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May 2012 Trends



Deteriorated Situations

Democratic Republic of
Congo (p.2)
Mali (p.4)
Mexico (p.9)
Nepal (p.6)



Improved Situations

Haiti (p.9)



Unchanged Situations

Afghanistan (p.5), Algeria (p.11), Armenia (p.8), Azerbaijan (p.8), Bahrain (p.10), Bangladesh (p.5), Belarus (p.8), Bolivia (p.9), Bosnia (p.7), Burma/Myanmar (p.6), Burundi (p.2), Cameroon (p.2), Central African Republic (p.2), Chad (p.2), Colombia (p.9), Côte d'Ivoire (p.4), Cyprus (p.8), Ecuador (p.9), Egypt (p.11), Eritrea (p.2), Ethiopia (p.2), Georgia (p.8), Guatemala (p.9), Guinea (p.4), Guinea-Bissau (p.4), India (non-Kashmir) (p.5), Indonesia (p.6), Iran (p.10), Iraq (p.11), Israel/Occupied Palestinian Territories (p.10), Jordan (p.11), Kashmir (p.5), Kazakhstan (p.4), Kenya (p.2), Kosovo (p.7), Kyrgyzstan (p.5), Liberia (p.4), Libya (p.11), Macedonia (p.7), Madagascar (p.3), Malawi (p.3), Mauritania (p.11), Moldova (p.8), Morocco (p.11), Nagorno-Karabakh (Azerbaijan) (p.8), Nigeria (p.4), North Caucasus (Russia) (p.8), Philippines (p.7), Rwanda (p.2), Saudi Arabia (p.11), Senegal (p.4), Serbia (p.7), Somalia (p.3), Somaliland (p.3), South Sudan (p.3), Sri Lanka (p.6), Sudan (p.3), Tajikistan (p.5), Thailand (p.7), Timor Leste (p.7), Tunisia (p.12), Turkey (p.9), Turkmenistan (p.5), Uganda (p.3), Ukraine (p.8), Uzbekistan (p.5), Venezuela (p.9), Western Sahara (p.12), Yemen (p.11), Zimbabwe (p.3)

June 2012 Watchlist



Conflict Risk Alerts

Lebanon (p.10)
Mali (p.4)
Syria (p.10)



Conflict Resolution Opportunities

CrisisWatch

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

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

CrisisWatch is compiled by Crisis Group's Brussels Research Unit, drawing on multiple sources including the resources of our some 140 staff members across five continents, who already report on some 60 of the situations listed here. Comments and suggestions can be sent to crisiswatch@crisisgroup.org.

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Africa


Central Africa

 **Burundi** Human rights activist Pierre Claver Mbonimpa late May reportedly discovered President Nkurunziza acquitted in 2011 by Supreme Court in total secrecy for 1998 atrocities, effectively awarding amnesty; Mbonimpa said move constitutes procedural irregularity as affair was supposed to be addressed in Truth and Reconciliation. Opposition ADC leaders, ruling party members, former heads of state, civil society met 28 May at leadership retreat, sparking hope for political dialogue. Army 4 May announced death of former Forces for National Liberation (FNL) commander Carmel, accused by govt of masterminding 2011 Gatumba bar massacre. Ombudsman Mohamed Rukara 9 May said plot to kill him uncovered, declined to release names. 14 sentenced to 10 years-life imprisonment 22 May in connection with 2009 killing of anti-corruption activist.


- ["L'acquittement en catimini de Pierre Nkurunziza siscite la polémique"](#), RFI, 25 May 2012.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°185, [Burundi: A Deepening Corruption Crisis](#), 21 March 2012.

 **Cameroon** Following postponement of elections originally scheduled July 2012 and adoption of new electoral code, opposition parties 12 May agreed to boycott 20 May national day celebrations. Fears of spillover from conflict in Nigeria exacerbated following 4 May shootout with suspected Boko Haram gunmen in border town of Banki; incident follows 12 April attack which left 5 dead in same town; regional leaders 1 May called on Cameroon to re-integrate joint deterrence force of Lake Chad Basin Commission (CBLT) to tackle Boko Haram threat.

- ["L'opposition camerounaise appelle au boycott du défilé du 20 mai"](#), Camer.be, 14 May 2012.

 **Central African Republic** Disarmament recommenced 12 May in centre north: People's Army for Restoration of Democracy (APRD) rebel group officially dissolved 17 May. President Bozizé 15 May invited political parties, rebel representatives, civil society, diplomats to presidential palace; Bozizé delivered speech but no dialogue held. 2 villages burned, 5 killed 20-23 May near Batangafo, centre north; regional lawmaker blamed Chadian cattle herders and rebel Front Populaire pour le Redressement (FPR). Ugandan army 12 May captured LRA commander Caesar Acellam in SE.

- ["Cattle herders kill 5 in Batangafo"](#), AFP, 24 May 2012.

 **Chad** Judges, citing procedural irregularities, 10 May rejected calls for release of president's chief of staff and former AU ambassador to EU, Mahamat Saleh Annadif, arrested mid-April on corruption charges. Govt 21 May launched "operation Cobra" to promote transparency in handling of public funds, better governance. President Déby 1 May called for creation of "joint deterrence force" to fight Boko Haram at Lake Chad Basin Commission.

- ["Enfin, une 'operation Cobra' lancée contre l'enrichissement illicite au Tchad"](#), Alwihda, 22 May 2012.


 **Democratic Republic of Congo** Fighting escalated in Kivu region as FARDC continue to hunt Bosco Ntaganda, wanted by ICC for war crimes; UNHCR 29 May said over 40,000 displaced by recent violence; MONUSCO said over 98 killed between 9 May and 25 May, N Kivu. New armed group, Movement for 23 March (M23), emerged 10 May after govt crackdown on former CNDP troops following April attempted mutiny by Ntaganda; military court 30 May sentenced in absentia 2 officers to death for role in mutiny, 11 others given prison sentences. Leaked MONUSCO report late May said Rwandans recruited to help M23; Kigali denied allegation, DRC govt 29 May said investigation underway; UN 30 May said 11 Rwandans recruited but no evidence Rwandan govt involved. FDLR launched several attacks on FARDC throughout month in Kivus; UNOCHA 16 May said FDLR killed at least 50 civilians in May. 7 peacekeepers wounded by gunfire 15 May during protest at UN base in S Kivu. Kinshasa police 14 May confirmed investigation into corruption allegations levelled at former PM Adolphe Muzito.

- ["Thousands flee renewed violence in DRC"](#), Al Jazeera, 18 May 2012.


 **Rwanda** Govt expressed security concerns following influx of over 7,000 refugees from N Kivu; 31 May accused UN of stirring regional tensions following report DRC fighters recruited in Rwanda. Police chief agreed to establishment of joint border security force to prevent infiltration by destabilising elements from DRC at meeting with Ugandan counterpart 19 May.

- ["Rwanda accuses UN of fomenting regional tensions"](#), Reuters, 1 June 2012.


Horn of Africa

 **Eritrea** Relations with U.S. deteriorated as U.S. govt 17 May announced suspension of consular, diplomatic services in Eritrea, reportedly in response to Eritrean refusal to guarantee visas for diplomatic staff. President Afewerki received Sudanese counterpart late May, discussed bilateral relations.

- ["The bad news over Badme – why Ethiopia won't back down on Eritrean border"](#), allAfrica, 23 May 2012.

 **Ethiopia** Opposition coalition Forum for Democratic Dialogue in Ethiopia (Medrek) condemned Ethiopia-Sudan convict exchange agreement signed 16 May, said could be used to prosecute political refugees. Court 17 May confirmed terror charges against 11 accused of forming cell linked with al-Qaeda. Following April announcement of govt crackdown on suspected extremists, Muslims demonstrated throughout month to protest govt interference, including attempt to impose anti-wahabi Abhash sect as lead of Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs in Ethiopia. Contradicting earlier statement withdrawal imminent, PM Meles Zenawi 21 May said troops deployed in Somalia preparing surge to combat al-Shabaab.

- ["Ethiopian government, Muslims clash about ideology"](#), VOA 21 May 2012.

 **Kenya** PM Raila Odinga warned of ethnic violence around next year's polls, said some politicians seeking to "Balkanise" country along ethnic lines. 5 police officers killed in bomb explosion at Dadaab refugee camp 15 May; same day 1 killed, 5 wounded in nightclub grenade attack, Mombasa; 1 killed, over 30 injured

by bomb explosions 27 May, Nairobi. Armed forces 31 May announced capture of Somali towns Afmadow, Hayo, at least 17 al-Shabaab militants killed.

- [“Official: 1 dead from attack on Kenya’s coast”](#), AP, 16 May 2012.

➡ **Somalia** UN, AU and IGAD 1 May issued rare joint statement expressing continued concern at threat posed to transition by Somali spoilers. Signatories of Mogadishu Roadmap including TFG President Sharif met 21-23 May in Addis Ababa to discuss changes to draft constitution, overall mandate and new deadlines; agreed to guidelines for Constituent Assembly and Federal Parliament. Elders meeting to choose 825 delegates to Constituent Assembly opened 5 May. Some 300 civil society members including 135 traditional elders met 26-30 May in Istanbul to discuss Somalia’s future in preparation for 31 May-1 June conference. 7 killed 1 May in al-Shabaab suicide attack targeting group of politicians visiting Galgaduud region. AMISOM, Transitional Federal Govt (TFG) forces 27 May captured strategic town of Afgooye, near Mogadishu; President Sharif’s convoy ambushed 29 May while visiting area, 1 soldier killed, 6 injured. At least 9 killed 7 May in al-Shabaab attack on AU forces, Mogadishu; at least 7 killed 19 May in bomb, grenade attacks. 6 killed 30 May by roadside bomb in Galkayo town, Puntland. EU 15 May conducted first onshore strikes against pirates near Harardhere town.

- Abdirashid Hashi, [“Somalia at crossroads, should not squander great opportunity”](#), *Hürriyet Daily News*, 31 May 2012.
- [“Istanbul conference on Somalia opens”](#), BBC, 31 May 2012.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°87, [Somalia: An Opportunity that Should Not Be Missed](#), 22 Feb. 2012.

➡ **Somaliland** Military court 17 May sentenced 17 civilians to death, 5 minors to life for 15 May clash with military that left 3 soldiers, 4 civilians dead. Deputy leader of opposition Democratic party Ali Borsed, opposition NDB leader Fowzia Haji Aden and opposition Jamhuriya party leader Mohamed Odawa arrested 1 May in Hargeisa, released several hours later; govt banned planned protests against electoral commission’s 20 April rejection of right to register their political parties.

- [“Somaliland military court sentences 17 civilians to die”](#), BBC, 17 May 2012.

➡ **South Sudan** UNSC 2 May adopted resolution calling for withdrawal of S Sudan and Sudan armed forces from disputed areas, establishment of joint border security mechanisms, endorsed AUHIP-mediated negotiations, threatened sanctions against Sudan, S Sudan if they fail to comply with AU roadmap for talks; govt 29 May said Sudan bombarded Werguet, Majak Woi border, Khartoum denied attack; talks resumed 29 May. UN Human Rights chief Pillay visited 8-12 May, called for continued vigilance in combating human rights violations, criticised recent bombing raids by Sudan. UNSG Ban 12 May commended S Sudan on withdrawal of “special police” forces from Abyei, called on Khartoum to do same, establish Abyei Area Administration. UNSC 17 May extended mandate of Abyei peacekeeping force by 6 months. Aid group Medecins Sans Frontiers accused military of rape, torture, extrajudicial killing of Muerle tribe members during disarmament campaign initiated March 2012. Jonglei state tribal leaders 5 May signed agreement to end cycle of inter-ethnic clashes.

- [“Group: S. Sudan troops kill, torture minority tribe”](#), AP, 24 May 2012.

➡ **Sudan** Govt 27 May filed complaint at UNSC accusing S Sudan of cross-border incursions. S Sudan 22 May accused Khartoum of conducting air strikes against S Sudan 21-22 May in contravention of UNSC resolution, ceasefire. UNSG Ban 30 May welcomed late May withdrawal from Abyei, called for withdrawal of remaining armed police forces. President Bashir 15 May said S Sudan oil exports through Sudan will not be allowed unless disputes over border security resolved. 4 UN de-miners arrested late April in Helig region by SAF released 20 May. 1 killed 22 May in explosion, Port Sudan.

- [“Sudan, South Sudan start first talks since conflict”](#), AFP, 30 May 2012.

➡ **Uganda** Army 12 May announced capture of LRA former intelligence chief Major General Caesar Acellam in Central African Republic, sparking dispute over whether he should be offered amnesty; chief prosecutor 22 May said Acellam will be prosecuted if found to be senior LRA official. Govt early May threatened to eject Oxfam for accusing govt of land-grabbing, demanded retraction, apology.

- [“Uganda rules out amnesty for captured LRA commander”](#), Reuters, 22 May 2012.
- For latest report see Crisis Group Africa Report N°187, [Uganda: No Resolution to Growing Tensions](#), 5 April 2012.

Southern Africa

➡ **Madagascar** Transitional President Rajoelina 18 May met UNSG Ban in New York, announced willingness to forge political agreement with former president Ravalomanana, hold elections soon, said Ravalomanana not allowed to participate in polls; Ravalomanana cautioned against poll prior to his return, supporters boycotted transitional govt meetings throughout month. Transitional electoral commission 29 May announced “partial” electoral calendar, deferred decision on election date to Aug. SADC Troika 11 May called for amnesties for all political exiles including Ravalomanana, end to transitional roadmap implementation stalemate. Police 19 May violently dispersed protesters demonstrating against media crackdown following 2 May detention of 2 journalists, several arrested. U.S. State Dept 2011 human rights report, released 24 May, labelled transitional govt “illegal”, condemned widespread unlawful killings, arbitrary arrests.

- [“Madagascar strongman says ready for accord with rival”](#), AFP, 18 May 2012.

➡ **Malawi** In first state of nation address, President Banda 18 May called for restoration of rule of law, announced inquiries into former president Mutharika’s death, April coup plot, Malawi Revenue Authority tax scandal; revealed plans to revoke anti-gay legislation. Multiple MPs defected to Banda’s People’s Party. President Banda 17 May fired head of Anti-Corruption Board Alex Nampota, accused of shielding former president Mutharika’s collaborators from investigations.


- [“President Joyce Banda shakes up Malawi”](#), Globalpost, 21 May 2012.

➡ **Zimbabwe** President Mugabe 18 May reportedly announced desire to retire but fears disintegration of Zanu-PF, 4 May called for unity as party leadership rivalry intensifies. Zanu-PF supporters 26 May reportedly stoned to death MDC-T official, injured others during rally in Mudzi. Dialogue with EU resumed 10 May; EU High Representative Ashton 17 May praised ongoing political reforms


in meeting with 6 govt representatives in Brussels; Zimbabwe demanded immediate unconditional lifting of sanctions. During 19-25 May visit, UN human rights chief Pillay called for suspension of sanctions, free and fair polls, activation of human rights commission before elections, non partisan behaviour by security forces, greater media freedoms. EU, U.S. vowed to maintain sanctions until elections held, permanent political reform demonstrated; Attorney General responded by filing sanctions lawsuit against EU. South African High Court 8 May ruled Pretoria must investigate March 2007 attack on MDC, civil society activists in Zimbabwe; Zimbabwe Justice Minister Chinamasa said ruling "lies", violation of sovereignty. Draft constitution, released 30 April, endorsed by MDC-T, Zanu-PF demanded significant rewriting; tensions remain over presidential powers, devolution.

- ["Zimbabwe's Mugabe: Lift sanctions, UN's Navi Pillay urges"](#), BBC, 25 May 2012.


West Africa

 **Côte d'Ivoire** UNOCI 7 May asked govt to consider "situation in jails as top priority" following 4 May prison escape by 52 inmates, including several pro-Gbagbo hardliners. At least 4 killed 13 May in clashes between security forces and armed gang in Bangolo. Govt 23 May issued 30-day ultimatum calling on all persons illegally holding weapons to voluntarily disarm. Deputy Defence Minister Koffi Koffi 10 May said CDI, Liberia agreed to deploy troops to borders. Govt 19 May banned pro-Gbagbo daily Notre Voie for 5 days following publication of Gbagbo photo labelled "President of Republic deposed by 'UN-France coalition'".


- ["UN voices concern over recent prison breaks"](#), UN News, 5 May 2012.

 **Guinea** Thousands of opposition demonstrators 10 May resumed protests over govt refusal to organise transparent, credible elections; dozens of demonstrators, policemen wounded. Govt asked electoral commission to suspend controversial voter registration, 13 May organised "giant meeting" where thousands rallied to show support for ruling party Rally of the Guinea People.



- ["L'opposition annonce une nouvelle vague de manifestations"](#), *Jeune Afrique*, 8 May 2012.

 **Guinea-Bissau** Junta, ECOWAS, opposition parties 11 May agreed to nominate Serifo Nhamadjo to preside over 1-year transition; Rui Duarte Barros named PM 16 May. Majority party PAIGC and CPLP strongly criticised ECOWAS for "legitimising coup d'état". ECOWAS 19 May started deploying 629-strong Burkinabè/Nigerian/Senegalese security force. Angolan official 31 May said departure of MISSANG soldiers expected 2-10 June. UNSC 18 May imposed sanctions on coup leaders, demanded legitimate democratic govt. EU 31 May said does not recognise interim govt, broadened own list of sanctions targets.


- ["Angolan troops to leave Bissau next week- Official"](#), Reuters, 31 May 2012.

 **Liberia** Govt 28 April launched first of 5 regional justice and security hubs in Gbarnga. Senate 4 May pulled out of joint legislative group set up to probe national oil company NOCAL, review oil production sharing agreements. Special Court for Sierra Leone 30 May sentenced former President Taylor to 50 years in jail for war crimes, crimes against humanity.


- ["Charles Taylor: Sorry for those hurt by war crimes"](#), AP, 16 May 2012.

  **Mali** ECOWAS refused to accept decision by convention of pro-junta associations and parties naming Captain Sanogo as interim president at end of 40-day transition period prompting pro-junta demonstrators to storm presidential palace 21 May, wounding interim President Traoré; ECOWAS reached deal giving Sanogo status of ex-president in exchange for his acceptance of Traoré as interim president for 1 year. Algeria 1 May launched airstrike against Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJWA) convoy near Tinzwaten, killed 20. New armed group, Republican Movement for Restoration of Azawad (MRRA), reportedly formed 19 May, composed of Songhai, Fulani, Tuareg and Arabs; stated aim to recover Azawad from rebels. MNLA spokesman 1 June said negotiations with Islamist militant rebel group Ansar Dine to establish Azawad Republic failed. AQIM/Ansar Dine started enforcing Sharia in Timbuktu, attacked holy Muslim Sufi site; foreign, including South Asian, fighters reportedly joined AQIM ranks mid-May. Dispute over land/grazing rights between Fula and Dogon ethnic groups along Burkina Faso border left at least 25 dead 24 May.

- ["Le chef putschiste Sanogo désigné président de transition"](#), *Libération*, 23 May 2012.

 **Nigeria** Security forces clashed with Boko Haram (BH) throughout month; 6 May shootout in Kano left 4 BH members dead; shootouts 13 May in Borno and Zamfara states left 6 security force officers dead; suspected "BH enclave" in Jos destroyed 19 May. Bomb in Taraba state 30 April killed 11 policemen; govt 22 May foiled separate attempts to bomb police HQ and govt radio station in Abuja. Unknown gunmen 28 May killed 4 traders from mainly Christian Igbo ethnic group in northeastern Nigeria; unclear whether attack carried out by BH. German hostage abducted in Jan killed 30 May during failed rescue operation in Kano; 5 gunmen killed. Gunmen 28 May kidnapped Italian engineer in western state of Kwara.


- ["3 ministers escape death as two suspected bombers arrested"](#), *Vanguard*, 22 May 2012.

 **Senegal** Casamance separatists (MFDC) 7 May raided Mané-counda, Kounaya villages, took 10 hostages; 13 May raided Brikama village. Defence Minister Augustin Tine 10 May said liberation of 5 soldiers held since Dec imminent. Head of Collective of Casamance's Leaders, Pierre Goudiaby Atépa, 19 May launched appeal to MFDC military leaders for return to peace.

- ["Casamance: 10 personnes prises en otage par des assaillants, des boutiques pillées"](#), *PressAfrik*, 8 May 2012.

Asia

Central Asia

 **Kazakhstan** Kyrgyz President Atambaev 10 May began 2 day visit to discuss bilateral issues with President Nazarbaev, PM Masimov. Ex-prison warden 17 May sentenced to 5 years jail in connection to Dec 2011 Janaozen violence; court 23 May sentenced 11 in Aktau for Shetpe riot sparked by Janaozen violence, 6 later amnestied; 5 police 28 May sentenced to 5-7 years for "abuse of power" during Janaozen violence. Copper mine workers 7 May ended 2day strike after salaries doubled; gold mine workers 18 May began strike over

salaries; large protest 19 May in Temirtau organised by metallurgic workers trade union.

- [“Abuse claims swamp Kazakh oil riot trial”](#), BBC, 15 May 2012.

➡ **Kyrgyzstan** President Atambaev 3 May softened position on U.S. use of Manas airbase, said dependent on events in Afghanistan, U.S. willingness to pay higher rent. Kyrgyzstan, U.S. signed agreement 22 May allowing NATO to establish supply routes to and from Afghanistan. Radio Azattyk 16 May reported links between Kyrgyz criminal figures and Afghan-Pakistani Haqqani network. 79 initially detained, 2 hospitalised in 20 May brawl in Moscow between Kyrgyz and Uzbek migrants, reported continuation of ethnic tensions in S Kyrgyzstan.

- [“Kyrgyz President appears to soften position on Manas”](#), RFE/RL, 3 May 2012.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia report N°222, [Kyrgyzstan: Widening Ethnic Divisions in the South](#), 29 March 2012.

➡ **Tajikistan** Supreme Court 3 May ruled Islamist Jamaat Ansarul-lah extremist group, banned organisation. Court 30 May jailed 17 suspected Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) members. Officials 11 May announced arrest of suspected regional IMU leader Zilmurod Eshonkhonov, 2 associates in southern Khatlon Province. UN special rapporteur on torture Juan Méndez 18 May reported police, prosecutors using violence as “main investigatory tool”. Former Popular Front leaders 16 May announced plans for new Popular Front Without Weapons party to help unite political opposition. Ethnic Uzbek journalist and outspoken critic of Uzbek, Tajik govts Salim Shamsiddinov attacked 5 May by unknown assailants in Qurghon-Teppa.

- [“Tajikistan’s investigators rely heavily on violence – UN”](#), Eurasianet, 21 May 2012.

➡ **Turkmenistan** State media 24 May announced creation of “Entrepreneurs Party” to challenge one-party rule. Officials 23 May signed agreement with Pakistan, India to build gas-pipeline President Berdimukhammedov 18 May amnestied 1,000 prisoners to commemorate country’s adoption of constitution.

- [“Turkmenistan, Pakistan, India sign trans-Afghan gas pipeline deal”](#), RFE/RL, 23 May 2012.

➡ **Uzbekistan** Police 15 May announced investigation into 8 May abduction, killing of former minister Anvar Jabborov. Govt mid-month stated intention to privatise 500 key state assets

- [“Ex-Soviet Uzbekistan plans privatization drive”](#), AP, 16 May 2012.

North East Asia

➡ **North Korea** DPRK 22 May vowed to strengthen nuclear deterrent after U.S. threatened further sanctions if regime fails to abandon nuclear program. U.S., EU, ROK, Japan 1 May submitted list of some 40 DPRK companies to UNSC sanctions committee for possible blacklisting; 3 DPRK state-owned companies added to list 2 May. Japan vice-FM Hamada 2 May urged DPRK against further provocation; UNSC P5 urged DPRK to refrain from nuclear tests. DPRK officials 17 May demanded payment for release of Chinese fishing boats, 29 crew, 22 May released fishermen. Pictures purportedly showing signs of activity at new North Korea rocket launch

facilities published 22 May. DPRK revised Constitution published 30 May proclaimed status as nuclear-armed state.

- [“Satellite images show more work at North Korean nuclear site”](#), *New York Times*, 22 May 2012.

South Asia

➡ **Afghanistan** NATO summit late-May focussed on Afghanistan said 2014 withdrawal “irreversible”, reaffirmed commitment to long-term strategic partnership. Govt 13 May agreed border control mechanism, discussed restoration of NATO supply with ISAF, Pakistan at Tripartite Commission meeting. ISAF 29 May announced al-Qaeda second-in-command killed in 28 May air strike, Kunar province. 2 NATO soldiers killed, 6 injured 18 May in rocket attack on base in Kunar; 13 killed 19 May in suicide bomb attack on police checkpoint, Khost province; 6 police, 1 civilian killed 17 May in multiple suicide bomb attack on govt compound, Farah province; 8 police killed 20 May in clash with Taliban, Badakhshan; at least 11 police, one NATO soldier killed 31 May in Taliban bombings. ISAF 3 May reported capture of Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) leader in Kunduz province.

- Louise Arbour, [“Neutralidad para Afganistán”](#), Foreign Policy en español, 3 May 2012.
- [“NATO considers future of Afghanistan”](#), Deutsche Welle, 20 May 2012.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°221, [Talking About Talks: Toward a Political Settlement in Afghanistan](#), 26 March 2012.

➡ **Bangladesh** Month saw widespread protests against April arrest of 45 opposition leaders, disappearance of BNP regional leader Ilyas Ali; 200 injured 13 May across Bangladesh; several bombs exploded, over 100 arrested 17 May during Dhaka protest. Opposition set 10 June ultimatum for restoration of caretaker govt to oversee 2013 national elections, threatening boycott. U.S. Secretary of State Clinton 5 May called for political dialogue during visit to Dhaka. 3 top Jamaat-e-Islami members, including leader Ghulam Azam, indicted 12, 28 May for genocide, murder during 1971 Bangladesh liberation war; first trial expected to start 20 June; party said charges politically motivated. 9 journalists wounded 29 May in attack on Dhaka news outlet.

- [“Arrests, blasts in Bangladesh during nationwide strike called by opposition alliance”](#), AP, 17 May 2012.

➡ **India (non-Kashmir)** 7 Maoists, including former bodyguard of slain leader Kishenji, surrendered 23 May. 6 police, 1 civilian killed 14 May in Maoist attack, Chattisgarh. Senior ISA official freed 3 May after 12 days in captivity. 4 Maoists killed 9 May in firefight in Tinsukia district of Assam. Opposition 31 May led nationwide strike protesting rising fuel prices.

- [“Kishanji’s bodyguard, six other Maoists surrender”](#), Times of India, 24 May 2012.

➡ **Kashmir** Police 21 May prevented Hurriyat Conference protest in Srinagar commemorating 1990 Mirwaiz Farooq assassination. 14 injured 19 May in grenade attack on police station near Srinagar. Senior Hizbul Mujahidin militant killed 25 May by security forces in Jammu. 7 Indian soldiers injured in 30 May Srinagar attack.

- [“Kashmir militants give up fight and head home”](#), BBC, 31 May 2012.



Nepal Constituent Assembly (CA) dissolved after political parties 27 May failed to promulgate new constitution. PM Baburam Bhattarai announced new CA elections for 22 Nov; main opposition Nepali Congress denounced decision as unconstitutional; 30 May said intends to topple govt through protests. Supreme Court 24 May stayed govt and opposition proposal to extend CA's term by 3 months, upholding Nov 2011 verdict offering 3 options: state of emergency, fresh elections, other agreed-upon alternative. Run-up to CA deadline saw shutdowns from identity-based groups, including 20-day strike in west. Some attacks on media in 20-22 May strike called by indigenous umbrella organisation rejecting 15 May deal between parties for not recognising ethnic identity, 52 arrested. 4 killed 1 May in Janakpur after IED attack by Madhesi armed group. Supreme Court judge under investigation for corruption shot dead 31 May, Kathmandu.

- Anagha Neelakantan, "[Moment of truth](#)", República, 24 May 2012.
- "[CA's demise](#)", República, 28 May 2012.



Pakistan President Zardari attended NATO summit 20-22 May, urged "permanent solution" to U.S. drone strikes: 4 killed 23 May, 10 killed 24 May, 4 killed 26 May, 12 killed 29 May in reported drone strikes, North Waziristan. Tensions with U.S. deepened after tribal court sentenced doctor who helped CIA find Bin Laden to 33 years in prison for, according to leaked court document, providing medical care to banned terror groups; U.S. Secretary of State Clinton 24 May said move "unjust and unwarranted". NATO supply lines remained closed, U.S. rejected demand for \$5,000 per container. Violence in Karachi continued: at least 9 killed, 30 wounded 22 May when gunmen opened fire on political rally, sparking riots, gunfights; 9 killed, including senior police officer, in targeted attacks 9 May, following court-martial of 3 navy officers for "negligence" in connection with 2011 Taliban attack on Karachi Naval base. 3 killed 28 May in bombing targeting police, Quetta. 20 killed 4 May, 9 soldiers killed 5 May, further 2 killed 28 May in militant attacks in tribal belt. Govt 10 May announced successful nuclear-capable short-range missile test; 31 May conducted medium-range missile test. Speaker of national assembly 24 May refused to disqualify PM Gilani over contempt conviction; opposition Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz and Pakistan Tehrik-i-Insaf parties 28 May filed petitions with Supreme Court challenging decision. National conference of all political parties, hosted by Supreme Court Bar Association 25 May, called for end of military operations, withdrawal of military and paramilitary troops from Balochistan.

- "[Pakistan's 'tough line' after Chicago](#)", BBC, 22 May 2012.

New Crisis Group Asia Report N°224, [Pakistan's Relations with India: Beyond Kashmir?](#), 3 May 2012. Their recent dialogue process provides the best chance yet for bilateral peace and regional stability, but Pakistan and India must still overcome serious mistrust among hardliners in their security elites.



Sri Lanka 3rd anniversary of end of civil war commemorated 18-19 May, President Rajapaksa announced govt implementing some LLRC recommendations, would not be dictated to by outside powers. FM G.M. Peiris 18 May met U.S. Secretary of State Clinton during Washington visit, said inquiry into limited set of alleged war crimes by security forces had begun, but presented no concrete plan for accountability or implementation of LLRC. Govt 24 May announced establishment of new courts to accelerate trials of Tamil civil war suspects. Former army chief and Democratic

National alliance leader Sarath Fonseka released 21 May following presidential remittance of sentence, terms of release bar him from political office for 7 years. Govt 13 May announced plans for Sept provincial elections in North Central, Sabaragawumuwa and Eastern provinces, but not North. Canadian High Commissioner to Sri Lanka called for full investigation amid allegations of military involvement in early May murder of Canadian citizen of Tamil origin, Kilinochichi.

- "[Sri Lanka marks three years since war's end](#)", Al Jazeera, 19 May 2012.
- For latest reports, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°219, [Sri Lanka's North I: the Denial of Minority Rights](#), 16 March 2012 and Crisis Group Asia Report N°220, [Sri Lanka's North II: Rebuilding Under the Military](#), 16 March 2012.

South East Asia



Indonesia Hardline Muslim groups 5, 9 May disrupted lectures by Canadian Muslim feminist in Jakarta, Yogyakarta; police failed to intervene. Lady Gaga cancelled planned Jakarta concert following protest by hardliners. 1 Papuan shot dead, 3 wounded by paramilitary police 15 May at gold mining site in Degeuwo, Paniai; police to launch internal investigation. Suspected Free Papua Movement (OPM) attack 17 May killed 1, injured 3 in Puncak Jaya. 55 injured in 15 May clash between Christian, Muslim groups in Ambon; 6 suspects linked to September 2011 deadly unrest in Ambon arrested 17 May.

- "[Is Indonesia becoming less tolerant?](#)", BBC, 29 May 2012.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°135, [Indonesia: Averting Election Violence in Aceh](#), 29 Feb. 2012.



Burma/Myanmar VP Tin Aung Myint Oo 3 May reportedly resigned on health grounds, govt yet to officially confirm. Opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi 2 May debuted in parliament, given passport for first time in 24 years ahead of May, June travel to Thailand, UK, Ireland, Norway, Switzerland. At least 31 killed early May in govt clashes with Kachin Independence Army (KIA); KIA rebels 15 May appealed to UNSG for UN observers to monitor conflict zone. President Thein Sein 3 May named as chairman of new peace team to negotiate with armed groups. Govt, Shan State Army rebels 19 May agreed to enforce ceasefire, eradicate drug production in area; armed clashes occurred 23 May. Rare protests in Yangon, Mandalay, other cities late May over electricity shortages, govt appealed for understanding. G8 leaders 19 May praised ongoing political reforms. U.S. Secretary of State Clinton 17 May announced easing of investment ban, named new ambassador, called for release of remaining political prisoners. Following first official visit for 9 years, Amnesty International report released 24 May noted major human rights improvements in past year, but expressed concern over continued violations. During 14 May visit by South Korean President Lee, President Thein Sein pledged to abide by UNSC resolutions on DPRK's nuclear program, halt weapons purchases from DPRK. MPs 10 May visited European Parliament, met with European Council President van Rompuy, EU High Representative Ashton.

- "[Testing Myanmar's waters as dissent gets freer rein](#)", *Wall Street Journal*, 22 May 2012.
- For latest report see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°136, [Reform in Myanmar: One Year On](#), 11 April 2012.

➡ **Philippines** Fishing ban declared by Philippines, China mid-May failed to end Scarborough Shoal dispute, defence chiefs 28 May agreed to exercise restraint. Govt-MILF peace talks resumed 28 May. MILF military affairs chief died 3 May, replacement not yet announced. Mid-May conflict between local MILF, Moro National Liberation Front commanders in North Cotabato displaced close to 300 families. 3 killed, 24 injured in grenade blast in Iligan City 5 May. Authorities 30 May confirmed March murder of witness in 2009 Maguindanao massacre trial. Abu Sayyaf Group rebels 11 May freed Malaysian kidnapped May 2011, still holding 6 foreigners hostage. Senate 29 May impeached Chief Justice Corona on corruption charges.

- “China, the Philippines, and the Scarborough Shoal”, Huffington Post, 20 May 2012.

New Crisis Group Asia Report N°225, *The Philippines: Local Politics in the Sulu Archipelago and the Peace Process*, 15 May 2012. Politics in the Sulu archipelago could be an unforeseen stumbling block for a negotiated peace with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in the southern Philippines.

➡ **Thailand** Scuffles in parliament, “yellow shirt” protests followed 29 May introduction of reconciliation bills, which include amnesty for former PM Thaksin Shinawatra. Large-scale peaceful rallies 19 May marked 2nd anniversary of 2010 deadly protests; Department of Special Investigations 17 May said “state authorities” responsible for at least 25 deaths during 2010 crackdown; first of 18 inquests into state involvement in deaths began 21 May. 8 May death of man jailed Nov 2011 for 20 years for insulting king in text messages, 30 May conviction of news website manager for lese majesté resulted in “red shirt” protests, petitions to govt for law reform. 5-year ban given in 2007 to 111 politicians from Thai Rak Thai Party expired 30 May, several expected to be appointed to cabinet in upcoming reshuffle. Constitutional Court 18 May declared July 2011 election of “red shirt” leader Jatuporn Prompan invalid, stripped him of parliamentary seat. Deputy PM Yuthasak Sasiprapa 15 May announced initiative to better integrate govt agencies’ efforts to address southern violence; Organisation of the Islamic Conference delegation visited 7-13 May to assess situation in south, noted improved situation, encouraged dialogue; attacks continued in Pattani including 1 May bombing of military convoy killing 3, 3 May attack killing 4 local officials, 13 May insurgent ambush injuring 16 paramilitary rangers, 28 May bombing killing 3 civil defence volunteers.

- “New unity bills stir suspicions”, *Bangkok Post*, 30 May 2012.

➡ **Timor Leste** Taur Matan Ruak 20 May sworn in as president during ceremonies marking 10-year independence anniversary.

- “East Timor celebrates 10 years of independence”, *The Age*, 20 May 2012.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°134, *Timor-Leste’s Elections: Leaving Behind a Violent Past?*, 21 Feb. 2012.

Europe

Balkans

➡ **Bosnia** Coalition govt to split following defection of coalition member Bosniak Party of Democratic Action (SDA) in 30 April vote finalising 2012 budget; Social Democratic Party 31 May called for SDA to leave coalition. Party leaders made substantial progress towards implementation of agreements on state and defence property, governance of autonomous Brčko district; U.S., UK, Turkey signalled Office of High Representative closure subject to assessment of political situation. Republika Srpska (RS) Serb parliamentary parties 17 May said BiH NATO accession would require referendum in RS. ICTY trial of Ratko Mladić began 16 May on charges of genocide. BiH 22 May announced plans for local elections despite EU refusal to recognise polls due to discrimination against ethnic minorities.

- “SDP-SDA coalition breaks up”, *Balkan Insight*, 31 May 2012.

➡ **Kosovo** Serbian elections 6, 20 May conducted peacefully; OSCE Chairperson 21 May commended “responsible behaviour on all sides”; 2 N Kosovo municipalities conducted local Serbian elections despite opposition from international community; Priština 8 May condemned local elections as illegal. Kosovo 23 May announced opening of administrative office in North Mitrovica to disburse govt funds; Serbia said move “flagrant provocation”. Serbian presidential elections 20 May passed without violence in N Kosovo; new Serbian President Nikolić 28 May stated Serbia would not recognise Kosovo in return for EU membership. EULEX forces 21 May raided home of N Kosovo Serb businessman Zvonko Veselinović, suspected of links to organised crime, organising riots against EULEX forces; 6 suspected accomplices arrested 30 May. 2 Kosovo Serb houses 23 May set on fire in N Kosovo, police investigating links to Albanian National Army paramilitary group.

- “OSCE welcomes peaceful elections in Kosovo”, *Balkan Insight*, 21 May 2012.

➡ **Macedonia** Macedonian police 1 May arrested 20 ethnic Albanian “radical Islamists” in connection with April murders of 5 ethnic Macedonians; ethnic Albanians 4, 11 May protested arrests in Skopje. PM Gruevski condemned NATO’s “selective respect of international law” after NATO failed to consider Macedonian accession during Chicago summit due to name dispute; U.S. ambassador Wohlens 31 May stated expectation Macedonia will become NATO member before next summit. Opposition leader Branko Crvenkovski 28 May presented “classified” 2005 UN mediator proposal for name change to “Republika Makedonija”, criticized President Gruevski’s rejection of it; Gruevski 31 May cited proposal’s imprecision on nationality, language.


- “Macedonian PM criticised over NATO remarks”, *Balkan Insight*, 23 May 2012.

➡ **Serbia** Serbian Progressive Party (SNS) leader Tomislav Nikolić 20 May defeated incumbent President Tadić in presidential elections. New President same day declared Serbia “will not stray from its European path” in effort to assuage fears over previous links to Milošević and cultivation of ties with Moscow; EU, U.S. encouraged continued dialogue with Kosovo. In first official visit to Moscow


President Nikolić 28 May said Serbia would not recognize Kosovo even as requirement for EU membership.

- [“Nationalist wins Serbian presidency, clouding ties to the west”](#), *New York Times*, 20 May 2012.


Caucasus

 **Armenia** Ruling Republican Party of Armenia (HHK) won 69 of 131 mandates in 6 May parliamentary elections with reported 44% of votes; opposition coalition Armenian National Congress (HAK) surpassed 7% threshold to enter parliament. Prosperous Armenia Party (BHK), Armenian Revolutionary Federation (HHD), HAK alleged widespread violations, fraud; BHK leader Gagik Tsarukian 24 May ruled out joining ruling-coalition.


- [“Armenian politics enters new phase”](#), RFE/RL, 28 May 2012.

 **Azerbaijan** Police in Baku throughout month broke-up unsanctioned opposition rallies demanding greater freedoms, protesting country's poor human rights record. Court 16 May released prominent opposition activist Elnur Mecdli, arrested following April protest.


- [“Azerbaijani police detain dozens of opposition protesters”](#), RFE/RL, 24 May 2012.

 **North Caucasus (Russia)** In Dagestan: double suicide attack 3 May against police post in Makhachkala killed 13, injured almost 100, including 55 civilians; alleged organiser and insurgent leader Hussein Mamaev killed 15 May in counterterrorist operation (CTO). 7 militants, 2 policemen killed during 10 May clashes in Kizlyar district. 12 May ambush of security forces on border of Sergokalinsky, Kayakentsky districts killed policeman, head of local militant group. 18 May CTO in Makhachkala killed suspected militant, sparked clashes with Salafi demonstrators. Deputy Sports Minister killed 29 May in Makhachkala. In Chechnya: Interior Ministry empowered to conduct special operations in Ingushetia and Dagestan. Chechen leader Kadyrov 17 May sacked govt; Abubakar Edilgeriev 21 May named new PM. 4 suspected militants 24 May killed in Urus-Martan, Achkhoy-Martan districts. In Kabardino-Balkaria: Baksan district administration head 28 May wounded in shooting, suspected attacker killed. Tyrnauz town administration head 18 May killed by unknown gunmen. In Stavropol Krai: Neftekumsk town mosque imam wounded in shooting by unknown gunmen.

- [“The Ministry of Interior Affairs of Chechnya will carry out special operations in Dagestan and Ingushetia”](#), *Caucasian Knot*, 21 May 2012.


 **Georgia** 80,000-100,000 attended mass rally 27 May in Tbilisi marking start of opposition coalition Georgian Dream election campaign. Ruling United National Movement reduced residency requirement for Georgian-born EU citizens running for presidency to 5 years; Georgian Dream leader Bidzina Ivanishvili refused to use amendment, said changes “propaganda tricks”, asked to be granted dual citizenship instead. State audit agency fined private company \$3mn for allegedly making political donations to Georgian Dream. Russian Anti-terrorism Committee (NAK) 10 May reportedly discovered of arms cache in Abkhazia, alleged Caucasus Emirate leader Doku Umarov planning attack in Sochi in cooperation with Georgian security services.

- [“Russia again alleges Georgian connivance with Chechen militants”](#), RFE/RL, 11 May 2012.


 **Nagorno-Karabakh (Azerbaijan)** Officials 17 May said soldier severely injured near border. Minsk Group co-Chairs 11-14 May visited Yerevan and Baku, expressed concerns over line of contact incidents.

- [“OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs call on to accelerate reaching agreement on Nagorno-Karabakh”](#), *Trend*, 14 May 2012.


Eastern Europe

 **Belarus** U.S. Treasury Department 22 May said Belarusian Cedex bank institution “of primary money laundering concern”, proposed banning transactions with U.S. financial institutions.

- [“U.S says Belarusian bank ‘of primary money laundering concern’”](#), RFE/RL, 22 May 2012.


 **Moldova** Defence Minister Marinuta 23 May suggested Moldova may benefit from missile warning data from European missile shield, subject to “involvement in cooperation with NATO”. U.S. 22 May agreed to provide \$2mn in extra funds for rule of law development.

- [“Moldova may benefit from NATO missile defense - minister”](#), *RIA Novosti*, 23 May 2012.

 **Ukraine** 4 coordinated bomb blasts 29 April in Dnipropetrovsk injured 30 civilians; govt condemned acts as “terrorism”; 2 men arrested 31 May after allegedly seeking to extort money from govt for not proceeding with bombing. President Yanukovich 20 May ruled out releasing jailed opposition leader Tymoshenko for medical treatment abroad, new corruption case postponed to 25 June, but authorities claim Tymoshenko is “material witness” in 1996 murder case; Tymoshenko remained in hospital recovering from hunger strike after alleged prison beating in April; EU leaders postponed 11-12 May Ukraine summit over concerns about Tymoshenko treatment; European Parliament 16 May received clearance to send doctors.

- [“Parliament to send medics to Tymoshenko”](#), *European Voice*, 16 May 2012.

Western Europe/Mediterranean

 **Cyprus** President Christofias 14 May ruled out re-election after pledge to bow out if no reunification solution found. UNSG Ban 19 May reportedly suggested in meeting with EU Commission President Barroso bid to convince Turkey to renew negotiations despite Turkish vow to freeze negotiations during Cypriot EU Presidency. UN Special Adviser Downer 24 May said convergences achieved so far should not be “thrown away”, expressed desire for talks to continue at technical level with discussion of confidence building measures but admitted “period of uncertainty” while President Christofias’ successor unknown. After French, Italian, Russian oil companies bid 11 May for Cyprus East Mediterranean hydrocarbon blocks, Turkey 18 May warned it will not allow exploration in disputed zones, said applying for Cypriot licenses would disqualify them from Turkish contracts.

- [“End of the road for Christofias – President will not seek re-election”](#), *Famagusta Gazette*, 14 May 2012.
- For latest report see Crisis Group Europe Report N°216, *Aphrodite's Gift: Can Cypriot Gas Power a New Dialogue?*, 2 April 2012.

➡ **Turkey** Clashes between security forces and PKK continued across S-E killing 25 PKK militants, 9 govt forces. PKK began new wave of kidnappings, assassinations: AKP district official taken 15 May in Diyarbakır; AKP city deputy head killed 17 May in Şırnak; village official, 5 guards kidnapped 18 May in Bitlis; Imam 20 May killed in Ağrı; 10 villagers kidnapped 23 May in Diyarbakır, 10 civilians kidnapped 29 May in Iğdır. PKK 18 May attack on bus in Hakkari killed 1 worker, 21 May bus attack in Istanbul; 25 May suicide car bombing outside police station in Kayseri attributed to PKK, 1 police, 3 assailants killed. Police 8-9 May detained 100 people with alleged connections to Kurdish Communities Union, including 3 with high level links to pro-Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party (BDP). Turkish Interior Minister Şahin 23 May blamed Turkish air force for accidental Dec 2011 killing of 34 Kurdish smugglers flagged by drone intelligence, accused Syria of allowing PKK to establish bases in its territory. 18 soldiers, including 6 generals detained 18 May in investigation into 1997 military coup, 7 later released; jailed Rear Adm. Çakmak 28 May allegedly threatened revenge for trials. Parliamentary commission 1 May began drafting new civilian constitution. EU Enlargement Commissioner Füle's visit 14 May revived talks over blocked accession chapters despite Cyprus deadlock. Court 28 May indicted Israeli generals for flotilla attacks (see Israel/ Occupied Palestinian Territories).

- ["Back to 1990s on Kurdish woe"](#), *Hürriyet Daily News*, 25 May 2012.

Latin America

➡ **Bolivia** Tensions over construction of national highway through TIPNIS national park continued; President Morales 10 May said highway will be constructed. Citizen Security Vice Minister Miguel Vásquez 16 May said national security threatened by 21,000 gang members, police corruption. Govt restored 6-hour workday following dialogue with Bolivarian Central Union, representing health workers protesting since 23 April against decree increasing workday to 8 hours.

- ["Pandillas y policías corruptos amenazan seguridad, según general"](#), *Infolatam*, 16 May 2012.

➡ **Colombia** Bomb targeting former Interior and Justice Minister Fernando Londoño 15 May left 2 dead, 54 injured; perpetrator unknown. FARC attack (59th Front) 21 May killed 12 soldiers, injured 4 in Guajira dept. At least 10 police killed, 25 injured as result of other FARC attacks across country. FARC 30 May released France24 journalist Romeo Langlois held since 29 April. New illegal armed group Rastrojos leader Javier Calle Serna, alias 'Comba', 4 May surrendered to U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency; concerns he may evade prosecution in Colombia, receive reduced sentence in U.S. Venezuelan priest/journalist Pedro José Palmar 25 May alleged FARC leader Rodrigo Londoño, alias 'Timochenko' and FARC secretariat members frequently spend night at estate of Adán Chávez, President Chávez's brother and governor of Barinas state. 6 soldiers jailed 26 May for 30-50 years for role in 'falsos positivos' scandal.

- Javier Ciurlizza, ["El marco para la paz frente a una auténtica justicia transicional"](#), *Razón Pública*, 20 May 2012.
- ["Bomb targeting Colombia politician kills at least two"](#), *BBC*, 15 May 2012.

➡ **Ecuador** Govt deployed 10,000 soldiers across country to support police in crime-fighting, causing unease among soldiers who felt unprepared; head of Armed Forces announced plan to train 4,000 to fight crime. Authorities 7 May captured FARC leader (48th Front) Wilson Tapiero, alias "Dumar", in Angostura province.

- ["Ecuador arrests alleged leader of FARC's 48th Front"](#), *InSight Crime*, 8 May 2012.

➡ **Guatemala** President Pérez Molina 2 May declared state of siege, deployed 500 security personnel to Santa Cruz Barillas following protest, seizure of army post by indigenous residents after killing of community leader opposed to construction of hydroelectric dam; state of siege lifted 18 May, 240 security personnel to remain; Molina said Zetas drug cartel possibly involved. Defence Ministry 9 May announced deployment of 500 soldiers, including 300 special forces, to combat drug trafficking in Petén.

- ["Guatemala Lifts State of Siege in Indigenous Community"](#), *EFE*, 18 May 2012.

➡ **Haiti** Following 6 months of increasing instability, FM Lamothe confirmed as new PM 3 May; political parties declined Lamothe's invitation to form unity govt; 1 opposition member Rodolphe Joazile, appointed defence minister. Police with support of MINUSTAH began action against ad hoc military groups occupying state property since Jan; 2 former soldiers arrested 6 May; police 19 May shut down former military base in Lamentin. Some 50 people, including 2 U.S. citizens, arrested 18 May during march led by military that turned violent near presidential palace.

- ["Remnants of Haiti's army march in the capital; two Americans were among those arrested"](#), *Miami Herald*, 19 May 2012.

➡ **Mexico** 5 journalists killed; crime reporter Marco Antonio Avila found dead 18 May in Sonora State, photojournalists Gabriel Hüge, Guillermo Luna, Esteban Rodríguez found dead 3 May in Veracruz; journalist Rene Orta Salgado found dead in Morelos State. Unidentified assailants 11 May attacked newspaper *El Mañana* in Nuevo Laredo. Authorities arrested 4 army officers suspected of links to Beltrán Leyva cartel in unprecedented investigation of military high command. 49 dismembered bodies found 13 May in Nuevo Leon state; 18 bodies found 10 May in Jalisco; 23 bodies found 4 May in Tamaulipas. Authorities 20 May announced arrest of Zeta leader Daniel Elizondo, alias "Madman", on suspicion of perpetrating Nuevo Leon massacre; Zetas denied responsibility. 8 police officers, 2 civilians injured 24 May following attack by gunmen on Nuevo Laredo hotel.

- ["Amid violence, Mexican paper gives up reporting all crime"](#), *Huffington Post*, 24 May 2012.

➡ **Venezuela** President Chávez early May appointed "Council of State" body of advisers, touted as part of a plan for post-Chávez transition. Parliament 8 May voted to withdraw from Inter-American Commission on Human Rights; FM Maduro called upon regional govts to work towards creation of new supra-national human rights infrastructure independent from OAS and U.S.; UNOHCHR spokesperson Rupert Colville called upon govt to reconsider. Continued uncertainty over Chávez's health following 11-day silence after return from Cuba.

- ["Chávez dejó fuera del Consejo de Estado a los 'candidateables'"](#), *El Universal*, 11 May 2012.

Middle East/North Africa

Eastern Mediterranean



Israel/Occupied Palestinian Territories Israeli PM Netanyahu 8 May announced opposition Kadima party to join govt, pushing back elections to Nov 2013. Netanyahu 12 May replied to April letter from Abbas, called for return to negotiations without pre-conditions. Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak 30 May said Israel may consider “unilateral move” if negotiations with Palestinians fail. Some 1,600 Palestinian prisoners in Israel 14 May ended hunger strike following reported agreement to improve conditions, review administrative detention of 322 prisoners. EU FMs 14 May published report denouncing Israeli settlements, settler violence, house demolitions in W-B. Israel 31 May returned bodies of 91 dead militants to Palestinian authorities. Roughly 1,000 protested 23 May against African migrants in Tel Aviv, attacked Africans. Hamas, Fatah 28 May resumed talks to form unity govt; announced Central Election Commission to register Gaza voters, prepare elections. Turkish court 28 May indicted 4 former Israeli commanders, including former Chief of Staff Ashkenazi, over alleged involvement in 2010 Mavi Marmara raid.

- Robert Blecher, “No, the Two-State Solution Isn’t Dead Yet — But You’re Asking the Wrong Question”, *Daily Beast*, 31 May 2012.
- Robert Blecher, “Back to Square One”, *Al-Akhbar*, 1 May 2012.
- “Israeli official weighs an imposed Palestinian border”, *New York Times*, 30 May 2012.

New Crisis Group Middle East Report N°122, *The Emperor Has No Clothes: Palestinians and the End of the Peace Process*, 7 May 2012. Israelis, Palestinians and the international community should reconsider the basic pillars of the Middle East Process, which in its current form will not yield a durable agreement.



Lebanon Month saw escalating violence between supporters, opponents of Syrian regime: 12 May detention of Sunni cleric Shadi al-Mawlawi sparked clashes between Alawites, Sunnis in Tripoli, 9 killed. Killing of Sunni cleric Ahmed Abdul Wahid at army checkpoint in N Lebanon triggered 21 May protest in Beirut, 2 killed; 11 Lebanese Shiite pilgrims kidnapped in Syria 22 May provoked further unrest. String of violent incidents on Syrian border led to several deaths, injuries. Security sources claimed al-Qaeda gunman with links to 2005 Hariri murder arrested, accomplice killed 24 May in Beirut following standoff with soldiers.

- “Roots of the chaos in north Lebanon spread far and wide”, *Daily Star*, 22 May 2012.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Middle East Report N°117, *Lebanon’s Palestinian Dilemma: the Struggle Over Nahr al-Bared*, 1 March 2012.



Syria Month saw continued violence, fighting despite presence of UN monitors. UN reported 108 killed 25 May in Houla during regime shelling, many summarily executed; residents reported scores of women, children massacred by pro-regime Alawite militia, attribution disputed by regime, questioned by Russia; UNSC condemned killings, use of heavy weapons by regime; numerous countries, including U.S., France, UK expelled Syrian diplomats. UN 29 May found 13 executed near Deir al-Zour. Series of bombings: 5 May reportedly targeting business in Aleppo

linked to pro-regime militia, at least 5 killed; 10 May against military intelligence building in Damascus, 55 reported killed, 372 wounded; 19 May against security building in Deir al-Zour, 9 killed. Security forces 3 May stormed Aleppo university campus following anti-regime protest by students, 5 killed, over 200 arrested; thousands 18 May demonstrated in Aleppo in solidarity with students. Security forces 15 May attacked funeral in Khan Sheikhoun during UNSMIS visit, 20 reported killed, 3 UN vehicles damaged. Opposition Free Syrian Army (FSA) 20 May claimed 6 senior regime officials poisoned, including head of Syrian intelligence Asif Shawkat. UN-Arab League envoy Kofi Annan 28 May arrived in Damascus to push for implementation of peace plan, warned Syria at “tipping point”. UNSG Ban 31 May said Syria moving towards “catastrophic” civil war, demanded Syria implement peace plan. Senior Iranian Revolutionary Guards commander late-month reportedly confirmed Iranian troop presence in Syria. As part of regime touted reforms, 7 May parliamentary elections held amid low turnout, opposition boycott. Opposition Syrian National Council chairman Burhan Ghalioun 17 May resigned following widespread criticism.

- “Syria civil war threat grows after Houla massacre”, BBC, 31 May 2012.
- For latest report see Crisis Group Middle East Briefing N°33, *Syria’s Phase of Radicalisation*, 10 April 2012.

Gulf



Bahrain 4 police injured in 5 May blast in Bani Jamrah; police 16 May issued arrest warrants for 20 people in connection with bomb attacks. Bahrain Centre for Human Rights President Nabeel Rajab 5 May arrested on return from Lebanon, charged with organising illegal demonstrations, insulting statutory body via Twitter, released 28 May on bail. Thousands protested 11 May near Manama in support of detained activist Abdulhadi al-Khawaja; al-Khawaja 28 May ended 110-day hunger strike; daughter Zainab al-Khawaja 24 May convicted over anti-govt protests. King Hamad 3 May ratified amendments to constitution giving extra powers to parliament. U.S. 11 May announced resumption of arms shipments to Bahrain for “external defence”. Gulf Arab countries 14 May held summit in Riyadh, discussed plans of greater union between Bahrain, Saudi Arabia.

- Joost Hiltermann, “Bahrain: A New Sectarian Conflict”, *New York Review of Books*, 8 May 2012.
- “Bahrain may not be Syria, but that’s no reason for activists to turn a blind eye”, *Guardian*, 8 May, 2012.



Iran Talks resumed 14-15 May with IAEA in Vienna; during 21-22 May visit to Tehran IAEA head Amano said deal on resolving outstanding issues close; Israeli PM Netanyahu warned West against “bowing down” to Iran. 23-24 May talks between Iran and P5+1 ended without agreements on curbing Iran’s enrichment programs or lifting sanctions; talks to resume 18-19 June in Moscow. IAEA 25 May reported 27% enriched uranium at Fordo nuclear site. U.S. envoy to Israel Dan Shapiro said U.S. plans to attack Iran exist should diplomacy fail. U.S. Senate 22 May tightened Iranian sanctions. Iran President Ahmadinejad suffered further setback in 2nd round of parliamentary elections held 4 May after supporters won only 13 of 65 seats. Diplomatic row erupted over proposed union between Bahrain, Saudi Arabia; Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani said Bahrain should be integrated into Iran.

- “Despite endgame fears, no need to rush Iran nuclear talks”, BBC, 28 May 2012.

➡ **Iraq** Series of bombings, shootings across country left several dead, dozens injured. Roadside bomb near Baghdad 27 May injured 24 Pakistani pilgrims. Bombings 31 May in Baghdad killed at least 13 people. Trial in absentia of Vice President al-Hashemi opened in Baghdad 15 May; Turkey 9 May refused to extradite al-Hashemi despite 8 May Interpol Red Notice for his arrest. Kurdistan regional govt (KRG) President Barzani 28 May warned of desire for “Arabisation and ethnic cleansing” among some politicians. KRG Oil minister Hawrami 20 May outlined plans to export oil, gas directly to Turkey.

- “Period of Relative Calm in Iraq Is Brought to End by Fatal Bomb Blasts”, *New York Times*, 13 May, 2012.
- For latest report see Crisis Group Middle East Report N°120, *Iraq and the Kurds: The High-Stakes Hydrocarbons Gambit*, 19 April 2012.

➡ **Saudi Arabia** King Abdullah 11 May sacked hard line advisor Sheikh al-Obeikan after criticising reforms easing restrictions on women.

- “Saudi King Abdullah sacks conservative adviser”, BBC, 11 May 2012.

➡ **Jordan** King Abdullah II 2 May swore in new cabinet; 7 May approved Independent Elections Commission to oversee elections to be held before end 2012. Opposition Islamists 3 May warned new govt setback for reform plans. Mass demonstrations 11 May demanded elected govt, criticised PM Tarawneh, 25 May protested govt plans to hike commodity prices, taxes.

- “Jordan king pushes for polls before end of 2012”, Middle East Online, 9 May 2012.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Middle East Report N°118, *Popular Protest in North Africa and the Middle East (IX): Dallying with Reform in a Divided Jordan*, 12 March 2012.

➡ **Yemen** More than 100 killed 21 May by suicide bomb at military parade rehearsal in Sanaa; al-Qaeda in the Arab Peninsula (AQAP) claimed responsibility. Same day, air strikes in Abyan province killed 16 suspected al-Qaeda militants. 2 suicide bombs 25 May linked to AQAP killed 12 in north. CIA 7 May announced AQAP plot to smuggle bomb aboard U.S. bound airliner had been thwarted. U.S. drone strike 6 May purportedly killed senior al-Qaeda militant al-Quso wanted in connection with Oct 2000 bombing of USS Cole; airstrikes 10 May near Jaar and Zinjibar killed suspected al-Qaeda militants; numerous strikes 12 May left several militants dead; govt 14-15 May intensified campaign to recapture towns from Islamist militants, killing dozens. Fighting 28 May killed at least 17 militants, 1 civilian in Bayda province. At least 7 killed in 30 May AQAP attack against govt troops in Radda. President Hadi 6 May announced formation of 8-member contact committee to begin preparations for national reconciliation dialogue. Former President Saleh’s nephew Mohammed Abdullah mid-month stepped down as commander of Republican Guard’s 3rd Brigade. U.S. President Obama 16 May authorised U.S. Treasury to freeze assets of anyone “obstructing” implementation” of transition plan.

- “Profile: Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula”, Al Jazeera, 9 May 2012.

North Africa

➡ **Algeria** 10 May legislative elections saw official turnout rise to 43%, with ruling National Liberation Front (FLN) receiving 204 of 462 seats, National Rally for Democracy (RND) 69 seats; opposition RCD party claimed turnout only 18%; Islamist parties said results fraudulent. 1 May airstrike targeted Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJWA) convoy near Tinzwaten. MUJWA 3 May demanded €15 million for 7 Algerian diplomats kidnapped in April in Mali, release of detained MUJWA members.

- “Algeria’s 10 May 2012 elections: preliminary analysis”, *Jadaliyya*, 14 May 2012.

➡ **Egypt** Month saw peaceful voting in 23-24 May presidential elections; announcement of 16-17 June run-off between Muslim Brotherhood’s Morsi, former PM Shafiq sparked protests; Shafiq campaign HQ ransacked 28 May. Military council 31 May ended 31-year state of emergency. Unidentified assailants 2-4 May attacked protesters demonstrating outside defence ministry against military rule, some 11 killed. Bedouin tribesmen 7 May released 10 Fijian members of Multinational Force and Observers (MFO) mission in Sinai, reportedly after demands met.

- Yasser El-Shimy, “Présidentielle : une lueur d’espoir en Egypte”, *Le Figaro*, 22 May 2012.
- “Egyptian election results present ‘nightmare scenario’”, *Guardian*, 25 May 2012.
- For latest report see Crisis Group Middle East/North Africa Report N°121, *Lost in Transition: The World According to Egypt’s SCAF*, 24 April 2012.

➡ **Libya** NTC 2 May passed series of laws prohibiting glorification of former dictator Qadhafi, absolving rebels of crimes committed during rebellion, increasing concerns govt hampering freedom of expression, promoting culture of impunity. Voting registration began 1 May, extended to 21 May; 19 June elections postponed, no new date set. Gunmen 8 May occupied office of interim PM al-Keib over pay dispute, killing at least 1. Local forces, rebel militias clashed 10 May in Bani Walid. 16 May clashes between local militias, Tuareg fighters in Ghadames killed at least 7. Mauritanian authorities 21 May announced former Qadhafi intelligence chief al-Senussi to face charges in Mauritania. Tunisian justice ministry announced intention to extradite former PM al-Mahmoudi to Libya.

- “Libya still ruled by the gun”, *Telegraph*, 18 May, 2012.

➡ **Mauritania** Demonstrations demanding resignation of President Abdel Aziz continued throughout month; opposition rally led by Coordination for Democratic Opposition (COD) violently dispersed 2 May. April burning of Islamic Maliki legal texts legitimising slavery by Initiative for Abolitionist Resurgence (IRA) head Biram Ould Abeid led thousands to march calling for banning of IRA; govt 24 May announced creation of High Council for Fatwas after several Haratine Imams called on Ulemas to issue fatwa “abolishing slavery”.

- “Mauritanian activist sparks religious storm”, BBC, 31 May 2012.

➡ **Morocco** Banned but tolerated Judges Club 7 May published petition calling for judicial changes making prosecutors independent of executive; King Mohammed VI 8 May appointed 40-strong Higher Body of National Dialogue on Reform of the Judiciary. Mass protest 28 May in Casablanca over govt failure to deliver reforms. Student

organiser Ezzedine Barzani jailed over Jan Taza riots released 1 May after 134-day hunger strike. Rapper Mouad Belghouat 11 May jailed for 1 year for “defaming” police after denouncing corruption. Interior Ministry 5 May announced dismantlement of Mujahideen Movement of Morocco.

- “Justice reform begins in Morocco”, Magharebia, 20 May 2012.



Tunisia: Head of Constituent Assembly Ben Jaafar 11 May announced 23 Oct deadline for drafting new constitution. Court 3 May fined head of Nessma television station Nabil Karoui for broadcasting film depicting God; FM Abdesslem warned against foreign interference in justice system after U.S. criticism of verdict. Court 2 May sentenced 2 policemen to 20 years in prison for killing protester in 2011 uprising. President Marzouki 4 May issued decree extending state of emergency throughout country until late July. Congress for the Republic (CPR) Secretary-General Ayadi 9 May announced his separation from CPR along with 11 others; 16 May established Independent Democratic Congress. Govt 11 May recognised Islah (Reform) Front, first Salafist party. In violent campaign against alcohol sales, Salafists 19 May burned bars in Sidi Bouzid. Protests 26 May in Jendouba against arrest of 4 Muslims following attack on alcohol sellers turned violent as Salafists clashed with police.

- “Moncef Marzouki: Tunisia at the crossroads”, Al Jazeera, 12 May 2012.

New Crisis Group Middle East/North Africa Report N°123, *Tunisia: Combating Impunity, Restoring Security*, 9 May 2012. Although Tunisia stands out in a turbulent Arab world for its relatively peaceful transition, justice and security must be bolstered to ensure long-term stability.



Western Sahara Morocco 17 May said UN Western Sahara envoy Ross biased, criticised April UN report accusing Morocco of spying on MINURSO. Human Rights Watch (HRW) 15 May denounced authorities’ failures to investigate Nov 2010 police beating of HRW researcher investigating human rights violations.

- “Morocco says it no longer has confidence in UN envoy”, AFP, 17 May 2012.

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