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October 2012 Trends



Deteriorated Situations

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Lebanon (p.10)
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Improved Situations

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November 2012 Watchlist



Conflict Risk Alerts



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** At least 1 army officer killed 4 Oct in clash with Burundi rebels near Uvira, eastern DRC; witnesses alleged army conducting joint operation with DRC army. At least 9 rebels reportedly killed 22-24 Oct in clashes with security forces in Cibitoke province, near DRC.

- ["Rebel group claims responsibility for Burundi attacks"](#), AFP, 25 Oct. 2012.

New Crisis Group Africa Report N°192, [Burundi: Bye-bye Arusha?](#), 25 Oct. 2012. Since the 2010 boycotted elections, Burundi is steadily drifting away from what was initially regarded as a peacemaking model, and violence from both the ruling party and the opposition is threatening stability.

➤ **Central African Republic** Public prosecutor 18 Oct said 3 arrested, charged with planning coup. Authorities began repatriating Popular Front for Recovery (FPR) rebels to Chad early Oct. 2 Chinese road workers abducted late Sept by unidentified rebels on Garoua Boulai-Bouar road released.

- ["Central African Republic says foils another coup"](#), Reuters, 18 Oct. 2012.

➤ **Chad** French President Hollande early Oct requested reopening of investigation into 2008 "disappearance" of political opponent Ibni Mahamat Saleh, 8 Oct cancelled planned meeting with President Deby; Deby did not attend 14 Oct Francophonie summit in Kinshasa, reportedly in response. 3-day trade union strike over salaries began 22 Oct. Govt 12 Oct announced expulsion of Italian bishop Michel Russo following his criticism of govt handling of oil revenues.

- ["Après le sommet de la Francophonie, les relations entre les présidents tchadien et français s'enveniment"](#), RFI, 17 Oct. 2012.

➤ **Democratic Republic of Congo** Clashes between M23/Congolese Revolutionary Army rebels and FARDC continued in east. M23 10 and 14 Oct conducted unsuccessful offensives to extend territory in NE. FARDC 24 Oct began integration of Nyatura local militias. Leaked UN group of experts report mid-month said Uganda, Rwanda backing M23 rebellion; UNSC 19 Oct announced intention to impose sanctions on M23 leaders, anyone who violated sanctions regime, arms embargo. DRC 17 Oct called for sanctions against Ugandan and Rwandan officials named in leaked report. At 14th Francophonie summit in Kinshasa, French president Hollande, Canadian PM Harper criticised govt over human rights, democratic record; govt denounced outside involvement in eastern rebellion. Attempted assassination of rights activist Dr Denis Mukwege in Bukavu 25 Oct prompted international condemnation. 6 UN peacekeepers wounded 19 Oct near Buganza, NE; 2 rangers, 1 soldier, 5 Mayi Mayi rebels killed 25 Oct in attack on Virunga National Park, NE.

- ["Uganda and Rwanda deny supporting DRC rebels"](#), Al Jazeera, 17 Oct. 2012.

New Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°91, [Eastern Congo: Why Stabilisation Failed](#), 4 Oct. 2012. The Kivus region of eastern Congo again faces escalating violence, including by a rebel force acting as a proxy of neighbouring Rwanda. To stop the repetitive cycle of rebellion and avoid large-scale killing, donors and African mediators need to move from crisis management to conflict resolution with the right set of pressures on Kigali and Kinshasa.

➤ **Rwanda** Country won 2-year Africa seat on UNSC 18 Oct despite continued international condemnation for reported support to DRC rebels. UN group of experts report leaked mid-Oct accused Defence Minister James Kabarebe of commanding DRC M23 rebels. Opposition leader Victoire Ingabire sentenced to 8 years jail 30 Oct for "genocide denial". Amnesty International early Oct released report alleging govt torture of detainees in run-up to 2010 election.

- ["Opposition leader sentenced to 8 years in Rwanda"](#), AP, 30 Oct. 2012.

Horn of Africa

➤ **Eritrea** In 27 Sept letter to UNSC released 8 Oct, govt requested UNSC lift sanctions imposed 2009 over its support to Somali militants, said Ethiopia "actively engaged in destabilising" Eritrea. Ethiopia-based opposition Red Sea Afar Democratic Organisation (RSADO) 20 Oct accused Asmara govt of forcibly displacing Afar ethnic minority in Galalo. 2 senior air force officers early month reportedly defected to Saudi Arabia.

- ["Why two Eritrean pilots went rogue and stole their president's plane"](#), *Atlantic*, 16 Oct. 2012.

➤ **Ethiopia** Following Supreme Council on Islamic Affairs elections 7 Oct, ongoing countrywide protests over perceived govt interference in Muslim affairs. Demonstrations turned violent 21 Oct in Gerba, Amhara state, at least 4 killed including 1 police; 29 Muslims, including nine prominent religious leaders, charged with terrorism 29 Oct. Peace talks between govt and Ogaden rebels 15-17 Oct failed to achieve breakthrough. Govt 27 Oct announced 10 NGOs shut down under new civil society and charity law. Govt 9 Oct released 75 Eritrean prisoners captured in March cross-border attack on Eritrean military base.

- ["Ethiopia's ONLF rebellion"](#), IRIN, 29 Oct. 2012.

➤ **Kenya** In wave of arrests of separatist Mombasa Republican Council (MRC) members, police 15 Oct arrested MRC leader Omar Mwamnuadzi and shot dead 2 supporters in Kwale, near Mombasa; Mwamnuadzi charged with fire arms possession, incitement to violence; 2 killed 28 Oct including Muslim cleric in police raid in Mombasa. 3 suspected al-Shabaab killed 17 Oct in police raids near Mombasa. President Kibaki 9 Oct vetoed bill passed by parliament awarding MPs large bonus following protests in Nairobi. ICC Prosecutor Bensouda visited 22-27 Oct, criticised politicians' politicisation of ICC trial. PM Odinga 24 Oct said voter registration delays will not change 4 March 2013 election date. Thousands of Baringo county residents late month fled clashes between Pokot and Tugen communities; 13 killed 30 Oct in reported Samburu raid on Turkana village in Samburu County. 4 killed 29-30 Oct in Kisumu in demonstrations following 29 Oct killing of local politician. Suspected al-Shabaab militants 1 Oct attacked Garissa police post, 2 Oct torched Garissa police station; policeman killed, 1 injured 30 Oct in ambush on patrol in Garissa.

- ["Kenya's coastal separatists – menace or martyrs?"](#), IRIN, 24 Oct. 2012.

➡ **Somalia** President Sheikh 6 Oct selected political newcomer Abdi Farah Shirdon as PM; MPs 17 Oct unanimously approved appointment. International community including visiting Italian FM Giulio Terzi welcomed appointment, commended conclusion of transition period. Al-Shabaab threatened attacks on Kenya and UK, banned aid group Islamic Relief from territory. Negotiations to establish permanent governing structure for former al-Shabaab stronghold Kismayo ongoing. Al-Shabaab attacks in Mogadishu, Kismayo and newly-liberated areas continued including 28 Oct killing of Somali general. Puntland security forces mid-month reportedly seized al-Shabaab arms shipment from Yemen in Qandala coastal town. Poet Warsame Shire Awale and female civilian shot dead 30 Oct in Mogadishu; al-Shabaab defector killed in Mogadishu same day. UN human rights chief Pillay 30 Oct expressed alarm at assaults on media workers after 3 killed during Oct, bringing total to 18 killed this year.

- “Somalia MPs approve Shirdon as the new prime minister” BBC, 17 Oct. 2012.

New Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°92, *Assessing Turkey's Role in Somalia*, 8 Oct. 2012. As a new Somali government is established, Turkey's engagement in the war-ravaged country must be thoughtful and carefully coordinated so as not to lead to yet another failed international intervention.

➡ **Somaliland** Journalist killed 23 Oct by gunmen in disputed Sool region amid growing concerns over harassment, arrest of journalists in Somaliland; UN SRSG Augustine Mahiga called for investigation. 4 wounded 23 Oct by landmine in Sool region; governor said al-Shabaab militants suspected.

- “Somaliland journalists under fire”, IRIN, 17 Oct. 2012.

➡ **South Sudan** Parliament 16 Oct ratified border and oil deal with Sudan; hundreds 15 Oct protested against demilitarisation of contested border areas. Govt 18 Oct ordered oil companies to resume production, ending 9-month shutdown. Govt 23 Oct expressed disappointment over AUHIP call to extend Abyei mediation efforts, said extension not consistent with AU roadmap, UN Resolution 2060. 5, including soldier, killed 19 Oct by unknown gunmen in Bor county, Jonglei. Amnesty International 3 Oct accused security forces of widespread abuses in Jonglei disarmament campaign. Govt 24 Oct announced plans to mediate Ethiopia-Eritrea border dispute. VP Machar 19 Oct dismissed rumours of coup plot following 11 Oct arrest of senior military officer and visit by President Kiir to SPLA HQ, speech warning against coups.

- “S Sudan ratifies border deal with Sudan despite protest”, Reuters, 16 Oct. 2012.

➡ **Sudan** Military factory in Khartoum reportedly bombed by Israeli aircraft 24 Oct, 2 killed; govt blamed Israel, threatened referral to UNSC, said reserved “right to react”; Iranian warships reportedly docked at Port Sudan 29 Oct. UN human rights chief Pillay called for investigation into 17 Oct attack on convoy that killed UN peacekeeper, 2 Oct killing of 4 UN peacekeepers in W Darfur. Renewed rebel clashes with govt troops in Darfur left several dead in Abu Dalig mid-month; govt and splinter JEM rebels 22 Oct agreed to immediate ceasefire, peace negotiations following series of meetings 17-22 Oct; JEM, Sudan Liberation Army rebels 27 Oct reportedly attacked El Fasher, North Darfur state capital and govt stronghold. Govt 24 Oct expressed concern over security arrangements, timeframe of Tripartite Initiative to deliver humanitarian air to S Kordofan, Blue Nile states. SPLM-N

reported bombing of S Kordofan villages by Sudan Armed Forces 30 Oct. U.S. 31 Oct accused SPLM-N rebels of recruiting child soldiers from S Sudan refugee camps. Fighting continued in S Kordofan, including SPLM-N attacks on Kadugli garrison and town. Govt 10 Oct expelled Norwegian diplomat following 9 Oct expulsion from Oslo of Sudanese diplomat who reportedly spied on Sudanese refugees.

- “Sudan threatens retaliation over alleged Israeli air strike”, *Guardian*, 24 Oct. 2012.

➡ **Uganda** Leaked UN group of experts report mid-month accused govt of aiding rebellion in eastern DRC; FM Oryem 23 Oct denied reports govt planning to halt M23-Kinshasa mediation efforts if UNSC endorsed accusations, said govt strengthening security in Lake Albert Rift Basin region bordering DRC following reports DRC rebels planning resumption of fighting.

- “Uganda must explain role in Congo – Kabila”, *Daily Monitor*, 28 Oct. 2012.

Southern Africa

➡ **Madagascar** SADC consultation mission visited mid-month to assess roadmap implementation, feasibility of holding elections in May 2013. SADC military mission 15 Oct visited to assess security conditions in view of former president Ravalomanana's return, met with detained soldiers. Security forces reportedly burned down 16 villages in south suspected of harbouring dahalo cattle-rustlers.

- “Gendarmes et voleurs de zébus”, *Jeune Afrique*, 10 Oct. 2012.

➡ **Zimbabwe** Feared showdown over draft constitution at 21-23 Oct Second All-Stakeholders Conference did not materialise. However, President Mugabe 21 Oct claimed political party principals will have final say on input from Second All-Stakeholders Conference, prompting fears principals may try to force amendments. Petrol bomb attack in Zaka early Oct injured several MDC supporters; PM Tsvangirai 6 Oct again threatened to pull out of unity govt, citing renewed violence against MDC members/supporters. MDC-T negotiator and Energy Minister Elton Mangoma arrested 10 Oct, accused of “undermining president”; released on bail. Justice Minister Patrick Chinamasa and ZANU-PF spokesman/politburo member Rugare Gumbo announced Tsvangirai presidency would not be acceptable to military.

- “Rogue soldiers terrorise, threaten villagers”, *NewsDay*, 29 Oct. 2012.

New Crisis Group Africa Report N°191, *Implementing Peace and Security Architecture (II): Southern Africa*, 15 Oct. 2012. To preserve Southern Africa's relative peace in the face of rising challenges and threats, Southern African Development Community (SADC) member states must collectively reinforce its peace and security architecture.

West Africa

➡ **Côte d'Ivoire** UNSC 12 Oct discussed leaked group of experts report alleging supporters of former president Gbagbo using Ghana as rear base to destabilise CDI, recruiting mercenaries in Liberia, met with Malian junta members and sought to recruit Islamist extremists from northern Mali. Report also alleged Presi-

dent Ouattara violated arms embargo during first year in office. Govt 8 Oct reopened borders closed after Sept border-post attack by suspected pro-Gbagbo elements. Ghanaian authorities 15 Oct arrested 43 Ivorian ex-combatants suspected of involvement in subversive activities in refugee camp near CDI border; 24 Oct released former Gbagbo spokesman Justin Koné Katinan on bail. Unknown gunmen 13-14 Oct attacked police station, gendarmerie brigade, military barracks in Bonoa town, leaving 2 dead; 27 Oct attacked prosecutor's residence in Gagnoa. Authorities 11 Oct found 6 bodies in mass grave in Duékoué. Military court 11 Oct sentenced general Brunot Dogbo Blé, accused of killing retired colonel-major Adama Dosso during post-electoral crisis, to 15 years jail. Amnesty International, local NGOs, 30 Oct issued joint communiqué criticising continued human rights violations.

- "Un rapport qui fait grand bruit en Côte d'Ivoire", RFI, 8 Oct. 2012.

↳ **Guinea** President Condé 5 Oct reshuffled govt, replacing 3 generals with civilians in move to symbolise political normalisation. Opposition coalition 30 Oct contested president's appointments to elections commission. Govt 13-14 Oct expelled 26 northern Malians suspected of links with Islamist groups.

- "Remaniement ministériel, Louncény Fall aux Affaires étrangères", *Jeune Afrique*, 8 Oct. 2012.

↳ **Guinea-Bissau** Ethnic Felupe soldiers 21 Oct attacked military barracks near Bissau airport in attempted coup; 6 killed. Govt accused former chief of staff Zamora Induta, ousted PM Carlos Júnior and Portuguese govt of involvement, 28 Oct requested formal explanation from Portugal. Gomes Júnior supporters denounced coup as "set-up". Soldiers 27 Oct captured suspected coup leader Captain Pansau N'Tchamá, allegedly murdered 3 accomplices, increasing fears of backlash against ethnic Felupe. 2 leading politicians critical of transition authorities, Yancuba Djola Indjai and Silvestre Alves, badly beaten by military 22 Oct. Angolan FM 28 Oct formally requested AU peace and Security Council to intervene.

- "Guiné-Bissau acusa Portugal de apoiar um golpe de Estado", *Público*, 21 Oct. 2012.
- For latest report, see Group Africa Report N°190, *Beyond Turf Wars: Managing the Post-Coup Transition in Guinea-Bissau*, 17 Aug. 2012.

↳ **Liberia** President Johnson Sirleaf 18 Oct met with CDI President Ouattara, announced joint military operation along border; security forces same day arrested warlord Bobby Julu for suspected role in CDI conflict. Govt refuted UN expert report claims that several Ivorian rebel training bases established in east.

- "Govt rejects rebel training claims", *New Dawn*, 19 Oct. 2012.

↳ **Mali** Planning for military intervention in Islamist-held north continued as UN 12 Oct gave ECOWAS, AU 45-day deadline to set out "means and modalities" for intervention. AU appointed former Guinean transitional president and military strongman Gen Sekouba Konaté to make proposed West African force "operational"; international experts met in Bamako 31 Oct to discuss intervention plans. Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO) 29 Oct vowed to "take Bamako in 24 hours" if international forces deployed. Diplomatic efforts to resolve crisis also continued: AU 26 Oct named former Burundian president Buyoya as High Representative for Mali and Sahel, 24 Oct lifted Mali's suspension from organisation; UN 10 Oct named former Italian PM Romano Prodi as Special Envoy for Sahel. Burkinabè FM and mediator Djibril Bassolé 9 Oct presented new National

Movement for Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) political platform now claiming "right to self-determination" instead of "secession". EU FMs 15 Oct commissioned plan to deploy some 150 military personnel to train Malian army. 4,000 United Front for Safeguarding Democracy and Republic (FDR) supporters demonstrated in Bamako to demand liberation of northern Mali; 2,000 Coordination of Patriotic Organisations in Mali (COPAM) supporters 18 Oct staged counter-protests against plans for foreign intervention. Armed men in military fatigues reportedly killed several Tuareg civilians near Diabaly 24 Oct; MNLA demanded explanation from Bamako. Guinean govt 17 Oct authorised arms shipment bound for Mali, previously blocked because of security concerns.

- "The whiff of conflict grows in Mali", *New York Times*, 23 Oct. 2012.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°90, *Mali: The Need for Determined and Coordinated International Action*, 24 Sept. 2012.

↳ **Niger** Following 14 Oct abduction of 6 humanitarian workers in Dakoro, allegedly by Nigeria-based Boko Haram militants, govt signed cooperation agreement with Nigeria to start joint border patrols; kidnapers reportedly crossed border into northern Mali.

- "Le Niger et le Nigeria renforcent leur coopération et signent un accord de défense", RFI, 19 Oct. 2012.

↳ **Nigeria** At least 31 killed, hundreds displaced 18-22 Oct in clashes between army and suspected Boko Haram (BH) militants in Potiskum, NE. Suicide car bomb attack on church in Kaduna 28 Oct killed at least 7, injured over 100; 3 Muslims killed in reprisal attacks. BH member arrested 18 Oct at home of prominent senator. Perpetrators of 1 Oct attack in Mubi that killed at least 25 civilians, many students, remain unknown; several reportedly arrested, including BH members. Human Rights Watch 11 Oct said BH attacks in north likely amount to crimes against humanity, said govt security forces also engaged in abuses including unlawful killing.

- "Nigerian soldiers 'killed by Boko Haram' in Potiskum", BBC, 22 Oct. 2012.

↳ **Sierra Leone** Ahead of 17 Nov polls, violence 27-28 Oct between supporters of rival parties in Kono district wounded at least 10.

- "Chaos engulfs rival parties ahead of Sierra Leone polls", *Citizen*, 30 Oct. 2012.

Asia

Central Asia

↳ **Kazakhstan** 3 opposition activists including opposition party leader Vladimir Kozlov convicted 8 Oct of forming illegal group, seeking to overthrow govt, inciting social hatred. Charges linked to oil workers strike which led to Dec 2011 violence in Janaozen; Kozlov jailed for 7.5 years. U.S. expressed muted "concern" over apparently politically-motivated case. Witness in case related to Janaozen violence who testified that investigators had tortured him found dead 15 Oct. Court in western city Atyrau 10 Oct jailed local man for 10 years for terrorist activities, illegal arms possession; court in Aqtobe 23 Oct jailed 3 for plotting to blow up police station, creating terrorist group. Sole survivor of June police special operation in Aqtobe jailed for 12 years for terrorism, murder. Al-Qaeda-linked website 15 Oct announced Tunisian

leader of Kazakh-linked extremist group Jund al-Khilafah killed in N Waziristan, Pakistan; group has claimed credit for 3 attacks in Kazakhstan. Head of Agency on Religions said number of legal religious groups reduced from 46 to 17 following new law requiring re-registration.

- [“Political trial fails to provoke Pussy Riot-style outcry”](#), Eurasianet, 10 Oct. 2012.

➡ **Kyrgyzstan** Over 1,000 protesters calling for nationalisation of country’s largest gold mine Kumtor 3 Oct clashed with security forces, police in Bishkek. Opposition Ata-Jurt leader Kamchybek Tashiev joined demonstration, called on supporters to seize power; he and several others attempted to enter presidential administration. Tashiev arrested along with 2 other Ata-Jurt MPs, charged with attempting to overthrow govt. Mounting protests in southern city Jalal-Abad calling for their release; police also dispersed protesters in Osh. President reportedly willing to consider clemency if defendants are convicted. Over 200 people demonstrated in northern town Orlovka 22 Oct calling for closure of Chinese mining company operations at Altynken gold mine; work halted indefinitely following mass scuffles between Chinese and local workers. 7 suspected terrorists detained, large amount of weapons reportedly seized during 2 security operations in Bishkek and nearby village. PM Satybaldiyev 18 Oct told cabinet 2013 budget to be cut drastically due to “unprecedented” deficit.

- [“Was Kyrgyz protest really about gold mine or face time?”](#), RFE/RL, 4 Oct. 2012.

➡ **Tajikistan** Russia and Tajikistan 5 Oct signed agreement allowing Russian troops to remain at military base in Tajikistan until 2042; U.S. ambassador said U.S.-Tajikistan ties not affected. Court 24 Oct ordered closure of prominent rights group Amparo. Amnesty International urged President Rakhmon to take measures against widespread use of torture in pre-trial detention facilities. 2 Tajik citizens arrested in Afghanistan for alleged IMU membership and planning terrorist attacks in Afghanistan. Islamic Renaissance Party leader said support for party increasing in Gorno-Badakhshan, site of controversial military operation against alleged militants in July.

- [“IRP leader examines moderate Islam’s influence in Central Asia”](#), Eurasianet, 22 Oct. 2012.

North East Asia

➡ **China/Japan** Chinese, Japanese officials met mid-month to discuss dispute over Diaoyu/Senkaku islands. Chinese officials pulled out of IMF, World Bank annual meetings in Japan. Chinese patrol vessels entered waters near islands during month. 30 Oct confronted Japanese vessels. Chinese navy 19 Oct conducted exercises in East China Sea.

- [“Chinese ships enter disputed Senkaku waters”](#), *Telegraph*, 25 Oct. 2012.

➡ **North Korea** Tensions mounted on Korean peninsula against backdrop of rising nationalism in the region. ROK 7 Oct announced deal with U.S. to extend ballistic missile system range; Pyongyang responded with claim it has missiles that could reach U.S. mainland. DPRK 19 Oct threatened military action against ROK if S Korean rights activists dropped propaganda leaflets in DPRK; activists carried out airdrop of 120,000 leaflets 22 Oct despite ROK police

attempts to block them, and released further 50,000 leaflets 29 Oct. Seoul commenced annual Hoguek joint military exercise 25 Oct, involving 240,000 personnel; ROK satellite launch, planned for late Oct, postponed till Nov. DPRK Army Vice-Minister Kim Chol reportedly executed for misbehaviour during official mourning period after Kim Jong-Il’s death.

- [“North Korea warns US on missiles after South deal”](#), BBC, 9 Oct. 2012.

South Asia

➡ **Afghanistan** President Karzai 18 Oct said security forces ready for NATO handover amid rumours of accelerated NATO withdrawal; French FM Fabius 21 Oct said French troop withdrawal may happen “more quickly than anticipated”. Govt 31 Oct announced April 2014 presidential election date. Suicide bomber 26 Oct killed at least 35, wounded dozens attending mosque to celebrate Eid al-Adha holiday in Maymana, Faryab province. 19 wedding attendees killed 19 Oct by roadside bomb in Balkh province. 17 killed 31 Oct in series of roadside bombings in south. Police 23 Oct announced capture of Taliban commander Mullah Abdul Rahman in joint Afghan-NATO operation in Kunduz province. Pakistan FM Khar 21 Oct called on Kabul to arrest, extradite Maulana Fazlullah, Pakistan Taliban leader who claimed responsibility for shooting of teenage activist in Pakistan (see Pakistan); Fazlullah believed to be in Afghanistan. Taliban 25 Oct claimed responsibility for killing 2 U.S. troops in southern Uruzgan province in suspected insider attack. Authorities 11 Oct reported expulsion of 31 Pakistani, 4 Iranian clerics, accused of encouraging jihad against govt.

- Louise Arbour, [“For a Clean Vote in Afghanistan”](#), *Hindu*, 31 Oct. 2012.
- [“Afghanistan’s safest province falling prey to Taliban”](#), Reuters, 17 Oct. 2012.

New Crisis Group Asia Report N°236, [Afghanistan: The Long, Hard Road to the 2014 Transition](#), 8 Oct. 2012. Afghanistan is hurtling toward a devastating political crisis as the government prepares to take full control of security in 2014.

➡ **Bangladesh** Police early Oct arrested 300 suspects in Sept anti-Buddhist violence in Cox’s Bazaar district, including Buddhist local who put image of burnt Quran on Facebook, sparking violence. Govt mid-month sought talks with U.S. diplomats over arrest of Bangladeshi terror suspect Quazi Mohammad Rezwanul Ahsan Nafis who attempted to blow up Federal Reserve Bank in New York. Govt 25 Oct sent additional security forces to Myanmar border amid reports of influx of Rohingya Muslim refugees fleeing Rakhine State violence.

- [“Bangladesh violence instigator arrested”](#), AFP, 11 Oct. 2012.

➡ **India (non-Kashmir)** Police arrested several Maoists in West Midnapore, Palu, Simdega districts; 7 Oct raided Maoist base camp in Saran district; 10 Oct seized cache of ammunitions, explosives from Maoist hideouts in West Midnapore district. 6 police killed, 8 injured in Maoist landmine blasts, gunbattle in Gaya district 18 Oct. Maoists 16 Oct kidnapped 3 in Malkangiri district, 18 Oct killed 1 in Koraput district. Grenade blast 29 Oct in Assam killed 1, injured 5.

- [“Hardcore Maoist area commander arrested in Simdega”](#), ANI, 27 Oct. 2012.

➡ **Kashmir** Militants from Pakistan-based extremist group Lashkar-e-Tayyaba (LeT) 19 Oct opened fire on army convoy and hotel near Srinagar killing 2. 2 killed, 3 injured 21 Oct in LeT gunfight with police in Baramulla district. Suspected militants 5 Oct threw grenade at Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) bunker in Baramulla district, 3 police injured. Police 1 Oct killed 5 suspected Mujahidin in Ganderbal district, 23 Oct arrested 3 militants in Kulgam district for alleged threats against village leaders. 3 civilians killed 16 Oct when Pakistani troops reportedly opened fire along Line of Control (LoC) due to “construction of new forward posts by India” in Baramulla district. Buddhist-Muslim tensions erupted late Oct in Chenab Valley, Kargil district.

- “Ominous signs in Kashmir”, *Global-Views*, 20 Oct. 2012.

➡ **Nepal** Parties missed 16 Oct deadline to settle political impasse through consensus, committed to new mid-Nov deadline. Most major parties now favour election of new Constituent Assembly (CA); President Yadav 28 Oct also encouraged elections. Parties still disagree on composition of govt; opposition parties insist PM Baburam Bhattarai step down. 36 indigenous leaders who quit Nepali Congress (NC) and over 500 ethnic leaders who quit Communist Party of Nepal-UML (CPN-UML) discussing forming new party. 7 Madhesi, indigenous parties 1 Oct formed Federal Democratic Forum-Nepal to promote Madhesi and indigenous issues. OHCHR 8 Oct published report on alleged human rights violations during civil war, released Transitional Justice Reference Archive on conflict-related incidents; govt dismissed report as “irrelevant”. Supreme Court asked govt to explain decision to promote Col Raju Basnet to Brigadier General after allegations of his involvement in torture, forced disappearance of Maoists during civil war.

- “The chakravayuh of politics”, *Kathmandu Post*, 17 Oct. 2012.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°233, *Nepal's Constitution (I): Evolution Not Revolution*, 27 Aug. 2012.

➡ **Pakistan** Teenage activist Malala Yousafzai shot 9 Oct in Mingora, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, 2 others wounded; Maulana Fazlullah-led Pakistan Taliban faction claimed responsibility. Yousafzai airlifted to UK for medical treatment. President Zardari 22 Oct cautioned against military action against Pakistan Taliban. Interior Minister Rehman Malik early Oct said Pakistan had no objection to using drones against militants, but called for U.S. to agree to common strategy, share drone technology.

- “Drones will be used responsibly, Pakistan assures U.S.”, *Dawn*, 8 Oct. 2012

New Crisis Group Asia Report N°237, *Pakistan: No End To Humanitarian Crises*, 9 Oct. 2012. Three successive years of devastating floods threatening the lives of millions, coupled with the displacement of hundreds of thousands due to military operations and militancy, gives Pakistan's radical Islamist groups opportunities to recruit and increases the potential for conflict.

➡ **Sri Lanka** Defence minister Rajapaksa mid-Oct repeatedly called for national referendum to abolish 13th amendment to constitution which grants limited devolution of power to provinces, angering Indian govt. Bill to expand powers of economic development ministry at expense of provincial councils awaiting Supreme Court judgment on constitutionality. Judicial Services Commission secretary assaulted 7 Oct, prompting strike by jurists protesting increasing govt attacks on independence of judiciary. Leading opposition politician Sarath Fonseka 18 Oct held first political rally

since release from jail; main opposition UNP prevented members from attending. Defence ministry 17 Oct announced release of Tamil Tiger leader Selvarasa Pathmanathan, detained since Aug 2009 and wanted in India for assassination of former PM Rajiv Gandhi. University teachers 11 Oct ended 3-month strike calling for increased public funding of education, higher wages and end to politicisation of universities. Hundreds of Buddhist monks, supporters, marched 4 Oct in Colombo to condemn attacks on Buddhists in Bangladesh.

- “Lanka politics threatens ties with India”, *Times of India*, 23 Oct. 2012.

South East Asia

➡ **Indonesia** In Central Sulawesi, police 17 Oct found 2 police investigators dead near alleged terrorist training camp, arrested 3 suspected of involvement. Car bomb exploded in Poso early Oct, no injuries; 2 killed in bomb explosions 22 Oct; police 31 Oct killed 1 terror suspect, arrested 2, seized explosives. In Papua, police said they seized explosives allegedly held by National Committee for West Papua (KNPB) in raids in Wamena (29 Sept, 13 Oct) and Timika (19 Oct). 8 injured in clashes between KNPB protesters and police 23 Oct in Manokwari. Provincial elections commission announced Papua governor's election to be held 29 Jan 2013. Authorities in Aceh 23 Oct closed down 9 Christian churches, 6 Buddhist temples following pressure from Islamic Defenders Front hardliners, citing lack of permits. 11 suspected terrorists with links to Salafi group and Central Java networks arrested late month for allegedly plotting attacks on foreign targets including U.S. embassy. 14 killed, 9 injured 28-30 Oct in clashes in Lampung province; over 1,500 police, 500 soldiers deployed to contain violence.

- “Indonesia's resilience faces test of extremism”, *Straits Times*, 31 Oct. 2012.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°138, *Indonesia: Defying the State*, 30 Aug. 2012.

➡ **Myanmar** Renewed violence broke out involving Muslim and Buddhist communities in Rakhine State 21 Oct; official figures report death toll from latest outbreak of inter-communal tensions, mostly involving Muslim Rohingya and Buddhist Rakhine, to be at least 89, with 136 injured, 5,351 houses torched; more than 30,000 officially displaced. Authorities 24 Oct imposed curfew in at least 2 towns, President Thein Sein 25 Oct ordered more security forces. Govt 30 Oct rejected ASEAN proposal to hold tripartite talks with UN to contain Rakhine violence. Thousands of protesters gathered 30 Oct in Ramree Island to demand extra security measures, separation of Muslims from Buddhist neighbourhoods; 1 killed after police allegedly fired on demonstrators. Hundreds of monks early Oct protested in Yangon and Sittwe against anti-Buddhist unrest in Rakhine State and Bangladesh. Thein Sein 15 Oct withdrew permission for Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to open liaison office in Yangon following Buddhist demonstrations. Deadly clashes continued between govt and Kachin Independence Army (KIA) in Hpakant jade mining area of Kachin State. Kachin Independence Organisation (KIO), govt representatives met 30 Oct on Sino-Myanmar border for latest round of peace talks; KIO sent low-level delegation. Tensions within Karen National Union (KNU) as group 3 Oct sacked 3 senior members; reinstated them 29 Oct (one posthumously). Aung San Suu Kyi (ASSK) 8 Oct declared National League for Democracy's intention to try to amend con-

stitution to allow her to run for president in 2015; Thein Sein said will accept her as president if elected. U.S. President Obama 5 Oct signed bill lifting restrictions on international financial institutions lending to Myanmar. U.S. delegation including high-ranking military visited mid-Oct for rights dialogue with leadership, military; senior U.S. official said country on “right track” ending military ties with DPRK.

- “UN warning as death toll soars in Rakhine state”, BBC, 26 Oct. 2012.



Philippines President Aquino 7 Oct announced deal with Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF); signed by chief negotiators 15 Oct. Framework agreement envisions creation of new autonomous regional government called the Bangsamoro, replacing failed Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao; conditions include drafting of law to create region, to be approved by Congress, followed by plebiscite and MILF-led transition before elections in 2016. Further details, particularly policing and decommissioning of MILF forces, to be discussed mid-Nov. Agreement widely welcomed, though criticised by breakaway Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Movement (BIFM) and Moro National Liberation Front founder Nur Misuari, who organised rally against agreement 21 Oct in Davao. Bombs struck Mindanao 10, 11, 18 Oct; 2 killed. At least 4 killed in 18 Oct MILF-BIFM clashes in Maguindanao. 3 soldiers killed 13 Oct in attack by suspected Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) in Basilan; 4 marines, 10 ASG killed 28 Oct in Sulu. Police mid Oct arrested 2 suspected Abu Sayyaf leaders in central Mindanao. Govt-New People’s Army (NPA) clashes killed 13 in Mindanao, Western and Eastern Visayas. Chinese vice-FM Fu Ying visited Philippines 19 Oct as part of effort to mend relations after increased tensions over South China Sea.

- Bryony Lau, “South Philippines Best Chance for Peace?”, *Diplomat*, 16 Oct. 2012.
- “It could be peace”, *Economist*, 13 Oct. 2012.



Thailand Violence in south intensified. In Pattani, several attacks purportedly in retaliation for late Sept killing of Muslim couple included shootings on 6, 8, 9 Oct; 15 dead, 4 injured. 16 injured in grenade attack 27 Oct; 5 police injured by bomb explosion 30 Oct. Many shops refused to open Fridays in response to insurgent threats. In Narathiwat, 3 bombs exploded in Tak Bai 20 Oct, and insurgents fired on police station and detachment of troops; 1 killed, 8 injured. 21 Oct bomb blasts injured 8 soldiers, killed 1. In Yala, 3 injured in bomb blast 6 Oct; 9 insurgents surrendered to authorities 2 Oct. New Interior Minister Jarupong Ruangsuan elected leader of ruling Pheu Thai Party (PTP) after Deputy PM Yongyut Wichaidit resigned late Sept. King Bhumibol Adulyadej 28 Oct endorsed cabinet reshuffle, strengthening PM Yingluck Shinawatra’s position in advance of anticipated censure motion. 10,000 supporters of pro-monarchy Pitak Siam (Protect Siam) group demonstrated against govt 28 Oct, promised further rallies.

- “Thailand’s secessionist Muslim insurgency escalates”, *National*, 20 Oct. 2012.



Timor-Leste In 2 Oct letter to UNSG Ban, PM Gusmão explained govt not interested in UNMIT follow-on mission, asked for end to UNSC consideration of situation in Timor-Leste. Planned Dec withdrawal will mark end to over 13 years of continuous political/peacekeeping missions.

- “UN no longer needed, says premier”, *Eurasia Review*, 5 Oct. 2012.

New Crisis Group Asia Report N°235, *Malaysia’s Coming Election: Beyond Communalism?*, 1 Oct. 2012. Demographic and social change, easing of authoritarian controls, a growing civil society and economic uncertainty are shaking the communal foundations of Malaysian politics and making the outcome of its coming election unusually unpredictable.

Europe

Balkans



Bosnia In local elections 7 Oct Bosniak Party of Democratic Action (SDA) won 37 municipalities; nationalist Serbian Democratic Party (SDS) and its minor coalition partners won 26, up from 13; Republika Srpska president Dodik’s SNSD won only 19, down from 41. Croat HDZ won 13, and HDZ 1990 3. Voter turnout at 56.3%, higher than 2008 polls. Central Election Commission received reports of widespread fraud. Dispute over voting system meant no elections in Mostar. Following elections, predominantly Bosniak SDP expelled rival SDA from state govt, formed new coalition. Annual EC progress report criticised lack of progress on political criteria, institutional reform. U.S. Sec State Clinton urged reforms during late Oct visit.

- “Bosnia elite fears EU rule of law, experts say”, *Balkan Insight*, 12 Oct. 2012.



Kosovo PM Thaci and Serbian PM Dačić met in Brussels 19 Oct: discussed continuation of EU-mediated dialogue on normalisation of relations. Dačić told Serbian media no change on Serbia’s position of never recognising independence, but said “time for a historic agreement”, Serbia “ready for final status talks”. Followed 10 Oct resumption of technical dialogue, including implementation of Dec 2011 border management agreement; working groups negotiated implementation action plan 12 Oct. Self-Determination movement protesters opposed to talks clashed with police 22 Oct. EC adopted Feasibility Study for Kosovo, confirmed country largely ready to open negotiations on Stabilisation and Association Agreement. Sporadic violence continued in north; 4 arrested following 7 Oct attack on border checkpoint by terrorist “Movement for Freedom”.

- “Belgrade, Pristina relaunch dialogue amid tension”, *SE Times*, 9 Oct. 2012.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Europe Report N°218, *Setting Kosovo Free: Remaining Challenges*, 10 Sept. 2012.



Macedonia Govt 3 Oct survived no-confidence vote. EC progress report for 4th year recommended start of accession negotiations, pending solution to ongoing name dispute with Greece. 5 ethnic Albanians formally charged with April killing of 5 ethnic Macedonians. Tens of thousands marched in Skopje 28 Oct calling for early elections.

- “Macedonia’s brand new foreign office”, *Economist*, 12 Oct. 2012.



Serbia EC progress report concluded Serbia continues to fulfil political criteria and conditions of Stabilisation and Association process, but called for “visible and sustainable improvement in relations” with Kosovo. PM Dačić said “upset” that report included request for Serbia to respect Kosovo’s territorial integrity.

- “EC references to Kosovo upset Belgrade”, *SE Times*, 16 Oct. 2012.

Caucasus

➤ **Armenia** Ahead of Feb 2013 elections, authorities charged major opposition candidate MP Vartan Oskanian, former foreign minister and possible contender for presidency, with money laundering. Oskanian accused of embezzling more than \$1.4 million from donation made by U.S. businessman to his Civilitas Foundation. Oskanian stripped of immunity from criminal prosecution in 2 Oct parliamentary vote boycotted by all parties except ruling coalition. Many condemn charges against Oskanian, say trial politically motivated.

- "Playing the corruption card as presidential race starts", Eurasianet, 11 Oct. 2012.

➤ **Azerbaijan** Court 9 Oct jailed 22 people convicted of plotting to kill foreign citizens, organising attacks on U.S. and Israeli targets; follows late Sept sentencing of 3 men for plotting to kill teachers at Jewish school. Suspects accused of links with Iranian special services. Following recent escalation in tensions with Iran, apparent rapprochement with 16 Oct meeting between President Aliyev and Iran's President Ahmadinejad. Around 200 protesters clashed with police 5 Oct during demonstration against hijab ban in schools. Officials accused "external groups" of organising disturbances, but local Shiite group reportedly claimed responsibility. Late Sept arrest of activist Zaur Qurbanli criticised by rights activists.

- "Does Baku face evolving opposition?", Eurasianet, 25 Oct. 2012.

➤ **Georgia** Georgian Dream (GD) coalition led by billionaire Bidzina Ivanishvili claimed victory in 1 Oct parliamentary elections; polls hailed as historic, marking first democratic transfer of power since independence. GD claimed 55% of vote; President Saakashvili's United National Movement (UNM), in power since 2003 Rose revolution, gained 40%. GD to occupy 85 of 150 seats in parliament, UNM 65. Saakashvili conceded defeat 2 Oct. International observers praised peaceful conduct of elections. New PM Ivanishvili initially called for Saakashvili, whose term ends Oct 2013, to resign immediately, then rescinded, said ready for dialogue. Parliament 25 Oct approved new cabinet, comprised mostly of technocrats. Ivanishvili 24 Oct said will quit politics in 18 months. New Minister for Reintegration Paata Zakareishvili outlined new strategy for conflict regions, including direct negotiations with de facto authorities. Policy of not discussing recognition of breakaway regions to continue. Abkhaz authorities issued report alleging Georgian involvement in "terrorist acts" aimed at destabilising Gali region in 2012, denied by Tbilisi; independent investigations impossible as Abkhazia and Russia have evicted international organisations from region, refuse to allow EU monitors to enter entity or look into claims. Change in govt prompted discussions about relations with Russia, but new FM quickly ruled out resumption in ties while Moscow continues to recognize South Ossetia, Abkhazia. GD leaders stress Georgia's pro-Western orientation and emphasis on Euro-Atlantic integration will continue, but improvement of ties with Russia still a goal. In statement welcomed by Moscow, Ivanishvili confirmed Georgia will take part in 2014 Sochi Olympics.

- Sabine Freizer, "Breaking the Monopoly on Power in Georgia, One Step at a Time", *Today's Zaman*, 3 Oct. 2012.
- "Over to you, Bidzina", *Economist*, 6 Oct. 2012.

➤ **North Caucasus (Russia)** National Anti-Terrorist Committee (NAC) 21 Oct reported large operation in NC involving Federal Security Service and Interior Ministry forces in recent months resulted in 49 militants killed in Kabardino-Balkaria and Dagestan, including 9 leaders. At 16 Oct meeting on NC counter-insurgency effort, President Putin praised security and law enforcement agencies for eliminating 300 militants in recent months, called for increased efforts to wipe out NC militants. Russian media reported federal army units have joined counter-insurgency effort for first time since 2006; NAC denied this, although defence minister recently became member of NAC. Ongoing violence in Dagestan with over a dozen suspected militants killed in clashes with security forces/police early month including in Makhachkala, Buinaksk district, Khasavyurt district. Prominent South Dagestan Salafi religious leader killed together with brother and father 30 Oct. Dagestan top investigator survived apparent assassination attempt 14 Oct. Security forces 9 Oct conducted air strikes against militants near Makhachkala. PM Medvedev visited Dagestan 2 Oct, pledged additional socio-economic assistance to NC. Security forces 12 Oct reported police officer and 2 suspected militants killed in special operation in Nalchik, capital of Kabardino-Balkaria. 4 police killed by suspected militants during clash in Ingushetia 3 Oct. Ingush govt launched hotline for insurgents who want to return to peaceful life. 2 militants and 1 FSB officer killed 23 Oct during counter-terrorism operation in Kazan, capital of Tatarstan republic.

- "Russian aircraft bomb Caucasus targets", *Financial Times*, 9 Oct. 2012.

New Crisis Group Europe Report N°220, *The North Caucasus: The Challenges of Integration (I), Ethnicity and Conflict*, 19 Oct. 2012; and Crisis Group Europe Report N°221, *The North Caucasus: The Challenges of Integration (II), Islam, the Insurgency and Counter-Insurgency*, 19 Oct. 2012. Russia's North Caucasus region is Europe's deadliest conflict today, with some 574 deaths already this year, and the killing is unlikely to end soon.

➤ **Nagorno-Karabakh (Azerbaijan)** Tensions between Armenia and Azerbaijan continued: Armenian President Sargsyan 6 Oct said Azerbaijan initiating fresh preparations for war over N-K; said Baku buying "horrendous amounts of weapons", preparing for armed resolution to conflict. Baku dismissed statement, yet announced it would increase defence budget for 2013 by almost 9% to \$2 billion, not including \$1.7bn spent on other security force detachments. Armenian defence forces conducted 2-week anti-aircraft exercise involving 45,000 soldiers and including units from N-K. U.S. open-source analysis centre revealed Armenia has upgraded and repositioned air defence systems to cover N-K, Armenia. Both countries now claim to possess offensive missiles with 300km+ range. Controversy continues over long-postponed opening of N-K airport; Turkey threatened to close airspace to Armenian aircraft if Armenia begins flights there.

- "Ramil Safarov and the making of an anti-hero", Eurasianet, 5 Oct. 2012.

Eastern Europe

➤ **Belarus** EU FMs 15 Oct extended sanctions against individuals and companies linked to govt.

- "EU renews Belarus sanctions due to human rights concerns", Reuters, 15 Oct. 2012.

- **Ukraine** Preliminary results show President Yanukovich's Party of Regions won 30% of vote in parliamentary elections, likely to control at least 187 out of 450 seats and lead parliamentary majority; Fatherland party of jailed opposition leader Tymoshenko won 25%/103 seats. OSCE 29 Oct said vote marred by abuse of power and "excessive role of money", said "democratic progress appears to have reversed in Ukraine"; U.S. Sec State Clinton called elections "a step backward".
- "Ukraine election 'reversed democracy', OSCE says", BBC, 29 Oct. 2012.

Western Europe/Mediterranean

- **Cyprus** Speaking in north Cyprus, Turkey's EU Minister Bağış 16 Oct said recognition of Greek Cypriots by other states "means nothing", implied Turkey had no intention of giving Varosha (Maras) and Morphou (Güzelyurt) back to Greek Cypriots as part of a solution. Several protests in south after Turkish Cypriots 30 Sept arrested Greek Cypriot police who had chased Turkish Cypriot youth into north. President Christofias asked UN to intervene; policemen released 3 Oct.
- "Cyprus celebrates independence with no solution in sight", SE Times, 3 Oct. 2012.

- **Turkey** PKK attacks on civilian targets in south east intensified; arson strikes on more than 20 schools, several incidents of kidnappings of teachers and students. Oct death toll from violence between PKK and army at least 52 according to Crisis Group's informal minimum count, down from Sept. Protesters in support of hunger-striking Kurdish prisoners clashed with police in Diyarbakır, Istanbul 30 Oct. Turkish-Syrian relations further deteriorated as Syrian shelling across border escalated to highest level yet. Mortar shell fired by Syrian govt forces killed 5 civilians in border town Akcakale 3 Oct; Turkey responded with at least 12 hours of artillery fire. Exchange of fire continued sporadically throughout Oct as additional shells landed in Turkey. Parliament 4 Oct authorised cross-border raids; PM Erdoğan insisted move was deterrent not mandate for war, but harsh war rhetoric coming from other senior govt figures. Tensions increased as Turkey 10 Oct forced Syrian passenger plane en route from Moscow to Damascus to land in Ankara, on suspicion it was transporting weapons equipment for Syrian govt, claimed it found illegal military equipment. Syria 13 Oct closed airspace to Turkish planes, reciprocated by Ankara 14 Oct. Refugee situation worsened as govt mid-month reported over 100,000 Syrians in 13 camps along border; around 14,000 reportedly waiting on Syrian side of border. Military 27 Oct denied presence of U.S. troops after top U.S. commanders said military personnel sent to help deal with spillover of Syrian crisis, fight against PKK. EC Progress Report 10 Oct criticised Turkey's relations with Republic of Cyprus, Kurdish issue, press freedom, lack of consultation in legislative process.
- "Terrorist PKK starts violent campaign against schools and children", *Today's Zaman*, 21 Oct. 2012.
 - For latest report, see Crisis Group Europe Report N°219, *Turkey: The PKK and a Kurdish Settlement*, 11 Sept. 2012.

Latin America

- **Bolivia** President Morales 7 Oct signed contract to resume contested construction of road through indigenous territory TIPNIS, despite ongoing indigenous resistance.
- "Morales firma contrato para reanudar obras de ruta resistida por indígenas", *Infolatam*, 7 Oct. 2012.
- **Colombia** Peace talks between govt, FARC began in Oslo 18 Oct; FARC chief negotiator stoked controversy by criticising govt's efforts to hand back land seized during conflict as a "trap", also called for "profound demilitarisation" and "radical socio-economic reforms". Both parties agreed to resume talks in Cuba 15 Nov. Hostilities ongoing as security forces 1 Oct captured FARC's Southern Bloc intelligence chief Ninfa Lozada in Casanare dept, and 34th front commander Fernando Salazar Palacios alias "El Niche" in Medellín. FARC 15 Oct attack on soldiers in Arauca dept left 2 civilians dead, 19 Oct killed 5 soldiers in Putumayo, 20 Oct killed 5 soldiers near Ecuador border, 23 Oct killed 3 soldiers in Arauca dept, 29 Oct killed 6 police in Cauca dept. National Liberation Army (ELN) 8 Oct wounded 3 soldiers near Venezuela border. Leader of dissident "Meta" faction of New Illegal Armed Group (NIAG) ERPAC, José Antonio López alias "Jean-Claude", 17 Oct surrendered to authorities. 17 NIAG Rastrojos members 22 Oct surrendered in Valle del Cauca dept. Argentinian authorities 30 Oct arrested NIAG Urabeños leader Henry de Jesus López alias "Mi Sangre".
- Louise Arbour, "Will Colombia Have Peace at Last?", *Miami Herald*, 3 Oct. 2012.
 - "Colombia and Farc negotiators launch Norway peace talks", BBC, 18 Oct. 2012.
 - For latest report, see Crisis Group Latin America Report N°45, *Colombia: Peace at Last?*, 25 Sept. 2012.
- **Ecuador** International Press Institute 23 Oct said Ecuador's private media outlets "being targeted" by govt. Armed forces mid-month arrested 5 suspected members of Colombian armed groups, handed over to Colombian authorities
- "Ecuador in the midst of a press freedom crisis", claims IPI in-situ report", *MercoPress*, 24 Oct. 2012.
- **Guatemala** Army colonel and 8 soldiers arrested for 4 Oct killing of 6 indigenous Mayan villagers protesting high electricity prices in Totonicapán dept. President Pérez first denied military involvement, blamed shooting on unidentified assailants, then apologised after investigators found shell casings from military ammunition. Pérez 16 Oct said army would no longer intervene during protests but reaffirmed policy of using military to back up police in high crime areas and to combat organised crime, especially along border. Interior Minister López 24 Oct announced police will be equipped with electronic chips to track movements.
- "Guatemalan soldiers arrested over Totonicapán protest killings", BBC, 12 Oct. 2012.
- **Haiti** Thousands of opposition supporters marched in Port-au-Prince and other cities 30 Sept, 6, 8, 14, 17 Oct to demand President Martelly's resignation. Police violently dispersed protest in Petit-Goâve 4 Oct. 1 person reportedly killed by gunshot during protest in Fort-Liberté 8 Oct; protesters clashed with police, later burned

police station. UN Security Council 17 Oct renewed MINUSTAH mandate for another year. Hurricane Sandy left 51 reported dead, 200,000 displaced, estimates of millions of dollars in damages.

- ["U.N. peacekeepers' mandate in Haiti renewed for a year"](#), *Miami Herald*, 12 Oct. 2012.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Latin America/Caribbean Report N°44, [Towards a Post-MINUSTAH Haiti: Making an Effective Transition](#), 2 Aug. 2012.

➡ **Mexico** Security forces 3 Oct arrested 2 suspected of killing U.S. border agent; 7 Oct reportedly killed leader of Los Zetas cartel, Heriberto Lazcano Lazcano alias "El Lazca", in Coahuila state; same day arrested Salvador Alfonso Martínez Escobedo, suspected of planning killings of dozens of Central and South American migrants; 23 Oct killed 7 alleged Zetas in Zacatecas state. UN human rights chief Pillay criticised U.S. border patrol for "excessive use of force" following 10 Oct shooting of Mexican teen. Amnesty International reported "alarming increase" in use of torture by authorities.

- ["El final del capo llamado Verdugo"](#), *El País*, 14 Oct. 2012.

➡ **Venezuela** Presidential election held 7 Oct with no major incidents reported; President Chávez re-elected for 4th term with 55.3% of vote, defeating opposition Henrique Capriles (44.1%). Govt 16 Oct expelled all remaining Paraguayan diplomats following July withdrawal of ambassadors from both countries amid tensions over June impeachment of Paraguayan president Lugo.

- ["Hugo Chavez celebrates re-election in Venezuela"](#), BBC, 8 Oct. 2012.

Middle East and North Africa

Eastern Mediterranean

➡ **Israel/Occupied Palestinian Territories** Emir of Qatar visited 23 Oct, breaking Hamas's isolation; promised \$400 mn aid, called for Hamas-Fatah unity. Long-delayed PA municipal elections held 20 Oct in WB in 93 of 353 municipalities; Hamas boycotted polls which saw low turnout. Fatah 21 Oct announced victory but failed to secure majorities in key cities including Ramallah. Several Palestinians killed in escalating exchanges between Israel and Gazan militants, including Hamas; Egypt 24 Oct mediated ceasefire, but violence resumed. Israeli PM Netanyahu 9 Oct called early elections following coalition's failure to agree budget; elections set for Jan 2013. Govt 18 Oct approved expansion of Gilo settlement in occupied East Jerusalem, drawing international protests. Israel 20 Oct intercepted Gaza-bound ship carrying 30 activists, including 5 European MPs.

- ["Hamas policy on attacking Israel has changed"](#), *Haaretz*, 24 Oct. 2012.

➡ **Lebanon** Car bomb in Beirut 19 Oct killed 3, including intelligence chief General Wissam al-Hassan, triggering demonstrations and clashes. Opposition alleged Syrian involvement, called for govt resignation. Dozens clashed with security forces in Beirut 21 Oct following al-Hassan's funeral. Fighting same day between predominantly pro- and anti-Syrian regime neighbourhoods in Tripoli killed 10, injured at least 50; quelled by army intervention 22 Oct. 1 killed, 6 injured in clashes between gunmen and soldiers

22 Oct in Tariq al-Jadideh, Beirut. PM Makati 16 Oct condemned Hizbollah's 11 Oct launch of Iran-manufactured reconnaissance drone over Israel and OPT. Continued reported violations of Lebanese airspace in south by Israeli warplanes.

- ["Why Lebanon isn't headed for civil war"](#), *Christian Science Monitor*, 24 Oct. 2012.

➡ **Syria** Fighting between govt and rebels continued with reported death tolls frequently exceeding 100 per day, ongoing internal and external displacement. Ceasefire brokered by UN/Arab League envoy Brahimi for Eid al-Adha festival 26-30 Oct repeatedly broken with extensive fighting across country. Surge in regime airstrikes late Oct; Syrian rights activists claimed 29 Oct worst day yet of regime air raids. Rebels continued attempts to establish "safe zone" in north, 9 Oct recaptured strategic town Maarrat al-Nu'man; battle for nearby Wadi al-Deif base ongoing. As Egyptian "contact group" on Syria appeared to stall, Qatar 15 Oct called for "well-armed" peacekeeping force. Mid-month formation of "committee of wise men" by former Syrian National Council president Ghalioun met with widespread cynicism. At least 30 killed in first reported case of Syrian-Arab rebels exchanging fire with Syrian Kurds in Aleppo 24 Oct; clashes ongoing. Turkish PKK threatened intervention if clashes persist. Reports emerged early Oct of late Sept clash between rival Alawite clans in al-Qardaha, President Assad's hometown. State TV 30 Oct reported "terrorist" assassination of air force general Abdullah Mahmoud Al-Khalidi; some activists assert regime responsible, claim Khalidi wanted to defect, regime acted in anticipation. Concerns over regional instability exacerbated by ongoing cross-border fire with Turkey (see Turkey).

- ["Airstrikes, car bombs in Syria leave brief cease-fire in tatters"](#), *Christian Science Monitor*, 29 Oct. 2012.

New Crisis Group Middle East Report N°131, [Tentative Jihad: Syria's Fundamentalist Opposition](#), 12 Oct. 2012. The presence of Salafi groups among Syria's armed opposition is an irrefutable, damaging yet not necessarily irreversible trend. Breaking this cycle will require the opposition to curb their influence, members of the international community to coordinate their policies and a perilous military stalemate to transition to a political solution.

Gulf

➡ **Bahrain** Govt 30 Oct announced ban on all rallies, gatherings, citing security reasons. Protesters in Jidhafs clashed with police at funeral of activist Muhammad Mushaima who died in custody 2 Oct. Police 12 Oct violently dispersed anti-govt protesters led by activist Zainab al-Khawaja in Manama, same day permitted demonstration by opposition al-Wefaq in West Manama. Policeman killed 19 Oct in explosion in Eker, south of Manama, 7 arrested; clashes broke out 20-21 Oct in various villages after police blocked rights activists, medics attempting to enter Eker to protest "siege" following reports of violent raids and arrests by security forces, 3 activists detained including Zainab al-Khawaja; authorities 21 Oct fired tear gas to disperse over 200 protesters. King Hamad 14 Oct called for national dialogue, urged govt to consider criminalising "everything that harms our unity and the security of the population". Court 1 Oct rejected appeals of 9 medics arrested during 2011 uprising, 23 Oct acquitted policewoman charged with torturing journalist during uprising.

- [“US denounces Bahrain ban on public demonstrations, says it’s concerned about human rights”](#), *Washington Post*, 31 Oct. 2012.

➤ **Iran** Police 3 Oct violently dispersed demonstrators protesting currency depreciation; 50 people reportedly arrested. EU 15 Oct approved additional sanctions for gov’t non-compliance over nuclear program. Judiciary 21, 24 Oct blocked President Ahmadinejad’s request to visit his press advisor imprisoned last month.

- [“A red line and a reeling rial”](#), *Economist*, 6 Oct. 2012.

➤ **Iraq** Arrest warrants issued for Central Bank governor, suspended from post 16 Oct, and other bank officials over currency manipulation allegations. PM al-Maliki 5 Oct requested electoral commission plan for April provincial elections. Shootings and bombings targeting Shia communities throughout country 27-28 Oct left at least 43 dead, 92 injured. 9 killed, 26 wounded 23 Oct in attack on Shiite neighbourhoods in Baghdad. At least 17 killed 20 Oct in Baghdad in bombing near Shia Muslim shrine and shootings targeting gov’t official; 3 killed same day in attack on Mosul police checkpoint. Gov’t 2 Oct announced stoppage of Syria-bound Iranian planes in Baghdad for weapons inspections. Gov’t agreed weapon deals with U.S., Russia, Czech Republic, as part of program to control airspace. Al-Qaeda-linked Islamic State of Iraq 5 Oct claimed responsibility for 30 Sept bomb attacks and 27 Sept Tikrit jailbreak.

- Joost Hiltermann, [“A Kurdish Wedge Between Iraq and Turkey”](#), *Real Clear World*, 24 Oct. 2012.
- [“What is behind Iraq’s arms deal with Russia?”](#), *Al Jazeera*, 10 Oct. 2012.

➤ **Jordan** King Abdullah 4 Oct dissolved parliament, called for early elections before end 2012, 10 Oct appointed Abdullah Nsour as new PM; thousands of Islamists demonstrated in Amman 5 Oct calling for further reforms. Soldier killed at Syrian border 22 Oct, several arrested. 11 militants arrested 21 Oct for allegedly planning attacks on Western diplomats, shopping centres in Amman.

- [“A kingdom divided?”](#), *Al Jazeera*, 6 Oct. 2012.

➤ **Kuwait** Thousands protested mid- to late-Oct against gov’t changes to election law, criticised as attempt to limit opposition’s prospects at 1 Dec parliamentary elections. Gov’t changed law despite it being confirmed by Constitutional Court 25 Sept. Scores injured, 15 detained in clashes with security forces, including 3 former opposition MPs. Thousands of protesters end-month demanding release of opposition leader Musallam al-Barrack, defying 23 Oct ban on protests; clashed with security forces.

- [“Kuwait protests challenge ruling family”](#), *Alertnet*, 24 Oct. 2012.

➤ **Saudi Arabia** Anti-regime protests in Qatif 13 Oct called for release of political activists including anti-regime poet Adel al-Labad, arrested 11 Oct. Interior Ministry 12 Oct warned against future rallies. 19 charged 17 Oct over participation in 23 Sept peaceful protest outside prison in Qassim province seeking release of family members. Human Rights Watch 28 Oct urged gov’t to stop prosecution of protesters, address legitimate concerns. Gov’t reportedly withdrew from Egyptian-initiated Syrian contact group.

- [“Shiite protests pose major challenge for Saudi Arabia”](#), *Washington Post*, 19 Oct. 2012.

➤ **Yemen** Al-Qaeda in the Arab Peninsula (AQAP) militants 19 Oct killed 16 soldiers in attack on Abyan province army base. 1 militant, 3 tribesmen allied to army killed in suspected AQAP attack on military checkpoint in Abyan province 16 Oct. Reported U.S. drone strikes in south killed at least 12 suspected AQAP militants. Security forces 6 Oct reportedly foiled plot to bomb joint gov’t-U.S. air base in Lahej province. 3 AQAP leaders reportedly killed 2 Oct in raid in Aden; court same day sentenced 2 AQAP militants to death for killing of military, security leaders. AQAP militants 9 Oct beheaded 3 people in Maarib after accusing them of spying. Iraqi military advisor to army assassinated in Sanaa 16 Oct; security officer at U.S. embassy assassinated 11 Oct. Families of protesters killed during 2011 anti-regime rally filed charges against members of former regime, including ousted President Saleh. Gas pipeline feeding country’s only gas export terminal sabotaged 30 Oct.

- April Alley, [“Triage for a Fracturing Yemen”](#), *Foreign Policy*, 31 Oct. 2012.
- [“Yemeni debate over drones emerges after Saleh’s fall”](#), *Reuters*, 17 Oct. 2012.

North Africa

➤ **Algeria** Parliament 2 Oct adopted new PM Sellaal’s reform plan; gov’t authorised 5 new political parties. Minister for Maghreb/African affairs Abdelkader Messahel 7-8 Oct visited Sahel countries, said ready to negotiate with groups not engaged in terrorist/criminal activities; gov’t expected to deploy 9 additional border guard units along southern border before month’s end. Army 15 Oct killed AQIM “external relations chief” Bekai Boualem in Boumerdès province. U.S. Sec State Clinton 29 Oct met President Bouteflika, asked Algeria to support military intervention in Mali.

- [“L’Algérie ouvre la porte à une opération militaire au nord du Mali”](#), *Le Monde*, 22 Oct. 2012.

➤ **Egypt** Court 23 Oct referred case challenging constitutionality of Islamist-dominated Constituent Assembly (CA) to Supreme Constitutional Court. Draft constitution released 10 Oct criticised by judiciary, opposition, civil society for shortcomings in human rights, separation of powers. Clashes erupted 12 Oct in Tahrir Square between ruling Muslim Brotherhood and opposition supporters denouncing Islamist dominance of CA. President Morsi attempted to remove Mubarak-era Prosecutor-General following 11 Oct court acquittal of 24 Mubarak loyalists accused of involvement in deadly “Battle of the Camels” attack on anti-regime protesters during 2011 uprising. Prosecutor-General 22 Oct ordered investigation into allegations of fraud in presidential election following official complaint by Ahmed Shafiq, who narrowly lost contest; call came day after authorities froze Shafiq’s and family’s assets as part of investigation into his wealth. Libyan militant Karim Ahmed Essam el-Azizi, suspected of involvement in Sept attack on U.S. consulate in Libya, killed by security forces 24 Oct in Cairo. Morsi 8 Oct issued blanket pardon for crimes, except murder, committed in “support of the revolution”.

- [“Political clash over Egypt’s constitution”](#), *Al Jazeera*, 20 Oct. 2012.

➤ **Libya** Gov’t-affiliated brigade 17-18 Oct launched full-scale attack against former pro-Qadhafi stronghold Bani Walid, including shelling of civilian areas; at least 20 killed, hundreds wounded, thousands displaced; shelling earlier in month killed 3 Bani Walid residents, triggered tensions between Misratans and members of

Warfalla tribe in Sebha and Sirte. Town declared “liberated” 24 Oct but militias preventing civilians’ return. Govt security forces continue to come under attack in east: 4 police killed 3 Oct at Souza checkpoint; Benghazi police chief survived assassination attempt 13 Oct. Govt mid-month said Islamist militant leader Abu Khattala suspected of role in Sept attack on U.S. consulate. Political crisis as General National Congress 7 Oct dismissed PM Abu Shaghour for failing to form cabinet; appointed independent Congress member Ali Zeidan new PM 14 Oct; new cabinet approved 31 Oct. Dozens of protesters stormed National Assembly 30 Oct, forced cancellation of vote on coalition govt proposed same day by PM Zeidan. Libya defended right to hold domestic trial of Saif al-Islam Qadhafi at ICC public hearing 9 Oct.

- [“Libya marks 1st ‘liberation’ anniversary amid tension”](#), AFP, 23 Oct. 2012.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Middle East/North Africa Report N°130, [Divided We Stand: Libya’s Enduring Conflicts](#), 14 Sept. 2012.

➡ **Mauritania** President Abdelaziz flew to France for treatment following apparent “friendly fire” incident 13 Oct, sparking speculation over his health; soldier suspected of being responsible 22 Oct gave interview to explain “mistake”.

- [“Mauritania soldier on shooting President Abdelaziz”](#), BBC, 22 Oct. 2012.

➡ **Morocco** Around a thousand judges 8 Oct demonstrated before Supreme Court against corruption, called for higher salaries and greater judicial independence. Police 4-5 Oct violently dispersed hundreds of unemployed university graduates and 300 striking miners occupying worksite in Ouarzazate. After Sept visit UN rapporteur Juan Mendez 24 Oct said torture and excessive use of force against protesters ongoing, particularly in Western Sahara, urged govt action to curb abuses. Court 15 Oct sentenced February 20 activist Bashir Benchaib to 12 years in jail.

- [“Morocco jails activist for 12 years”](#), News24, 17 Oct. 2012.

➡ **Tunisia** Ruling Troika of An-Nahda, Ettakatol, Congress for the Republic (CPR) met 13 Oct, agreed on semi-parliamentary system of govt with elected head of state, announced June 2013 parliamentary and presidential elections, after An-Nahda abandoned demand for constitutional criminalisation of attacks on religion. Arson attack 16 Oct on Sufi shrine blamed on Salafists; local leader of secular Nida Tounes party killed 18 Oct during clash between secularists, pro-govt Islamists in Tatouine. Thousands demonstrated in Tunis 22 Oct against killing, govt failure to stem Islamist violence. Hardline Salafis 27 Oct clashed with alcohol sellers in Tunis. Arrest of Salafi Islamist accused of assaulting head of Manouba’s public security brigade reportedly led to retaliatory attack on Tunis police station 30 Oct, 1 Salafi reported killed; ensuing clashes prompted deployment of security forces, extension of national State of Emergency to Jan 2013. Election anniversary 23 Oct also saw demonstrations against ruling coalition. Tunisian national arrested in Turkey for links to Sept attack on U.S. consulate in Libya repatriated to Tunisia 11 Oct, charged with terrorism. Court 24 Oct sentenced Islamist Ansar al-Sharia member Abu Ayab to 1 year in jail for inciting Sept attack on U.S. embassy in Tunis; group’s leader Abu Iyadh 23 Oct accused govt of being un-Islamic, U.S. puppet. Media workers 17 Oct began strike over govt interference; govt same day issued 2 decrees aimed at protecting press freedoms.

- [“Tunisian politicians struggle to deliver”](#), Al Jazeera, 23 Oct. 2012.

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