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## February 2012 Trends



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## CrisisWatch

- summarises briefly developments during the previous month in some 70 situations of current or potential conflict, listed alphabetically by region, providing references and links to more detailed information sources (all references mentioned are hyperlinked in the electronic version of this bulletin);
- assesses whether the overall situation in each case has, during the previous month, significantly deteriorated, significantly improved, or on balance remained more or less unchanged;
- alerts readers to situations where, in the coming month, there is a particular risk of new or significantly escalated conflict, or a particular conflict resolution opportunity (noting that in some instances there may in fact be both); and

- summarises Crisis Group's reports and briefing papers that have been published in the last month.

*CrisisWatch* is compiled by Crisis Group's Brussels Research Unit, drawing on multiple sources including the resources of our some 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](mailto:crisiswatch@crisisgroup.org).

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## Africa

### Central Africa

➡ **Burundi** Prominent anti-graft activist Faustin Ndikumana arrested 7 Feb after denouncing corruption in magistrates' recruitment process; freed 21 Feb after 10 Burundian civil society groups 14 Feb called for release. EU ambassador 17 Feb expressed concern over human rights violations, said extrajudicial executions "intolerable", situation remains "disturbing". 2 opposition politicians released 17, 28 Feb. Appeal court 10 Feb deferred to beginning of March decision on defence petition suggesting judges not impartial in trial of 23, including journalist, charged with terrorism, connection to FRD rebel group.

- ["Burundi arrests prominent corruption activist"](#), Reuters, 8 Feb. 2012.

➡ **Cameroon** Opposition, civil society groups 14 Feb called for dissolution of national elections body (ELECAM) over reported lack of credibility, 'absolute subordination' to President Biya. Cameroon-Nigeria border remained sealed over fear Boko Haram using northern parts of Cameroon as rear base.

- ["Elecam: vers le renforcement des pouvoirs du conseil électoral"](#), Quotidien Mutations, 23 Feb. 2012.

➡ **Central African Republic** Amid dire humanitarian fallout, sporadic skirmishes, retaliatory raids continue centre-north after late-Jan offensive by joint CAR-Chad forces against Chadian rebel group Popular Front for Recovery (FPR). Baba Laddé, FPR leader, still at large. Rebel Popular Army for the Restoration of Democracy (APRD) leader and DDR steering committee vice-president Jean-Jacques Demafouth, charged 15 Feb with attempting to destabilise state, remains in prison.

- ["Chad rebels threaten to advance on N'Djamena"](#), AFP, 14 Feb. 2012.

➡ **Chad** Supreme Court 22 Feb confirmed ruling Patriotic Salvation Movement victory in 19 of 43 constituencies in 22 Jan local elections; opposition CPDC coalition alleged fraud.

- ["Chad opposition cries foul"](#), Independent Online, 7 Feb. 2012.

➡ **Democratic Republic of Congo** CENI 2 Feb released official election results: ruling coalition took 260 of 500 seats but Kabila's DDRP party won only 63, down from 111; opposition coalition won 110 seats, 41 of which won by Tshisekedi's UDPS; 17 seats unfilled pending Supreme Court ruling after allegations of fraud. UNSRSG Meece 8 Feb said elections marred by "numerous problems", expressed concern over security situation. Key presidential aide killed 12 Feb in plane crash sparking fears of power struggle within Kabila inner circle. Police 16 Feb fired tear gas to disperse Christian groups in Kinshasa protesting Nov 2011 election results; groups 17 Feb said 3 priests, 2 nuns jailed.

- ["While march in Kinshasa is banned, analysts fear for Congo"](#), VOA, 16 Feb. 2011.

➡ **Rwanda** High Court 16 Feb announced creation of international crimes chamber to try extradited suspects. Trial of Leon Mugesera, charged with planning, inciting genocide and recently deported from Canada, delayed 2 Feb to 2 April. Supreme Court 24 Feb confirmed life sentence for PDP-Imanzi party leader Deo Mushyayidi for links with rebel FDLR; party said trial politically motivated.

Rwandan diplomat expelled 8 Feb from Sweden, accused of "spying" on political refugees.

- ["Sweden expels a Rwandan diplomat for spying on political refugees"](#), Jambonews, 16 Feb. 2012.

### Horn of Africa

➡ **Eritrea** Opposition Eritrean People's Democratic Party (EPDP) official Mohammed Ali Ibrahim reported missing in Kassala, eastern Sudan; EPDP 17 Feb alleged Ibrahim abducted by Asmara security agents; Khartoum suspected of complicity. Govt 23 Feb criticised "foreign meddling" in Somalia, called for "Somali people-owned" dialogue.

- ["Eritrea denounces foreign meddling in Somalia"](#), AFP, 20 Feb. 2012.

➡ **Ethiopia** Rebel Ogaden National Liberation Front 16 Feb accused army of killing 16 civilians in 12 Feb attack in Gunagado district, Degahbur, SE Ogaden region. Over 100 killed 28-29 Feb in clan battle in Raas village, Somali Regional State. Survival International 23 Feb accused govt of committing "flagrant and violent" human rights abuses in Omo Valley, stealing tribal land. Senior opposition Unity for Democracy and Justice official Andualem Aragie beaten by violent cellmate mid-Feb; former president Gidada appealed to Human Rights Commission to provide protection for opposition leaders held on terrorism charges, 27 Feb said Aragie in urgent need of medical attention. Five UN Special Rapporteurs 2 Feb criticised use of anti-terrorism legislation to stifle free speech, prosecute journalists and opposition. Troops in Somalia 21 Feb gained control of Yurkud, strategic town in Gedo region, 22 Feb took al-Shabaab stronghold of Baidoa.

- ["Ethiopian rebel group says army kills 16 civilians in Ogaden"](#), Bloomberg, 16 Feb. 2012.

➡ **Kenya** Operations against al-Shabaab in Somalia continued throughout Feb: army 11 Feb claimed it had cut off 75% of al-Shabaab revenue; 4 Feb said al-Shabaab lost control of 2 key towns 1-2 Feb. Police 18 Feb said al-Shabaab suspected of killing at least 30 Kenyan civilians since start of operations in Somalia, dozens of Kenyan youth recruited and operating in Kenya; 6 Kenyan suspected al-Shabaab members arrested 23 Feb entering Kenya near Kiunga. Security forces 29 Feb arrested at least 10 youths following 28 Feb landmine blast that killed policeman, injured 8 in Mandera. Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission 10 Feb requested principals dissolve coalition govt in Oct to allow for Dec elections; Cabinet 16 Feb ruled out 2012 polls. UNOCHA 7 Feb said tens of thousands displaced from northern Moyale region by clashes between Borana and Gabra pastoralists, majority crossed into Ethiopia; Ethiopian Oromo Liberation Front suspected of involvement.

- ["Kenya has lost 10 soldiers in Somalia offensive"](#), AFP, 18 Feb. 2012.

**New** Crisis Group Africa Report N°184, [The Kenyan Military Intervention in Somalia](#), 15 Feb. 2012. As Kenya advances into southern Somalia, it must act cautiously and avoid prolonged "occupation", lest it turn local opinion against the operation and galvanise opposition Al-Shabaab can co-opt, much as happened to Ethiopia in 2006-2009.

➡ **Somalia** Al-Shabaab 9 Feb announced merger with al-Qaeda; Transitional Federal Govt (TFG) 13 Feb called for lifting of UN arms embargo. Puntland Galaga militants 26 Feb declared al-Qaeda

allegiance. UNSG Ban, representatives of over 50 govts including UK PM Cameron and U.S. Sec of State Clinton, Somali leaders 23 Feb met in London to discuss conflict; agreed on need for greater coordination, establishment of joint financial management board and local stability fund to support sub-national administrations. UNSC 22 Feb agreed to authorise AMISOM troop increase to 17,731. 5 reported killed, 6 injured 27 Feb in bomb blast at Mogadishu football match; 9 soldiers, 4 al-Shabaab militants killed 28 Feb in heavy fighting in Lower Juba region. Puntland administration 13 Feb announced key al-Shabaab explosives expert captured in Golis Mountains; at least 6 senior al-Shabaab commanders and al-Qaeda-linked foreign operatives reportedly killed in 24 Feb airstrikes, southern Somalia; senior al-Qaeda leader killed 27 Feb in Mogadishu. TFG President, presidents of breakaway Galmudug, Puntland regions and pro-govt Ahlu Sunna militia leader 18 Feb signed accord on nature of parliamentary system to replace TFG.

- "Nervously, world powers eye greater Somalia action", Reuters, 24 Feb. 2012.

**New** Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°87, *Somalia: An Opportunity that Should Not Be Missed*, 22 Feb. 2012. If the international community can agree on but a few core policies, there is the best chance in years to foster peace in Somalia.

➡ **Somaliland** Fighters from newly declared Khaatumo state in disputed Ayn region 8 Feb clashed with army near Buhodle border town, 3 soldiers, 6 Khaatumo fighters killed, thousands of civilians displaced. 2 journalists arrested 20 Feb in ongoing media crackdown. Former president and opposition United People's Democratic Party leader Riyale returned 16 Feb from Paris, where resident since loss in 2010 presidential polls, rejected 23 Feb London Conference; 18 Feb criticised govt offensive in Buhodle. Police 19 Feb arrested 2 reporters for Ogaal newspaper; 21 Feb arrested journalist Mohamed Abdirahman.

- "Somaliland clashes with secessionists", Reuters, 10 Feb. 2012.

➡ **South Sudan** Tensions with Sudan continued throughout month: Secretary General of SPLM 13 Feb said Khartoum had seized another 2.4mn barrels of southern oil; govt 15 Feb threatened permanent closure of oil pipeline to Sudan Red Sea port following failed 6 day AU-mediated talks, further talks scheduled for 24 Feb delayed to 6 March. Juba 17 Feb warned Chinese companies operating in South faced expulsion if found complicit in Khartoum's oil "theft"; 21 Feb expelled head of Chinese Petrodar oil company for "non cooperation". Juba 17 Feb introduced set of austerity measures to counteract loss of revenue due to oil production shutdown. Govt 14 Feb accused Sudan of bombing disputed Jau town 11 Feb, after non-aggression pact signed in Ethiopia 10 Feb. Senior UN Humanitarian Affairs official Valerie Amos early Feb visited Jonglei, expressed concern over ongoing internal violence; 37 killed 3 Feb when armed men opened fire at mediation meeting in Unity state; Dinka Bor youth 8 Feb reportedly attacked Murle community in Manyibol, Pibor county, killing 9 and injuring 11. Mid-Feb 3-day peace conference bringing together communities along Sudan-S Sudan border, including nomadic Missiriya and Dinka Malual, called for international assistance resolving border disputes; UN SRSG for S Sudan and UNMISS head Hilde Johnson called on warring ethnic groups to find peaceful solutions. Govt 28 Feb announced ceasefire, peace agreement with former George Athor rebels.

- "Sudan oil talks end with recriminations, large rift", VOA, 15 Feb. 2012.

➡ **Sudan** President Bashir 3 Feb said tensions with S Sudan over oil could lead to war; mid-Feb AU mediated talks collapsed, further talks scheduled for 24 Feb delayed to 6 March. UN, Arab League (AL) and AU early Feb submitted joint proposal for humanitarian access in S Kordofan and Blue Nile states to Khartoum; UNSC 14 Feb called upon govt to allow immediate humanitarian access, urged renewed talks between SPLM-N and govt. SPLM-N 26 Feb announced capture of disputed state of Jau from Sudan Armed Forces (SAF), 150 SAF soldiers killed; Khartoum alleged SPLA involvement, threatened retaliation. SPLM-N rebels 7 Feb released 29 Chinese workers kidnapped Jan in S Kordofan. Rebel alliance Sudanese Revolutionary Front 20 Feb elected SPLM-N leader Malik Agar as alliance president. UNSC 17 Feb extended mandate of Panel of Experts tasked with monitoring sanctions for another year citing continued violence, individuals impeding Darfur peace process; 1 peacekeeper killed, 3 injured 29 Feb in ambush by gunmen, Darfur. President Bashir 8 Feb formally launched Darfur Regional Authority. Police 17 Feb raided University of Khartoum dormitories, arrested hundreds of students, reportedly charged with inciting unrest.

- Comment by Zach Vertin, "Le conflit au Soudan, grand oublié de l'UA", Jeune Afrique, 8 Feb. 2012.
- "Sudan's rebels elect Malik Agar leader of their alliance", Sudan Tribune, 21 Feb. 2012.

➡ **Uganda** Opposition leader Kizza Besigye and senior Forum for Democratic Change party leaders injured 21 Feb when police dispersed Kampala rally with tear gas. At least 1 killed 16 Feb when govt troops evicted estimated 6,000 people living on nature reserve; evictees claim govt attempting to sell ancestral land to foreign developers. Govt early Feb signed 2 controversial oil production agreements with Tullow Oil, despite Oct 2011 Parliament resolution preventing new oil contracts before necessary laws put in place; opposition condemned move. 2 cabinet ministers 16 Feb resigned following corruption allegations.

- "Ugandan opposition leader injured as police disperse", Reuters, 21 Feb. 2012.

## Southern Africa

➡ **Madagascar** President Rajoelina faced resistance as members of govt, including PM Beriziky, judiciary early Feb reportedly privately called for his resignation amidst growing pressure to implement SADC elections roadmap. Govt missed 29 Feb SADC deadline to adopt amnesty law allowing ousted President Ravalomanana's return. Police 6 Feb raided home of Ravalomanana's son, suspected of drugs and arms trafficking; First Lady Lalao Ravalomanana denied return from South Africa 2 days earlier under Transport ministry ban.

- "Southern African leaders intervene to ease tensions", Southern African News Features, 7 Feb. 2012.

➡ **Malawi** Outspoken presidential critic, former Attorney General Ralph Kasambara 11 Feb called for President Mutharika's resignation; jailed 13 Feb with 5 supporters, accused of kidnapping, torturing 3 men, released 15 Feb on bail, re-arrested 16 Feb. Kasambara said case politically motivated. State-run Anti-Corruption Bureau 17, 20-21 Feb interrogated 3 lawyers who worked on Kasambara bail application.



- [“Human rights lawyer jailed after calling on Malawi president to resign”](#), *Guardian*, 16 Feb. 2012.

➡ **Zimbabwe** Constitutional Select Committee 9 Feb finished constitution draft; recriminations erupted 13 Feb over age clause barring President Mugabe from another term, clause dropped 22 Feb; Mugabe 19 Feb said elections will “definitely” be called in 2012, 21 Feb vowed to stay in power. Govt 14 Feb suspended 29 NGOs in Masvingo province for not renewing annual registration; Media Commission 2 Feb announced it would seek to ban unregistered foreign newspapers that ignored calls to “regularize” status. National Constitutional Assembly 7 Feb said new constitution and equal media access to politicians are election prerequisites. EU 17 Feb renewed arms embargo and govt-to-govt development aid freeze on a 6-month basis, demanded political reforms and prospects for credible elections. 51 individuals and 20 companies removed from restrictive measure lists that authorised visa bans, asset freezes; 2 cabinet ministers on list given special permission to travel to Europe on business involving political, economic “re-engagement”.

- [“European Union eases targeted sanctions”](#), SW Radio Africa, 17 Feb. 2012.

**New** Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°86, [Zimbabwe's Sanctions Standoff](#), 6 Feb. 2012. A bold approach to the sanctions issue is necessary to refocus efforts on the actions needed to break the political stalemate in Zimbabwe before elections are held that otherwise threaten to be as violent and undemocratic as the 2008 round.

## West Africa

➡ **Côte d'Ivoire** Continued concerns over President Ouattara's lack of control over army (FRCI); at least 3 killed, 20 injured in ethnic clashes between Agni, Malinkés and army members in Arrah 12-13 Feb over continued policing of area by former northern rebels integrated into FRCI; 6 killed in attack by unidentified commandos 21 Feb in western town of Tai. Unknown gunmen 26 Feb shot at Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) convoy near IEC office in Bonon; at least 5 killed. HRW 23 Feb requested 6 month extension of national commission of inquiry investigating 2010-2011 post-election violence. ICC 23 Feb announced extension of temporal mandate to cover crimes committed since 19 Sep 2002.

- [“Côte d'Ivoire: 3 morts dans des violences”](#), AFP, 13 Feb. 2012.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°83, [Côte d'Ivoire: Continuing the Recovery](#), 16 Dec. 2011.

➡ **Guinea** Mediation by David Gomez ended 21 Feb; dialogue between govt and opposition resumed, Minister of Territorial Administration said elections scheduled for May, opposition said it will prevent polls if better guarantees not given. Judges 1 Feb announced indictment of Colonel Moussa Camara for role in Sept 2009 Conakry massacre, 17 Feb initiated prosecution of 50 civilians, soldiers accused of participating in 19 July attack on President Condé's residence.

- [“Major Breakthrough in the case of the Sept. 28 2009 Conakry stadium massacre, with the indictment of a minister in office”](#), FIDH, 21 Feb. 2012.

➡ **Guinea-Bissau** In controversial vote PAIGC 4 Feb named PM Carlos Gomes Júnior as candidate to contest election scheduled 18 March; 13 other candidates announced intention to run, including former President Yalá. EU 17 Feb announced elections observer mission.

- [“Tempestade no PAIGC”](#), *Gazeta de Notícias*, 17 Feb. 2012.
- For latest report, see Group Africa Report N°183, [Beyond Compromises: Reform Prospects in Guinea-Bissau](#), 23 Jan. 2012.

➡ **Liberia** Acting UNSRSG Moustapha Soumare 23 Feb expressed concern over reports of “rebel training” in Grand Gedeh County. Sirleaf-Johnson accused of nepotism following early Feb appointment of sons, relatives to govt.

- [“Confusion looms in CDC- Youth League urges Tubman to resign”](#), Analyst, 23 Feb. 2012.

➡ **Mali** Tuareg rebellion intensified as National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) fighters 7 Feb attacked military outpost in Tinzwaten, 19 Feb attacked Hombori town, leaving 1 dead. Army 10 Feb bombarded rebels in Kidal, 14 Feb bombarded Tessalit; MNLA 29 Feb led assault to take back Tessalit. UN said over 130,000 displaced by rebellion; crisis prompted calls for postponement of presidential election scheduled 29 April. Suspected MNLA alliance with Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb confirmed following summary executions of 95 govt fighters in Aguelhok 24 Jan; MNLA reiterated it has no links with terrorist group. Tuareg/Arab populations in South, Bamako fled throughout month as clashes exacerbated intercommunal tensions. France, Algeria early Feb called for immediate ceasefire, dialogue; MNLA refused.

- [“Rébellion au Mali : pourra-t-on voter à la présidentielle?”](#), *Jeune Afrique*, 23 Feb. 2012.

➡ **Niger** President Issoufou 9 Feb requested increased cooperation with Nigeria, other neighbouring countries in order to prevent ‘synergy’ between Boko Haram and Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb.

- [“Empêcher une “synergie” entre Boko Haram et Aqmi \(président nigérien\)”](#), AFP, 10 Feb. 2012.

➡ **Nigeria** Boko Haram launched series of attacks throughout month in Kaduna, Suleja, Borno, Kano, targeting security personnel, churches. 30 civilians reportedly killed in 20 Feb Boko Haram attack at Maiduguri market, army killed 8 attackers, deactivated bombs. Suspected Boko Haram gunmen 15 Feb stormed Kogi state prison, freeing 119 inmates; over 14 killed in multiple Boko Haram explosions, prison attack in Gombe 25 Feb. At least 2 killed in 26 Feb reprisals following death of 3 in bombing of church HQ, Jos, Plateau. Boko Haram spokesperson Abul Qaqa captured 1 Feb, reportedly revealed sect's foreign backing. Movement for Emancipation of Niger Delta 5 Feb attacked Italian pipeline in region. Despite fierce criticism over party's handing of northern insurgency, ruling People's Democratic Party won 5, 12 Feb elections in northern state of Adamawa, southern state of Bayelsa respectively.

- Comment by Comfort Ero, [“Boko Haram, reflet d'un profond malaise au Nigeria”](#), *Le Figaro*, 22 Feb. 2012.
- [“Nigeria militants tied to government”](#), *Financial Times*, 10 Feb. 2012.


➡ **Senegal** Elections held 26 Feb in relative calm despite weeks of protests calling on President Wade to step down; early tallies suggest likely run-off between Wade and former PM Macky Sall, to be held 18 March. Opposition/civil society group “Movement 23”

said 15 killed, 539 injured in anti-Wade protests since late Jan. Tear gas grenades thrown in Dakar Zawiya Mosque 17 Feb prompted clashes in Tijanyya Sufi Brotherhood 'capital' of Tivaouane. Sporadic Casamance separatist attacks in South continued; 4 soldiers killed, 8 injured 13 Feb in confrontation with MFDC near Sindian; 1 killed, 2 injured 25 Feb in ambush near Kaour.


- ["Présidentielle au Sénégal : à une semaine du scrutin, nouvelles violences à Dakar"](#), *Jeune Afrique*, 20 Feb. 2012.

## Asia


### Central Asia

 **Kazakhstan** Some 1,000 anti-govt protesters 25 Feb staged unsanctioned rally in Almaty calling for political reform; govt detained key opposition leaders. Four more leaders of striking oil workers arrested 17 Feb on charges of inciting social unrest during Janaozen violence; over 100 currently being held. Following Jan arrest of unregistered opposition Algha party leader Vladimir Kozlov over Janaozen violence, further party leaders 7 Feb summoned to face National Security Committee. European Parliament 14 Feb condemned authorities' use of lethal force in Janaozen, called for end to arrests. Opposition politicians and rights activists mid-month announced creation of international committee to defend victims of shootings in Janaozen. Current and former Janaozen mayors Orak Sarbopeyev and Zhalgas Babakhanov both detained during month on suspicion of embezzling state funds. Energy sector strikes over pay and conditions continue in West. Group of suspected religious extremists arrested 4 Feb in NW city Oral. 5 men jailed 5-13 years on terrorism charges in NW city Aqtobe 21 Feb, over July 2011 bombing. Prominent rights activist Yevgeny Zhovtis, jailed in 2009, and opposition activist Yermek Narymbaev, jailed 2010, both granted amnesty 9 Feb.


- ["Unsettled"](#), *Economist*, 5 Feb. 2012.

 **Kyrgyzstan** Former presidential candidates and leaders of 2 nationalist political parties Ata-Jurt and Butun Kyrgyzstan early Feb announced merger to form opposition bloc; with both parties drawing majority of support in south, move raises fears of further regional fragmentation in country. President Atambayev 16 Feb visited Osh, pledged to finalize investigation into June 2010 ethnic violence, fight corruption, enforce teaching of Kyrgyz language in schools. Security forces 10 Feb captured member of Zhayshul Mahdi terrorist group in Bishkek. President Atambaev 23 Feb undertook 3-day visit to Russia, called for closure of Russian Kant airbase over unpaid fees. Continued protests over frequent power outages.

- ["No need for Russian air base says new Kyrgyz President"](#), *RiaNovosti*, 27 Feb. 2012.

 **Tajikistan** Uzbek delegation arrived in Dushanbe 20 Feb for negotiations on delimitation of border with Tajikistan, stalled since 2009. Trial of 34 residents of Isfana region accused of Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan membership began 30 Jan.

- ["Who let the watchdogs out?"](#), *Eurasianet*, 9 Feb. 2012.


 **Turkmenistan** President Berdymukhamedov won 97.14% of votes in 12 Feb election, securing 2nd 5-year term; turnout reported at over 96%.

- ["Turkmen president wins 97 pct of vote in election"](#), *Reuters*, 13 Feb. 2012.

 **Uzbekistan** U.S. suspended ban on providing military assistance to Tashkent, in place since 2003, to allow transit of supplies to forces in Afghanistan.



- ["U.S. ends ban on aid to Uzbekistan"](#), *Wall Street Journal*, 1 Feb. 2012.

### North East Asia

 **North Korea** DPRK 29 Feb agreed to moratorium on nuclear tests, long-range missile launches, to allow nuclear inspectors to visit Yongbyon nuclear complex, U.S. to send food aid. U.S. Ambassador Glyn Davies and DPRK First Vice FM Kim Kye-gwan met 23-24 Feb, discussed food aid, nuclear program; no agreement for further 6-party talks. 20 Feb ROK conducted live-fire military drills from islands near disputed sea boundary with DPRK despite Pyongyang's threat of retaliation. DPRK 16 Feb commemorated Kim Jong-il's 70th birthday. U.S., ROK 27 Feb began Key Resolve joint military exercises; DPRK threatened "sacred war" in response.

- ["No.Ko in first nuke talks since Kim death"](#), *AP*, 23 Feb. 2012.

### South Asia

  **Afghanistan** Scores killed in protests that erupted 21 Feb outside U.S. Bagram Air Base and rapidly spread across country, following report U.S. troops burned dozens of copies of Qu'ran, other religious materials: 2 Afghans killed, 7 NATO troops injured 26 Feb in clash; 4 protesters shot dead by police in Parwan province; 2 killed in Jalalabad and Logar province protests. 2 U.S. soldiers shot dead 23 Feb by Afghan national army soldier who had joined rallies in Nangarhar province; Taliban suicide bomber 27 Feb killed 9 in attack on Jalalabad NATO base. 2 senior U.S. military officers killed 25 Feb inside Afghan Interior Ministry, prompting NATO, UK, France to recall civilian staff from ministries; Taliban claimed responsibility. UN 28 Feb withdrew staff from Kunduz compound, northern Afghanistan, after attack by protesters. NATO/Afghan forces late Jan reportedly killed Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) leader in N Afghanistan responsible for Dec suicide bombing in Taloq, 3 Feb captured IMU/Taliban commander in Helmand. President Karzai 17 Feb met with Iranian and Pakistani counterparts to discuss peace prospects, cooperation on drug trafficking, refugees. U.S. 1 Feb announced plans to end combat mission by end of 2013. UNAMA 4 Feb said 3,021 civilian deaths recorded in 2011, marking record high, attributed increase to change in insurgent tactics, use of IEDs. Taliban office in Quetta 13 Feb confirmed former Defence Minister Akhundzada died in Karachi prison, ending rumours he would lead Qatar negotiations.

- Comment by Candace Rondeaux, ["Obama et le problème des prisonniers en Afghanistan"](#), *Le Figaro*, 10 Feb. 2012.
- Comment by Nick Grono, ["Afghanistan's injustice system"](#), *Foreign Policy*, 1 Feb. 2012.

- [“France and Germany withdraw civilian staff”](#), BBC, 26 Feb. 2012.

➡ **India** Car bomb targeting Israeli embassy in Delhi exploded 13 Feb wounded 4 (see Israel). Police 10 Feb said 4 officers killed in suspected Maoist attack in Orissa state, 11 Feb said Maoists planning major offensive against security forces in Jharkhand state.

- [“Embassy car bombing: India has ‘considerable evidence’ against Iran, says Israel”](#), *Times of India*, 26 Feb. 2012.

➡ **Kashmir** Separatist Hurriyat Conference in protest against police detention called 7 Feb. Opposition National Panthers Party march on legislative assembly intercepted 23 Feb, several arrested.

- [“Kashmir Panther Party protesters arrested”](#), Zee news, 23 Feb. 2012.

➡ **Maldives** President Nasheed 7 Feb resigned following days of protests after late Jan arrest of Chief Justice; police mutinied, refused to disperse crowds. Nasheed 8 Feb alleged police and army figures had forced resignation at gunpoint in coup. 32 seriously injured in clashes between pro-Nasheed protesters and police in Malé 9 Feb. New President Waheed, previously VP, 16 Feb suggested possibility of early elections, called for interim unity govt; Nasheed’s Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) refused to recognise new leader. India’s FM 16, 29 Feb mediated dispute, reportedly won agreement to hold elections in upcoming months. Group including Islamist hardliners 7 Feb broke into Nat’l Museum, destroyed ancient Buddhist relics.

- [“Protests rock Maldives after coup”](#), *Wall Street Journal*, 9 Feb. 2012.

➡ **Nepal** Bomb exploded 27 Feb near govt office in Kathmandu killing at least 3; United Ethnic Liberation Front reportedly claimed responsibility. Govt 3 Feb began releasing, reintegrating 7,365 former Maoist fighters marking progress in peace process; 9 Feb acquiesced to opposition demands to scrap plans to legalise war-time land deals, ending parliamentary deadlock. Communications Minister and leader of Madhesi People’s Rights Forum party 21 Feb convicted of corruption sentenced to 18 months jail.

- [“Deadly Violence Resurfaces in Nepal’s Political Turmoil”](#), *Wall Street Journal*, 28 Feb. 2012.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°131, [Nepal’s Peace Process: The Endgame Nears](#), 13 Dec. 2011.

➡ **Pakistan** Mansoor Ijaz, who late 2011 alleged ambassador to U.S. Haqqani sent memo to U.S. administration requesting help to prevent military coup, 22 Feb testified at commission investigating allegations, said request originated with President Zardari. Supreme Court 13 Feb charged PM Gilani with contempt for refusal to reopen corruption case against Zardari, case delayed to 7 March; 29 Feb reopened inquiry into secret service election fraud after 13 years. Interior Minister Malik said govt would use Interpol to arrest former president Musharraf for assassination of former PM Bhutto. Zardari 16-17 Feb met with Iranian, Afghan counterparts for trilateral talks on mutual cooperation, security; said Pakistan would not assist U.S. if it attacked Iran. PM Gilani 6 Feb arrived in Qatar to discuss Afghan peace process. Hundreds of anti-U.S. protesters demonstrated in Peshawar 24 Feb against Qu’ran burning (see Afghanistan). Govt 24 Feb offered amnesty to Balochistan insurgency leaders in attempt to promote negotiations. U.S. 16 Feb urged govt to limit movement of al-Qaeda-associated Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jamaatud Dawa leader Hafiz Saeed, freeze assets of groups; 2 U.S. drone strikes 16 Feb killed at least 21 suspected militants in North Waziristan. At least 12 killed, dozens

wounded 23 Feb in Peshawar explosion. 18 Shias killed 28 Feb in sectarian attack in Kohistan, north. 7 killed in bomb blast at Awami National Party rally in Nowshera, Khyber. 26 killed 17 Feb by suicide bomber at Shia mosque in Kurram Agency; police later shot dead 3 demonstrators protesting bombing. 17 Taliban, 1 soldier and 3 militiamen killed 17 Feb in clash with army, govt-backed local militia in Khyber district.

- [“Pakistani Prime Minister is indicted on contempt charge”](#), *New York Times*, 13 Feb. 2012.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°216, [Islamic Parties in Pakistan](#), 12 Dec. 2011.

➡ **Sri Lanka** EU 23 Feb criticised Lessons Learned and Reconciliation Commission shortcomings, called for full implementation of recommendations, further action on accountability, following similar position taken by U.S. mid-Feb. U.S.-drafted resolution calling on govt to implement LLRC recommendations, initiate “credible and independent investigations and prosecutions” of those responsible for war crimes presented to HRC session beginning 27 Feb. Army 15 Feb announced appointment of 5-member court of inquiry into war crimes, widely seen as delaying tactic before HRC session. Govt also facing serious domestic pressure: month saw series of strikes over economic hardship by students, bus owners, electricity workers. One fisherman shot dead by police in 15 Feb protest over fuel price hike in Chilaw town; police used tear gas, water cannons to disperse peaceful opposition protests in Colombo. Abductions and enforced disappearances continued: Tamil businessman abducted 11 Feb 2 days before due to appear in court to testify to govt torture, arbitrary detention.

- [“Unslayable ghosts”](#), *Economist*, 25 Feb. 2012.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°217, [Sri Lanka: Women’s Insecurity in the North and East](#), 20 Dec. 2011.

## South East Asia

➡ **Indonesia** Violence continued in lead-up to 9 April Aceh elections with 5, 23 Feb attacks on supporters of gubernatorial candidate Irwandi Yusuf in East Aceh. Ahead of 17 Feb Tolikara district elections in Papua rival political supporters clashed 14-16 Feb, killing at least 6. Rival candidates in Puncak district election dispute charged with inciting violence late Feb after over 6 months of clashes between supporters. Paramilitary policeman killed 7 Feb near Freeport-McMoRan mine, bringing total killed by unidentified gunmen in area to 15 since Oct. Trial of Umar Patek, accused of involvement in 2002 Bali bombings, began 13 Feb. Supreme Court 27 Feb restored radical cleric Abu Bakar Ba’asyir’s terrorism sentence to 15 years after reduced to 9 years on appeal in Oct 2011.

- [“More absentees in 2014 legislative, presidential elections?”](#), *Jakarta Post*, 28 Feb. 2012.

**New** Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°135, [Indonesia: Averting Election Violence in Aceh](#), 29 Feb. 2012. Election monitors should begin deployment to Aceh long before the 9 April election to deter intimidation.

**New** Crisis Group Asia Report N°218, [Indonesia: the Deadly Cost of Poor Policing](#), 16 Feb. 2012. Despite years of investment in community policing, the Indonesian police remain deeply distrusted by the people they are supposed to serve.



**New** Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°133, *Indonesia: Cautious Calm in Ambon*, 13 Feb. 2012. Five months after an outbreak of Christian-Muslim violence in Ambon, the city is outwardly calm and bustling, but many issues remain unresolved.

➡ **Myanmar/Burma** Govt 20 Feb lifted restrictions on election campaigning that prevented 3 planned National League for Democracy 14 Feb rallies after party publicly complained it was being denied use of venues. EU development commissioner Andris Piebalgs visited 12-14 Feb, announced €150mn in new aid over 2 years. Govt 21 Feb promised to “seriously consider” allowing Southeast Asian observers for 1 April by-elections. Burma Civil society delegation of political activists met U.S. Sec State Clinton 8 Feb during historic visit to U.S., discussed political prisoners, women’s rights, ethnic minorities with U.S. officials.

- “Dissidents’ new fear in Myanmar: irrelevance”, *New York Times*, 21 Feb. 2011.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°214, *Myanmar: A New Peace Initiative*, 30 Nov. 2011.

➡ **Philippines** Senior figure of violent extremist Abu Sayyaf group among at least 14 reportedly killed in 2 Feb airstrike on southern island of Jolo; military claimed 2 high profile foreign jihadis with ties to Jemaah Islamiyah killed. Police 14 Feb arrested alleged Abu Sayyaf member in Zamboanga City in connection with 2000-2001 resort kidnappings. Army 11 Feb clashed with 15 Abu Sayyaf militants attempting to bomb road project in southern Basilan. At 13-15 Feb MILF-govt peace talks both sides agreed to renew Ad Hoc Joint Action Group, which facilitates cooperation on interdiction of criminals and terrorists in MILF-controlled areas. Roughly 10,000 fled Rajah Buayan, Maguindanao province, 12-15 Feb when rebel commanders clashed over land. At least 3 killed, 15 wounded in 19 Feb attempt by gunmen to free prisoners from Kidapawan city jail, North Cotabato. 1 soldier killed, 3 wounded in 27 Feb communist guerrilla attack in Compostela Valley province. Former President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo 23 Feb pleaded not guilty in electoral fraud trial. 3 MILF commanders suspended 28 Feb for involvement in 18 Oct al-Barka clash, Basilan, that left 19 soldiers, 5 rebels dead.

- “Conflict looms in South China Sea oil rush”, Reuters, 28 Feb. 2012.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°213, *The Philippines: Indigenous Rights and the MILF Peace Process*, 22 Nov. 2011.

➡ **Thailand** PM Yingluck Shinawatra’s Pheu Thai Party 9 Feb submitted controversial plan to rewrite 2006 post-coup constitution, provoking fears of renewed turmoil. Thai-Cambodian Joint Boundary Commission agreed to restart border demarcation and map making during 13-14 Feb meeting in Bogor, Indonesia; controversial Preah Vihear demarcation delayed. 4 Iranian suspects detained after accidental 14 Feb explosion; same day, Iranian documents found on man injured after hurling grenade at police and cab (see Israel). Political activist Surachai Danwattananusorn sentenced 28 Feb to 7.5 years prison for 2010 defamatory red-shirt rally speeches.

- Comment by Jim Della-Giacoma, “Temple conflict isn’t over; observers are still needed”, *Nation*, 23 Feb. 2012.
- “Thailand’s détente threatened”, *Wall Street Journal*, 27 Feb. 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** 20 Feb arson attack on offices of electoral administration bodies, UN police car. Court of Appeals same day announced 13 candidates certified for 17 Mar presidential polls; Angela Freitas disqualified 16 Feb. Presidential campaign opened 29 Feb. In sudden vote, parliament 9 Feb approved long-awaited land law establishing basis for assigning land ownership, balancing existing claims.

- Comment by Jim Della-Giacoma, “Timor-Leste: everyone needs good neighbors”, *Interpreter*, 13 Feb. 2012.
- “Timor-Leste has made significant progress towards peace – UN”, *UN News*, 24 Feb. 2011.

**New** Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°134, *Timor-Leste’s Elections: Leaving Behind a Violent Past?*, 21 Feb. 2012. Timor-Leste’s upcoming presidential and parliamentary elections will be an important step in consolidating the relative stability the country has enjoyed since recovering from the 2006 crisis, but a number of security risks deserve continued attention.

## Europe

### Balkans

➡ **Bosnia** State parliament 10 Feb approved new cabinet, first since Oct 2010 elections; new govt at first session 13 Feb adopted state budget. Republika Srpska (RS) political parties 6 Feb filed motion in parliament to abolish state-level court and prosecutor’s office in response to prosecutor’s decision to drop investigation into wartime atrocities against Serbs. House of Peoples 1 Feb adopted Census Law, permitting start of preparations for 2013 count, first since 1991. Chair of BiH Council of Ministers Vjekoslav Bevanda 21 Feb stated Bosnia expected to fulfil conditions for EU candidate status by end of June. Both chambers of parliament 3 Feb adopted State Aid Law, fulfilling key EU membership condition.

- “Debates begin over 2013 census in BiH”, *SE Times*, 23 Feb. 2012.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°66, *Brčko Unsuper-vised*, 8 Dec. 2011.

➡ **Kosovo** Over 99% of Kosovo Serbs voting in controversial unofficial referendum in North 14-15 Feb rejected sovereignty of Kosovo institutions; turnout estimated at 75%. Serbian President Tadić 14 Feb again criticised referendum as harmful to Serbia’s interests. EU-facilitated Kosovo-Serbia dialogue 24 Feb achieved agreement clearing the way for Kosovo to independently represent itself in regional organisations, made further progress on integrated border management. Kosovo nationalist party Vetëvendosje (Self-Determination) condemned compromise, staged protest 27 Feb outside parliament. KFOR and Serbian police 23 Feb removed barricades at Jarinje and Brnjak in North Kosovo, allowing cars to cross border into Serbia. Kosovo police special units 25 Feb arrested 5 Serbian police officers for “threaten[ing] Kosovo’s legal order” and obstructing police officers. EU Commission 28 Feb promised feasibility study for EU-Pristina Stabilisation and Association Agreement, seen as first step to membership. Parliament 31 Jan adopted resolution calling for end to “internationally supervised independence” at end of 2012. New political coalition Serb Movement of Kosovo, independent of Belgrade, launched in N Kosovo.

- [“Kosovo gives way to Serbia on representation”](#), Balkan Insight, 21 Feb. 2012.

**New** Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°215, [Kosovo and Serbia: a Little Goodwill Could Go a Long Way](#), 2 Feb. 2012. The dispute about Kosovo’s sovereignty continues to fuel tensions and violent clashes in northern Kosovo, halting Kosovo’s and Serbia’s fragile dialogue and putting at risk Serbia’s EU candidacy.

➡ **Serbia** EU FMs 28 Feb agreed to recommend EU candidacy; EU leaders to approve decision at Brussels summit 1 March.

- Comment by Sabine Freizer, [“Conflict with Kosovo: an obstacle to Serbia’s EU candidacy”](#), Today’s Zaman, 2 Feb. 2012.
- [“Serbia inches closer to EU candidacy”](#), MSNBC, 12 Feb. 2012.

➡ **Macedonia** UN envoy Nimetz arrived 20 Feb for two-day meeting with President Ivanov, PM Gruevski, and FM Poposki to discuss possible solutions to name dispute with Greece ahead of Brussels meeting between the countries’ leaders 1-2 March. Ivanov 18 Feb wrote letter to NATO leaders urging them to admit Macedonia to alliance despite continued Greek opposition. Visiting OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities 9 Feb voiced concern over recent increase in ethnic tensions. Democratic Party of Albanians, largest ethnic Albanian opposition party, 24 Feb called for resistance against “anti-Albanian” deal on police cooperation between Serbia and Macedonia.

- [“Amid doubts, Macedonia doubles NATO membership efforts”](#), SE Times, 15 Feb. 2012.

## Caucasus

➡ **Armenia** Ruling coalition partners 13 Feb announced plans to run separately in 6 May parliamentary elections, signalling split in 2-party coalition and intensifying pre-election competition.

- [“Prospect of vote-rigging overshadows upcoming Armenian parliamentary elections”](#), RFE/RL, 13 Feb. 2012.

➡ **Azerbaijan** Further accusations between Azerbaijan and Iran; Iranian arrested 17 Feb, accused of drug possession. Followed accusation by Tehran that Baku harbouring Israeli intelligence agent accused of killing 3 Iranian nuclear scientists. National Security Ministry 22 Feb announced arrest of alleged terrorist group working for Iran, suspected of planning attacks against foreign citizens; some 20 people arrested so far in 2012 on charges of terrorism, arms and drug possession. Israeli media 26 Feb reported \$1.4 billion Israeli arms sale to Azerbaijan, despite Iranian warning.

- [“The Iran conflict comes to the Caucasus”](#), RFE/RL, 17 Feb. 2012.

**New** Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°67, [Tackling Azerbaijan’s IDP Burden](#), 27 Feb. 2012. As negotiations between Azerbaijan and Armenia to resolve the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh stall, the Azerbaijan govt has improved living conditions for the internally displaced (IDPs), though return to the occupied territories remains by far the preferred solution.

➡ **North Caucasus (Russia)** Chechen Ministry of Interior launched large-scale military operation against insurgents in Chechnya and Dagestan 13-17 Feb; official sources report 17 security servicemen killed, 24 injured, other reports suggest casualty figures higher; 6

insurgents killed, including veteran commander Magarbi Timevaliev. Dagestan rebels 16 Feb confirmed leader Ibragimkhalil Daudov aka Emir Salikh killed following special operation in Gurbuki. 3 militants 16-17 Feb killed in special operation in Nartkala, Kabardino-Balkaria; cousin of Arsen Republic head Kanokov wounded, one police officer killed in Nartkala 2 Feb. 5 civilians 27 Feb killed in Karabudakhkent’sky region. Prominent moderate mufti killed in car bomb in Pyatigorsk, Stavropol region 13 Feb, prompting fears of increased religious tensions in region. Warlord Doku Umarov in online video posted 2 Feb called on insurgent fighters to stop attacks on Russian civilians, in light of popular protests against President Putin. Ingushetia president Yevkurov at 18 Feb rights forum admitted involvement of Russian security services in kidnappings in region. Congress of Russian Circassians 11 Feb called on Russian authorities to repatriate Syrian Circassians from Syria; willing in return to abandon demands for Russian recognition of genocide of Circassians.

- [“Information war highlights intensified fighting in Chechnya”](#), RFE/RL, 20 Feb. 2012.

➡ **Georgia** Newly-elected de facto president of Abkhazia Aleksandr Ankvab survived 5th assassination attempt unharmed 22 Feb; 1 bodyguard killed in highly coordinated roadside attack; actions described by Ankvab as attack on “state sovereignty” of Abkhazia by criminal groups; Abkhaz officials doubted any connection with Tbilisi central govt. Ankvab early-Feb received head of European Commission delegation to Georgia, criticised EU’s Abkhazia policy, said no reason for further meetings with EU officials. Tensions in South Ossetia following Nov de facto presidential elections after annulled victor in elections Alla Dzhioyeva hospitalised 9 Feb when masked security forces stormed her HQ, allegedly assaulted her day before her planned symbolic self-inauguration. 25 March “repeat” elections called after opposition leader Dzhioyeva’s victory thrown out by pro-Moscow local constitutional court; Dzhioyeva said will not run again. Restrictions tightened on foreign media. Concerns Georgia could be drawn into escalating conflict between Tehran and Israel after police 13 Feb defused bomb planted on Israeli diplomat’s car in Tbilisi (see Iran). Billionaire businessman-turned-politician Bidzina Ivanishvili and 3 partner political parties 21 Feb formed opposition coalition for Oct parliamentary elections.

- [“President of Abkhazia survives assassination attempt”](#), New York Times, 22 Feb. 2012.

➡ **Nagorno-Karabakh (Azerbaijan)** Continued tensions along Line of Contact (LoC); Armenian govt vowed “Baku will answer” for death of Armenian soldier in latest common cross-fire incident. Azerbaijan 20 Feb began week-long military exercise along LoC, reportedly involving air and land forces, use of newly-purchased and manufactured military equipment. De facto N-K authorities 16-18 Feb held “international conference” on prospects for territory, marking 20th anniversary of declaration of “independence”.

- [“Remembering the victims of Khojaly”](#), BBC, 27 Feb. 2012.

## Eastern Europe

➡ **Belarus** EU Foreign Affairs Council 10 Feb paved way for additional targeted sanctions against Belarusian regime; EU 27 Feb enacted further expansion of visa ban and asset freeze blacklist after



omitting Belarusian businessman with economic ties to Slovenia. Belarus 28 Feb retaliated, expelled Polish and EU ambassadors, all EU member states withdrew envoys in response.

- [“Why did Slovenia spare Belarusian mogul from EU sanctions?”](#), RFE/RL, 28 Feb. 2012.

➡ **Ukraine** Former Interior Minister Yuriy Lutsenko, who served under jailed former PM Tymoshenko, sentenced 27 Feb to 4 years prison for abuse of office; opposition denounced verdict as politically motivated. Ukraine 24 Feb rejected Russian deal to reduce gas prices as insufficient. Russia's Gazprom CEO 22 Feb accused Ukraine of siphoning off gas destined for Europe, announced intention to bypass Ukraine entirely with future pipelines.

- [“Outcry as Ukraine jails another opposition figure”](#), Euronews, 28 Feb. 2012.

## Western Europe/Mediterranean

➡ **Cyprus** Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot leaders met 16, 21 Feb, discussed procedural matters and property chapter in reunification talks, made little progress. Turkish Cypriot leader Eroğlu 26 Feb reiterated negotiations would not continue once Cyprus takes over EU Presidency 1 July. Greek Cypriot govt 11 Feb opened second offshore hydrocarbon licensing round. Turkey issued statement 14 Feb protesting “provocative” unilateral step, warned it would take necessary measures to protect its interests. Greek Cypriot President 16 Feb called Turkey “troublemaker”, Greek Cypriot FM 15 Feb said its behavior was “bullying”.

- Comment by Didem Akyel, [“Le sommet de l'ONU échoue à surmonter l'impasse chypriote”](#), *Le Monde*, 21 Feb. 2012.
- [“Cyprus, Israel explore gas link”](#), *Asia Times*, 22 Feb. 2012.

➡ **Turkey** Govt 17 Feb passed emergency legislation allowing PM Erdogan to prevent prosecutors summoning intelligence officials or other public officials from testifying in court after 5 senior intelligence officers, including spy chief Hakan Fidan, called to testify in Kurdish insurgency probe 7 Feb; politicians pledged appeal at Constitutional Court. Police 13 Feb raided labour union HQ in 9 cities in Kurdish Communities Union (KCK) investigation, detained over 100; police 21 Feb detained 13 in Istanbul charged with belonging to KCK youth arm. PKK clashes with security forces continued in southeast: 1 soldier, 13 militants killed 9 Feb in Çukurca, Bingöl provinces; 15 militants, 2 soldiers killed in 14 Feb attack on PKK hideout, Şırnak province. In 12 Feb cross-border bombing, warplanes targeted suspected Kurdish rebel hideouts in Iraq's Zap, Hakurk regions. Govt welcomed French Constitutional Council's 28 Feb repeal of “Genocide Law” criminalising denial of Armenian genocide.

- [“Turkey passes spy law”](#), *Wall Street Journal*, 18 Feb. 2012.

## Latin America/Caribbean

➡ **Bolivia** Conflict over controversial highway construction through TIPNIS National Park intensified early Feb as ruling Movement Towards Socialism (MAS) renewed campaign to determine project's fate. Following allegations by opposition that President Morales uses politically subservient judges to remove elected

opponents, UN 7 Feb called for transparency and due process; Morales 8 Feb responded that MAS does not engage in political persecution of opposition.

- [“Morales responde a la ONU que no hay persecución política a opositores”](#), InfoLatam, 8 Feb. 2012.

➡ **Colombia** Hope for peace process boosted as FARC 26 Feb announced intention to free all remaining military, police hostages, abandon longstanding practice of ransom kidnappings; President Santos said “important” but “insufficient” step. Spate of FARC attacks mid-late Feb concentrated in Nariño, Cauca depts left dozens dead. Authorities 9 Feb issued arrest warrant for former High Commissioner for Peace Luis Carlos Restrepo for alleged false demobilisation of FARC unit in 2006, exacerbating tensions between Santos and former President Uribe. Santos 11 Feb led high-level delegation to attend 14,000 strong victims' march in Necoclí, boosting support for victims' reparation, land restitution.

- [“Nos interesa el fin del conflicto. No los ceses al fuego”: Santos](#), *Semana*, 21 Feb. 2012.

➡ **Ecuador** President Correa 16 Feb won defamation case against El Universo newspaper; Emilio Palacio, former El Universo editor, 8 Feb requested asylum in U.S.; Correa 27 Feb issued Presidential pardon for controversial prison sentence against Palacio and two other El Universo directors accused in case.

- [“Correa pediría anular condena a El Universo”](#), *El Espectador*, 22 Feb. 2012.

➡ **Guatemala** President Pérez Molina 13 Feb said he would urge Central American leaders to debate legalising drugs at upcoming regional summit; presidents of El Salvador, Honduras remain opposed to proposal. Molina secured legislative victory with adoption of fiscal reform bill designed to increase revenues, combat evasion. Court 29 Feb approved extradition to U.S. of alleged top narco-trafficker Juan Ortiz Lopez.

- [“Guatemala pres: Drug war requires more than arms”](#), AP, 15 Feb. 2012.

➡ **Haiti** PM Conille's 24 Feb resignation amid reports of discord within top political leadership plunged country into renewed state of political uncertainty. Several thousand Aristide supporters demonstrated 29 Feb against President Martelly. Military-clad persons, some ex-army soldiers, occupied former military posts across country throughout month; made calls for reconstituting army; UN 16 Feb said police best body for providing security. Senate 14 Feb announced ultimatum ordering govt members to turn in travel documents for scrutiny of nationality within 48 hours or face impeachment. Clash between State University students and Martelly supporters 17 Feb in Port-au-Prince reportedly left several injured. Fanmi Lavalas party supporters 7 Feb demonstrated, burned photos of Martelly.

- [“Poursuite du cycle de tâtonnements avec la démission de Garry Conille”](#), *AlterPresse*, 28 Feb. 2012.

➡ **Mexico** Govt 11 Feb said 12,903 people died in drug-related violence in 2011, increase of 11 per cent from 2010. Police 4 Feb arrested José Antonio Torres Marrufo, leader of Gente Nueva gang – armed wing of Sinaloa drug cartel. U.S. court 10 Feb said drug gangs reportedly paid \$4.5 million in political bribes to figures in opposition Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI). At least 44 killed in clash between rival Zeta and Gulf cartels at Apodoca

prison 19 Feb; guards confessed to helping some 30 Zeta inmates escape prison after clash. Authorities 15 Feb found 6 mutilated bodies near Cuernavaca, 24 Feb found 4 bodies abandoned near Veracruz city hall.

- [“Al menos 44 personas mueren durante una riña en penal de Nuevo León”](#), CNN México, 19 Feb. 2012.



**Venezuela** Henrique Capriles Radonski, leader of Primero Justicia party and governor of Miranda state, elected 12 Feb as unified opposition candidate to run against President Chávez in 7 Oct primaries. Chávez 4 Feb commemorated 20th anniversary of failed coup that launched his political career. Political uncertainty increased after Chávez travelled to Cuba 24 Feb to remove cancer tumour, 29 Feb said “recovering like a condor”; worries his health may affect conduct of elections.

- [“Capriles Radonski: el nuevo rival de Hugo Chávez”](#), BBC, 13 Feb. 2012.

## Middle East/North Africa

### Eastern Mediterranean



**Israel/Occupied Palestinian Territories** Month saw rising tensions between Israel, Iran: U.S. presidential security adviser Donilon 18-20 Feb visited Israel reportedly to deter Israeli strike against Iranian nuclear facilities (see Iran); Israel accused Iran of “terrorist campaign” following 13 Feb attempted attack on Israeli diplomat in Georgia and bombing of Israeli embassy in India leaving 4 wounded, 14 Feb blasts in Thailand; Iran rejected accusations. Hamas, Fatah 6 Feb announced agreement to form single Palestinian govt under Abbas, hold general elections in coming months; Hamas leaders in Gaza opposed deal. UNSG Ban 1 Feb urged Israel, Palestinians to return to negotiations, 3 Feb said only talks will lead to independent Palestinian state; Abbas 12 Feb insisted on settlement freeze as pre-condition. Israel 21 Feb agreed to release Islamic Jihad activist Khader Adnan following 2-month hunger strike. 1 Palestinian killed 24 Feb during West Bank protest following Temple Mount clashes; IDF 26 Feb bombed targets in Gaza in response to rocket fire.

- [“Unity deal brings risks for Abbas and Israel”](#), *New York Times*, 6 Feb. 2012.



**Lebanon** UN Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL) 1 Feb announced suspects in former PM Rafiq Hariri murder to be tried in absentia. UNSG Ban 22 Feb renewed STL mandate for 3 years. Former PM and Future Movement leader Saad Hariri 14 Feb called on Hizbollah to disarm, support STL, hand over suspects; Hizbollah leader Nasrallah 16 Feb rejected call, reiterated support for Syrian regime. 3 killed, several wounded 10 Feb in clash between supporters and opponents of Syrian regime in Tripoli; FM Mansour 13 Feb reaffirmed “disassociation” policy towards Syria, said Arab League (AL) call for UN-AL peacekeeping force in Syria “dangerous” for Lebanon.

- [“Torn between factions, Lebanon a potential powder keg as neighbor Syria descends into chaos”](#), AP, 11 Feb. 2012.



**Syria** Fears of civil war grew with regime targeting protesters and civilians on unprecedented scale, ongoing clashes between security forces and Free Syrian Army across country; UN 28 Feb announced over 7,500 killed so far. Regime 4 Feb began heavy shelling of Homs, killing 2 Western journalists 22 Feb; opposition warned of massacre. 2 truck-bombs 10 Feb targeted security compounds in Aleppo killing 28. Al-Qaida leader al-Zawahiri 12 Feb vowed support for uprising. Security forces 19 Feb fired on estimated 15,000 demonstrators in Damascus. International community remained divided: Russia, China 4 Feb vetoed UNSC draft resolution backed by Arab League (AL) condemning violent crackdown and supporting Jan AL roadmap; AL 12 Feb called for joint UN/AL peacekeeping mission; UNGA 16 Feb approved Arab-backed resolution condemning human rights violations. UN HR chief Pillay 13 Feb called for ICC referral of situation; UN Commission of Inquiry 23 Feb reported Syrian security forces, senior officials responsible for gross, systematic human rights violations. UN Human Rights Council 28 Feb held emergency session; Pillay described rapidly deteriorating situation. U.S. 22 Feb warned of “additional measures” if regime fails to end violence. Kofi Annan appointed UN-AL special envoy to Syria 23 Feb. “Friends of Syria” contact group - including 60 countries - 24 Feb met in Tunis, recognised opposition Syrian National Council as “a legitimate representative of Syrians”; Saudi Arabia, Qatar vowed to arm opposition; EU 27 Feb announced new sanctions against Syria; France, U.S. 28 Feb drafting new UNSC resolution to alleviate humanitarian suffering. Russia 7 Feb, China 17 Feb dispatched envoys to Damascus: Russian FM Lavrov called for solution based on Dec AL peace initiative; Chinese deputy FM Zhai Jun backed Syrian reforms. National referendum 26 Feb approved new constitution removing Ba’ath party monopoly.

- Comment by Peter Harling and Sarah Birke, [“Beyond the fall of the Syrian regime”](#), Middle East Research and Information Project, 24 Feb. 2012.
- [“U.N., ‘Friends’ pursue new tracks on Syria”](#), *Wall Street Journal*, 24 Feb. 2012.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Middle East Briefing N°31, [Uncharted Waters: Thinking Through Syria’s Dynamics](#), 24 Nov. 2011.

### Gulf



**Bahrain** Police clashed with anti-govt protesters during marches to Pearl Square in Manama ahead of 14 Feb anniversary of uprising; activists 15 Feb claimed over 150 protesters wounded; UNSG Ban 15 Feb expressed concern. Leading activist Zainab al-Khawaja arrested at 12 Feb rally, released from detention 20 Feb. Court same day acquitted Matar Matar, leading member of opposition al-Wefaq party, accused of taking part in “unlawful” anti-govt protests last year.

- [“Bahrain struggles to police the protests”](#), BBC, 18 Feb. 2012.



**Iran** Israel accused Iran of organising “terrorist campaign” against Israeli targets in India, Georgia, Thailand mid-Feb (see Israel). Tension continued over nuclear program: Israel defence minister Barak 3 Feb warned time running out to halt Iranian nuclear program; Ayatollah Khamenei responded warning any attack will meet forceful response. U.S. President Obama 6 Feb said U.S. focussed on diplomatic solution but no option off table, froze assets of Iranian govt, Central Bank. U.S. carrier Abraham Lincoln 14 Feb passed through Strait of Hormuz despite Iranian warnings. Iran 15 Feb

loaded first domestically-made nuclear fuel in reactor, unveiled more efficient enrichment centrifuges at Natanz facility. UK FM Hague 18 Feb warned nuclear Iran could lead to “new cold war”, nuclear arms race in region. U.S., E.U. expressed cautious optimism following Iran mid-month letter to EU High Representative Ashton offering resumption of nuclear talks. Iranian authorities 20 Feb suspended oil exports to France, Britain; same day announced new military drills; 21 Feb warned of pre-emptive strikes if national interests endangered. IAEA 24 Feb reported Iran stepped-up uranium enrichment in recent months, failed to cooperate during 20-22 Feb visit to clarify “possible military dimensions” of nuclear program, denied access to Parchin site.

▪ [“Bombing Iran”, \*Economist\*, 25 Feb. 2012.](#)

**New** Crisis Group Middle East & Europe Report N°116, [In Heavy Waters: Iran's Nuclear Program, the Risk of War and Lessons from Turkey](#), 23 Feb. 2012. As the standoff over Iran's nuclear program edges closer to military confrontation, talks may be a way out but require mutual compromise and Western abandonment of the notion that a mix of threats and crippling sanctions will force Iran to back down.

➡ **Iraq** Series of bombings, shootings across country 23 Feb left at least 50 dead, hundreds injured; umbrella group including al-Qaeda, Islamic State of Iraq, claimed responsibility. Suicide car bombing 19 Feb killed 19 police officers, cadets outside Baghdad police academy. At least 6 killed 29 Feb by car bombs in Baghdad, Tuz Khurmatu. Activists 11 Feb announced creation of new opposition party Union of Patriotic Figures, vowing to act as a check on govt. Judicial panel 16 Feb said Sunni VP al-Hashemi ran death squads since 2005, responsible for attacks on security officials and Shiite pilgrims; al-Hashemi 20 Feb denounced charges as politically motivated.

▪ [“Dozens killed in wave of attacks across Iraq”, CNN, 23 Feb. 2012.](#)

➡ **Jordan** Former intelligence head al-Dahabi detained 9 Feb on charges of money laundering, abuse of power, embezzlement. Hundreds, mainly Islamic Action Front (IAF), marched 25 Feb in Amman alleging police fired tear gas in 24 Feb clash between Islamist demonstrators and govt loyalists in Mafraq.

▪ [“Demonstrations whisper of an Arab Spring in Jordan”, \*New York Times\*, 9 Feb. 2012.](#)

➡ **Saudi Arabia** 2 reportedly killed 9-10 Feb when security forces opened fire on Shiite protesters in Qatif demanding release of political prisoners, reforms, end of sectarian discrimination; authorities accused “foreign power” of fomenting violence in believed reference to Iran, vowed to respond with “iron fist”. FM Prince Saud al-Faisal 24 Feb backed arming of Syrian opposition (see Syria).

▪ [“Saudi Arabia vows to end violence with ‘iron fist’”, Reuters, 20 Feb. 2012.](#)

➡ **Yemen** Former VP Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi inaugurated president 25 Feb after winning uncontested elections held 21 Feb amidst boycott of polls by southern separatists and Huthis rebels, instances of pre-election and election day violence in south: at least 55 reported killed in early-Feb clashes between Shiite Huthi rebels and Salafists in northern Hajjah governorate. In Sanaa, thousands of demonstrators 10 Feb gathered in Change Square in support of election. In 20 Feb televised statement, deposed president Saleh signaled intention to preserve degree of influence on govt. Thousands gathered 11 Feb in Taiz city to mark 1-year since uprising.

Islamist group Ansar al-Sharia 12 Feb allegedly executed 3 men in Azan and Jaar for giving information to U.S.. At least 16 killed in 16 Feb clashes in al-Masaneh following killing of local al-Qaeda leader in family dispute.

▪ [“Violence as Yemen elects candidate to replace toppled leader”, Reuters, 21 Feb. 2012.](#)

## North Africa

➡ **Algeria** Security forces 20 Feb reportedly killed 13 militants near Algiers believed responsible for 19 Feb Boumerdes roadside bomb that killed 4, wounded 19 east of capital. 2 weapons caches, including 43 anti-aircraft missiles allegedly from Libyan arsenal, discovered mid-Feb near Libyan border. President Abdelaziz Bouteflika 9 Feb set parliamentary elections for 10 May, without consulting Electoral College; international observers expected to monitor polls for first time; secular opposition Rally for Culture and Democracy party 17 Feb announced boycott of “hoax” elections. 3 main Islamist parties 27 Feb announced electoral alliance following govt accreditation of 8 newly-formed parties. Opposition lawmaker Mohamed Seddiki 27 Feb appointed head of electoral surveillance commission.

▪ [“Is an Arab Spring in the air for Algeria?”, Reuters, 15 Feb. 2012.](#)

➡ **Egypt** Thugs reportedly associated with rival team 1 Feb killed 74 football fans in Port Said; authorities blamed for failure to prevent riot, prompting violent clashes between anti-military protesters and police at Cairo Interior Ministry; at least 12 killed. Muslim Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) 21 Feb criticised army-appointed govt, reiterated call for new national unity cabinet; FJP Ahmed Fahmi elected as speaker of parliament upper house, consolidating Islamist control over legislature. Elections Commission 29 Feb announced presidential elections 23-24 May. Egypt, U.S. engaged in intensive discussions to resolve dispute over foreign funding of NGOs: court 26 Feb adjourned trial of 43 NGO workers until 26 April; all 3 presiding judges resigned; travel ban on 7 U.S. employees lifted. Death sentences of 3 convicted in connection with 2004-2005 Sinai Peninsula bombings lifted 14 Feb.

▪ [“Egypt opens trial at heart of rift with US”, AP, 27 Feb. 2012.](#)

➡ **Libya** Deadly clashes continued throughout Feb between rival tribes in al-Kufra leaving scores killed. In Tripoli: rival militias 1 Feb fought gun battle at barracks; gunmen 6 Feb allegedly killed 5 refugees in camp. Representatives of about 100 militias from western Libya 13 Feb announced formation of federation to prevent infighting, press new govt for further reform. Amnesty International report 16 Feb accused militiamen of broad human rights abuses against suspected Qadhafi loyalists; interim President Abdul Jalil 21 Feb acknowledged transitional govt powerless to control militias. 2 UK journalists detained 22 Feb by militiamen. Head of committee to register former fighters Mustafa al-Saqizly 14 Feb stated more than 100,000 rebels registered; PM El-Keib 18 Feb said govt to give over \$1,500 to each family, pay unemployed former rebels. Publishing of electoral law 8 Feb set 40-seat quota for women, 80 seats for previously barred political parties in 200-seat national congress. Misrata 20 Feb became first major town to elect local council. President Abdul Jalil 12 Feb said Saif Al-Islam Qadhafi to be moved to Tripoli prison within 2 months to face trial. Court 22 Feb ruled defendants accused of Qadhafi era crimes



should be freed, tried in civilian court. President Abdul Jalil 15 Feb announced plan to let Syria's opposition National Council open Tripoli office.

- "Libya struggles to curb militias as chaos grows", *New York Times*, 8 Feb. 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** At least 32 injured, dozens arrested in student protests throughout Feb over closure of Islamic Institute; 6 freed 27 Feb. Authorities 4 Feb detained leader of Do Not Touch My Nationality movement Wan Abdoul Biran; move condemned by Rights group ANHRI. Further concerns over press freedom following 14 Feb arrest of journalist Dialtabé Samba Diop reporting on student protest. Leaders of Coordination for Democratic Opposition (COD) 25 Feb called on President Abdel Aziz to relinquish power. Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb 20 Feb threatened to kill gendarme abducted 20 Dec near Mali border. Number of refugees from Mali reached 28,000.

- "ANHRI condemns detention of activist", ANHRI, 7 Feb. 2012.



**Morocco** In effort to ease tensions King Mohammed VI 5 Feb pardoned leading Islamists, "Feb 20" protesters. Police 1-5 Feb clashed with youths in N-E town of Taza. Court 14 Feb sentenced student activist Abdel Samad al-Haydour to 3 years for insulting King Mohammed VI. Large anti-govt rallies held 20 Feb to commemorate 1-year since uprisings.

- "Morocco's resilient protest movement", *Foreign Policy*, 20 Feb. 2012.



**Tunisia** Salafists and security forces clashed 1 Feb in Sfax, 21 Feb in Jendouba. 13 parties 11 Feb formed "Tunisian National Party" coalition to oppose Ennahda. National Constituent Assembly 13 Feb began drafting new constitution. Police, protesters 16 Feb clashed in north following arrest of Monaem Darragi, Secretary-General of Tunisian Workers' Union (UTT). Defense Minister Zbidi called for further U.S. assistance in guarding borders fol-

lowing 15 Feb meeting with U.S. to discuss increased training, logistical support. Interior Minister Larayedh 13 Feb announced arrest of 12 suspects allegedly linked to Islamic extremist cell affiliated with al-Qaeda; President Marzouki 24 Feb hosted inaugural meeting of "Friends of Syria" in Tunis; 28 Feb offered Syrian President al-Assad asylum (see Syria).

- "Tunisia Steps Out", *Foreign Policy*, 23 Feb. 2012.



**Western Sahara** UN 24 Feb announced it would host further negotiations 11-13 March between Polisario Front, Moroccan govt

- "Talks on Western Sahara dispute holds next month", *Afrique en Ligne*, 25 Feb. 2012.

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