

1 November 2005, N°27

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 more than 110 staff members across five continents, who already report on some 50 of the situations listed here. Comments and suggestions can be sent to crisiswatch@crisisgroup.org.

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November 2005 Watchlist



Conflict Risk Alert

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Conflict Resolution Opportunity

None

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Africa

CENTRAL AFRICA

- ↳ Burundi Attacks against civilians by rebel National Liberation Forces denounced by human rights group. Government appointed new officials to demobilisation commission and announced preparation of new list of paramilitary youths to be demobilised after protests in Bujumbura by former combatants. UN mission to initiate preparatory talks with government on post-conflict Truth Commission.

 - ["Iteka denounces rights violations"](#), IRIN, 21 Oct. 2005.
 - ["17 rebels killed in Burundi fighting"](#), CNN (AP), 2 Oct. 2005.
 - For background, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°31, ["Elections in Burundi: A Radical Shake-Up of the Political Landscape"](#), 25 Aug. 2005.

- ↳ Central African Republic Refugees continued to flee fighting in northern CAR to Chad; UNHCR reported 11,000 since June. Economic Community of Central Africa States deployed 100 troops to northeast to fight banditry. Civil servants went on strike over non-payment of 2005 salary arrears, cause of past instability.


 - ["Civil servants begin eight-day strike"](#), IRIN, 19 Oct. 2005.
 - ["Hundreds more refugees flee fighting in Central African Republic"](#), UNHCR News, 4 Oct. 2005.

- ↳ Chad Dozens of soldiers deserted posts in capital 14 October, fled to east, called for President Deby's resignation and release of political prisoners; Deby dissolved Republican Guard in response. Transparency International named Chad world's most corrupt country.

 - ["Aid workers return to camps despite breakdown in talks with deserters"](#), IRIN 25 Oct. 2005.

- ↳ Democratic Republic of Congo UN Security Council extended MONUC mandate to September 2006, authorising only 300 of 2,580 additional peacekeepers sought by UNSG Annan. Over 18 million (60% of electorate) registered for series of elections starting with December constitutional referendum. Ugandan Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rebels, who entered DRC September, fled to Sudan after Congolese troops sent to disarm them; DRC rejected Ugandan calls for joint operation against any remaining LRA. Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and DRC called for sanctions against armed groups in eastern Congo and disarmament using "all necessary means"; UN-Congo operation launched in Virunga National Park to flush out rebels. 500 militiamen in Ituri handed over weapons 25 October. In Kivus, dissident Rwandan rebel group "Rasta" killed 24; Mai Mai militia captured but later released 43 local disarmament officers; refugees in Tanzania began returning despite insecurity. UN investigated clashes between gangs of diamond thieves in south that killed 13.

 - Comment by John Prendergast (Crisis Group), ["Ripples of Rwanda's genocide still rock the eastern Congo"](#), *The Globe and Mail*, 26 Oct. 2005.
 - ["Kinshasa rejects Kampala's proposal to redeploy troops"](#), IRIN, 21 Oct. 2005.
 - For background, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°25, ["The Congo: Solving the FDLR Problem Once and for All"](#), 12 May 2005.

Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°34, [A Congo Action Plan](#), 19 October 2005. 

The DR Congo will likely relapse into mass violence unless Congolese parties and the international community take urgent measures. Reunification has been plagued by government corruption and mismanagement, failed security sector reform, the ongoing threat of the Rwandan Hutu insurgency FDLR in eastern Congo, and a weak UN peacekeeping mission not adequately protecting civilians. This Action Plan lays out a comprehensive and urgent set of actions to save the peace process and produce a successful transition to elected government by June 2006. These include: preparing for and carrying out free and fair elections; curbing state corruption; creating an integrated national army and police force; and resolving the FDLR problem.

- ↳ Republic of Congo Clashes between security forces and former "Ninja" rebels killed at least 9 in Brazzaville's Bacongo district. Fighting coincided with, but not connected to, visit by exiled former PM Bernard Kolelas.

 - ["Calm returns to Brazzaville"](#), AlertNet, 21 Oct. 2005.
 - ["Congo Ninjas ousted from capital"](#), BBC, 20 Oct. 2005.

- ↳ Rwanda Trial of late President Habyarimana's brother-in-law began at international tribunal, meanwhile alleged mastermind of 1994 genocide, Colonel Bagesora, started his defence. Despite international calls for due process in treatment of refugees, agreement reached with Burundi to repatriate, for second time in 2005, over 3,000 Rwandans seeking asylum in Burundi.

 - ["Ex-president's ally tried for genocide"](#), CNN (AP), 3 Oct. 2005.
 - ["Congo: Deal with the FDLR Threat Now"](#), Crisis Group Statement, 14 Sept. 2005.



- ↳ Tanzania Ruling Chama Cha Mapinduzi party declared winner of Zanzibar 30 October parliamentary elections; won 27 seats while opposition Civic United Front won 19. Polls marred by sporadic violence, alleged rigging and opposition intimidation; violence increased pre- and post election. Presidential poll postponed due to death of Chadema party's vice-presidential candidate.

 - ["Zanzibar's electoral commission declares ruling party winner"](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 1 Nov. 2005.
 - ["Zanzibar police arrest 24 after violence"](#), ABC News (AP), 10 Oct. 2005.


- ↳ Uganda International Criminal Court issued first arrest warrants for 5 leaders of rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). Commander-in-chief Joseph Kony indicted on 33 counts of crimes against humanity and war crimes. UNSG Annan warned Uganda not to enter DRC to disarm LRA; DRC refused Ugandan call mid-month for joint operation, as LRA fled to Sudan. Khartoum granted Uganda unprecedented permission to attack LRA anywhere in southern Sudan. Relief agencies curtailed operations after LRA killed 25, including 2 aid workers and 2 de-miners. Ugandan army killed LRA commander after attacks in northeast.

 - ["Relief agencies cut back operations following suspected rebel attacks"](#), IRIN, 28 Oct. 2005.
 - ["When peace and justice clash..."](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 14 Oct. 2005.
 - For background see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°23, ["Shock Therapy for Northern Uganda's Peace Process"](#), 11 Apr. 2005.


HORN OF AFRICA

  Ethiopia/Eritrea Serious risk of return to conflict led to calls for urgent international action. Eritrea banned UN monitoring mission (UNMEE) from conducting helicopter flights, night patrols and restricted movement to main roads, in move to pressure Ethiopia to accept 2002 Boundary Commission ruling. UNMEE announced withdrawal of peacekeepers from 18 of 40 monitoring posts, as ban limited ability to police border. In Ethiopia, parliament voted to lift immunity of opposition MPs who boycotted first session since disputed May polls; police later arrested over 50 opposition supporters and MPs in separate incidents.


- [“Backing the favourite”](#), *The Economist*, 27 Oct. 2005.
- [“Ethiopia on verge of political crisis”](#), ISN, 27 Oct. 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°68, [Ethiopia and Eritrea: War or Peace?](#), 24 Sept. 2003.

 Somalia UN envoy met President Yusuf in attempt to end internal government tensions. UN Security Council condemned increased arms embargo violations, following monitoring team report. General insecurity continued: unidentified assailants killed Somali army colonel who helped train Yusuf's militia; at least 30 killed in fighting over grazing land in south; local UN security officer shot dead in Lower Juba region. Somali MP Qeybdid arrested in Sweden on suspicion of war crimes. Pirates released World Food Programme (WFP) ship after 100-day siege; hijacked 4 more, including second WFP vessel; later released 2.

- [“UN official, Somali president meet over impasse”](#), AlertNet, 25 Oct. 2005.
- [“Pirates hijack ship off Somalia”](#), BBC, 21 Oct. 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°95, [Counter-Terrorism in Somalia: Losing Hearts and Minds?](#), 11 July 2005.

 Somaliland (Somalia) Ruling Union of Democrats won 33 of 82 seats in September elections; opposition parties “Kulmiye” and “Justice and Welfare” won 28 and 21 respectively, agreed to respect results. International observers confirmed elections generally free and fair.

- [“Ruling party wins Somaliland parliamentary polls”](#), IRIN, 17 Oct. 2005.

 Sudan Rebel disunity, growing violence and deteriorating Sudan-AU relations marred sixth round of AU-mediated Darfur talks; next round due 20 November. Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) president refused to attend conference to resolve internal splits. Darfur security severely deteriorated: UN Security Council condemned deaths of 4 AU peacekeepers and 2 contractors in SLA ambush; breakaway faction of rebel Justice and Equality Movement kidnapped but later released 38 AU workers; 34 aid workers taken hostage by refugees 25 October but later freed in Kalma camp; SLA-Sudanese army clashes killed 5 civilians North Darfur. UN to evacuate non-essential staff in response to violence. South Sudan formed autonomous government 22 October, including wife of late SPLM rebel leader John Garang.

- [“Darfur rebels’ unity talks falter”](#), BBC, 29 Oct. 2005.
- [“Sudan, rebels wrap up round of peace talks”](#), CNN (AP), 20 Oct. 2005.
- [“Chaos spreads in embattled Darfur”](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 19 Oct. 2005.


Crisis Group Africa Report N°99, [The EU/AU Partnership in Darfur: Not Yet a Winning Combination](#), 25 October 2005. The security situation in Darfur will continue to worsen and the political process remain stalemated unless the African Union Mission in Sudan is armed with more troops, given a more robust mandate and assured new funding. Darfur, where at least 200,000 have died and two million have been displaced, is a litmus test for the EU and the AU as they take on larger political roles in Africa and beyond. The young AU deserves some praise for tackling the crisis, but the EU/AU partners and the international community as a whole must do much more and take a tougher stand for these efforts to bear fruit. This report is the first in a series examining strengths and weaknesses of the EU's growing crisis response capability and more ambitious conflict prevention policies.




Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°32, [Unifying Darfur's Rebels: A Prerequisite for Peace](#), 6 October 2005. The Abuja peace talks will fail and Darfur's conflict continue until the main rebel groups stop fighting each other, mend internal divisions and present a unified negotiating front. The chief figures in Sudan Liberation Army/Movement and Justice and Equality Movement must return to Darfur, organise broad-based conferences to resolve leadership disputes, restore command and control and instruct their Abuja delegations. Otherwise, they will be vulnerable to Khartoum's manipulation and become increasingly isolated as they lose legitimacy. The international community should coordinate better so rebel factions cannot play them off against each other; press them to resolve internal problems; and support the conferences each needs to do so. If the rebels continue their descent into banditry and warlordism, the crisis will continue indefinitely, and civilians will pay the costs.



SOUTHERN AFRICA

 Swaziland Previously rejected 2002 Internal Security Act resubmitted to parliament following 30 September Mbabane arson attacks: opponents fear King Mswati III may use bill to stifle dissent. First political party member in 33 years won parliament seat. Government offered “talks about talks” to pro-democracy group protesting constitution.

- [“Govt willing to engage civic societies on new constitution”](#), IRIN, 27 Oct. 2005.
- [“Draconian anti-terrorism bill resubmitted after fire bombings”](#), IRIN, 14 Oct. 2005.

 Zimbabwe Major dispute within opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) over whether to contest or protest 26 November senate elections. Party voted to participate but leader Morgan Tsvangirai sought to overrule; other MDC representatives, led by Secretary General Welshman Ncube, moved to select 26 candidates, with prospect of defection to new “third way” United People's Movement unless agreement to contest election. Allegations of MDC funding from Nigeria, Ghana, Taiwan added to party split; likely to have ramifications on proposed AU intervention. Electoral Court found Zanu-PF used violence and food aid to win votes but upheld March electoral win. High Court nullified evictions under Operation Murambatsvina, giving reprieve to 250 Harare families.

- [“Split over strategy weakens MDC”](#), BBC, 27 Oct. 2005.
- [“MDC in crisis - can the centre hold?”](#), IRIN, 26 Oct. 2005.

- Comment by Lord Patten of Barnes (Crisis Group), [“The Butcher of Harare”](#), *Wall Street Journal Europe*, 12 Oct. 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°97, [Zimbabwe’s Operation Murambatsvina: The Tipping Point?](#), 17 Aug. 2005.

WEST AFRICA

➤ Côte d’Ivoire Month ended with uncertainty and fears of unrest after failure to agree on new Prime Minister. Rebel Forces Nouvelles unilaterally declared leader Guillaume Soro PM end October, President Gbagbo remained in power despite opposition protests demanding his resignation with end of election mandate. UN Security Council extended peace process to October 2006 and endorsed AU recommendation Gbagbo remain in power until elections held, urged appointment of new PM “acceptable to all Ivorian parties” with substantive powers. UN said increased smuggling of cocoa, cotton, diamonds helping fund rebels, and human rights and security situation deteriorating. AU Peace and Security Council to set up International Working Group and Forum for National Dialogue. Human Rights Watch said army recruiting Liberians including child soldiers.

- [“Ivory Coast struggles as ethnic strife spreads”](#), *International Herald Tribune* (NYT), 1 Nov. 2005.
- [“Threats hang heavy over the future”](#), Amnesty International Report, 26 Oct. 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°90, [Côte d’Ivoire: The Worst May Be Yet to Come](#), 24 Mar. 2005.

Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°33, [Côte d’Ivoire: Halfway Measures Will Not Suffice](#), 12 October 2005. Côte d’Ivoire faces disaster unless the UN Security Council strengthens on 13 October the transition plan the African Union Peace and Security Council adopted last week. The UN body needs to reinforce a number of measures to give peace a last chance in a country whose end-of-month elections will not happen and which is poised for new violence. These include: announcing that existing government institutions will be dissolved by 31 October 2006 and that if there has been no presidential election, the Security Council, with the AU, will appoint an entirely new government; extending the mandate of the UN High Representative for Elections and furnishing all resources necessary to organise credible elections; and applying individual sanctions against those blocking the peace process authorised by the UNSC in 2004.



➤ Guinea Army imposed curfew after clashes between Muslim Konianke and Christian Guerze in Nzerekote; 100 arrested. Government set municipal elections for 18 December, first in decade; opposition said would participate. President Conte adopted law for first-ever electoral commission.

- [“Opposition throws hat into ring for local elections”](#), IRIN, 31 Oct. 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°94, [Stopping Guinea’s Slide](#), 14 June 2005.

➤ Guinea-Bissau President Joao Bernardo Vieira sworn in 1 October. Vieira dismissed PM Carlo Gomes Junior 28 October after PM reluctant to recognise Vieira’s presidency.

- [“President sacks prime minister but feud rumbles on”](#), IRIN, 31 Oct. 2005.

➤ Liberia Massive turnout for largely peaceful 11 October presidential vote. With 22 candidates, football legend George Weah received 28.9% of vote; former finance minister Ellen Johnson Sirleaf came second with 19.7%: run-off on 8 November. Accused war criminals amongst likely new parliamentarians. UN mission (UNMIL) warned will “react robustly” against threats to election officials. U.S. circulated draft Security Council resolution authorising UNMIL to apprehend and transfer former President Taylor to Sierra Leone special court if he returns to Liberia; court promised “new mechanism” to prevent Taylor escaping trial by remaining in exile. Demobilised soldiers protested in capital demanding severance pay.

- [“Diverse new parliament spells coalition for whoever ends up president”](#), IRIN, 28 Oct. 2005.
- [“Liberia poll promise new era”](#), BBC, 11 Oct. 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°98, [Liberia’s Elections: Necessary but Not Sufficient](#), 7 Sept. 2005.

➤ Nigeria Separate incidents in Lagos highlighted poor security: trivial dispute between police and soldiers killed 3 civilians, while 2 factions of outlawed militia group Oodua People’s Congress clashed in suburb, killing 3. Government said uncovered 10,000-strong terrorist organisation in Niger Delta region threatening oil flow. Ijaw militant Dokubo-Asari charged with felony and Biafran separatist leader Ralph Uwazuruike arrested. 2-day UN-led bilateral Abuja meeting on Nigeria-Cameroon border dispute failed to set deadline for Nigerian withdrawal from Bakassi peninsula.

- [“Nigeria-Cameroon fail to set new Bakassi pullout date”](#), Reuters, 15 Oct. 2005.
- [“Militia leader charged with treason, risks life imprisonment”](#), IRIN, 6 Oct. 2005.

➤ Sierra Leone Situation improved with repeal of seditious libel law, used to silence media, and continuation of anti-corruption cases, including charges of trafficking in passports. Opposition leader Margai asked president to appoint Political Parties Commission, saying failure to do so impeding party registration. UN announced aid shortfall for special war crimes court threatening 2006 activities. UN called for establishment of human rights panel and program to monitor situation after UNAMSIL departure.

- [“UN rights body calls on government to establish rights panels”](#), ReliefWeb, 24 Oct. 2005.
- [“Sierra Leone still blighted by war”](#), BBC, 17 Oct. 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°87, [Liberia and Sierra Leone: Rebuilding Failed States](#), 8 Dec. 2004.

Asia/Pacific

CENTRAL ASIA

➤ Kazakhstan 5 presidential candidates began campaigns for 4 December elections. Crackdown on opposition: security forces prevented opposition figure from meeting U.S. Sec. State Rice; 2 others found guilty of participating in unsanctioned rally; police raided pro-democracy youth group’s office on suspicion of anti-government activity.

- [“Kazakh opposition faces tough fight”](#), BBC, 25 Oct. 2005.

✚ Kyrgyzstan Prison riots caused political turmoil after MP Tynychbek Akmatbaev, penal authority chief Ikmattulla Polotov and 2 aides killed by inmates while trying to negotiate inside rebellious prison. Inmates took control of jails after pullback by security forces for safety reasons; 18 inmates killed 1 November in renewed unrest. Hundreds demonstrated in Bishkek and Osh, blamed PM Kulov for deaths and called for his resignation. Situation stabilised somewhat at month's end as demonstrators agreed to halt protests until outcome of investigation into deaths, slated 15 November. U.S. Sec. State Rice and President Bakiev reached agreement allowing U.S. to maintain airbase until Afghanistan stabilised.

- "Restive days in Bishkek", RFE/RL, 30 Oct. 2005.
- "Prison riot sparks political row in Kyrgyzstan", IWPR, 22 Oct. 2005.
- "Guards pulled out of Kyrgyz jails", BBC, 21 Oct. 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°97, *Kyrgyzstan: After the Revolution*, 4 May 2005.

✚ Tajikistan Supreme Court sentenced Democratic Party leader Makhmadrouzi Iskandarov to 23 years in jail for terrorism and embezzlement; opposition claimed charges politically motivated. U.S. Sec. State Rice met Tajik President Rahmonov to discuss bilateral cooperation. Russia announced plan to build airbase outside Dushanbe.

- "High-profile conviction seen as major setback for Tajik opposition", IWPR, 15 Oct. 2005.
- "Rice closes Central Asian tour with visit to Tajikistan", RFE/RL, 13 Oct. 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°33, *Tajikistan's Politics: Confrontation or Consolidation?*, 19 May 2004.

✚ Turkmenistan Rubber-stamp parliament rejected President Niyazov's public call for 2009 elections, saying president should remain for life. Niyazov fired 2 governors, 11 district heads for failing to meet cotton production targets; gave 8,000 prisoners amnesty prior to Independence Day celebrations. NGO "Forum 18" reported increased pressure against Islamic religious practice under pretence of combating "Wahhabism".

- "More pressure against Islamic religious practice", Forum 18 News Service, 24 Oct. 2005.
- "Why is Turkmenbashi wielding the axe?", IWPR, 22 Oct. 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°85, *Repression and Regression in Turkmenistan: A New International Strategy*, 4 Nov. 2004.

✚ Uzbekistan Uzbek authorities denied torturing confessions from 15 accused of instigating Andijon events. During trial lone witness testified soldiers shot unarmed demonstrators. EU imposed sanctions over lack of independent inquiry. Government's widespread repression of dissent continued with arrests of opposition leader Sanjar Umarov and rights activist Mu'tabar Tojibaeva. BBC closed Tashkent office after receiving threats. U.S. Sec. State Rice bypassed Uzbekistan during Central Asia tour.

- "One witness's testimony forces courtroom collision", RFE/RL, 23 Oct. 2005.
- "EU orders Uzbekistan sanctions", *International Herald Tribune*, 4 Oct. 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°38, *Uzbekistan: The Andijon Uprising*, 25 May 2005.

SOUTH ASIA

✚ Afghanistan Escalation of attacks and suicide bombings after National Assembly and Provincial Council elections. Final results delayed and somewhat marred by ballot-stuffing and fraud allegations, particularly in Sayyaf-dominated Paghman district and some southern provinces where unlikely turnout rates reported. Afghan Human Rights Commission claimed over 80% of winning candidates in provinces (60% in Kabul) linked to armed groups. Taliban militants increased attacks killing at least 35 Afghan security forces, 1 British and 3 U.S. soldiers, 6 local aid workers, 2 provincial officials and 3 pro-government clerics: Kandahar province particularly targeted by militants. 8 Afghan police mistakenly killed by U.S. troops in separate incidents while 4 suicide blasts between 5-10 October killed at least 10, and wounded 4 UK officials. 4 rockets hit Kabul hours before visit of U.S. Sec. State Rice 12 October. U.S. military practices again under scrutiny as footage of U.S. forces burning bodies of 2 militants shown on Australian television.

- "Afghanistan's elections", *International Herald Tribune* (NYT), 28 Oct. 2005.
- "Open season on winning candidates", IWPR, 28 Oct. 2005.
- "PRTs spreading, though impact remains unclear", RFE/RL, 20 Oct. 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°101, *Afghanistan Elections: Endgame or New Beginning?*, 21 July 2005.

✚ Bangladesh Coordinated bombing campaign continued: blasts at 3 courts outside Dhaka 3 October killed 2, in apparent attempt to intimidate judiciary ahead of trials connected to 17 August attacks. Bomb killed 2 in Satkhira district reportedly to warn against opening shops during Ramadan. Charges filed against leaders of Jammāt-ul-Mujahideen and Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh, suspected of 17 August/3 October blasts. Government banned Harkatul Jihad militant group and arrested leader Mufti Hannan. Bangladesh Nationalist Party top official killed by bomb in southwest 24 October. Dhaka to host regional SAARC summit scheduled for 12/13 November.

- "Bangladesh lay charges against fugitive Islamists", AlertNet, 18 Oct. 2005.
- "Serial blasts in B'desh leave two dead, 40 hurt", *Hindustan Times*, 3 Oct. 2005.

✚ India (non-Kashmir) Significant deterioration throughout month as violence escalated in northeast and terrorist attacks rocked Delhi. 3 coordinated blasts in capital on eve of major Hindu and Muslim festivals killed 59, 29 October; little-known Islami Inqilabi Mahaz (Islamic Revolutionary Group) claimed responsibility. Territorial dispute between rival northeastern separatist groups escalated into full-scale ethnic violence. Civilians targeted in Assam state's Karbi Anglong district: over 86 killed, 30,000 displaced in clashes between Karbi and Dimasā separatist groups. Peace talks between government and separatist United Liberation Front of Assam began 26 October. Communal violence in Uttar Pradesh state triggered by shooting at Hindu religious procession killed 7. Troop numbers to be doubled along Nepal border to prevent infiltration of Maoist insurgents. 13 security personnel killed by blast in Chatra district of Jharkhand state; Communist Party of India-Maoist prime suspects.

- "Who is behind the Delhi bombings?", BBC, 31 Oct. 2005.

- [“Delhi, and the Indo-Pakistani peace process, under attack”](#), *The Economist*, 30 Oct. 2005.
- [“Tribals clash with Army in violence-torn Assam town”](#), *Hindustan Times*, 18 Oct. 2005.

➤ Kashmir Region devastated by 8 October earthquake; over 55,000 killed (36,000 in Pakistan-controlled Kashmir) and 3 million homeless. India and Pakistan agreed to open Line of Control dividing Kashmir from 7 November to allow relief supplies and survivors to cross. Truce called by main Muslim rebel alliance in India-controlled Kashmir, United Jihad Council, but sporadic violence continued. Junior Education Minister of India-controlled Kashmir and 2 bodyguards killed 18 October in Srinagar by Islamic Front militants. Indian and Pakistani FMs signed security cooperation agreement 3 October in Islamabad: includes ballistic missile test notification pledge and hotline between maritime security forces. Agreement also reached to resolve dispute over frontier Siachen glacier in Kashmir within 3 months.

- [“Kashmir deal raises hopes - and fears”](#), BBC, 30 Oct. 2005.
- [“Aftershocks and afterthoughts in Kashmir”](#), *The Economist*, 20 Oct. 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°79, [India/Pakistan Relations and Kashmir: Steps toward Peace](#), 24 June, 2004.

➤ Maldives Top Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) opposition figure, Jennifer Latheef, jailed for 10 years on terror charges linked to 2003 riot. MDP leader Mohamed Nasheed awaiting trial.

- [“Maldives opposition threaten disobedience, strikes”](#), AlertNet, 31 Oct. 2005.

➤ Nepal Government yet to reciprocate Maoist September unilateral ceasefire. Demonstrations and turmoil continued: visiting EU troika concerned Nepal on verge of political collapse. Election Commission set 8 February 2006 for municipal assembly polls; King Gyanendra now promising parliamentary elections by April 2007; Nepali Congress announced boycott, saying free vote impossible under king's regime. Hundreds protested media curbs in Kathmandu. India doubled border guards in response to Maoists' pledge to cooperate with Indian counterparts. UN Human Rights monitors reported violence related to insurgency reduced but abuses on both sides continued.

- [“General strike disrupts normal life, over 80 arrested”](#), Kantipur Online, 28 Oct. 2005.
- [“Rights continue to be violated in Nepal despite Maoist truce”](#), ReliefWeb, 21 Oct. 2005.
- Comment by Rhoderick Chalmers (Crisis Group), [“Nepal on the Brink”](#), *Indian Express*, 12 Oct. 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°41, [Nepal: Beyond Royal Rule](#), 15 Sept. 2005.

Crisis Group Asia Report N°104, [Nepal's Maoists: Their Aims, Structure and Strategy](#), 27 October 2005. Despite the Maoist rebels' brutality and violence, there can be no resolution of Nepal's conflict without understanding them, confronting their strengths and tackling their political agenda. Through both force of arms and force of ideas, they have emerged as a formidable political organisation, which will not be easily displaced. The unilateral three-month ceasefire they announced in September is welcome, though temporary and conditional. Now they will have to work hard to...



...convince mainstream parties they can abandon their violent repression. The government's refusal to reciprocate the ceasefire, however, encourages renewed conflict. There are encouraging signs that serious negotiations are possible, but the Maoists will rejoin mainstream politics only if they see sufficient advantages and are convinced they will not make greater gains by other means.

➤ Pakistan Massive earthquake in north killed 55,000; 18,000 in North West Frontier Province. NATO approved dispatch of medics and hundreds of military engineers to clear roads and help reconstruction. Clashes between militants and security forces continued in North and South Waziristan. Gunmen attacked Ahmadi community in Mandi Bahaudin, Punjab, killing 8. Final phase of local government polls 5 October marred by large-scale rigging; results rejected by opposition parties.

- [“Relief workers plead for more aid”](#), *International Herald Tribune* (AP), 26 Oct. 2005.
- [“Opposition calls for independent EC: NA, Senate to take up motions on polls rigging”](#), *The News*, 8 Oct. 2005.
- Crisis Group Asia Report N°102, [Authoritarianism and Political Party Reform in Pakistan](#), 28 Sept. 2005.

➤ Sri Lanka Norwegian peace envoy said government and Tamil Tigers (LTTE) engaged in “subversive war” threatening ceasefire. Security forces on alert for 17 November presidential polls. Government re-extended state of emergency 18 October that gives security forces powers to arrest suspects without warrants. LTTE said expanded powers could derail proposed peace talks. LTTE reportedly killed soldier and police officer 13/14 October. PM Mahinda Rajapakse launched presidential campaign; rejected LTTE demand for Tamil autonomy.

- [“S.Lanka peace, economy hinge on coalition - ex-PM”](#), AlertNet, 29 Oct. 2005.
- [“EU warns Sri Lanka over elections”](#), BBC, 28 Oct. 2005.

NORTH EAST ASIA

➤ North Korea Chinese President Hu Jintao made first trip to NK ahead of fifth round of 6-party talks due to start in November; Jong-il reportedly pledged his commitment to talks. Diplomatic tensions raised over reported NK request for completion of civilian light-water reactor before disarmament possible. Pyongyang's No. 3 defence official and confidant of leader Kim Jong-il, Yon Hyong-muk, died 23 October; unlikely to herald policy shift.

- [“U.S. envoy says N.Korea nuclear demand inexcusable”](#), AlertNet, 30 Oct. 2005.
- [“China gets N. Korea's pledge on nuclear talks”](#), *Boston Globe*, 31 Oct. 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Report N°100, [Japan and North Korea: Bones of Contention](#), 27 June 2005.

➤ Taiwan Strait Parliamentary negotiations over reduced \$11 billion arms package with U.S. “hijacked” by opposition parties with slim majority in legislature who see deal as overpriced and unnecessary. President Chen Shui-bian hopes to reach compromise after 3 December county elections. Chen called Taiwan “sovereign and independent” 4 October, but made clear will not seek substantive change to status quo before leaving office 2008.

- [“US arms package for Taiwan remains in limbo”](#), Voice of America, 27 Oct. 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°42, [China and Taiwan: Uneasy Détente](#), 21 Sept. 2005.

SOUTH EAST ASIA

- Indonesia 1 October Bali blasts killed 23 and wounded 146; police circulated photos of 3 suicide bombers but produced no leads. Vice President Jusuf Kalla expressed need to monitor particular Islamic boarding schools as part of effort to control extremist ideology. Tensions sharply raised in Poso, Sulawesi, after 3 Christian schoolgirls beheaded 30 October. Indonesian military completed second of 4-phase Aceh pull-out: approximately 12,000 troops and 2,500 police have now left province; in return GAM surrendered 476 weapons. Government disbursed initial payment of \$100 per GAM combatant early October in block sums to local GAM commanders to distribute; precise mechanism to demobilise and assist 3,000 GAM fighters remained uncertain. Establishment of Papuan People’s Council scheduled for 15 October further delayed, prompting interior ministry to announce will press ahead with gubernatorial elections.
- [“Religious leaders call for calm”](#), *Jakarta Post*, 31 Oct. 2005.
 - Comment by Sidney Jones (Crisis Group), [“Terrorism’s toxic strains”](#), *The Age*, 5 Oct. 2005.
 - Comment by Sidney Jones (Crisis Group), [“The lessons from the latest Bali bombings”](#), *The Wall Street Journal*, 4 Oct. 2005.
 - For background, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°40, [Aceh: A New Chance for Peace](#), 15 Aug. 2005.

Crisis Group Asia Report N°103, [Weakening Indonesia’s Mujahidin Networks: Lessons from Maluku and Poso](#), 13 October 2005. In the wake of the latest terrorist attack on Bali, the need to understand Indonesia’s violent jihadist networks is greater than ever. Maluku and Poso, the sites of the worst communal conflicts in the immediate post-Soeharto period, have played central roles in bringing mujahidin from different parts of the country together. Personal networks are at least as relevant as organisational affiliation in determining how teams of operatives get put together for acts of violence. One key to preventing further violence is to weaken the local component of these networks through programs aimed at ex-combatants and imprisoned mujahidin in the conflict areas. Encouraging local mujahidin to find other pursuits will not be a silver bullet to end terrorism, but it could be a first step.

- Myanmar/Burma Continued calls for UN Security Council action as pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi marked 10 years under house arrest 25 October. National Convention to draft new constitution to reconvene 5 December.
- [“Envoy laments West’s approach with Myanmar”](#), *The Guardian*, 29 Oct. 2005.
 - For background, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°34, [Myanmar: Update on HIV/AIDS Policy](#), 16 Dec. 2004.
- Philippines Conflict with Communists intensified after government revoked immunity for National Democratic Front (NDF) peace negotiators: roadside bomb killed 9 on Mindanao, while NDF military wing (NPA) reportedly killed 60 soldiers in Luzon and north and east Mindanao. Breakaway faction of NPA, Revolutionary Party of Workers in Mindanao, signed

ceasefire agreement with government 28 October. Details emerged on “breakthrough” reached between government and Moro Islamic Liberation Front in September talks: government agreed in principle to allow southern Mindanao Muslims to write own charter and have revenue-raising powers; talks ongoing. U.S.-backed hunt for Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) militants continued around Mindanao. ASG-suspected ambush killed 3 on Basilan island 13 October. Ahmad Santos, alleged leader of the Rajah Soliman group with ties to ASG and Jemaah Islamiyah, arrested.

- [“Alleged Rajah Soliman leader, 4 others nabbed in Zambo”](#), *Minda News*, 26 Oct. 2005.
- [“Philippines grants MILF own gov’t, charter”](#), *Philippines Daily Inquirer*, 13 Oct. 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°80, [Southern Philippines Backgrounder: Terrorism and the Peace Process](#), 13 July 2004.

- Thailand Insurgency worsened in south leading to 19 October extension of controversial state of emergency. Violent deaths increased in 3 southern provinces including shooting of 5 soldiers, 2 separate beheadings, and killing of Buddhist monk and 2 teenage helpers in Pattani temple 16 October. Insurgents stole at least 92 guns in 63 coordinated raids on security posts and civilian defence volunteers in 3 provinces 26 October, killing 5. Regional army chief Lt.-General Kwanchat Klaharn sought approval to deploy new special task forces to improve southern security. Diplomatic tensions worsened over insurgency: Thailand accused Malaysia of sheltering rebel suspects, Malaysia charged Thailand with using heavy-handed tactics. PM Shinawatra protested Organization of the Islamic Conference criticism over handling of insurgency and assertion Muslim population had “legitimate demands”.

- [“Seven killed in wave of attacks in Thai Muslim south”](#), *AlertNet*, 27 Oct. 2005.
- [“Southern Strife: Emergency decree gets extended”](#), *The Nation*, 19 Oct. 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°98, [Southern Thailand: Insurgency, Not Jihad](#), 18 May 2005.

Europe

BALKANS

- Albania Tirana Mayor Edi Rama elected new leader of opposition Socialist Party after former PM Nano’s resignation. EU concerned over possible purges of administration after government change. Transparency International indicated Albania most corrupt country in South East Europe.
- [“New SP leader Rama seeks to renew, democratise party”](#), *Southeast European Times*, 13 Oct. 2005.
 - For background, see Crisis Group Europe Report N°153, [Pan-Albanianism: How Big a Threat to Balkan Stability?](#), 25 Feb. 2004.
- Bosnia & Herzegovina Promising steps towards EU integration after months of frustration. Republika Srpska (RS) parliament agreed to establish single police force after issue blocked start of EU Stabilisation and Association Agreement negotiations. NATO applauded BiH Defence Law enabling single military force. Bosnian Serb commission determined more than 17,000 RS security forces directly or indirectly involved in Srebrenica massacre.

Ante Jelavic, ex-member of BiH presidential troika, sentenced to 10 years for corruption by Bosnian court.

- [“Commission backs EU-Bosnia talks”](#), BBC, 21 Oct. 2005.
- Comment by Nicholas Whyte (Crisis Group), [“The lessons of Bosnia, ten years on”](#), *European Voice*, 7 Oct. 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Report N°164, [Bosnia’s Stalled Police Reform: No Progress, No EU](#), 6 Sept. 2005.

➤ Kosovo UN Security Council recommended 24 October that talks to determine Kosovo’s final status should begin “soon”, echoing conclusion of report submitted to SG Annan by Special Envoy Kai Eide 7 October. Report found high-levels of inter-ethnic and organised crime, unemployment and corruption in province. Former Finnish President (and Crisis Group Chairman) Ahtisaari likely to be UN envoy for status process. Kosovo Albanian negotiating team stalled by impasse over Assembly draft independence resolution proposed by opposition PDK party as precondition of participation; coordinator warned of “complete breakdown” in negotiation preparations after second meeting failed. Kosovo Serbs unclear over role in negotiations while Belgrade uncertain who will lead negotiating team. EU foreign policy chief Solana suggested possible EU police role. Hague tribunal relaxed conditions of former PM Haradinaj’s provisional release allowing for limited political activity. UNMIK confirmed new armed group, Kosovo Independence Army, present in west. Bombs planted under 2 UN cars early October. Police arrested dozens of young Albanian activists who sprayed graffiti on 20 UN cars in Pristina 19 October. Police (KPS) car carrying Serb border officers attacked near Strpce, 26 October.

- [“Kosovo moves toward a messy independence”](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 28 Oct. 2005.
- Comment by John Norris (Crisis Group), [“Kosovo: Get it right, now”](#), *Le Monde Diplomatique*, 12 Oct. 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Report N°165, [Bridging Kosovo’s Mitrovica Divide](#), 13 Sept. 2005.

➤ Macedonia UN Special Envoy Nimetz presented new proposal on dispute with Greece over Macedonia’s name: PM Buckovski said good basis for solution; Greece rejected proposal and threatened issue could harm Macedonian entry to EU. Buckovski met NATO and EU officials to discuss accession. 2 police injured by grenade in Albanian neighbourhood of Skopje 10 October.

- [“Macedonia looks to US to lean on Greece”](#), IWPR, 28 Oct. 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°37, [Macedonia: Not out of the Woods Yet](#), 25 Feb. 2005.

➤ Serbia & Montenegro EU opened Stabilisation and Association Agreement negotiations 11 October. Montenegro PM Djukanovic said will not postpone spring independence referendum despite EU pressure, but may amend voting rules. Trial of “Vukovar 3” suspected of war crimes in Croatia started in Hague. U.S. Assistant Sec. State Burns said lack of progress on capture of war crimes suspects Mladic and Karadzic blocking improved relations with U.S., EU and NATO. Serbian war crimes court charged 5 Scorpion paramilitaries for 1995 crimes while Serb police arrested 9 fellow officers over 1999 Kosovo killings. Violence broke out at Serbia-Bosnia football match, injuring 19.

- [“Montenegro PM says no delaying independence vote”](#), AlertNet, 14 Oct. 2005.

- [“US diplomat says to join NATO, Balkan nations must hand over ICTY indictees”](#), Southeast European Times, 12 Oct. 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°39, [Serbia: Spinning its Wheels](#), 23 May 2005.

CAUCASUS

➤ Armenia Referendum on constitutional amendments set for 27 November. Opposition parties urged referendum act as no confidence vote for government. President Kocharian visited Brussels on eve of Action Plan negotiations with EU. Municipal elections held in generally calm atmosphere in 3 stages; ruling coalition member Republicans main winners.

- [“Kocharian presses EU for quicker regional outreach”](#), RFE/RL, 21 Oct. 2005.
- [“Armenia signals further drift to West”](#), EurasiaNet, 18 Oct. 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Report N°158, [Armenia: Internal Instability Ahead](#), 18 Oct. 2004.

➤ Azerbaijan President Aliyev issued 25 October executive order to implement measures urged by OSCE to avoid fraud ahead of 6 November parliamentary polls. Ukraine detained opposition party leader Rasul Guliyev, wanted in Azerbaijan on embezzlement charges, en-route to Baku from 9-year exile; released 20 October. Series of high profile dismissals and arrests after government accusations of plot to overthrow President Aliyev: included Minister for Economic Development Farhad Aliyev and Health Minister Ali Insanov. Police beat and arrested opposition during repeated rallies in Baku. Human Rights Watch said free and fair election hopes “extinguished”.

- [“Azerbaijan poll abuses condemned”](#), BBC, 31 Oct. 2005.
- [“Azerbaijan: Aliev sees off rivals”](#), IWPR, 28 Oct. 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Report N°156, [Azerbaijan: Turning Over a New Leaf?](#), 13 May 2004.

➤ Chechnya (Russia) Chechen rebel forces, directed by deputy leader Shamil Basayev, and local Islamic extremists claimed responsibility for unprecedented attack on southern town of Nalchik in nearby Kabardino-Balkaria republic. Rebels killed 2 pro-Moscow police in Terskoye.

- [“Official says 200 abductions in Chechnya this year”](#), RFE/RL, 31 Oct. 2005.
- [“Chechen rebel Basayev says he directed town raid”](#), Reuters, 17 Oct. 2005.

➤ Georgia Parliament passed resolution setting deadlines for improved performance of Russian peacekeepers in South Ossetia (10 February), and Abkhazia (1 July), threatening their withdrawal thereafter. Russia pulled out of bilateral meeting scheduled 17-18 October. Joint Control Commission for South Ossetia met 24 October in Moscow; Russia and South Ossetia rejected Georgia’s call for inclusion of U.S. and EU. Georgia unveiled new peace plan at 27 October OSCE meeting; U.S. welcomed plan. FM Zourabishvili dismissed 19 October after parliament demanded resignation; thousands of her supporters assembled in Tbilisi: Former National Security Council Secretary Gela Bezhuashvili appointed to post.

- [“Has bloom faded from Rose Revolution?”](#), IWPR, 28 Oct. 2005.
- [“Georgia threatens to end Russian peacekeeping deal”](#), RFE/RL, 11 Oct. 2005.

- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°38, [Georgia-South Ossetia: Refugee Return the Path to Peace](#), 19 April 2005.

- Nagorno-Karabakh (Azerbaijan) Azerbaijan reported soldier killed in skirmish with Armenian forces near Nagorno-Karabakh 3 October, unconfirmed by Armenian military. Population census started 18 October; last conducted in 1989.
 - ["Soldier killed in ethnic Armenian attack"](#), RFE/RL, 10 Oct. 2005.
 - For background, see Crisis Group Europe Report N°166, [Nagorno-Karabakh: Viewing the Conflict from the Ground](#), 14 Sept. 2005.

Crisis Group Europe Report N°167, [Nagorno-Karabakh: A Plan for Peace](#), 11



October 2005. A compromise peace in Nagorno-Karabakh looks possible but significant stumbling blocks remain. The two sides appear close to agreeing on key principles of a peace deal; it is essential that the governments now begin preparing their people for a compromise. Major elements of the proposed settlement package include: withdrawal of Armenia-backed Nagorno-Karabakh forces from the occupied districts of Azerbaijan surrounding the entity; renunciation by Azerbaijan of the use of force to reintegrate the entity; deployment of international peacekeepers; return of displaced persons; and re-opening of trade and communication links. Nagorno-Karabakh's status should ultimately be determined by an internationally sanctioned referendum with the exclusive participation of Karabakh Armenians and Azeris, but only after the above measures have been implemented.

- North Caucasus (Russia) Attacks launched by rebels on police and army buildings in Nalchik, capital of Kabardino-Balkaria, 13 October. Russian counter-operation followed: approx. 90 militants, 35 police, 14 civilians killed. Chechen leadership claimed responsibility, but many fighters reported to be local. Elsewhere violence continued: Russian special forces stormed house 9 October in Makhachkala, Dagestan, killing 5 militants and 2 police; 4 Russian soldiers killed near North Ossetia-Ingushetia border by unknown assailants 26 October.
 - ["Kabardino-Balkaria may face sustained instability"](#), IWPR, 28 Oct. 2005.
 - ["Rebellion creeping through Caucasus"](#), *Los Angeles Times*, 23 Oct. 2005.

EASTERN EUROPE

- Belarus Opposition journalist found dead 18 October after *Narodnaya Volya* newspaper had been refused distribution. Opposition voted to support Alexander Milinkevich as single presidential candidate for 2006 elections. 70 members of independent election monitoring group arrested for unauthorised meeting. Security Service accused West of plotting to overthrow President Lukashenko. Russian Envoy to EU Yastrzhembsky asked EU to stop funding radio broadcasts into Belarus.
 - ["Belarussian KGB warns of Western 'intervention'"](#), AlertNet, 27 Oct. 2005.
 - ["In Belarus, faint hopes for an unlikely event"](#), *International Herald Tribune* (NYT), 17 Oct. 2005.

- Moldova OSCE said unable to monitor Transdniestria parliamentary election in December due to short notice. Government and Transdniestrian region agreed at resumed OSCE-mediated talks to send fact-finding team to prepare for elections. EU signed agreement with Moldova and Ukraine to aid anti-smuggling efforts; 50-strong EU mission to be deployed on border in December. Opposition party leader and 2 members to be investigated for alleged corruption.
 - ["Moldova talks agree to fact-finding mission"](#), AlertNet, 28 Oct. 2005.
 - ["EU launches first 'Neighborhood Policy' border mission in post-Soviet space"](#), RFE/RL, 9 Oct. 2005.
 - For background, see Crisis Group Europe Report N°157, [Moldova: Regional Tensions over Transdniestria](#), 17 June 2004.

- Ukraine President Yushchenko pledged to devolve power to PM and parliament after months of political turmoil. New PM Yekhanurov held first cabinet meeting, visited Brussels to discuss reforms. NATO Sec. Gen. de Hoop Scheffer discussed NATO membership bid. EU signed agreement with Moldova and Ukraine to aid anti-smuggling efforts.
 - ["Orange Revolution turns to rot"](#), *Los Angeles Times*, 23 Oct. 2005.
 - ["Rumsfeld applauds Ukraine's NATO progress"](#), *The Guardian*, 23 Oct. 2005.

WESTERN EUROPE/MEDITERRANEAN

- Basque Country (Spain) Bombs exploded near courts in 4 towns - 3 in Basque country - 28 October; ETA main suspects. ETA indicated willingness to negotiate settlement.
 - ["Bombs explode near courts in 4 Spanish towns"](#), AlertNet, 25 Oct. 2005.
- Cyprus After start of EU membership talks Turkey said would not change stance on Cyprus until "lasting settlement" reached. FM Gul suggested Turkey might ease restrictions on Cyprus, stressing would not mean recognition. EU Parliament President Borrell urged new effort for settlement during visit to both sides of island. Turkish Cypriot President Talat met U.S. Sec. State Rice in Washington 28 October, first time U.S. Sec. State has formally received a Turkish Cypriot leader.
 - ["Rice meets Turkish Cypriot leader"](#), *Voice of America*, 28 Oct. 2005.
 - ["EU chair Britain seeks to mend fences with Cyprus"](#), Reuters, 25 Oct. 2005.

- Northern Ireland (UK) Positive developments continued as splinter Loyalist Volunteer Force (LVF) announced stand-down and end of feud with Ulster Volunteer Force from 31 October; LVF also considered decommissioning. Independent Monitoring Commission concluded IRA observing July peace declaration; power-sharing negotiations with Sinn Fein to reopen if January report equally positive. Former Ulster Defence Association member killed 4 October by rivals; bomb discovered at primary school in Ian Paisley's constituency and west Belfast Orange hall set on fire.
 - ["LVF's short but turbulent history"](#), BBC, 31 Oct. 2005.
 - ["Seventh report of the Independent Monitoring Commission"](#), IMC, 19 Oct. 2005.

- Turkey EU accession talks started 4 October after last-minute Austrian objections overcome and Turkish fears of

implications for potential Cyprus NATO entry allayed. Separatist group PKK ended 6-week unilateral ceasefire. Suspected PKK bomb maker killed in Istanbul shop blast 5 October. Major operation against rebels involving 10,000 troops in southeast: 6 soldiers, 5 PKK rebels and 3 Maoist rebels (MKP-HKO) killed; further clashes killed 4 in Sirnak. PM Erdogan demanded U.S. measures against PKK in northern Iraq suggesting possible Turkish steps otherwise. Ankara adopted new state security measures and military defined terrorism as number 1 threat.

- [“Turkey’s Western ways”](#), *Washington Times*, 28 Oct. 2005.
- [“Turkey sentences Armenian writer”](#), BBC, 7 Oct. 2005.



Latin America / Caribbean

⏪ Bolivia Political uncertainty increased after electoral commission suspended December elections amid tensions over redistribution of parliamentary seats. Parliamentary groups and regional leaders met 31 October to try to resolve crisis; Presidential candidate Morales threatened protests if solution not found quickly.

- [“Bolivia seeks way out of crisis”](#), *Prensa Latina*, 31 Oct. 2005.
- [“Bolivia row forces election delay”](#), BBC, 29 Oct. 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Latin America Report N°12, [Coca, Drugs and Social Protest in Bolivia and Peru](#), 3 Mar. 2005.

⏪ Colombia Constitutional court approved lifting ban on presidential term limits. President Uribe awaiting further November ruling before able to run again. AUC paramilitaries suspended demobilisation amid American calls for imprisoned leader Don Berna’s extradition to U.S. Head of Administrative Security Department quit due to allegations agency infiltrated by AUC. FARC imposed armed blockade from 3 October in oil-rich Arauca department; intense FARC-paramilitary fighting over control of cocaine in west killed more than 20. Security forces killed 11 rebels in southeast, seized \$188 million worth of FARC’s cocaine and 135kg explosives; Colombian/U.S. authorities shut down major drug trafficking and money laundering operation in Bogotá.

- [“Colombia ousts secret police chiefs”](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 28 Oct. 2005.
- [“AUC disarmament talks may be derailed, again”](#), ISN, 14 Oct. 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Latin America Report N°14, [Colombia: Presidential Politics and Peace Prospects](#), 16 June 2005.

⏪ Ecuador President Alfredo Palacio, attempting to bypass Congress, asked election authorities to approve referendum for constitutional assembly to amend constitution; Congress requested Organisation of American States intervene. Ex-President Gutierrez renounced asylum granted by Colombia; returned to Ecuador and arrested.

- [“Ecuador evaluates referendum call”](#), CNN, 18 Oct. 2005.
- [“Ecuador ex-president under arrest”](#), BBC, 15 Oct. 2005.

⏪ Haiti Presidential and parliamentary elections postponed for third time. New date mid-December doubtful: over 3 million registered but preparations inadequate. UN Security Council called for vetting corrupt officers and human rights violators in Haitian police. Interim government

controversially decided Supreme Court cannot overrule election officials.

- [“UN presses for Haiti’s elections”](#), BBC, 18 Oct. 2005.
- [“Number of voters registered in Haiti passes 3 million, UN says”](#), UN News, 7 Oct. 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Latin America/Caribbean Briefing N°8, [Can Haiti Hold Elections in 2005?](#), 3 Aug. 2005.

⏪ Venezuela President Chavez repeated claims had intelligence showing U.S. plans to invade Venezuela for control of oil; accused evangelist group of spying for U.S. Ecuadorian intelligence alleged leftist rebels from 7 Latin American countries received guerrilla training in Venezuela in 2005 from backers of Chavez.

- [“Report alleges rebels trained in Venezuela”](#), *Miami Herald*, 23 Oct. 2005.
- [“Chavez warns U.S. against invasion”](#), CNN, 20 Oct. 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Latin America Briefing N°5, [Venezuela: Headed Toward Civil War?](#), 10 May 2004.



Middle East / North Africa

EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

⏪ Israel/occupied Territories Israeli-Palestinian relations deteriorated. Israel re-imposed restrictions on Palestinians travelling through West Bank, temporarily suspended security contacts with Palestinian Authority after Al-Aqsa Martyrs’ Brigade killed 3 Jewish settlers. Quartet special envoy James Wolfensohn stated Israel reluctant to loosen control over Gaza Strip; Israel denied foot-dragging and reached agreement in principle with Egypt to re-open Gaza-Egypt crossing with EU monitors. 10,000 Palestinians attended burial of senior Islamic Jihad leader Luay Saadi 25 October, killed by Israeli forces amid escalating violence in Gaza. Israel’s “rolling operation” to wipe out militants, announced after 5 killed in Islamic Jihad suicide bomb in Hadera, left 12 Palestinians dead, 23 arrested. U.S. President Bush met Palestinian leader Abbas, publicly distanced himself from 2004 pledge to sponsor creation of Palestinian state by 2009. Israel withdrew opposition to Hamas participation in January’s Palestinian elections.

- [“Palestinians: Israelis target militant car”](#), CNN, 28 Oct. 2005.
- [“Islamic Jihad pledges new attacks after Israelis kill 2”](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 24 Oct. 2005.
- [“Israel’s Mofaz says West Bank road ban temporary”](#), AlertNet, 20 Oct. 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Middle East Report N°44, [The Jerusalem Powder Keg](#), 2 Aug. 2005.

⏪ Lebanon Head of UN commission Detlev Mehlis presented report into killing of former PM Rafik Hariri 21 October, implicating top-ranking Syrian security officials and their Lebanese allies. Police arrested 5 in connection to Hariri’s death. Mehlis commission’s mandate extended to December 2005. Rise of tensions between Lebanese armed forces and pro-Syrian Palestinian fighters outside refugee camps; PM Siniora met with Palestinian leader Abbas in Paris, called for closure of Palestinian military bases and regulation of fighters inside refugee camps.

- [“Lebanon arrest after Hariri probe”](#), BBC, 23 Oct. 2005.
- [“Beirut wants Palestinian bases out”](#), *Christian Science Monitor*, 20 Oct. 2005.

- For background, see Crisis Group Middle East Report N°39, *Syria After Lebanon, Lebanon After Syria*, 12 April 2005.

☐ Syria Long-awaited UN interim report on assassination of former Lebanese PM Rafik Hariri published 21 October, implicating top-ranked Syrian and Lebanese security officials, including members of ruling Assad family, and faulting Damascus on lack of cooperation. Syria strongly denied accusations. UN Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 31 October demanding Syria cooperate fully with investigation or face "further action". Thousands participated in government-sponsored protests 24 October. Earlier in month, Interior Minister and former Syrian intelligence chief in Lebanon Ghazi Kanaan reportedly committed suicide.

- "U.N. vote demands Syria cooperation", CNN, 31 Oct. 2005.
- "America should test who's in charge in Damascus", *International Herald Tribune*, 28 Oct. 2005.
- "Syrian minister 'commits suicide'", BBC, 12 Oct. 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Middle East Report N° 24, *Syria Under Bashar (II): Domestic Policy Challenges*, 11 Feb. 2004.

GULF

☐ Bahrain Positive steps as main Shiite political organisation, Al-Wefaq, considered ending 4-year boycott of parliamentary elections. Move prompted split, with hard-liners resigning party posts and promising continued opposition to government.

- "Bahrain opposition suffers setback; constitution board members quit", *Khaleej Times*, 27 Oct. 2005.
- "Boycott group taps poll mood", *Gulf Daily News*, 27 Oct. 2005.

☐ Iran President Ahmadi-Nejad received widespread international condemnation, including UN Security Council statement, for saying Israel should be "wiped off the map"; prompted U.S./UK call for tougher international stance. Ahmadi-Nejad previously announced Iran will "produce and sell" nuclear fuel. Russian FM Lavrov affirmed Iran's right to produce peaceful nuclear energy after U.S. Sec. State Rice failed to secure Russian support for referral to UNSC for possible sanctions: Lavrov reaffirmed Moscow's intention to continue helping Iran build Bushehr nuclear reactor. IAEA to meet late November to determine next steps. UK officials denied claims of British involvement in 2 bomb attacks near border with Iraq 15 October that killed 4.

- "Blair condemns Iran on terrorism and Israel", *International Herald Tribune* (NYT), 28 Oct. 2005.
- "Conservatives and reformers speak of coalitions", RFE/RL, 21 Oct. 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Middle East Briefing N°18, *Iran: What Does Ahmadi-Nejad's Victory Mean?*, 4 Aug. 2005.

☐ Iraq Divisive constitution adopted, threatening worsening of continued severe sectarian violence. Constitution approved in 15 October referendum after Sunni Arab opponents mustered two-thirds majority in 2, but not the necessary 3, provinces. 3 main Sunni parties set up Iraqi Accord Front coalition to contest December general election; main Shiite and Kurdish parties also agreed on own coalitions leading to likely voting on ethnic and sectarian lines. Violence escalated after largely peaceful vote: 2 suicide attacks in predominantly Kurdish northeastern city of Sulaymaniyah 25 October killed at least 9, while 31 October car bomb in Basra killed over 20. U.S. air strikes on 2 villages near Ramadi in west killed about 70

militants according to U.S. military, although eyewitnesses claimed many dead were civilians. U.S. Operation Iron Fist underway near northwest city of Qaim resulted in deaths of at least 29 militants. Trial of Saddam Hussein began 19 October charged with crimes against humanity, postponed until 28 November. U.S. military casualties particularly high in month with 92 deaths. 1,594 Coalition soldiers, including 1,477 Americans, and thousands of Iraqis killed by hostile fire since declared end of combat 1 May 2003.

- "Iraq's main Shiite parties agree to run together as electoral bloc", *International Herald Tribune*, 28 Oct. 2005.
- "Now for the hard part", *The Economist*, 26 Oct. 2005.
- Crisis Group Middle East Briefing N°19, *Unmaking Iraq: A Constitutional Process Gone Awry*, 26 Sept. 2005.

☐ Saudi Arabia King Abdullah named Prince Bandar, former Saudi ambassador to U.S., as Secretary-General of new National Security Council. NSC to have wide-ranging powers to protect Saudi Arabia's political, economic, military, security and social interests.

- "Saudi king vows to crush al-Qaeda", BBC, 14 Oct. 2005.
- Crisis Group Middle East Report N°45, *The Shiite Question in Saudi Arabia*, 19 Sept. 2005.

☐ Yemen Suspected Islamist militants killed 12 policemen in northwest ambush 31 October.

- "Twelve policemen killed in Yemen ambush", Middle East Online, 31 Oct. 2005.

NORTH AFRICA

☐ Algeria Violence killed over 60 civilians, government forces and militants, despite September referendum approving national reconciliation pact. Army confiscated 6,000 weapons from Islamist militants. Tensions resumed with Morocco following accusations of Algerian involvement in smuggling illegal immigrants through its territory.

- "Algerian forces kill 9 suspects", *Khaleej Times* (AP), 30 Oct. 2005.
- "Morocco, Algeria accusations over illegal African immigration", *Arabic News*, 18 Oct. 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Middle East/North Africa Report N°29, *Islamism, Violence and Reform in Algeria: Turning the Page*, 30 July 2004.

☐ Egypt Campaigns underway for parliamentary elections with first round of voting 8 November; ruling National Democratic Party to replace up to third of incumbent MPs to promote younger people; members of banned Muslim Brotherhood to stand as independent candidates. 3 killed in riot outside Christian church protesting play accused of offending Islam. Egypt started building security fence around Sharm al-Sheikh resort after July bombings.

- "Egypt holds 100 suspected rioters", BBC, 23 Oct. 2005.
- "Did Mubarak foe get too close for comfort?", *International Herald Tribune*, 20 Oct. 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Middle East/North Africa Briefings N°s 12 and 13, *Islamism in North Africa: Legacies of History and Egypt's Opportunity*, 20 April 2004.

Crisis Group Middle East/North Africa Report N°46, *Reforming Egypt: In Search of a Strategy*, 4 October 2005. Egypt's first multi-candidate presidential election in September, which only confirmed the domination of President Mubarak's National Democratic Party (NDP), was a false start but reform is coming, and Mubarak and the NDP should understand that the best thing they can do is ensure it happens smoothly and peacefully. Further reforms should aim to recast state/NDP relations and enhance parliament's powers. Mubarak should ensure November's legislative elections are free and fair. The U.S. and others can help by not pressing for quick, cosmetic results. In the longer term, reform is not only possible, it is inevitable, but it must be an Egyptian process to be accepted as legitimate.



- Mauritania Military junta issued electoral calendar outlining transition to democracy over 2006-2007, held "democratic transformation" conference. 2 new parties formed - Movement for Direct Democracy and Renewed Democratic Party.
 - "New junta puts tentative election schedule to the people", IRIN, 21 Oct. 2005.
 - For background, see Crisis Group Middle East/North Africa Report N°41, *Islamism in North Africa IV: The Islamist Challenge in Mauritania: Threat or Scapegoat?*, 11 May 2005.

- Western Sahara UN Special Envoy Peter van Walsum met separatist Polisario Front leaders and Moroccan king in first visit to region; concluded nearly impossible to find globally acceptable solution. Security Council extended UN mission for 6-months. 1 killed as anti-Moroccan protesters clashed with police in Laayoun. 32 Western Saharan prisoners resumed hunger strike, protesting treatment by Moroccan authorities.
 - "Saharan youth dies in anti-Moroccan protest", AlertNet, 31 Oct. 2005.
 - "Africans expelled from Morocco located in Western Sahara by Polisario Front", *Daily Star* (AFP), 15 Oct. 2005.



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