Los Tiempos*, 12 Jan. 2012.

➡ **Colombia** Urabeños illegal armed group leader Juan de Dios Úsuga killed 1 Jan by police; group retaliated by imposing “armed blockade”, paralysing trade, transportation in 6 departments, offered rewards for killing of police. FARC leader “Timochenko” 9 Jan proposed reviving failed peace talks agenda; President Santos 10 Jan rejected idea, claimed FARC not yet shown commitment to peace. In video published 25 Jan, FARC commander Iván Márquez named 3 military, police captives to be released along with another 3, identified 27 Dec, proposed constitutional change to allow swap for jailed guerrillas; govt rejected proposal. Suspected FARC attacks in Norte de Santander 13 Jan killed 3, govt announced increased military presence in Catatumbo border region; guerrillas 13 Jan bombed seat of former peace talks in Caguán, injuring 2. Law regulating compensation of some 4 million victims of Colombia’s armed conflict took effect 2 Jan.

- [“Gobierno cierra la puerta a propuestas de las Farc”](#), *La Semana*, 25 Jan. 2012.

➡ **Ecuador** Final court appeal of El Universal newspaper, accused of defamation by President Correa, began 13 Jan; National Court of Justice suspended hearing 24 Jan following judge illness, said new panel of judges would be appointed. Protests against free speech restrictions continued. After Dec criticism of lack of press freedom by Inter-American Human Rights Commission Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression, Ecuador, Venezuela initiated proposal to weaken Rapporteur’s role; adopted in OAS session 25 Jan.

- [“Court suspends hearing in Ecuador presidential libel case”](#), CNN, 24 Jan. 2012.

➡ **Guatemala** Guatemalan judge 26 Jan ruled ex-military leader Efraín Ríos Montt to stand trial for genocide, crimes against humanity following 14 Jan expiration of his Congressional term granting immunity; prosecutors argued Gen. Montt had full knowledge, command of army operations resulting in the killing of over 1,700 Mayan villagers suspected of harbouring leftist guerrillas 1982-83.

- [“Guatemala ex-leader Rios Montt to face genocide charge”](#), BBC, 27 Jan. 2012.

➡ **Haiti** President Martelly 1 Jan announced resumption of reconstitution of army; French FM Juppé 27 Jan said France ready to help build new security force to combat smuggling, secure borders; concerns over potential negative impact on development of Haitian National Police (HNP) remained unaddressed. Discord between executive and legislative continued over elections, formation of Electoral Council, publication of constitutional amendments, outstanding judicial appointments. Rare anti-Martelly protest 9 Jan demanded govt pay 36 months’ worth of public sector salary arrears, called for removal of president on grounds he holds other nationalities. Following 19 Jan installation of Supreme Court vice-president Jules Cantave, govt announced plans to swear in Superior Judiciary Council (CSPJ) Feb 2012. 7 HNP officers jailed 20 Jan over killing of at least 10 prisoners in aftermath of 2010 earthquake. Martelly 26 Jan announced possible decision to pardon Duvalier in interest of national reconciliation; judge announced 30 Jan Duvalier to face trial for corruption, not human rights violations.

- Comment by Bernice Robertson, [“Haiti’s winner-take-all politics hinders recovery”](#), *Miami Herald*, 9 Jan. 2012.
- [“Haitian Leader Could Pardon Duvalier”](#), AP, 27 Jan. 2012.

➡ **Mexico** Govt released statistics showing 12,000 drug-related killings in 2011, 11% increase from 2010. Authorities continued to target alleged kingpins, including leaders of Sinaloa, La Familia cartels; 16 Jan arrested Raymundo Mateo Cruz, reportedly in charge of cocaine distribution in Mexico State; 23 Jan killed Luis Alberto Cabrera Sarabia, high-ranking aide to most-wanted drug dealer El Chapo. 5 police killed 26 Jan near Mexico City; 9 killed in drug-related violence in Monterrey 26 Jan; 13 bodies dumped 9 Jan in Zitacuaro.

- [“Mexico drug violence killed 12,000 in 2011: reports”](#), AFP, 2 Jan. 2012.

➡ **Venezuela** President Chávez restructured cabinet, appointed Henry Rangel Silva as defence minister, Diosdado Cabello as National Assembly president; changes seen as part of electoral strategy to regain links with regions under opposition control, strengthen control over armed forces. Colombian magazine *Semana* 14 Jan denounced links between Defence Minister Silva and FARC leader “Timochenko”, sparking debate on Venezuela-FARC ties; President Chávez denied allegations. Chávez 9 Jan met Iranian counterpart, signed new political/industrial agreements. Venezuelan Prisons Observatory 20 Jan said number of prison deaths spiked to 560 in 2011, nearly 1,500 inmates injured in prison violence. Opposition pre-candidate Leopoldo López 24 Jan withdrew from Feb primaries, announced support for Henrique Capriles.

- [“Venezuela’s Leopoldo Lopez pulls out of election race”](#), BBC, 25 Jan. 2012.

Middle East/North Africa

Eastern Mediterranean

➡ **Israel/Occupied Palestinian Territories** PA threatened strong diplomatic response if Israel failed to demonstrate serious commitment to talks by 26 Jan following lack of progress in Jan meetings; Palestinian PM Abbas 28 Jan said Israel foiled talks, failed to present “clear vision” of borders, security; Israeli PM Netanyahu 29 Jan expressed hope for continuation of talks. EU-Israeli tension increased by 3 reports critical of Israeli policy on settlements, East Jerusalem; British Deputy PM Clegg 16 Jan called settlements “deliberate vandalism”. UNSG Ban 13 Jan said Israeli incursions into Lebanese airspace violate state sovereignty, discredit UNIFIL; 15 Jan said settlement building hinders two-state solution. PLC speaker Aziz Dweik arrested 19 Jan; PA 22 Jan demanded release of Palestinian legislators. Hamas 21 Jan announced leader Meshal to step down after 16 years. 2 Palestinians killed 18 Jan by IDF; 5 extremist settlers charged 7 Jan with organising 13 Dec attack on West Bank army base.

- [“Toddling to talks about talks”](#), *Economist*, 21 Jan. 2012.

➡ **Lebanon** Political quarrel over Syria continued; PM Mikati 28 Jan said his policy is “disassociation” with Syria; March 14 coalition urged support of uprising, endorsed Syrian National Council (SNC) call for “new page” in Lebanon-Syria relations; Defence Minister Ghosn widely criticised for Dec claim al-Qaeda militants infiltrating Lebanon posing as Syrian opposition activists; parliamentary Future bloc and March 14 allies accused Ghosn of serving Syrian regime. Druze leader Jumblatt 17 Jan criticised Assad, expressed

concern about possible Syria civil war. Hizbollah rejected UNSG Ban 13 Jan call to disarm.

- [“Controversy over Al-Qaeda presence rages on”](#), *Daily Star*, 4 Jan. 2012.

➡ **Syria** UNSC in debate 31 Jan failed to agree on resolution calling on Assad to step down, talks continue. Russian FM Sergei Lavrov 18 Jan stated Russia would reject sanctions, use UNSC veto to block any proposals for military intervention; Britain, France, U.S. 24 Jan condemned Russia’s sales of weapons to Syria. Gulf Arab states 24 Jan withdrew observers after gov’t rejected plan for President Assad to surrender power; Arab League 24 Jan requested meeting with UNSG Ban to discuss crisis, demand UNSC support. Arab League 28 Jan announced withdrawal of observers due to increased violence; FM Muallem 24 Jan accused Arab League of plotting to internationalise crisis. Despite continued violent crackdown on anti-gov’t protests, wide-scale demonstrations in support of Free Syrian Army continued throughout Jan. Damascus suicide bombs 6 Jan killed 25; explosions in Idlib province 21 Jan killed at least 14; at least 37 reported killed by security forces 27 Jan; 17 dead found 28 Jan on streets, allegedly killed by gov’t forces; at least 33 killed in attack by gov’t forces in Rankous, north of Damascus. Activists 30 Jan claimed over 100 dead, mostly in Homs.

- Comment by Peter Harling, [“Collectively failing Syrian society”](#), *Foreign Policy*, 24 Jan. 2012.
- [“Is Syria descending into civil war?”](#), Al Jazeera, 30 Jan. 2012.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Middle East Briefing N°31, [Uncharted Waters: Thinking Through Syria’s Dynamics](#), 24 Nov. 2011.

GULF

➡ **Bahrain** Clashes continued despite King Hamad 15 Jan constitutional reform proposal. Human rights activist Nabeel Rajab beaten, briefly detained following 6 Jan march in Manama; hundreds protested arrest; U.S. urged gov’t to undertake full investigation. Bahraini Shiite found dead at Amwai islands 14 Jan, opposition alleged he died in custody despite autopsy reporting death by drowning; security forces 21 Jan fired tear gas to disperse mourners marching after authorities refused to authorise earlier funeral march. Police 18 Jan reportedly violently dispersed protesters holding banned demonstration in Manama; 30 Jan reportedly fired tear gas on hunger strikers in prison protesting their detention for 2011 pro-democracy protests. Court of Cassation 9 Jan overturned appeals court ruling sentencing 2 anti-gov’t protesters to execution. Civil court 9 Jan began hearing for 20 medical staff convicted of taking part in crimes against the state during 2011 anti-gov’t protests. Trial of 2 policemen accused of torturing to death two Shiites detained following mid-March 2011 crackdown on pro-democracy protests began 11 Jan. Interior Minister Sheikh Rashid bin Abdullah al-Khalifa 29 Jan called for tougher penalties against attacks on security forces.

- [“Factbox: Key political risks to watch in Bahrain”](#), Reuters, 19 Jan. 2012.

➡ **Iran** Month saw increased tensions with West, as IAEA and Iranian officials 9 Jan confirmed Iran producing 20% enriched uranium at Fordo plant near Qom, prompting new Western sanctions. Tehran 3 Jan warned U.S. aircraft carrier USS Stennis should not return to Persian Gulf; Iranian nuclear scientist Ahmadi Roshan killed in 11 Jan car bomb attack blamed by Tehran on U.S. and Israeli intelligence services; Tehran court 9 Jan sentenced U.S.-Iranian man

to death for spying for CIA. U.S. warned Iran's threat to close Strait of Hormuz would provoke U.S. response; U.S., UK, France 22 Jan deployed aircraft carrier and 6 warships through Hormuz. Tehran indicated willingness to return to nuclear talks, called on U.S. to negotiate "without conditions". EU FMs 23 Jan agreed to impose embargo on Iranian oil exports, freeze central bank assets, starting 1 July; Iran threatened to pre-empt embargo by halting exports to Europe immediately. FM Salehi 18 Jan warned countries in region not to put themselves in "dangerous position" after Saudi Arabia expressed willingness to increase oil output in light of sanctions. IAEA conducted inspection visit 29-31 Jan; IAEA, Tehran described talks as positive, IAEA planning another visit in near future.

- "Iran, U.N. end 'constructive' nuclear talks; U.S. says still chance for diplomacy", Al-Arabiya, 1 Feb. 2012.

➡ **Iraq** Iraqiya ministers, MPs 29 Jan ended parliament and council of ministers boycott over Dec arrest warrant for VP Tariq Al-Hashimi. Iraqiya-linked Diyala deputy governor Ghadban al-Khazraji arrested 21 Jan; Iraqiya leader Allawi 18 Jan accused PM Maliki of using security services to torture opposition. UNHCHR Pillay 24 Jan called for immediate moratorium on death penalty following 19 Jan execution of 34 people for terrorism-related offences. 5, 14 Jan bomb attack on Shiite pilgrims in south killed over 100; gunmen disguised as police 15 Jan attacked police compound in Ramadi killing 9. Bomb 1 Feb targeted Iraqi MP Qais al-Shadhr's convoy in Baghdad, wounding five.

- Comment by Joost Hiltermann, "Iraq and the Pretense of Control", *European*, 12 Jan. 2012.
- "Rising strife threatens tenuous Iraqi stability", *New York Times*, 22 Jan. 2012.

➡ **Jordan** Deaths of 2 people after self-immolation early Jan sparked demonstrations in Amman 13 Jan calling for economic reforms; participants attacked by counter-protesters. Hamas leader Khaled Meshal met with King Abdullah 29 Jan during first official visit since 1999 expulsion from country.

- "Hesitant Arab Syria response leaving Jordan with 'few good options'", *Jordan Times*, 22 Jan. 2012.

➡ **Saudi Arabia** Security forces 12 Jan killed 1 Shiite, injured 3, in Awamiya, Eastern Province, while subduing protest calling for release of political prisoners, end of anti-Shiite discrimination. Killing provoked further protest 13 Jan; rights groups called for independent investigation. Trial began 7 Jan of 16 suspected al-Qaeda members accused of killing policeman, plotting attacks on officials and weapons facilities.

- "Saudi Arabia urged to investigate Shi'a protester death", Amnesty International, 13 Jan. 2012.

➡ **Yemen** Parliament 21 Jan approved controversial legislation granting President Saleh blanket immunity, giving aides immunity for "politically motivated" crimes committed in course of official duties; thousands protested legislation, demanded accountability for killing of demonstrators. Saleh 22 Jan traveled to U.S. for medical treatment, reportedly will return in Feb for swearing-in of elected president. FM Abubakr al-Qirbi 17 Jan said security concerns may delay Feb presidential election: clash between govt forces and Islamist group Ansar al-Sharia in Zinjibar 3 Jan left 7 dead, army 21 Jan killed 10 Ansar al-Sharia members; 6 killed, 10 wounded mid-Jan by security forces in Aden city. Islamist militants 14 Jan seized Radda; 4 militants, including local al-Qaeda leader,

1 soldier killed in clash 21 Jan; militants left 25 Jan in exchange for formation of council to govern town, release of several jailed comrades. Information minister Ali Ahmed al-Amrani survived 31 Jan assassination attempt. Same day, air raids in south killed some 15 fighters alleged to have al-Qaeda links. World Bank 23 Jan lifted funding freeze, established March 2011 in response to turmoil.

- "Yemen's Saleh leaves for U.S., opponents protest", Reuters, 22 Jan 2012.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Middle East Report N°114, *Breaking Point? Yemen's Southern Question*, 20 Oct. 2011.

NORTH AFRICA

➡ **Algeria** Police 10 Jan violently dispersed demonstrators protesting unemployment, housing shortages in Laghouat, southern Algeria; at least 10 injured, 40 arrested. Main opposition parties 4 Jan demanded President Bouteflika remove PM Ahmed Ouyahia, appoint interim cabinet of technocrats to ensure credible parliamentary elections later this year. Court 24 Jan sentenced in absentia fugitive AQIM leader Mokhtar Belmokhtar and 3 others to death for May 2010 attacks on military; court 2 Jan sentenced Abdelhamid Abou Zeid, senior AQIM leader, to life in prison. Illizi region governor Mohamed Khelfi freed 18 Jan by Libyan militia after 16 Jan kidnapping while mediating protests in Debdeb settlement on Libyan border. Govt 26 Jan said oil exports will not be increased in light of new EU oil sanctions on Iran.

- "Algeria parties demand new PM to oversee election", Reuters, 4 Jan. 2012.

➡ **Egypt** Islamist parties secured 73% of assembly seats following first post-Mubarak parliamentary elections held 21 Jan; president due to be elected by June. Freedom and Justice Party leader Mohamed Saad al-Katatni elected 23 Jan as speaker of People's Assembly. Military 24 Jan partially lifted decades-old emergency law, released roughly 3,000 prisoners ahead of 25 Jan 1st anniversary of start of revolt that toppled President Hosni Mubarak's regime. Tensions with U.S. after travel ban on 10 Americans, Europeans as part of criminal investigation into foreign-funded democracy groups. Clashes between authorities and Bedouin continued throughout month; Bedouin 11 Jan clashed with army near Suez in attempt to reclaim land, 24 Jan stormed Sinai tourist resort demanding 4m Egyptian pounds to leave. Radioactive material reportedly stolen 19 Jan when Dabaa residents broke into unfinished nuclear plant, blowing up buildings, including what is believed is the reactor.

- "Scoreboard: Egypt since the revolution", Al Jazeera, 24 Jan. 2012.

➡ **Libya** Public discontent with NTC increased further, often due to continued presence of Qadhafi-era officials. NTC Behghazi office stormed 21 Jan by armed protesters, interim President Abdul Jalil attacked. Former Qadhafi insider and current NTC deputy head Abdulhafid Ghogha resigned following attack 19 Jan at university in Benghazi. Turf wars continued throughout month: 4 killed 3 Jan in clash between rival armed groups in Tripoli; at least 2 killed, 36 wounded 14-16 Jan in battle between militias from northwestern Gharyan and al-Asabia towns. NTC supporters 23 Jan forced out of Bani Walid by local uprising. NTC 2 Jan published draft electoral law without regulations for political parties, effectively forcing candidates to run as independents; rejected 14 Jan by 12 moderate Islamist parties. President Abdul Jalil 7 Jan met with Sudanese counterpart, discussed militia disarmament.

- Comment by William Lawrence, "Les défis sécuritaires de l'après Kadhafi", *Le Figaro*, 5 Jan. 2012.
- "Why are Libyans protesting again?", Al Jazeera, 23 Jan. 2012.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Middle East/North Africa Report N°115, *Holding Libya Together: Security Challenges after Qadhafi*, 14 Dec. 2011.



Mauritania AQIM 13 Jan claimed responsibility for 20 Dec kidnapping of gendarme near Mali border; activists launched campaign demanding his release. Following spate of attacks by Tuareg rebels in Mali 17-18 Jan, ministers from Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Algeria 24 Jan met in Nouakchott to discuss increasing Sahel region violence. Scores of Malian refugees crossed border fleeing 26 Jan clashes (see Mali).

- "Mauritania rallies behind kidnapped gendarme", Magharebia, 12 Jan. 2012.



Morocco New cabinet sworn in 3 Jan under Justice and Development Party's (PJD) PM Abdellali Benkirane; King's appointment as royal advisers of childhood friends, outgoing ministers criticised as parallel cabinet. Pro-reform and anti-corruption protests throughout month. Unemployed graduate protest in Taza 4 Jan repressed, dozens injured; 5 unemployed graduates 18 Jan attempted self-immolation after police obstructed delivery of food to 4-day sit-in in Rabat; 1 died. Feb 20 Movement (M20F) rapper Mouad Belghouat found guilty 12 Jan of assaulting royalist activist.

- "Repression undercuts reform pledges", Human Rights Watch, 22 Jan. 2012.



Tunisia First anniversary of revolution celebrated 14 Jan but economic and security conditions continued to deteriorate, with increasing economic conflicts and widespread protests in the countryside throughout Jan. 6 day strike 13 Jan in mountain town of Makhtar inspired further protests; Tunisian General Labour Union (UGTT) 25 Jan staged nationwide strike, protesters in northwest 17 Jan blocked national road to demand higher wages. Students at Manouba University, Tunis, 17-24 Jan staged hunger strike, sit in,

to protest ban on niqab in exams. Over 8,000 marched in Tunis 28 Jan against Islamist extremism.

- "Tunisia one year on: New trend of self-immolations", BBC, 12 Jan. 2012.

Advocacy Offices

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

Field Offices

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

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