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November 2012 Trends



Deteriorated Situations

Democratic Republic
of Congo (p.2)
Egypt (p.11)



Improved Situations



Unchanged Situations

Afghanistan (p.5), Algeria (p.11), Azerbaijan (p.7), Bahrain (p.10), Bangladesh (p.5), Bosnia (p.7), Burundi (p.2), Cameroon (p.2), Central African Republic (p.2), Chad (p.2), China/Japan (p.5), Colombia (p.9), Côte d'Ivoire (p.4), Cyprus (p.8), Ecuador (p.9), Eritrea (p.2), Ethiopia (p.2), Georgia (p.8), Guatemala (p.9), Guinea (p.4), Guinea-Bissau (p.4), Haiti (p.9), India (non-Kashmir) (p.5), Indonesia (p.6), Iran (p.10), Iraq (p.10), Israel/Occupied Palestinian Territories (p.9), Jordan (p.11), Kashmir (p.5), Kazakhstan (p.5), Kenya (p.2), Kosovo (p.7), Kuwait (p.11), Kyrgyzstan (p.5), Lebanon (p.10), Liberia (p.4), Libya (p.11), Madagascar (p.3), Mali (p.4), Mauritania (p.11), Mexico (p.9), Moldova (p.8), Morocco (p.12), Myanmar (p.6), Nagorno-Karabakh (Azerbaijan) (p.8), Nepal (p.6), Niger (p.4), Nigeria (p.), North Caucasus (Russia) (p.8), Northern Ireland (p.8), North Korea (p.5), Pakistan (p.6), Philippines (p.7), Rwanda (p.2), Saudi Arabia (p.11), Senegal (p.4), Somalia (p.3), Somaliland (p.3), South Sudan (p.3), Sri Lanka (p.6), Sudan (p.3), Syria (p.10), Thailand (p.7), Timor-Leste (p.7), Tunisia (p.12), Turkey (p.8), 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)

December 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** President Nkurunziza 10 Nov appointed new chiefs and deputies to police, army. Forced repatriation of 35,000 Burundian refugees from Tanzania that began 31 Oct continued throughout month, raising concerns over possible land disputes. Trial of RFA journalist Hassan Rucakuki continued with hearings 8-9 Nov; verdict expected Jan 2013. U.S. govt 8 Nov issued travel warning, said Burundi target of Somalia-based al-Shabaab militants. Cabinet 15 Nov adopted draft law on Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

- "Burundi journalist pleads innocent of terror charge", AFP, 8 Nov. 2012.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°192, *Burundi: Bye-bye Arusha?*, 25 Oct. 2012.

➡ **Cameroon** Security forces 6 Nov violently dispersed some one thousand opposition supporters in Douala protesting against President Biya's 3 decades in power. Opposition grouping "G7" 10 Nov announced end of opposition coalition. UN/Nigerian/Cameroonian Joint Technical Team 23 Nov announced suspension of maritime boundary demarcation process following protests by displaced Bakassi people.

- "1982-2012: de Biya à Biya", *Jeune Afrique*, 12 Nov. 2012.

➡ **Central African Republic** Abuses by armed groups near Kabo town in north throughout month, and 27 Nov fights between CAR army and rebels in which several soldiers killed, confirmed nascent rebellion. Ouaka governor shot, seriously wounded 24 Nov near Sibut by unidentified men; disarmament process in NE remains stalled. Faction of UFDR threatened attack on Ndele, NE. Policeman, 2 others killed 13 Nov in attack by armed men in Libi, north of Bangui.

- "Les versions divergent sur les auteurs d'une nouvelle attaque près de Kabo", RFI, 28 Nov. 2012.

➡ **Chad** President Deby 14 Nov met with AU High Rep for Mali standby military force Sékouba Konaté; Konaté suggested Chad ready to contribute troops, govt spokesman Hassan Sylla said Chad had not formally consented.

- "Nord du Mali: option militaire et dialogue politique menés de front", RFI, 15 Nov. 2012.

➡ **Democratic Republic of Congo** M23 rebels 15 Nov launched offensive against FARDC in east with alleged support from Rwanda, 19 Nov took regional capital Goma prompting thousands to flee and sparking protests against Monusco and presidential political party PPRD; M23 rapidly extended control to Sake town 10km from Goma, announced intention to take S Kivu capital Bukavu. President Kabila 19 Nov met with Rwandan, Ugandan counterparts for emergency regional meeting; 3 presidents 20 Nov called for M23 withdrawal from Goma. UNSC 20 Nov condemned Goma takeover and called for immediate withdrawal, 28 Nov extended sanctions against armed groups in DRC to 1 Feb 2014, said additional measures against M23 leaders and supporters will be considered. International Conference of the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) met 24 Nov; peace deal announced following reported first meeting between M23 rebels and President Kabila at gathering. M23 leader Colonel Sultani Makenga 29 Nov announced

withdrawal from Goma and Sake; rebel leaders 30 Nov said withdrawal delayed due to "logistical reasons"; UN peacekeepers impeding withdrawal; promised rebels would fully withdraw by 2 Dec. UN Group of Experts report 21 Nov substantiated alleged Rwandan and Ugandan support for M23; Group mandate and current sanctions renewed 28 Nov for 14 months.

- "DR Congo rebel withdrawal facing hitches", Al Jazeera, 30 Nov. 2012.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°91, *Eastern Congo: Why Stabilisation Failed*, 4 Oct. 2012.

New Crisis Group Africa Conflict Alert, *DR Congo's Goma: Avoiding a New Regional War*, 20 Nov. 2012. The east Congolese city of Goma and its key airport have reportedly fallen after heavy fighting to the M23 rebel group. Regional and international actors must now prevent this turning into a new regional war.

➡ **Rwanda** Govt 19 Nov accused DRC military of shelling across border in Gisenyi, wounding 3 civilians. DRC soldier shot dead, Rwandan wounded 3 Nov in Kibumba, near Goma, when several DRC soldiers crossed border. UN Group of Experts 21 Nov released new report again accusing Rwanda of supporting M23. Pressure to cut aid to Rwanda for support to DRC's M23 rebels mounted among EU member states, U.S.; UK 30 Nov announced £21m to be withheld. Authorities 27 Nov said attack by FDLR Hutu rebel group in Rubavu district repelled, 6 FDLR killed, 2 captured.

- "Rwanda accuses Congo of shelling border town", Reuters, 19 Nov. 2012.

Horn of Africa

➡ **Eritrea** Govt 1 Nov accused Ethiopia of obstructing Eritrea's efforts to rejoin Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD). Exiled Red Sea Afar Democratic Organisation (RSADO) 13 Nov again called for public uprising against govt, said Eritrea facing crisis, pointed to growing division between political and military leaders.

- "Opposition renews calls for mass revolt against regime", *Sudan Tribune*, 13 Nov. 2012.

➡ **Ethiopia** Islamic Affairs Supreme Council 5 Nov elected new executive members, with Sheikh Kiyar Mohamed Aman chosen as chairperson; follows months of demonstrations against govt interference in body, clashes and arrests. 29 Muslims including 9 prominent leaders charged Oct with plotting terrorist acts 22 Nov appealed charges. U.S. panel on religious freedom 8 Nov accused govt of trying to control Muslim community, religious repression. Parliament 29 Nov approved newly-elected PM and cabinet including 2 deputy PMs. PM Desalegn 21 Nov met with Kenyan President Kibaki, renewed commitment to cooperate to tackle challenges to regional peace and security, reviewed military presence in Somalia. Ethiopia elected to UNHRC 12 Nov despite protests by human rights groups over govt rights record.

- "Ethiopia abusing religious freedom of Muslims: U.S. body", Reuters, 9 Nov. 2012.

➡ **Kenya** Group seeking court ruling on whether Deputy PM Kenyatta and former agriculture minister William Ruto, charged by ICC with crimes against humanity, are eligible to run in March 2013 presidential elections withdrew case 29 Nov. Ruto and Kenyatta reportedly negotiating plan to run for election on joint

ticket. Month-long biometric voter registration began 19 Nov following several delays. Suspected Turkana cattle raiders 10-11 Nov reportedly killed over 40 police officers in Suguta valley, NW; subsequent arrival of hundreds of Kenya Defence Forces, police and paramilitary General Service Unit caused hundreds to flee fearing reprisals. Grenade attack 18 Nov killed at least 7 in Eastleigh, Nairobi, sparking riots, violence against ethnic Somali community. 1 policeman killed, 11 injured 4 Nov in grenade attack on church in Garissa town; 3 soldiers killed 19 Nov in ambush; at least 8 shot, 50 wounded in army crackdown following attacks. Kenya elected to UNHRC 12 Nov.

- “Kenyans, Somalis riot in wake of Nairobi blast”, AP, 19 Nov. 2012.

➡ **Somalia** Formation of new govt continued: 10-member cabinet sworn in 15 Nov, several junior posts not yet filled. 2 protesters shot 23 Nov during demonstration in Quardo during visit by semi-autonomous Puntland region president Farole. Charcoal reportedly being exported from Kismayo despite UN ban; IGAD/govt-supported task force prevented from investigating by AMISOM-allied Ras Kambooni Brigade militia due to “security concerns”. Sharp increase in fighting in Gedo region 24 Nov as al-Shabaab attacked and briefly held Buldo Xawo border town.

- “Is it the advent of a new era in Somalia?”, Huffington Post, 26 Nov. 2012.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°92, *Assessing Turkey's Role in Somalia*, 8 Oct. 2012.

➡ **Somaliland** Local council elections held 28 Nov following peaceful campaign; Somali president congratulated Somaliland for democratic local elections. Tensions high, particularly in disputed Sool, Sanaag and Cayn region, claimed by Somaliland, Puntland and Khatumo State, pending announcement of results; media and electoral commission reported cancellation of election in certain disputed districts; fatalities reported in Hudun district following clashes between army and Khatumo militias.

- “Somaliland voters go to the polls”, VOA, 28 Nov. 2012.

➡ **South Sudan** President Kiir 26 Nov said oil production, scheduled to resume 15 Nov, delayed due to new Khartoum security demands that Juba disarm SPLM-N. Govt 23 Nov condemned Khartoum for “continuous unprovoked attacks” on Bahr el-Ghazal region, killing and injuring scores of civilians and displacing over 900; Khartoum denied responsibility. 19 rebels, 1 soldier reportedly killed 19 Nov in SPLA attack on base of David Yau Yau rebels in Jonglei. Govt 4 Nov expelled UN human rights investigator.

- “A country failing to thrive after the euphoria of independence”, *Guardian*, 26 Nov. 2012.

➡ **Sudan** National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS) 22 Nov announced it had foiled “sabotage plot” by former chief Salah Abdallah Gosh and other senior security and army officers as well as civilians, said 13 arrested. Islamist groups said detained number higher, called for release. 3 newspapers prevented from reporting “plot”. Sudanese Islamic Movement (SIM) 15-17 Nov held 8th conference in Khartoum, adopted new constitution establishing High Command under President Bashir’s leadership, new Shura Council; several Islamist factions expressed dissatisfaction with perceived Bashir takeover. SPLM-N, National Umma Party (NUP) and Popular Congress Party (PCP) 14 Nov signed agreement on coordinated opposition, transition from Bashir rule. Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) stepped up military operations in Darfur, attacking SAF military convoy 9 Nov. SLA-MM 17 Nov said it

bombarded al-Fashir, capital of North Darfur. Talks on S Kordofan, Blue Nile remain stalled. Around 100 Misseriya demonstrated in Khartoum 28 Nov against AU Abyei referendum proposal; govt 30 Nov called for AU involvement in referendum.

- “Coup claims expose splits in Sudan regime”, *Financial Times*, 26 Nov. 2012.

New Crisis Group Africa Report N°194, *Sudan: Major Reform or More War*, 29 Nov. 2012. Last week’s arrests of senior security figures for allegedly plotting a coup showed how close Sudan is to even greater violence and disintegration. Only managed but fundamental governance reform can help it escape chronic conflict and humanitarian misery.

➡ **Uganda** Following Oct suspension of UK, Irish, Norway and Denmark aid in response to reported embezzlement by PM’s office of \$13mn meant for Northern Uganda Development and Recovery ministry, parliamentary Public Affairs Committee 11 Nov announced plans for inquiry. Govt threatened to withdraw forces from Africa peacekeeping operations if UN Group of Experts’ report accusing Uganda of involvement in DRC M23 rebellion is officially endorsed by UN.

- “Uganda threatens to quit hunt for Joseph Kony”, *Foreign Policy*, 9 Nov. 2012.

Southern Africa

➡ **Madagascar** SADC 25 Nov condemned recent human rights violations, crackdown on freedom of expression by govt. Supporters of former president Ravalomanana 15 Nov criticised govt’s “authoritarian drift”. Amnesty International 20 Nov called on govt to rein in security forces in south who are accused of mass killings. Christian churches council 26 Nov began new mediation/reconciliation process aimed at bringing political roadmap signatories to negotiating table.

- “Crise malgache, la SADC se sent toujours concernée”, Madagascar Online, 25 Nov. 2012.

➡ **Zimbabwe** Month saw increased manoeuvring within ZANU-PF between Mujuru and Mnangagwa factions ahead of party’s 13th National People’s Conference in Dec and planned restructuring following disbanding of District Coordinating Committees. Reports of increasing army deployments to rural areas fuelled concerns over security. Electoral Commission 26 Nov said \$50mn allocated in national budget (as opposed to \$270mn requested) is insufficient to fund referendum and elections set for 2013. Campaign group Partnership Africa Canada mid-month alleged \$2bn in diamond revenues unaccounted for. Intimidation of opposition, rights activists, civil society continued, including 12 Nov arrest of 150 Women of Zimbabwe Arise activists in Bulawayo. Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders 26 Nov said govt violently suppressing rights activists.

- “Report: Zimbabwe targets human rights activists”, AP, 26 Nov. 2012.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°19, *Implementing Peace and Security Architecture (II): Southern Africa*, 15 Oct. 2012.

West Africa

➡ **Côte d'Ivoire** President Ouattara 14 Nov dismissed PM Ahoussou-Kouadio in cabinet reshuffle following apparent dispute between parties of governing coalition during parliamentary committee debate, 21 Nov appointed FM Kablan Duncan as new PM but remains in charge of defence portfolio. ICC 2 Nov said former president Gbagbo fit to stand trial, 22 Nov unsealed arrest warrant for former first lady Simone Gbagbo. Human Rights Watch 19 Nov reported continued human rights violations by national army (FRCI); govt early month removed military police chief Zacaria Koné and head of military operations for Abobo Gaoussou Koné, both suspected of gross human rights violations. International and Ivorian human rights groups 2 Nov called on authorities to end rights violations, promote impartial justice and reconciliation.

- ["Gbagbo à tout prix"](#), *Jeune Afrique*, 12 Nov. 2012.

New Crisis Group Africa Report N°193, *Côte d'Ivoire: Defusing Tensions*, 26 Nov. 2012. President Alassane Ouattara's coalition is walking a dangerous path toward polarisation by repeating mistakes made by previous governments that could ultimately lead Côte d'Ivoire back to crisis.

➡ **Guinea** Treasury Office director Aïssatou Boiro, who had uncovered high-level corruption case, killed 9 Nov by unidentified gunmen wearing army uniforms. Govt 1 Nov swore in new electoral commission despite opposition concerns over panel's composition. Opposition 7 Nov reiterated criticism of govt hiring of South African company Waymark to revise 2010 electoral register over fears of manipulation of electoral roll. Conakry Court again summoned 15 accused in July 2011 attack on President Condé's residence to appear in court, including former chief of staff Nohou Thiam and Oury Bah, VP of leading opposition party UFDG.

- ["La directrice nationale du Trésor assassinée par balles à Conakry"](#), AFP, 11 Nov. 2012.

➡ **Guinea-Bissau** Military spokesperson 5 Nov threatened to dissolve National Assembly following prolonged standoff between main parties following April coup. Parties 15 Nov confirmed minority Social Renovation Party (PRS) leader Sory Dialo as speaker marking resumption of Assembly operations; majority PAIGC content with vice-presidencies. Assembly mandate extended until 2013 elections. Security forces on alert 13 Nov following reports of "mercenary activity" in east/south of country, but alternative sources suspect cover-up for delivery of drugs. Sanha Clussé confirmed as Navy chief of staff 29 Nov, rather than Bubo na Tchuto, who is suspected of links to drug trade and involvement in several past coup attempts. ECOWAS 7 Nov committed \$63 million to army reform. Ousted PM Gomes Júnior 8 Nov said would meet with transitional govt in Addis Ababa end-of-month to relaunch dialogue but transitional govt denied. International fact-finding mission due on 15 Nov cancelled over participants' failure to agree "terms of reference".

- ["Parlamento da Guiné-Bissau aprova prorrogação da legislatura até novas eleições"](#), Lusa, 21 Nov. 2012.

➡ **Liberia** Thousands of opposition supporters 5 Nov rallied in Monrovia to mark one-year anniversary of deadly police shooting during 2011 elections. Prominent human rights lawyer 26 Nov called for resignation of President Johnson-Sirleaf for appointing sons to key govt positions in violation of constitution.

- ["Liberia's Sirleaf in bid to warm ties with opposition"](#), RNW, 22 Nov. 2012.

➡ **Mali** ECOWAS heads of state 11 Nov agreed to deploy 3,300 troops for one year to take back Islamist-held north, 26 Nov sent plan to UNSC for approval; UNSG Ban 29 Nov urged caution, said military intervention should be last resort. AU acting president Yayi Boni 30 Nov said disappointed with UNSG Ban's report, urged immediate action. UN Special Envoy for Sahel Romano Prodi 19 Nov said intervention unlikely before Sept 2013. AFRICOM Gen Carter Ham 14 Nov said U.S. ready to consider requests for military support; EU FMs 19 Nov agreed to send 250 military advisors to support African-led intervention. Diplomatic efforts to resolve crisis continued: rebel Ansar Dine (AD) delegation 4 Nov met with Burkinabè FM and mediator Bassolé in Ouagadougou, 6 Nov met with President Compaoré and MNLA Tuareg rebels delegation, said ready to cease hostilities, renounce terrorism; transitional govt expected to meet with MNLA delegation in Ouagadougou 3 Dec. Conflicting statements throughout month on intention to implement Sharia in territories under AD control suggested internal divisions within group. Media 4 Nov reported representatives of key AD leader Iyad Ag Ghali in Algiers to negotiate "rupture with AQIM" (Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb) with Algerian govt. Fighting continued: following 16-19 Nov clashes between MNLA and Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO) near Gao, MUJAO 20 Nov seized Ménaka. MNLA 27 Nov withdrew from Leré, near Mauritanian border; AD 28 Nov reportedly took town. MUJAO 20 Nov abducted French national in Diema, near Mauritania-Senegal border. AQIM's Sahara emirate 28 Nov announced creation of 6th brigade composed mainly of Tuaregs to be led by El Kairouani Abu Abdelhamid al-Kidali, expected to be active in area surrounding Kidal Aguelhok and Tigherghar mountain range.

- Gilles Yabi, ["No Quick Fixes for a Complex Crisis"](#), AllAfrica, 19 Nov. 2012.
- ["La présence du Qatar au nord du Mali: les doutes persistent"](#), RFI, 2 Nov. 2012.

➡ **Niger** Govt 3 Nov announced liberation of 5 hostages abducted 14 Oct in Dakoro. MUJAO brigade leader Hicham Bilal 7 Nov defected to Niger, said "MUJAO are not Muslims, just drug traffickers".

- ["Ils n'ont rien de musulmans": un jihadiste nigérien quitte le Mujao au nord du Mali"](#), RFI, 9 Nov. 2012.

➡ **Nigeria** Two suicide bombs 25 Nov killed at least 11, injured 30 in attack on military church in Kaduna state. 2 police killed 26 Nov in suspected Boko Haram (BH) attack on police base in Abuja where BH militants frequently detained. Army 27 Nov said 10 killed when gunmen opened fire in predominantly Christian town in Plateau state. Police 25 Nov said BH leader Benjamin Kato, 12 others arrested in Nasarawa state; army 30 Nov said explosives, bomb-making materials recovered from BH base in Zaria city, suspect arrested. ICC prosecutor's office report 26 Nov said "reasonable basis" to believe BH have committed crimes against humanity since mid-2009. At least 20 reportedly killed, 70 houses burned 21 Nov in clash between Koro and Eggon communities in Agyaragu, Nassarawa state.

- ["Twin suicide bombings kill 11 at Nigeria church"](#), AFP, 25 Nov. 2012.

➡ **Senegal** Police 8 Nov summoned ex-president Wade's son Karim Wade over corruption allegations levelled against him while minister of international cooperation; supporters 15, 23 Nov gathered outside police station to protest investigation.

- ["Karim Wade accusé d'être un as du maquillage financier"](#), Slate Afrique, 26 Nov. 2012.

Asia

Central Asia

- ➡ **Kazakhstan** State prosecutors 21 Nov filed applications to ban 2 opposition movements and close around 40 media outlets for “propagating extremism”, citing links to Oct jailing of opposition Alga leader Vladimir Kozlov. Almaty court subsequently banned 3 opposition newspapers and suspended Alga party. Court in southern city Qyzylorda sentenced Amangeldy Aitkulov, former deputy governor of western region Manghystau, to 12 years’ jail for abuse of office, bribe-taking; Aitkulov arrested in connection with Dec 2011 violence in Janaozen. Trial began of Vladislav Chelakh, border guard accused of killing 15 people in May on Kazakh-Chinese border. UNGA 12 Nov elected Kazakhstan to UN Human Rights Council, despite opposition from rights groups.
- [“Kazakhstan in move to ban opposition parties and media”](#), Reuters, 21 Nov. 2012.

- ➡ **Kyrgyzstan** Dozens protested outside parliament 12 Nov following Oct arrest of 3 opposition leaders. Russia reportedly to provide \$1.1bn worth of support to modernise Kyrgyzstan army. 5 former officials jailed for involvement in March 2009 assassination of opposition politician Medet Sadyrkulov. Leader of ruling coalition Felix Kulov resigned in protest at fraud during 25 Nov local elections. EU foreign policy chief Ashton discussed security issues with regional FMs at 27 Nov meeting in Bishkek.
- [“Local voting unsettles national politics”](#), Eurasianet, 27 Nov. 2012.

- ➡ **Turkmenistan** Rare small-scale protest of market vendors against limits on their working hours in east 1 Nov; police issued warnings but did not intervene.
- [“Vendors rebel in east Turkmenistan”](#), Chronicles of Turkmenistan, 2 Nov. 2012.

- ➡ **Uzbekistan** Tashkent court reversed Sept decision to seize all assets of subsidiary of Russian mobile company MTS after Russian investigators seized Moscow apartment belonging to President Karimov’s daughter. Authorities arrested 3 women in SE region Surhondaryo for spying for Tajikistan.
- [“Tajik spy ring busted, says Uzbekistan TV”](#), Eurasianet, 3 Nov. 2012.

NORTH EAST ASIA

- ➡ **China/Japan** Chinese patrol vessels continuing to carry out surveillance around disputed Diaoyu/Senkaku islands. U.S. delegation visited Tokyo and Beijing for high level talks in effort to reduce tensions.
- Stephanie Kleine-Ahlbrandt, [“Why China Won’t Turn the Other Cheek Over Foreign Policy”](#), CNN, 14 Nov. 2012.
 - [“Japan calls for stronger U.S. security ties to counter China”](#), AP, 9 Nov. 2012.

- ➡ **North Korea** DPRK 1 Dec announced planned launch of long-range rocket carrying a satellite between 10 and 22 Dec; follows speculation that country planning missile test in violation of UNSC resolutions. Pyongyang 22 Nov threatened to shell Yönp’yöng island ahead of ROK military drill on 2-yr anniversary of DPRK attack there. DPRK vessels crossed NLL at least twice

in late October. U.S. President Obama during 20 Nov speech in Myanmar called for DPRK to negotiate denuclearisation. ROK activists behind Oct launch of balloons with propaganda leaflets into DPRK 15 Nov announced they would halt balloon launches until after election. DPRK media late month reported messages from Kim Jong-un read out at senior meetings of police and judiciary calling for elimination of rebellious people attempting to “destroy our unity”. FAO/ WFP special report on DPRK food security reported improved harvests this year, but approx 207,000 tons shortfall predicted next year. Media reported that in May ROK seized DPRK-made graphite cylinders bound for Syria in Chinese freighter in Pusan; parts reportedly can be used as missile components. IAEA director general 29 Nov reported DPRK had made progress in construction of an atomic reactor.

- [“N. Korea rocket launch plans boost tensions”](#), *Washington Post*, 1 Dec. 2012.

South Asia

- ➡ **Afghanistan** Govt mid-month welcomed Pakistan’s decision to release several detained Taliban leaders (see Pakistan); FM Zalmay Rasoul 29-30 Nov visited Pakistan, discussed partnership agreement, bilateral cooperation on terrorism, narcotics trade. UNSC 5 Nov added militant Haqqani network to sanctions list. Govt officials 15 Nov began talks with U.S. counterparts on bilateral security accord. Trial of officials charged with involvement in Kabul Bank fraud began 14 Nov. Human rights groups late Nov criticised spate of death penalty executions; 2 people executed over previous 4 years. At least 20, including 12 civilians, killed 8 Nov in 4 separate militant attacks. 17 civilians killed 16 Nov by roadside bomb in Farah Province. 3 killed, at least 90 injured 23 Nov by suicide bomber in Wardak province. 10 killed, 8 wounded 29 Nov by roadside bomb in Oruzgan Province.
- [“US, Afghanistan begin talks to craft agreement on American footprint in the country after 2014”](#), AP, 15 Nov. 2012.
 - For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°236, [Afghanistan: The Long, Hard Road to the 2014 Transition](#), 8 Oct. 2012.

- ➡ **Bangladesh** Police arrested some 2,500 Jamaat-e-Islami, Islami Chhatra party supporters following nationwide protests throughout Nov against trial of party leaders accused of committing war crimes during 1971 independence war.
- [“Jamaat activists pounce on police”](#), bdnews24, 6 Nov. 2012.

- ➡ **India (non-Kashmir)** At least 10 killed 10-17 Nov in series of attacks in Assam described by govt as “isolated incidents”. Authorities imposed curfew; Assam govt said large number of illegal weapons were major reason behind fresh violence. Maoists killed 4 in series of shootings in Dantewada, Bijapur, Gadchiroli districts; 8 Nov attacked convoy of Congress leader Mahendra Karma, also former leader of movement to counter Maoists in south Chhattisgarh; 9 Nov ambushed police vehicle in Giridih district killing 4; 7 Maoist prisoners escaped. Security forces 14 Nov killed 5 Maoists in Bhaliagada jungle, 25 Nov killed 1 Maoist in Gadchiroli district.
- [“Fresh Assam violence isolated events: centre”](#), *Indian Express*, 17 Nov. 2012.

- ➡ **Kashmir** Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) commander Yasir Tunda killed late Nov in Baramulla district in joint army and police raid. Indian army early Nov killed 4 alleged militants near Line of Control (LoC) in Kupwara district. 2 suspected militants, 3 soldiers

killed 13 Nov in gunfight near LoC in Baramulla district. Security forces 13 Nov killed militant in Kulgam district. 1 police killed 27 Nov after alleged militants attacked police camp in Srinagar. Grenade explosion 28 Nov injured 3 in Bijbehara. Shiite-Sunni clashes erupted in Srinagar 28 Nov, authorities imposed curfew in parts of city.

- “JeM’s last visible commander killed”, *Hindu*, 24 Nov. 2012.

➡ **Nepal** President Yadav 23 Nov called on parties to agree on PM candidate to lead national unity govt by 29 Nov; decision welcomed by opposition Nepali Congress (NC), Communist Party of Nepal-UML (CPN-UML), but deemed “unconstitutional” by cabinet and ruling Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) (UCPN(M)). Following request by major parties, President Yadav 29 Nov extended deadline by a week. Govt rescheduled elections set for 22 Nov to Apr-May 2013. Two-thirds budget for remainder of fiscal year approved 20 Nov by President Yadav despite lack of consensus, drawing criticism from opposition. Supreme Court 21 Nov demanded written explanation from President Yadav for delay in approving govt ordinances on education, health, civil service and transitional justice. Former UML ethnic janajati leaders 22 Nov formed Federal Socialist Party Nepal to advocate for identity-based federalism. Former Maoist combatants 21 Nov formally joined Nepal Army. Cross-party special committee for integration and rehabilitation 21 Nov recommended govt form 4,171-strong non-combat general directorate for ex-combatants.

- “Disturbed power balance”, *Kathmandu Post*, 28 Nov. 2012.

➡ **Pakistan** Govt 14 Nov announced release of several detained Taliban leaders, reportedly including former regime officials, to facilitate dialogue between Afghan govt and Taliban; govt 30 Nov agreed to further releases during talks on bilateral cooperation with Afghan FM Zalmay Rassoul. Court 14 Nov dismissed blasphemy case against teenage Christian girl in Islamabad. Over 80 killed in first half of month in sectarian, ethnic and political violence in Karachi. Police arrested 4 members of banned Lashkar-e-Jhangvi group suspected of planning attack on Karachi Shia population; bombing of Shia mosque 18 Nov killed 3, injured 14. 23 killed, 62 wounded 22 Nov in attack on Shia procession in Rawalpindi. 7 killed 24 Nov, at least 5 killed, 90 wounded 25 Nov near Shia procession in Dera Ismail Khan, NW. Prominent militant commander Maulvi Nazir, believed to have non-aggression pact with Pakistan army, escaped suicide bomb attack 29 Nov in South Waziristan, 7 others killed; hours later U.S. drone strike killed 3 suspected militants near attack site.

- “Escalation”, *Economist*, 1 Dec. 2012.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°237, *Pakistan: No End To Humanitarian Crises*, 9 Oct. 2012.

➡ **Sri Lanka** Govt 1 Nov began impeachment proceedings against Supreme Court Chief Justice, accused of financial misconduct and conflict of interest. Chief Justice mounted strong rebuttal, supported by unusually strong and widespread opposition to govt move from lawyers, rights groups, Christian and Buddhist religious leaders, opposition parties and leftist members of UPFA coalition; many alleged impeachment politically motivated. Speaker of Parliament 29 Nov rejected Supreme Court summons issued to parliamentary panel looking into impeachment charges. U.S. condemned impeachment; Commonwealth Sec-Gen 15 Nov expressed concern, called on govt to respect independence of judiciary. UN HRC 1 Nov reviewed govt human rights record under Universal Periodic Review process; govt 5 Nov rejected

unusually high number of states’ recommendations. Military 27 Nov violently dispersed Jaffna student protests on traditional “heroes day” for LTTE fighters. Civil society groups protested govt plans to post Shavendra Silva, allegedly involved in war crimes and currently Sri Lanka’s Deputy Permanent Rep to the UN, as deputy high commissioner to South Africa.

- Alan Keenan, “Time to Push Back Over Sri Lankan Impunity”, CNN GPS, 20 Nov. 2012.
- “Sri Lanka chief justice faces impeachment hearing”, AP, 23 Nov. 2012.

New Crisis Group Asia Report N°239, *Sri Lanka: Tamil Politics and the Quest for a Political Solution*, 20 Nov. 2012. The Sri Lankan government’s refusal to negotiate seriously with Tamil political leaders or consider reasonable forms of power sharing is heightening ethnic tensions and damaging prospects for sustainable peace.

South East Asia

➡ **Indonesia** Lampung province in Sumatra again hit by inter-ethnic violence as indigenous groups in Central Lampung attacked transmigration village inhabited by Javanese families 8 Nov; dozens of houses torched, hundreds forced to flee; district chief brokered truce 9 Nov. Terrorist attacks resumed on Sulawesi: in South Sulawesi suspected terrorist 11 Nov threw bomb that failed to explode at provincial governor Syahrul Yasin Limpo in Makassar: police arrested attacker, clashed with 2 accomplices; men suspected of links to Santoso terrorist group. In Central Sulawesi police 1 Nov arrested 4 terror suspects; 3 Nov killed community leader suspected of links with Santoso terrorist group during house raid in Poso; 7 Nov confiscated weapons and ammunitions from Islamic boarding school in Tamanjeka with suspected links to radical Islamic group Jamaah Ansharut Tauhid (JAT). Unidentified attackers in Poso 15 Nov fired at a police precinct chief in his residence. Clashes erupted 3-4 Nov between villagers in Sigi district, dozens injured, 15 houses torched. Violence broke out 19 Nov between villagers in Palu, 7 reportedly injured. In Kalimantan, police 9 Nov arrested 2 terror suspects including 1 suspected of involvement in 2009 Jakarta hotel bombings. In Aceh mob 16 Nov attacked residence of “heretical” preacher Teungku Aiyub; preacher and 2 others killed in subsequent clash. In Lanny Jaya, Papua, police precinct chief and 2 other police killed 27 Nov after unidentified assailants attacked police station.

- “Moderate Islam losing ground to extremists in Poso”, *Jakarta Post*, 13 Nov. 2012.

➡ **Myanmar** Following renewed outbreak of conflict in Rakhine State late Oct, President Thein Sein 16 Nov held joint meeting with Buddhist and Muslim leaders to call for calm; sent letter to UNSG Ban pledging to address contentious issues, 20 Nov requested Indonesia’s help to resolve violence. Aung San Suu Kyi 7 Nov issued joint statement with ethnic minority parties calling on govt to deploy more troops in Rakhine State and address their concerns; 15 Nov blamed Myanmar govt and Bangladesh for Rohingya humanitarian crisis, said statelessness of Rohingya Muslims must be examined. Authorities early-month reportedly started operation to verify citizenship of Rohingya Muslims in Rakhine State. Court 21 Nov sentenced religious leader Dr Htun Aung to 12 years in jail for role in Rakhine State violence. U.S. president Obama visited country 19 Nov, first ever visit by sitting U.S. president; country also hosted PMs of Norway, Denmark, Sweden, New Zealand, plus EU president Barroso. Thein Sein 2 Nov signed into law new foreign

investment law. Ahead of Obama's visit, govt announced release of over 500 prisoners, including 66 alleged political prisoners. Deadly clashes continued between govt and Kachin Independence Army (KIA) in Hpakant jade mining area of Kachin State. Govt-KIA fighting reignited early-Nov in N Shan State; 8 soldiers reportedly killed. Thousands gathered at Monywa copper mine in NW 19-20 Nov to resume protests against seizure of land by company jointly owned by Myanmar military conglomerate and Chinese company; dozens of monks and protesters injured in violent crackdown by security forces 29 Nov.

- Louise Arbour, "Myanmar Facing Unfolding Crisis", CNN GPS, 17 Nov. 2012.
- "Unforgiving history", *Economist*, 3 Nov. 2012.

New Crisis Group Asia Report N°238, *Myanmar: Storm Clouds on the Horizon*, 12 Nov. 2012. Even as Myanmar's democratic transition continues apace, ethnic violence in Rakhine State represents a threat to national stability. It demands decisive moral leadership from all the country's leaders as they strive to find long-term solutions to the many challenges that lie ahead, including longstanding discrimination of the Rohingya and other Muslim minorities.

➡ **Philippines** Govt and Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) held further negotiations 12-17 Nov on 4 annexes to 15 Oct "framework agreement"; next round of talks scheduled Dec. MILF 15 Nov sent delegation to Organisation of Islamic Conference's (OIC) meeting of FMs; OIC seeking to increase Moro National Liberation Front's (MNLF) cooperation with MILF in wake of Oct agreement. In Maguindanao, 2 bomb explosions 26 Nov killed 1 member of MILF breakaway group Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Movement (BIFM). 21 killed in clashes between govt and communist New People's Army during month in Mindanao, Luzon. Security forces killed Indonesian extremist 23 Nov in Marawi City. Manila and ASEAN criticised late month reports that Chinese border guards to be given powers to search, seize and expel ships "illegally entering" Chinese waters in South China Sea.

- "OIC got Nur and Murad to sit down for Bangsamoro Coordination Forum", *Mindanews*, 24 Nov. 2012.

➡ **Thailand** Pitak Siam (Protect Siam) Group, led by retired Gen Boonlert Kaewprasit, held second anti-govt rally 24 Nov. Govt deployed 20,000 security forces, imposed Internal Security Act (ISA) in 3 Bangkok districts; 82 injured in clashes between protesters and police. Boonlert called off 2nd day of protests, announced end of his involvement in Pitak Siam. Govt no-confidence debate took place 25-27 Nov; PM Yingluck Shinawatra and 3 other ministers survived no-confidence vote 28 Nov. During 18 Nov visit, U.S. president Obama praised country's democratic development. U.S. Sec Defence Panetta signed defence cooperation agreement with Thai counterpart in Bangkok 15 Nov. Violence in south continued. In Narathiwat 3 people killed, dozens injured in attack on train 18 Nov in Ruesoh district; 2 vehicle bombs exploded 3 Nov in Ruesoh district, 3 killed; 5 killed in series of shootings. In Pattani former sub-district chief killed 3 Nov in Mayo district; several people killed in series of shootings. Teachers late Nov shut down over 300 schools to protest against killing of education workers by militants. Bomb explosion 22 Nov injured 2 soldiers in Khok Po district. In Yala province imam shot dead 14 Nov in Yaha district; 1 killed after bomb exploded 17 Nov in Muang district; 3 soldiers injured after militants attacked military base in Bannang Sata district. 1 militant killed 4 Nov in clash with security forces in Songkhla. Govt 30 Nov extended enforcement of ISA by a year in several districts of Songkhla and Pattani.

- "Bomb blast hits train, killing 3, injuring 36", *Bangkok Post*, 19 Nov. 2012.

➡ **Timor-Leste** UNMIT 31 Oct announced final certification of reconstitution of Timorese national police (PNTL).

- "Security Council praises country's progress, reaffirms continued UN support", UN News Centre, 7 Nov. 2012.

Europe

Balkans

➡ **Bosnia** SDP and largely Serb League of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD) 31 Oct came out with joint political platform, paving way for creation of new state-level coalition comprising SDP, SNSD, League for a Better Future (SBB), Serb Democratic Party, HDZ, HDZ 1990. New coalition promised to move swiftly on constitutional reform and other key priorities, 2 new ministers appointed 22 Nov. SDA promised to block implementation of new platform. Mostar City Council 3 Nov illegally extended its own mandate after failure to hold local election in city in Oct; High Representative Inzko rejected action, warned Council not to act. In 21 Nov statement RS President Dodik called for formation of 3rd, Croat entity within Bosnia. In Federation entity, govt session called off due to lack of quorum, 2013 budget discussion postponed.

- "BiH political rivals strike landmark deal", *SE Times*, 23 Nov. 2012.

➡ **Kosovo** EU 7 Nov hosted 2nd high-level meeting between Kosovo PM Thaçi and Serbia PM Dačić, following visits to Pristina and Belgrade by U.S. Sec State Clinton and EU foreign policy chief Ashton pushing dialogue. Working groups met, implementation of key "integrated management of crossing points" agreement expected to begin early Dec. Shootings and explosions marred attempts to begin construction of new houses in mixed Mitrovica neighbourhood; UNMIK officials warned construction unauthorised; Serbs attacked Albanian construction workers, at least 8 Serb members of Kosovo Police (KP) refused orders to protect them. Serbian special police 31 Oct arrested Slavoljub Jović aka "Pagi" in Mitrovica, took him across border into Serbia to face trial on charges of firing at KFOR troops in June. Former PM Haradinaj and 2 other ex-KLA commanders acquitted during their retrial at ICTY in The Hague; ruling condemned by Serbs, received with euphoria in Pristina. Tapes of EULEX interceptions of phone conversations by PM Thaçi and other senior officials leaked 29 Nov, condemned as fakes by govt but said to be part of ongoing investigation by EULEX.

- "Former Kosovo prime minister returns to Kosovo", AP, 30 Nov. 2012.

Caucasus

➡ **Azerbaijan** Chechen president Kadyrov met with President Aliyev and PM Rasizade during official visit to Baku aimed at attracting Azeri investment in Chechnya; also met with head of Muslim Administration of the Caucasus, discussed rise of religious extremism, suggesting possible future cooperation between Azerbaijan and Chechnya in fight against terrorism. Amid increasing concern over oppression of minorities and opposition, parliament adopted amendments to law on public gatherings increasing fines for unsanctioned demonstrations. Around 100 opposition activists protested in Baku 17 Nov. 4 suspects accused of planning terrorist attacks went on trial; accused of cooperating with Iran's

Revolutionary Guards. As Baku hosted UN-sponsored Internet Governance Forum, visiting OSCE representative on freedom of media criticised govt crackdown on press freedom.

- [“Rights groups slam Azerbaijan over freedom of speech”](#), RFE/RL, 8 Nov. 2012.

➤ **North Caucasus (Russia)** In Dagestan several militants killed by security forces and police during month, including 2 militants killed in special operation in Khasavyurt city 7 Nov. Police 20 Nov reportedly killed militant leader Taimas Taimasov in Gubden village in east following shoot-out. 2 police, 1 civilian killed in bomb explosion in Untsukul district 21 Nov; 1 police officer killed during 20 Nov special operation in Gubden village. Unknown assailants shot dead moderate imam Gadzhi Aliyev in Levashi district 11 Nov. Additional police redeployed from Chechnya to Dagestan during month, prompting increased tensions; clashes broke out between residents and police because of alleged forcible disappearance of 3 villagers 16 Nov in Gimry village, Untsukul region. Elsewhere, 5 suspected militants killed by law enforcement officials in Kabardino-Balkaria republic 17-18 Nov. Republican govts dismissed in Kabardino-Balkaria and Karachay-Cherkessia 1 and 12 Nov. Renewed exchange of criticism between Chechen president Kadyrov and Ingush leader Yevkurov over burial of slain insurgents. Kadyrov made official visits to Baku (see Azerbaijan) and UAE.

- [“Dagestan becomes hotbed of North Caucasus insurgency”](#), RFE/RL, 5 Nov. 2012.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Europe Report N°220 and N°221, [The North Caucasus: The Challenges of Integration \(I\), Ethnicity and Conflict](#) and [The North Caucasus: The Challenges of Integration \(II\), Islam, the Insurgency and Counter-Insurgency](#), 19 Oct. 2012.

➤ **Georgia** Despite agreement by new PM Ivanishvili and President Saakashvili to work together, signs of cracks emerging over budget and arrests of former govt officials. Tensions between ruling Georgian Dream coalition and President’s office ignited by dispute over 2013 State Budget, drafted 6 Nov, which saw funding for President’s Administration, National Security Council and Tbilisi municipality slashed. Saakashvili’s UNM slammed funding cuts as “politically motivated”. Arrest of former Interior Minister Bacho Akhalaia on charges of exceeding official powers and torture marked beginning of string of detentions of former interior ministry officials on charges of illegal confinement, illegal surveillance, damage of property, exceeding official powers. Govt responded to international, domestic concerns by promising to observe due process; Ivanishvili said he would not insist on impeachment of president, but his Georgian Dream parliamentary majority will initiate early adoption of constitutional changes set to significantly cut presidential powers. Ivanishvili 22 Nov said govt intends to establish relations with Abkhazia and South Ossetia; also said ready to meet Russian officials, though would not visit Russia. New govt appointed Zurab Abashidze as special envoy to Georgian-Russian affairs; Abashidze proposed “new, independent” format for Moscow-Tbilisi talks. Reports that Russian embargo on Georgian wine, water may be lifted.

- [“Georgia PM aims to strengthen his role before presidential vote”](#), Reuters, 22 Nov. 2012.

➤ **Nagorno-Karabakh (Azerbaijan)** Armenian and Azerbaijani FM’s met under Minsk group chairmanship for 2nd time in 2 months 27 Oct without results. Azerbaijan President Aliyev 31 Oct said Azerbaijan would celebrate victory in Karabakh “soon”; defence

ministry spokesman said Armenia’s Metsamor Nuclear Power Plant would be targeted in event of war. Armenian president Sargsyan responded warning “Azerbaijan is waiting for an occasion to start the conflict”, said Armenia “won’t stand aside when the population of Karabakh is going to be destroyed”; “deeper international engagement” needed to reduce tensions. One Azerbaijani soldier reported killed, 4 injured in mine explosions on Line of Contact in special operations during month. Minsk Group co-chairs visiting N-K 22 Nov urged local leaders not to put N-K airport into operation.

- [“Armenia accuses neighbour of stoking conflict”](#), *Wall Street Journal*, 9 Nov. 2012.

Eastern Europe

➤ **Moldova** President Timofti rejected Russian proposal to open consulate in breakaway Transdniestrian region, urged Russia to pull its troops out of area.

- [“Moldova blocks Russian plan to expand presence in rebel enclave”](#), Reuters, 17 Nov. 2012.

➤ **Ukraine** Over a thousand opposition supporters protested outside Central Electoral Commission in Kiev 5 Nov against alleged fraud during 28 Oct parliamentary elections; opposition parties called for partial recount, threatened to boycott parliament.

- [“EU countries split on Ukraine treaty”](#), EU Observer, 26 Nov. 2012.

Western Europe/Mediterranean

➤ **Cyprus** Turkish foreign ministry 3 Nov issued statement on Republic of Cyprus’ 2nd offshore licensing round for exploration of hydrocarbons, warned “adverse consequences” if international companies carried out “activities in the disputed areas over which Turkish Cypriots also have rights”, reiterating PM’s statement that they would be barred from new energy projects in Turkey. UN envoy Downer met separately with leaders of two sides during trip to island 20 Nov, implied progress not expected in reunification talks until Feb 2013 Greek Cypriot presidential elections.

- [“Downer returns to Cyprus to kick start UN peace talks”](#), *Famagusta Gazette*, 19 Nov. 2012.

➤ **Northern Ireland** New IRA faction claimed responsibility for 1 Nov killing of off-duty prison officer.

- [“IRA’ group admit responsibility for murder of prison officer David Black”](#), *Independent*, 12 Nov. 2012.

➤ **Turkey** Turkey continued to retaliate against stray Syrian shells with cross-border shelling. Stray shells wounded several in Turkey’s Ceylanpinar district during Syrian air assault on border town Ras al-Ain which began 8 Nov. Turkey sent fighter jets to border; thousands of Syrians fled into Turkey. Turkey 21 Nov formally requested NATO to deploy Patriot missiles along its border with Syria for defence purposes; 15 Nov announced recognition of new National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces as legitimate representative of Syrian people. PM Erdoğan condemned Israel’s 14-21 Nov strikes against Gaza (see Israel/OPT); visited Cairo 17 Nov for dialogue, talks on Israel-Hamas war. FM Davutoğlu visited Gaza 20 Nov. Turkey 26 Nov confirmed it had engaged in talks with Israel through diplomatic channels to revive bilateral ties prior to Israel-Hamas war. Hundreds of pro-

PKK prisoners 17 Nov ended 2-month hunger strike following message from jailed PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan. Govt met some of strikers' demands: 5 Nov said Öcalan could restart meetings with lawyers, and parliament 13 Nov started debating amendment to legalise use of Kurdish in courts. Justice Minister 19 Nov said talks with PKK, cut off mid-2011, could restart. Clashes between army and PKK in south east claimed at least 43 lives during month, down from 52 in October, according to Crisis Group's informal count. Continued Turkish airstrikes and raids in N Iraq targeted alleged PKK camps.

- Hugh Pope, "Turkey Needs to Change Course Over Own Insurgency", CNN GPS, 9 Nov. 2012.
- "Turkey says it will hold talks with Kurdish militants", Reuters, 19 Nov. 2012.

New Crisis Group Europe Report N°222, *Turkey's Kurdish Impasse: The View from Diyarbakir*, 30 Nov. 2012. Though battered economically, socially and politically for decades, the city and province of Diyarbakir could offer hope for Turks and Kurds who want to live together, if Ankara can refocus its policies on creating a more equal, democratic Turkey.

Latin America

➤ **Colombia** Peace talks between govt and FARC resumed in Cuba 19 Nov with discussions on rural development; FARC leading negotiator Iván Márquez announced 2-month unilateral ceasefire from 20 Nov to 20 Jan. Talks adjourned 29 Nov, expected to resume 5 Dec. Media reported govt plans to meet with country's second largest insurgent group ELN in Dec; former AUC paramilitary leaders also reiterated demand to join talks. Amid doubts over compliance, FARC 36th Front, which is part of FARC's north-western bloc known as Ivan Ríos, 24 Nov said ceasefire order did not reach it in time for 20 Nov attack on energy towers in Antioquia. Before ceasefire, FARC attack 31 Oct killed 2, injured 31 in Valle del Cauca dept; FARC 2 Nov raid on Timbiquí town in Cauca dept left 2 dead, 2 injured; 6 Nov attack on 5 vehicles in Cesar dept killed 1. Massacre 7 Nov reportedly carried out by New Illegal Armed Group (NIAG) Los Rastrojos killed 10 farm workers in Antioquia dept. Clashes between gangs in Bellavista prison left at least 28 inmates injured. Ombudsman 16 Nov called for declaration of "humanitarian emergency" in Buenaventura, after clashes between illegal armed groups triggered displacement of at least 4,000.

- "Colombian Farc rebels announce Christmas ceasefire", BBC, 19 Nov. 2012.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Latin America Report N°45, *Colombia: Peace at Last?*, 25 Sept. 2012.

➤ **Ecuador** President Correa registered his candidacy for re-election Feb 2013; 8 candidates will dispute Presidency; Correa ahead by 30 points in polls.

- "Poll gives Correa clear lead in February election in Ecuador", Reuters, 19 Nov. 2012.

➤ **Guatemala** Earthquake struck off Pacific coast 7 Nov killing 44 people, injuring hundreds more; President Pérez Molina declared 8 departments in south west "disaster zones". Angry crowd in eastern Jalapa dept 20 Nov abducted 4 mining company contractors and 5 soldiers, burned 6 vehicles, set fire to hotel.

- "Reforma policial debe ser fortalecida, señala informe", *Siglo21*, 17 Nov. 2012.

➤ **Haiti** Police/MINUSTAH troops 13 Nov dispersed demonstrators protesting 10 Nov killing of student. 3 police killed by unknown gunmen in separate incidents in carrefour Gérald Bataille, Delmas 21, downtown Port-au-Prince. President Martelly urged EU to consider free-trade deal with Haiti during 20 Nov speech at European Parliament. Torrential rains 9-10 Nov left at least 16 dead in North department. Haitian National Police 22 Nov arrested some 30 people claiming to be military in possession of uniforms, military IDs, locally-made weapons in Bon Repos, north of capital. Govt 26 Nov launched Framework for Coordination of Foreign Development Aid.

- "Haiti veterans in hiding renew vow to remobilize", AP, 24 Nov. 2012.

➤ **Mexico** President-elect Peña Nieto took office 1 Dec; has proposed strategy focusing on reduction of homicide, kidnapping and extortion, and creating National Gendarmerie body with military training but under civilian rule. Peña Nieto 30 Nov named cabinet, including close ally Miguel Angel Osorio Chong to head interior ministry. Former mayor of Tiquicheo, Michoacán María Santos Gorrostieta, found beaten to death days after going missing. Authorities 9 Nov charged 14 federal police officers in Aug attack against 2 CIA agents and a Mexican marine in Tres Mariás, Morelos; 12 Nov arrested Gen Pacheco Salgado on suspicion of giving false information about case. 20 bodies found 26 Nov in mass grave in Chihuahua state.

- "A glimmer of hope", *Economist*, 24 Nov. 2012.

➤ **Venezuela** Venezuela elected member of UNGA's Human Rights Council for 2013-2015; opponents of President Chávez, parts of international community criticised election, especially given Venezuela's Sept request for withdrawal from Inter-American Court on Human Rights. Judge arrested in 2009 while investigating prominent human rights case alleged she was raped while in prison. Chávez 27 Nov travelled to Cuba for new round of cancer treatment, marking 7th trip to island this year.

- "Venezuelan judge who angered Chávez says she was raped while in prison", *New York Times*, 26 Nov. 2012.

Middle East and North Africa

Eastern Mediterranean

➤ **Israel/Occupied Palestinian Territories** Israel-Hamas cross-border violence early month escalated to outright conflict; Israel 14 Nov launched Operation Pillar of Defence with assassination of Hamas militant leader in Gaza Ahmed al-Jaabari, and airstrikes on Gaza. Hamas retaliated with frequent rocket fire from Gaza toward Israel, reaching near Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. 5 Israeli civilians, 1 soldier killed; total number of Palestinians killed, including militants, exceeded 150; 219 Israelis and 1,200 Palestinians injured, vast majority civilians; Gaza infrastructure significantly damaged. Egypt-negotiated, U.S.-backed ceasefire agreed 21 Nov. Conflict provoked several protests and clashes with Israeli army across West Bank; 2 protestors killed, dozens injured. Bus bombing 21 Nov in Tel Aviv injured 21. Following ceasefire several incidents reported of Israeli forces shooting at Palestinians in Gaza border area including 1 killed, over a dozen injured 23 Nov. In majority vote UNGA 29 Nov granted Palestine non-member observer sta-

tus. Israel 30 Nov announced 3,000 new settlements in occupied WB, E Jerusalem; move widely interpreted as retaliation to UNGA vote; U.S. condemned move. Gestures toward rapprochement between Hamas and Fatah: Hamas 25 Nov announced release of Fatah-affiliated political prisoners, Fatah reciprocated; Hamas 26 Nov announced support for PA UNGA bid.

- “UN vote recognizes state of Palestine”, AP, 30 Nov. 2012.

New Crisis Group Middle East Report N°133, *Israel and Hamas: Fire and Ceasefire in a New Middle East*, 22 Nov. 2012. The latest round of fighting between Israel and Hamas must move beyond the quick-fix solutions of conflicts past, or the seeds of a future flare-up will be sown today.

➡ **Lebanon** Political crisis sparked by Oct assassination of Wissam Hassan continued: 14 March coalition repeated demands that govt resign, be replaced with “neutral salvation cabinet” as precondition for talks; National Dialogue session delayed to 9 Jan. PM Makati 19 Nov rejected feasibility of “neutral” cabinet, said formation of new cabinet could be discussed at National Dialogue session, offered to step down if it would resolve crisis. President Sleiman and Walid Jumblatt, Druze politician and leader of Progressive Socialist Party, attempted to reconcile sides. 3 killed 11 Nov in clashes between supporters of Hezbollah and Salafist Sheikh Ahmad Assir in Sidon; PM Makati called for calm. Army 24 Nov reportedly foiled plot in Nabatieh to attack Shia Ashura commemorations 25 Nov; 5 Syrians arrested. 2 rockets aimed at Israel launched 21 Nov but fell short of border, several other attempts foiled by army. FM Adnan Mansour 20 Nov visited Gaza in first-ever govt visit to OPT. Syrian army 30 Nov killed some 20 Lebanese gunmen from Tripoli fighting alongside rebels in Syria.

- “Political paralysis in Lebanon bodes well for Hizbollah”, *National*, 22 Nov. 2012.

New Crisis Group Middle East Report N°132, *A Precarious Balancing Act: Lebanon and the Syrian Conflict*, 22 Nov. 2012. Syria’s civil war is spilling beyond its borders and threatening Lebanon’s stability. More than ever, it is crucial that Lebanon’s leaders address the fundamental shortfalls of their governing structure, which exacerbate factionalism and leave the country vulnerable to the chaos next door.

➡ **Syria** Opposition 12 Nov announced break-through formation of National Coalition of Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces following week of talks in Qatar, external pressure. Former Syrian National Council merged into new body; former Damascene imam, Ahmed Moaz al-Khatib, named leader. 6 Gulf states 12 Nov, France 13 Nov, Turkey 15 Nov, UK 21 Nov, Spain 29 Nov formally recognised coalition as sole legitimate representative of Syrian people. Opposition forces in Aleppo 20 Nov voiced support for coalition day after rejecting it, called for greater representation; Syrian-Kurdish PYD party 20 Nov rejected coalition. Worst violence in months in southern, eastern Damascus rebel strongholds included airstrikes, fierce clashes; dozens killed in 2 car bombs 28 Nov; fighting 29 Nov closed Damascus Airport. Number of strategic gains by rebels, winning control of oil field, hydroelectric dam, several army bases; weapons captured. Rebel Free Syria Army 9 Nov captured Ras al-Ain on Turkish border; army responded with days of intense bombardment, occasionally spilling into Turkey; fighting sparked unprecedented exodus into Turkey. Month saw several incursions into Golan Heights demilitarised zone; Israel

sought UN action, in later incidents responded with direct fire. Rebels 7 Nov shelled mainly Alawite Damascus district.

- “Higher hopes”, *Economist*, 17 Nov. 2012.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Middle East Report N°131, *Tentative Jihad: Syria’s Fundamentalist Opposition*, 12 Oct. 2012.

Gulf

➡ **Bahrain** Coordinated bombs blasts in central Manama 5 Nov killed 2, injured 1; main opposition al-Wefaq condemned attack, opposition activists suggested security forces might have planted bombs to justify strong response. Authorities 6 Nov arrested 4 suspects, said bombings “bear hallmarks of Hezbollah”. Authorities 7 Nov revoked citizenships of 31 Shiite activists, including 2 former MPs, for having “undermined state security”. Police 30 Nov violently dispersed demonstrators outside Manama protesting “undeclared siege” beginning 7 Nov on Mahazza village, Sitra island. Opposition al-Wefaq 24 Nov said street protests will resume despite govt ban. Court 21 Nov sentenced 23 medical workers to 3 months jail for participation in “unauthorised demonstrations” during 2011. Security forces 26 Nov violently dispersed hundreds marching towards central Manama after Ashura ceremonies.

- “Bahrain revokes nationality of 31 over national security”, Reuters, 7 Nov. 2012.

➡ **Iran** Iranian warplanes 1 Nov fired at U.S. surveillance drone claiming it had entered Iranian airspace; U.S. officials maintain it was in international airspace. Iran 23 Nov formally accused U.S. Navy of “illegal and provocative acts” near its coastline and of violating its airspace in letters to UNSG Ban and UNSC. U.S. 8 Nov unveiled new sanctions targeting top Iranians and national bodies related to media and internet censorship. MPs 21 Nov withdrew motion calling for questioning of President Ahmadinejad regarding Iran’s economic problems following public intervention by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

- “Iran supreme leader tells MPs not to summon president”, BBC, 21 Nov. 2012.

➡ **Iraq** Tensions between Baghdad, autonomous Kurdish region increased late Nov with week-long standoff along contested internal border. Military leaders from both sides 26 Nov agreed to work to defuse tensions; bombs 27 Nov killed 4 ethnic Kurds in Kirkuk. 1 died 16 Nov in clashes between Iraqi forces, troops guarding office of Kurdish political party in Tuz Khurmato. Car bombs 6 Nov killed at least 27 outside army base in Taji, 9 Nov killed over 30 and injured over 100 in Shiite cities outside Baghdad, 14 Nov killed at least 14 across country. PM al-Maliki’s rivals mid Nov began campaigning for introduction of term limits in attempt to block Shiite leader running for 3rd term in 2014. Court 1 Nov again sentenced fugitive VP al-Hashemi to death for alleged involvement in plot to assassinate interior ministry official. 2 Iraqi civilians killed, 3 wounded 6 Nov in Turkish air strike targeting PKK separatist rebels. Suspected Hezbollah operative Ali Musa Daquduq freed 16 Nov following acquittal by Iraqi court of involvement in killing of 5 U.S. soldiers.

- Joost Hiltermann, “Revenge of the Kurds”, *Foreign Affairs*, 5 Nov. 2012.
- “Talks to defuse Iraq army-Kurdish standoff make little headway”, Reuters, 22 Nov. 2012.

➡ **Jordan** 13 Nov announcement that govt fuel subsidies to be removed sparked nationwide protests, rioting, strikes 13-18 and 23 Nov, calls for PM Nsour's resignation. Protests in Amman 16 and 30 Nov drew thousands, some protesters reportedly called for King's downfall. Over 100 arrested, scores injured when police violently dispersed several protests; 1 killed 14 Nov in Irbid, police claim he attacked police station. Former head of intelligence Mohammed al-Dahabi sentenced 11 Nov to 13 years in prison, \$30m fine for embezzlement, money laundering, abuse of office.

- ["Political and economic problems fuel Jordan protests"](#), BBC, 16 Nov. 2012.

➡ **Kuwait** Ahead of 1 Dec elections, continued demonstrations protesting Oct change to voting rules; opposition groups continued to urge boycott of vote. Demonstrators clashed with police 31 Oct-1 Nov. Large opposition demonstration violently dispersed 4 Nov; activists accused security services of arbitrarily detaining protesters. Tens of thousands of opposition supporters demonstrated peacefully 11 and 30 Nov.

- ["Kuwait emir's change to election rules stirs signs of Arab spring"](#), *Guardian*, 25 Nov. 2012.

➡ **Saudi Arabia** King Abdullah 5 Nov replaced Interior Minister Prince Ahmed bin Abdul Aziz with Prince Mohammed bin Nayef, King's nephew. Saudi Arabia and Iran exchanged accusations and threats over alleged violations of each other's waters. Suspected al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula gunmen 5 Nov clashed with Saudi border guards while trying to cross into Yemen from Najran province, killing 2; 10 Saudi Arabians, 1 Yemeni arrested. Gunmen 28 Nov killed Saudi diplomat, bodyguard in Yemeni capital. Dozens arrested, reports of violence 27 Nov following rare protest in Riyadh demanding release or immediate trial of jailed relatives.

- ["New generation empowered in Saudi"](#), *Financial Times*, 13 Nov. 2012.

➡ **Yemen** 15 Nov National Dialogue postponed 3 weeks on request of preparatory committee; UN envoy to Yemen Jamal Benomar 28 Nov announced political parties had resolved issue of seat distribution for dialogue. During 19 Nov visit UNSG Ban pledged to help rescue efforts to implement power transfer deal. Al-Qaeda-linked suicide bomber 16 Nov killed himself, 3 others inside HQ of govt-allied militias in Zinjibar. Gunman 7 Nov killed security officer near interior ministry in Sanaa. At least 3 killed 24 Nov in bomb targeting Shiite ceremony in Sanaa; no one claimed responsibility. Drone strike reportedly carried out by U.S. 8 Nov near Sanaa killed 3 suspected al-Qaeda members. Saudi diplomat, Yemeni bodyguard killed in Sanaa 28 Nov, govt offered \$25,000 reward for help catching killers. Repeated explosions targeting oil export pipeline; soldiers 21 Nov fought with gunmen preventing restoration of pipeline.

- ["Southern support 'essential for Yemen dialogue'"](#), AFP, 25 Nov. 2012.

North Africa

➡ **Algeria** Security forces 16 Nov killed Rabah Makhfi, al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb military chief responsible for Kabylie region, same day arrested 4 alleged members of Tizi Ouzou terrorist network suspected of providing support to al-Qaeda fighters in Mizrana region. Govt 18 Nov raised alert level for army units stationed in south ahead of planned ECOWAS intervention in Mali.

- ["Dans les pas de Bouteflika"](#), *Jeune Afrique*, 23 Nov. 2012.

➡ **Egypt** President Morsi 22 Nov issued controversial constitutional declaration temporarily granting himself more powers and immunity from judicial review until a new constitution comes into force; declaration also effectively sacked Mubarak-era chief prosecutor, ordered retrial of recently-acquitted Mubarak officials implicated in violence against protesters, protects Shura Council and Constituent Assembly (CA) from potential court-ordered dissolution, and extended CA deadline to draft new constitution by 2 months. Morsi justified action as necessary to prevent pro-Mubarak judges sabotaging transition proceedings; opposition called declaration a "coup". Judges 24 Nov said declaration constitutes "unprecedented attack" on judiciary, initiated strike 25 Nov; Morsi 26 Nov made judiciary-proposed compromises to decree. Protests across country started 23 Nov, as well as pro-Morsi counter-protests; 3 killed, hundreds injured in clashes between sides and with security forces. Opposition 25 Nov initiated sit-in in Tahrir Square. CA saw further non-Islamist withdrawals and membership freezes during month, 30 Nov finished draft constitution. However process, quick completion and content of constitution criticised by some liberals, fuelling protests. Morsi said nationwide referendum on draft would be held "soon"; if public approves the constitution, all previous constitutional declarations, including President's latest, would automatically become void. Morsi credited with negotiating 21 Nov Hamas-Israel ceasefire (see Israel/OPT). Violent clashes began 18 Nov between residents of Qorsaya island in Giza and army over land ownership claims; several killed, 25 arrested. 1 killed, hundreds injured and arrested during days of clashes between demonstrators and police on Mohamed Mahmoud Street in Cairo following 18 Nov demonstration commemorating deadly 2011 clash. 3 members of Egypt's security forces shot dead, 1 wounded 3 Nov in attack by jihadi gunmen in N Sinai. Militants 26 Nov bombed security bases being built in Sinai, injuring 4. EU approved \$6.4bn financial support package; Egypt and IMF reached preliminary deal for \$4.8bn loan.

- ["Egyptians protest after draft constitution raced through"](#), Reuters, 30 Nov. 2012.

New Crisis Group Middle East/North Africa Conflict Alert, [A Way Out of Egypt's Transitional Quicksand](#), 26 Nov. 2012. In issuing a constitutional declaration granting himself full powers President Mohamed Morsi has used a chainsaw where a scalpel was needed. The key to resolving the current political impasse lies in devising a compromise enabling the transition to move forward at a reasonable pace while offering substantive guarantees to an apprehensive opposition.

➡ **Libya** Newly appointed PM Zeidan and two thirds of cabinet sworn in 14 Nov under heavy security; 5 ministers still missing including interior, defence, religious affairs and foreign relations. 4 killed 4 Nov in inter-militia fighting in Tripoli; 2 killed 10 Nov in Jebel Nafusa in clashes between rival armed groups from Tiji and Kabau. Security official killed in attacks in Benghazi on 4 and 7 Nov. Benghazi security chief Farj Dreisi killed by gunmen 21 Nov. Trial of Qadhafi-era PM al-Baghdadi al-Mahoudi, charged with corruption and ordering mass rape, began 12 Nov.

- ["Libya's new crisis: a wave of assassinations targeting its top cops"](#), *Time*, 26 Nov. 2012.

➡ **Mauritania** President Abdelaziz returned from France following recovery from 14 Oct shooting; Coordination for Democratic Opposition (COD) 2 Nov called for independent investigation into

shooting, 21 Nov held rally in Nouakchott to demand president's departure; Abdelaziz asked opposition to "be reasonable".

- ["L'opposition mauritanienne dénonce la vacance du pouvoir et demande une transition"](#), RFI, 2 Nov. 2012.

➡ **Morocco** Security forces 24 Nov dismantled network suspected of recruiting and training fighters for Islamist groups Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO) and al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). Interior ministry 5 Nov said large-scale terrorist plot to bomb several cities thwarted, 8 members of "Ansar al-Sharia in the Islamic Maghreb", new Ansar al-Sharia offshoot, arrested. Authorities 8 Nov imprisoned 3 suspected of planning terrorist training camp in Rif mountains.

- ["Les autorités annoncent le démantèlement d'une 'cellule terroriste'"](#), RFI, 2 Nov. 2012.

➡ **Tunisia** At least 200 injured 27-30 Nov as protesters demanding jobs, economic development clashed with police in Siliana; army deployed 30 Nov to disperse protests. PM Jebali 30 Nov rejected calls for his resignation, accused opposition parties, unions of provoking the protests. President Marzouki same day asked PM Jebali to appoint new cabinet in response. Hundreds of Salafis demonstrated in Tunis 6 Nov against sweeping arrests. 2 Salafi activists died 16-17 Nov in hunger strike initiated following detention in connection with mid-Sept U.S. embassy attack. Imam involved in Oct attack on Manouba guard posts died 1 Nov from wounds sustained during clashes; new Manouba imam 1 Nov called for jihad against ruling An-Nahda in live TV broadcast; 1 killed and several injured as supporters clashed with police next day. Demonstrations continued in mining areas. Some 30 injured mid-month when clans clashed over agricultural land in Msaken in east.

- ["Violence escalates in northern Tunisia"](#), Al Jazeera, 30 Nov. 2012.

➡ **Western Sahara** Security forces 3 Nov violently dispersed demonstration in Smara calling for self-determination, 10 injured. UN envoy Christopher Ross met with pro-independence Sahrawi activist Aminatou Haidar and members of Sahrawi parliament in exile, urged UNSC resolution to crisis.

- ["Amidst series of meetings, UN envoy urges resolution to Western Sahara crisis"](#), UN News, 12 Nov. 2012.

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