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January 2013 Trends



Deteriorated Situations

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Improved Situations

Guatemala (p.9)



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February 2013 Watchlist



Conflict Risk Alerts

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Venezuela (p.9)
Egypt (p.11)



Conflict Resolution Opportunities

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CrisisWatch

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

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

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

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Africa

Central Africa

➡ **Burundi** National Forces of Liberation (FNL) rebel group members early Jan announced Agathon Rwaswa, leader in exile, no longer head of group, sparking intra-FNL clashes in eastern DRC. Journalists 15 and 22 Jan demonstrated in Bujumbura against imprisonment of journalist Hassan Ruvakuki; life sentence against Ruvakuki reduced 8 Jan to 3 years after court dropped terrorism charges on appeal.

- “Un journaliste de RFI condamné à trois de prison en appel”, AFP, 8 Jan. 2013.

➡ **Cameroon** Authorities 7 Jan announced extradition of 29 Nigerians, 2 Nigériens suspected of ties with Boko Haram (BH). Former BH member turned “informant” found executed 19 Jan in Kousseri town, authorities believe BH responsible. Mid-month clashes over land between Peul and Mboum ethnic groups in Touborou left at least 4 dead. Amnesty International 24 Jan released report accusing govt of abuses including unlawful killings and torture of political opponents, human rights defenders, journalists.

- “La secte Boko Haram inquiète le Nord-Cameroun”, Le Septentrion, 19 Jan. 2013.

➡ **Central African Republic** Seleka rebel movement and President Bozizé 11 Jan agreed to ceasefire, formation of unity govt and legislative elections within 1 year at Libreville peace talks that began 9 Jan; Bozizé 17 Jan named Nicolas Tiangaye, leader of Republican Convention for Social Progress, as new PM until 2016, following his nomination by democratic opposition. Bozizé same day proposed ministerial redistribution: Seleka rebels and democratic opposition given 5 positions each, civil society and other politico-military groups 4 each, 12 positions awarded to presidential majority. PM Tiangaye late Jan denounced attacks committed by Seleka elements in Kembe and Dimbi; Seleka’s spokesperson said perpetrators will be sanctioned. UNSC 24 Jan welcomed ceasefire, extended peacekeeping mandate to 31 Jan 2014.

- Thierry Vircoulon, “Restart”, *Development & Cooperation*, 24 Jan. 2013.
- “No quick fix for Central African Republic”, *Mail & Guardian*, 11 Jan. 2013.

➡ **Chad** President Déby 21 Jan replaced PM Emmanuel Nadingar with Chief of Staff Joseph Dadnadji. National Alliance for Change and Democracy (ANCD) rebels 4 Jan denied govt claims ANCD lending support to CAR Seleka rebel coalition. Déby 23 Jan sent 2,000 troops to help fight Islamist groups in Mali.

- “Chad seeks regional clout in sending troops to Mali”, AFP, 22 Jan. 2013.

➡ **Democratic Republic of Congo** Govt talks with M23 rebels resumed 17 Jan after agreement on agenda, but plans to sign peace deal on 28 Jan cancelled as negotiations stalled. U.S. 9 Jan backed UN plans to deploy surveillance drones to aid peacekeepers. UN/SADC/AU/ICGLR leaders 28 Jan failed to reach agreement on deployment of neutral force. Rebel groups continued to launch attacks in east: Mai Mai Morgan militants 7 Jan seized Mambasa city in Province Orientale for 3 days; Front for Patriotic Resistance of Ituri (FRPI) 11 Jan attacked Kagaba city, Irumu; Mai Mai Gedeon and Bakata Katanga militias launched several attacks in Katanga province;

Rayia Mutomboki 10 Jan attacked several areas in Shabunda territory, South Kivu. 2013 budget adopted 15 Jan with significant increase in defence spending.

- “M23 rebels fear war over UN sanctions”, *Independent*, 20 Jan. 2013.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°93, *Eastern Congo: The ADF-NALU’s Lost Rebellion*, 19 Dec. 2012.

➡ **Rwanda** President Kagame 21 Jan said he does not oppose planned UN deployment of surveillance drones to DRC, again denied Rwandan support for M23 rebels, acknowledged difficult budget situation due to aid suspension. Germany 30 Jan announced suspended aid to Rwanda to be released. Rwanda 28 Jan expelled Belgian diplomat.

- “Rwanda wants ‘clarity’ on UN drone plans for DRC Congo”, AFP, 14 Jan. 2013.

Horn of Africa

➡ **Eritrea** Approx 100 lower-to-middle ranking soldiers 21 Jan seized information ministry, began TV broadcast calling for constitution and release of political prisoners; mutineers reportedly surrendered. Information Minister Ali Abdu Ahmed late Jan admitted defection from regime. Opposition conference held 13 Jan in Sweden called for international intervention to end human rights violations by President Afewerki’s regime.

- Cedric Barnes, “When is a Mutiny not a Mutiny?”, *African Peacebuilding Agenda*, 24 Jan. 2013.
- “A glimpse into a mysterious African dictatorship: is Eritrea on the verge?”, *Time*, 27 Jan. 2013.

➡ **Ethiopia** Court 15 Jan convicted 10 of plotting terrorist attacks with help from Somali militants, sentenced them to between 3 and 20 years jail. PM Desalegn elected AU chair 28 Jan.

- “Ethiopia’s PM marks 100 days in office”, *Deutsche Welle*, 4 Jan. 2013.

➡ **Kenya** Political parties’ nominations marred by irregularities, disorganisation; Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) extended nomination process to 18 Jan following delayed delivery of voting materials; violence erupted in Kisumu town when PM Odinga’s sister allegedly declared ODM’s candidate for governor’s post. EU 23 Jan announced deployment of 70 election observers to monitor 4 March elections. Visiting UN political affairs chief Jeffrey Feltman 31 Jan emphasised need for peaceful and credible elections. At least 11 killed 20 Jan in Kibisu village, Tana River district, in retaliatory attack for 21 Dec clashes between Orma and Pokomo that killed 42. High Court ruling 23 Jan provisionally halted relocation of urban Somali refugees to camps, reportedly scheduled to begin 21 Jan. 2 killed, 7 injured 5 Jan in grenade attack on Dadaab refugee camp.

- “Kenya election: a bewildering dance of candidates and coalitions”, *Guardian*, 31 Jan. 2013.

New Crisis Group Africa Report N°197, *Kenya’s 2013 Elections*, 17 Jan. 2013. Preparations for elections in Kenya turned into high gear as the parties in the three major coalitions nominated their candidates.

➡ **Somalia** Month saw several major security operations in Mogadishu: 1,700 suspected Al-Shabaab militants arrested 15 Jan; 730 arrested 19 Jan. SRSG for children and armed conflict Leila Zerrougui 18 Jan called on AU to minimise child casualties following 15 Jan operations in Leego village, Lower Shabelle region, that reportedly killed 7 civilians including 5 children; AU 17 Jan announced investigation. AMISOM/Somali forces continued to clash with Al-Shabaab militants. 6 reportedly killed 29 Jan in al-Shabaab suicide attack in Mogadishu near PM office. Journalist arrested and held without charge 10 Jan for investigating rape by security forces, another shot dead 18 Jan in Mogadishu. 2 French soldiers and intelligence officer held hostage by Al-Shabaab killed in rescue attempt 12 Jan; 17 Al-Shabaab militants also killed. U.S. 17 Jan officially recognised new Somali govt for first time since 1991. Govt 8 Jan reopened National Intelligence and Security Agency HQ. Ahlu Sunnah Islamist Party and Galmudug administration 7 Jan concluded preliminary agreement for establishing joint administration for central regions. Military 15 Jan clashed with Al-Shabaab in Galgala, Puntland. Puntland President Farole 11 Jan received U.S. Special Rep Swan, discussed security, regional stability. Farole's mandate extended 8 Jan by one year.

- "A failed state is back from the dead", *Independent*, 13 Jan. 2013.

➡ **Somaliland** 1 killed, 3 wounded in Borama 30 Dec in protests against election results during VP Abdirahman Abdullahi Saylici's visit. U.S. recognition of Somalia's govt 21 Jan sparked political unrest in Somaliland, fears recognition represents setback to peace talks with Somalia and independence bid. Border clashes between Somaliland forces and Khaatumo State militia continued. Citing "specific threat to Westerners", UK 27 Jan urged its citizens to leave Somaliland.

- "U.S. recognition of Somalia govt creates political storm in Somaliland", *Garowe Online*, 21 Jan. 2013.

➡ **South Sudan** Talks with Sudan continued: Presidents 6 Jan agreed to abide by timelines for security, border and oil deals but following a week of talks mid-month both sides accused each other of making new demands. Plans to resume oil exports delayed after negotiations failed to reach agreement on demilitarised zone. Govt official 30 Jan said Sudan attempting to wage "economic war" on S Sudan. Govt 22 Jan dismissed over 30 top army officers, including all 6 deputy chiefs of staff, denied link to rumoured coup attempt. SPLA 26-27 Jan clashed with former Yau Yau rebels in Pibor town, Jonglei state, displacing thousands. Police 24 Jan arrested traditional leader in Warrap state accused of recruiting and establishing training camp for personal vigilante group. At least 2 killed 24 Jan when SPLA clashed with armed pastoralists in Lakes state.

- "South Sudan delays resumption of oil exports", *Wall Street Journal*, 20 Jan. 2013.

➡ **Sudan** Opposition alliance National Consensus Forces (NCF) and rebel Sudanese Revolutionary Front (SRF) 5 Jan signed "New Dawn" charter stating aim to topple govt; Umma National Party (UNP) leader Sadiq Al-Mahdi 26 Jan said agreement "full of mistakes"; called for regime reform. Army 12 Jan reported over 50 rebels killed in clashes, S Kordofan. Amnesty International 30 Jan accused security forces of involvement in early-Jan fighting near Darfur goldmine that killed approx 200 and displaced some 100,000. Talks with S Sudan continued throughout month (see S Sudan). President Bashir 25 Jan announced Sudan had dropped demand for financial compensation over oil confiscated by S Sudan,

said govt will not invite international arbitration in dispute. UK late Jan reportedly agreed to drop Sudan's debts on condition govt address internal conflicts. Foreign ministry 31 Jan confirmed loss of UN voting rights for failure to pay fees.

- "Sudan army withdraws from gold mine area of Jebel 'Amer", *Radio Dabanga*, 27 Jan. 2013.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°194, *Sudan: Major Reform or More War*, 29 Nov. 2012.

➡ **Uganda** Police 26 Jan said leading opposition politician Kizza Besigye arrested for planning anti-govt protests. Vice chairman of Parliamentary Committee on Defence and Internal Affairs 29 Jan said committee considering calling President Museveni and Defence Chief Aronda Nyakairima to explain coup rhetoric: Nyakairima warned army poised to intervene if parliament continues "not showing seriousness" in tackling Uganda's problems, Museveni reportedly claimed army will intervene to "refocus the country's future" if current "confusion" in parliament continues. Anti-Corruption Court mid-Jan convicted MP Mike Mukula of embezzlement during 2005 term as health minister. Ugandan troops in CAR 18 Jan killed head bodyguard of LRA rebel leader Joseph Kony.

- "Ugandan army wades into raging coup debate", *Africa Review*, 24 Jan. 2013.

Southern Africa

➡ **Madagascar** Transitional President Rajoelina 15 Jan said would not contest upcoming elections but will stand in 2018 polls; UNSG Ban 17 Jan welcomed decision, reiterated importance of upholding electoral calendar. President of Lower House Mamy Rakotoarivelo said Rajoelina hoping to set up a "Putin-Medvedev scheme" by supporting ally in presidential election in hope it will secure him nomination as PM.

- "Présidentielle malgache 2013: qui sera la nouvelle star?", *Jeune Afrique*, 23 Jan. 2013.


➡ **Zimbabwe** GPA principals 18 Jan announced consensus reached on draft constitution. Joint Monitoring and Implementation Committee (JOMIC) received several reports of political violence and intimidation by army personnel in Mashonaland West. Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) said voter registration exercise announced in Dec 2012 delayed due to lack of funds.

- "Apathy greets news of a new Zimbabwe constitution", *Mail & Guardian*, 31 Jan. 2013.


West Africa

➡ **Côte d'Ivoire** Ghanaian authorities 17 Jan arrested Charles Blé Goudé, former head of Young Patriots street militia and member of former president Gbagbo's inner circle, in joint police operation with CDI; Blé Goudé extradited to CDI, charged with war crimes, murder and theft of public funds. Govt and Ivorian Popular Front (FPI) 18 Jan resumed political dialogue; local elections initially scheduled 24 Feb postponed indefinitely. IMF chief Christine Lagarde 7 Jan said economy on "right track", growth predicted to exceed 8.5% in 2013.


- [“Ivory Coast charges Gbagbo loyalist Charles Ble Goude”](#), BBC, 21 Jan. 2013.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°193, [Côte d’Ivoire: Defusing Tensions](#), 26 Nov. 2012.

 **Guinea** Trial of 33 suspected of carrying out attack on President Condé’s residence in July 2011 resumed 7 Jan; several defendants 21 Jan claimed evidence presented in court was obtained through torture. 2 main opposition coalitions lifted boycott of local electoral commissions 11 Jan, but reiterated disagreement with authorities and president of electoral commission over electoral preparations. Main opposition leader Cellou Dalein Diallo 21 Jan insisted protest campaign would be launched if Condé did not satisfy opposition’s demands. Condé 25 Jan denied problems with electoral list, insisted process would go on according to plan.




- [“Attentat contre Alpha Condé: reprise du procès devant la cour d’assises de Conakry”](#), *Jeune Afrique*, 9 Jan. 2013.

 **Guinea-Bissau** African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC) and 3 small parties 17 Jan joined political accord to regulate transition process. Transitional President Nhamadjo 20 Jan said holding of elections in May 2013 “technically impossible”. UNSG Ban 1 Jan appointed former Timor-Leste president Ramos-Horta as new SRSG and head of UN peacekeeping office in G-B; Ramos-Horta 21 Jan acknowledged “difficulties” in mobilising international support for electoral process; 26 Jan said situation has evolved and polls could be held before end of year. At AU summit 16 Jan, AU SR in G-B Ovídio Pequeno noted “positive evolution”; AU took “note” of ECOWAS request to lift suspension of G-B. PAIGC 14 Jan said will hold 8th congress in May; former CPLP Exec Sec Domingos Simões Pereira, former ministers Aristide Ocante da Silva and Braima Camara announced intention to run for party leadership. Ousted PM Gomes Júnior 23 Jan said he is “natural candidate” for presidential elections.

- [“Guinée-Bissau, le PAIGC veut sortir de la crise”](#), Xinhua, 18 Jan. 2013.


 **Liberia** President Johnson-Sirleaf 19 Jan said Liberia prepared to send military platoon to join ECOWAS peacekeeping mission in Mali. Defence Minister Bernie Samukai 8 Jan announced troop withdrawal from Côte d’Ivoire border by 13 Jan. Former president Taylor 22 Jan began appeal against war crimes conviction at ICC.

- [“Liberia’s Charles Taylor appeals at The Hague”](#), BBC, 22 Jan. 2013.


   **Mali** France 11 Jan launched “Operation Serval” intervention to oust Islamists in northern Mali, backed by African-led mission (AFISMA) deployed 17 Jan, prompted hopes area will return to govt control, but also fears military approach will divert attention from political process in Bamako and risk further detabilisation, regional spillover, and possible backlash. French forces quickly advanced north: at least 100 Islamists, 60 Malian troops, 1 French soldier, 10 civilians killed in battle of Konna; at least 50 Islamists, 3 soldiers reportedly killed 14-21 Jan in battle of Diabaly. French/Malian forces 26 Jan took control of Gao, 27 Jan captured Timbuktu, 30 Jan captured last rebel stronghold of Kidal. U.S. air force 22 Jan began airlift of French mechanised infantry units; several EU states pledged logistical/material support; French ground troops expected to swell to 3,700 total. UN 31 Jan said considering deploying up to 5,000 peacekeepers when Operation Serval is over. Rights groups late-month accused Malian troops of executing several Tuaregs and Arabs in Sévaré. Leader of Ansar Dine dissident faction, Algabass Ag Intal-

lah, 24 Jan announced creation of Islamic Movement for Azawad; said group ready to engage in peace talks and fight Ansar Dine.

- [“French troops face complicated military landscape in Mali”](#), *Washington Post*, 25 Jan. 2013.

 **Niger** President Issoufou 14 Jan confirmed deployment of 500 soldiers as part of ECOWAS-led force to retake Islamist-held northern Mali; troops expected to be deployed in Gao alongside 2,000-strong contingent pledged by Chad (outside ECOWAS framework). French FM Fabius 3 Jan said hostages abducted by AQIM in 2010 near Arlit still alive. Turkish PM Erdoğan visited 8-10 Jan to strengthen bilateral cooperation, signed several agreements.


- [“Niger president visits Mali bound troops”](#), AFP, 22 Jan. 2013.

 **Nigeria** Boko Haram (BH) second in command for southern and northern Borno state Muhammed Abdulaziz 30 Jan announced ceasefire on condition detained members released, destroyed mosque of leader Mohammed Yusuf be rebuilt; Nigerian govt said would study conditions of ceasefire before pronouncing on it; military said ceasefire would be subjected to one-month test. Following day 5 police killed in suspected BH attacks in Kano city and Kaduna state. Oil pipeline in Arepo, near Lagos, attacked 23 Jan. Suspected BH gunmen 22 Jan opened fire on Damboa town market killing 18; 5 shot dead, 2 wounded same day in Kano. Attack on Kano Emir’s convoy 19 Jan killed 6. Gunmen 28 Jan killed 8 in Gajigana, Borno state. President Jonathan 17 Jan announced govt sending 1,200 troops to help recapture northern Mali from Islamist groups; gunmen 19 Jan opened fire on troop convoy travelling to Mali, killing 2 and injuring 5, BH splinter group Ansarul claimed responsibility. Military spokesman 22 Jan announced border security strengthened in anticipation of retaliatory attacks. Hundreds protested 31 Sept outside Justice Ministry against lenient sentence handed to govt official convicted of embezzlement, demanded retrial, judicial reform. Shell Oil acquitted 30 Jan of 4 pollution claims in Niger Delta, ordered to pay compensation for fifth.

- [“Boko Haram ‘ceasefire’ claim spurs debate in Nigeria”](#), AFP, 29 Jan. 2013.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°196, [Curbing Violence in Nigeria \(I\): The Jos Crisis](#), 17 Dec. 2012.

Asia

Central Asia

 **Kyrgyzstan** Kyrgyz and Uzbek relations strained by violent confrontation between Kyrgyz citizens and residents of Uzbekistan’s largest exclave, Sokh, in Kyrgyzstan’s southern Batken province, in Ferghana Valley. Group of Sokh residents, most of whom are ethnic Tajik, 5 Jan attacked Kyrgyz border guards in response to construction of new border post; next day tore down power lines to post, burnt cars belonging to Kyrgyz citizens. Kyrgyz policeman seriously injured in clashes. Kyrgyz border guards responded firing into air, wounding at least 3 Sokh residents. Group of villagers took over 30 Kyrgyz citizens hostage including women and children, some reportedly beaten, released 7 Jan. Uzbekistan blamed Kyrgyz border officials for provoking violence; border posts around Sokh

closed. U.S. Asst Sec State Blake visited Bishkek mid-month to discuss future of Manas airbase, used by NATO for transit of non-combat supplies to troops in Afghanistan. President Atambayev has said lease will not be renewed when it expires in 2014; 16 Jan said no military equipment can remain after end-2014. Over 100 locals clashed with Chinese workers in Osh region early month; dozens injured. Some 700 opposition Ata-Jurt supporters rallied in Jalal-Abad 31 Jan.

- "Kyrgyzstan enclave in turmoil", IWPR, 11 Jan. 2013.

➡ **Tajikistan** Interior Minister 18 Jan acknowledged presence in at least 3 regions of small groups of terrorists previously fighting in Afghanistan. Announcement followed week-long special operation against Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) in western Sughd province near Uzbek border, resulting in 9 arrests, seizure of guns and ammunition; 1 IMU member, 1 policeman killed. 6 suspected IMU arrested in south late month. Soldier died in south 1 Jan during a gun battle with 20 intruders attempting to enter Tajikistan from Afghanistan. Russian FM Lavrov visited Dushanbe 17 Jan to jump-start implementation of agreement on extension of Russia's military presence in Tajikistan for another 30 years; in return, Tajikistan asking Russia to lighten migration rules for Tajiks, cancel custom taxes on Russian oil, help modernise Tajik army, invest in hydropower projects. Facebook and RFE/RL websites again blocked.

- "Suspected militants arrested in Tajikistan", RFE/RL, 11 Jan. 2013.

➡ **Turkmenistan** Visiting U.S. Asst Sec State Blake 15 Jan said U.S. drawdown in Afghanistan will be considerate to regional security, praised Turkmenistan's support role in terms of fly-over and refuelling rights.

- "U.S. focus on fuel, not freedom in Turkmenistan", IWPR, 14 Jan. 2013.

➡ **Uzbekistan** Conflict flared around Uzbek exclave Sokh, which is majority ethnic Tajik, in southern Kyrgyzstan (see Kyrgyzstan); closure of border in wake of violence left around Sokh 2,000 residents unable to return to exclave and food and essential supplies running low in Sokh. Some 500 people 18 Jan reportedly picketed Uzbek side of Sokh-Kyrgyzstan border demanding it be reopened; dispersed by Uzbek Special Forces. Tensions between Sokh residents and Uzbek authorities increased after provincial governor levied funds from residents to compensate Kyrgyz for damage to cars. Uzbek border guards shot dead Kyrgyz citizen along border 4 Jan.

- Andrew Strohlein and Steve Swerdlow, "Tweets Can't Hide Uzbekistan's Woeful Record", CNN, 25 Jan. 2013.
- "Border quarrel poses political test for Karimov", Eurasianet, 23 Jan. 2013.

North East Asia

➡ **China/Japan** Further increase in tensions over disputed Diaoyu/Senkaku islands. Japan 10 Jan sent military reconnaissance aircraft to tail Chinese marine surveillance plane near islands; China responded sending 2 fighter jets near islands for first time. Japan 16 Jan suggested it may fire warning "tracer" shots against intruding aircraft that refuse to change course. Chinese foreign ministry said country on "high alert", accused Japan of escalating tensions. Chinese fighter jets also shadowed 2 U.S. aircraft 10 Jan

in airspace near Japan/China border. U.S. Sec State Clinton 18 Jan said area is under Japanese administration and thus protected under U.S.-Japan security treaty; 3 Chinese govt ships next day entered Japanese waters around islands. Japan 13 Jan held annual military drills, focused for first time on island defence; also announced first increase in defence budget for over a decade, said may deploy mobile radars near islands. Japanese delegation visited Beijing 22-26 Jan in bid to ease tensions; Japanese PM Abe 29 Jan suggested summit between China and Japan. Chinese govt ships again entered Japanese waters next day.

- Stephanie Kleine-Ahlbrandt, "A Dangerous Escalation in the East China Sea", *Wall Street Journal*, 5 Jan. 2013.
- "Japan's leader expresses willingness to meet Chinese counterparts", *New York Times*, 29 Jan. 2013.

➡ **North Korea** UNSC 22 Jan unanimously passed resolution condemning DPRK's 12 Dec satellite launch and expanding existing sanctions against Pyongyang; DPRK condemned resolution, announced plans to carry out further rocket launches and nuclear test; threatened to attack ROK if they participated in new UN sanctions. ROK analysis of launch debris found in Yellow Sea showed many components of launcher produced in DPRK. ROK 30 Jan launched satellite into space. Kim Jong-un's New Year message broadcast on state TV; called for building economic power, strong military, end to hostile relationship with ROK. UNHCHR Navi Pillay 14 Jan called for international investigation into DPRK human rights violations. ROK reported number of defectors from DPRK dropped by nearly half in 2012. Delegation led by former U.S. governor Bill Richardson and including Google chief Eric Schmidt visited DPRK 7-10 Jan; Washington criticised timing of visit.

- Daniel Pinkston, "The Unha-3 Launch and Implications of UN Security Council Resolution 2087", *Strong and Prosperous*, 25 Jan. 2013.
- "New UN sanctions spark North Korean fury", *AFP*, 23 Jan. 2013.

South Asia


➡ **Afghanistan** President Karzai 11 Jan met with U.S. President Obama during 3-day visit to U.S., discussed future bilateral security agreement, transfer of prisoners currently in U.S. custody ahead of third round of security talks late Jan; Obama announced accelerated troop withdrawal to begin spring 2013, said continued U.S. troop presence after 2014 would depend on whether Afghan govt grants immunity from prosecution; Karzai 14 Jan said only Loya Jirga could decide on immunity issue. Parliamentarians 10 Jan warned withdrawal of all troops after 2014 would result in civil war following reports U.S. considering "zero option". At least 10 security officers killed, 20 injured 26 Jan in suicide bombing in Kunduz; 13, including 11 police, killed in 2 bomb attacks in Kandahar and Helmand provinces 27 Jan. Former foes Ustad Atta Mohammad Noor, governor of Balk province, and Abdul Rashid Dostum, leader of National Front party, met 5 Jan to discuss strengthening relations, 2014 elections.

- "After Karzai's visit to Washington, fears about U.S. withdrawal linger in Afghanistan", *Washington Post*, 12 Jan. 2013.


➡ **Bangladesh** Jamaat-e-Islami organised further strikes 28, 31 Jan to protest trials against party leaders accused of committing crimes during 1971 independence war; clashes between protesters and police in Dhaka and other cities. Tribunal 21 Jan sentenced

to death in absentia Muslim cleric and former Jamaat-e-Islami senior member Abul Kalam Azad for committing crimes against humanity during independence war. Jamaat-e-Islami 15 Jan organised half-day strike in 8 Rajshahi districts to protest arrest of party's assistant SG over threats to PM; at least 15 injured, including 4 police, in clashes, explosions. Police 6 Jan violently dispersed demonstrators protesting fuel price rise, dozens reported injured.


- ["Bangladesh cleric sentenced to death for crimes against humanity"](#), AP, 21 Jan. 2013.

 **India (non-Kashmir)** Maoist ambush on security forces 7 Jan reportedly killed 7 soldiers, 10 Maoists, 4 villagers in Jharkhand; police 11 Jan arrested 2 Maoists suspected of involvement. Police 22 Jan arrested 3 Maoists in Andhra Pradesh. In Chhattisgarh, Maoists 18 Jan attacked govt troops and shot at army helicopter, killing 1 soldier; 21 Jan attacked police station. Security forces 20 Jan killed 6 suspected Maoists in Maharashtra. Indian navy 27 Jan successfully tested underwater nuclear missile.


- ["Government quells Maoist rebellion in West Bengal"](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 14 Jan. 2013.

 **Kashmir** Escalation of tensions along Line of Control (LoC) early month as Pakistan 6 Jan accused Indian forces of killing Pakistani soldier after crossing LoC; India 8 Jan claimed Pakistani forces crossed LoC, killed 2 Indian soldiers. Daily heavy artillery shelling followed from both sides, killing second Pakistani soldier 10 Jan. Pakistani FM Hina Rabbani Khar early Jan accused India of "war-mongering", Indian army chief Gen. Bikram Singh urged troops to be "aggressive and offensive" when dealing with gunfire from Pakistan. Indian and Pakistani military commanders 16 Jan agreed not to allow escalation of tensions along LoC; trade and travel at Chakan da Bagh border point, suspended following shootings, resumed late Jan. In Baramulla district unidentified gunmen 11 Jan shot dead local official and 12 Jan injured another, triggering resignation of some 40 local officials. In Pulwama district police prolonged curfew until 31 Dec to contain violent demonstrations against alleged firing on protesters by police during 28 Dec anti-India protests.

- ["Villagers in Kashmir brace for escalating violence"](#), AP, 21 Jan. 2013.

 **Nepal** Deadlock between parties persisted; some anti-govt protests during month. President Ram Baran Yadav 15 Jan stopped setting deadlines for parties on consensus PM candidate. With no elected legislature to appoint replacements, Supreme Court down to 6 judges after another judge's term expired 21 Jan; last 2 election commissioners retired 10 Jan. Breakaway Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist held national congress 9-15 Jan; agreed on urban-centric "people's revolt" instead of "people's war". 9 Maoist cadres charged 28 Jan for 2004 kidnapping and murder of journalist Dekendra Thapa in Dailekh district. Supreme Court 18 Jan charged PM Bhattarai and Attorney General Mukti Pradhan with contempt for obstructing investigation, PM denied responsibility. 50 injured in Maoist-opposition clashes during PM's visit to Dailekh. Col. Kumar Lama 3 Jan arrested in UK on charges of wartime torture; Nepal govt protested, demanded release; UK court denied bail. Proposed Truth and Reconciliation Bill remains controversial.


- ["Preserving the 2006 framework"](#), *Kathmandu Post*, 15 Jan. 2013.

 **Pakistan** Supreme Court 15 Jan ordered arrest of PM Ashraf and others involved in corruption cases; order coincided with Islamabad rally, held by a Pakistan Canadian cleric-cum-political

leader, calling for dissolution of parliament and election commission, establishment of caretaker govt with input from military and judiciary; rally sparked suspicions military, with judiciary's support, conspiring to subvert democratic transition before elections. 115 killed 10 Jan in 3 suicide bomb attacks in Quetta; Sunni extremist group Lashkar-e-Jhangvi claimed responsibility. At least 18, including 3 Sunni clerics, killed 30-31 Jan in Karachi in wave of targeted killings. Victims' families called for dismissal of provincial govt; govt imposed governor's rule, removing provincial govt, suspending provincial parliament and awarding policing powers to paramilitary Frontier Corps (FC) accused of extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances. FC reportedly using new powers to target Baloch dissidents. Politicians Manzar Imam and Mian Taimur shot dead 17 Jan and 23 Jan respectively in Karachi; over 9 others reportedly shot dead 22-23 Jan. Govt forces 29 Jan claimed 33 militants killed in air strikes in Khyber and Orkzai agencies. Clashes between Taliban and pro-govt militia erupted in Khyber agency 25 Jan; some 52 reported killed. 5 female teachers, 2 health workers killed 1 Jan in Swabi, reportedly for links with vaccination scheme; 2 polio vaccination workers killed 31 Jan by landmine in Kurram. 22 killed 10 Jan in suicide bombing in Mingora, Swat valley. U.S. drone strike 3 Jan killed Mullah Nazir, top pro-military Taliban commander in S Waziristan.

- ["Pakistani Supreme Court orders arrest of prime minister in corruption case"](#), CNN, 16 Jan. 2013.

New Crisis Group Asia Report N°242, [Pakistan: Countering Militancy in PATA](#), 15 Jan. 2013. To overcome the security challenges and curb extremism in Pakistan's Provincially Administered Tribal Areas (PATA), its national and provincial leaderships should reclaim the political space ceded to the military.

 **Sri Lanka** President Rajapaksa 13 Jan ratified parliament's 11 Jan vote finding Chief Justice Shirani Bandaranayake guilty of misconduct, finalising her impeachment and marking unprecedented break with constitutional procedures; impeachment occurred despite Parliamentary Select Committee that heard case being declared unconstitutional in 3 Jan Supreme Court ruling. Govt supporters 10 Jan violently dispersed demonstration against impeachment, police failed to intervene; paramilitary police 15 Jan blocked Bandaranayake's access to office at Supreme Court. Rajapaksa 15 Jan appointed former attorney general and presidential adviser Mohan Peiris as Chief Justice; ceremony boycotted by majority of senior lawyers. U.S., UK, Canada, EU, UNOHCHR and Commonwealth Sec Gen condemned impeachment, called for respect for rule of law. Parliament 22 Jan passed law extending police detention powers from 24 to 48 hours sparking protests in Colombo. Opposition members, journalists and activists 29 Jan demonstrated in Colombo against attacks on media. Anti-terrorist police continued series of raids targeting northern Tamil politicians and civil society activists; Tamil National People's Front officials questioned in Jaffna; explosives and illegal pornography allegedly discovered 19 Jan in TNA parliamentarian Sivagnanam Sritharan's Kilinochchi office; TNA officials claim evidence planted.

- Crisis Group, ["Impeachment of the Sri Lankan Chief Justice"](#), Sri Lanka's Search for Lasting Peace, 17 Jan. 2013.
- ["New Sri Lanka chief justice Mohan Peiris sworn in amid opposition"](#), BBC, 15 Jan. 2013.

South East Asia

➤ **Indonesia** Police early Jan killed 7 alleged terrorists in West Nusa Tenggara and South Sulawesi, adding to mounting public concern over police killings of terrorist suspects. Further political violence; unidentified men 18 Jan torched 2 cars belonging to campaign team of candidate in South Aceh district chief race. 29 Jan Papua governor's election marred by killing of local assembly member in Tolikara. OPM claimed 10 Jan shooting of 1 soldier, 1 civilian in Puncak Jaya district.

- Achmad Sukarsono, "Indonesia 2013: A Year of Voting Dangerously?", *Resolving Conflict in South East Asia*, 31 Jan. 2013.
- "Indonesian authorities fight a new terror front", *Wall Street Journal*, 6 Jan. 2013.

➤ **Myanmar** Fighting between govt and Kachin Independence Organisation (KIO) in Kachin state escalated, with violence reportedly displacing thousands. Govt forces used attack helicopters, fighter jets and artillery fire against KIO during month. KIO HQ in Laiza town on Chinese border shelled repeatedly; several shells landed in China, prompting official complaint. KIO reported 3 civilians killed in Laiza in shelling 14 Jan, 2 killed in explosion 22 Jan. Following capture of several KIO outposts, authorities 18 Jan announced unilateral ceasefire around Laiza; ceasefire broken as govt troops 20 Jan attacked KIO base on Hka Ya hilltop near town. Army 26 Jan captured Hka Ya 3km from Laiza. Govt forces late Jan said Kachin rebels set fire to shops in Hpakant; KIO claimed govt forces torched houses in village near Laiza. Month ended with reports govt and Kachin rebels agreed on new round of peace talks. President Thein Sein 5 Jan met new Karen National Union leadership in Naypyitaw. Govt 29 Jan lifted ban on public gatherings. Govt 19-20 Jan convened first Myanmar Development Cooperation Forum aiming to enhance donor-govt cooperation.

- Jim Della-Giacoma, "A Serious Threat to Peace in Myanmar", *Resolving Conflict in South East Asia*, 10 Jan. 2013.
- "Burma's Kachin war: Renewed ethnic strife threatens regional stability", *Time*, 28 Jan. 2013.

➤ **Philippines** Attacks by communist New People's Army (NPA) resumed following end of holiday ceasefire; several rebels and soldiers killed in small-scale clashes late month. In Negros Occidental, alleged NPA members ambushed truck 27 Jan, killing 9, including 1 police officer. Peace talks in Malaysia between MILF and govt concluded 25 Jan; parties announced creation of 3rd party monitoring team to oversee implementation of Oct 2012 peace agreement. Negotiations continuing on supplementary "annexes". MNLF and MILF 16 Jan clashed in land dispute, killing 2; 4 killed in clashes between MILF units over land 22 Jan. Police-led operation 6 Jan killed 13 alleged criminals in gangland-style execution in Quezon province, putting pressure on President Aquino to address abuses perpetrated by police. Ahead of May elections, local politicians killed in provinces of Pampanga, North Cotabato, Isabela. Govt 22 Jan decided to bring China to UN arbitration tribunal to resolve South China Sea dispute and challenge "unlawful claim" to Philippine maritime domain.

- "PH challenges China in UN", *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 23 Jan. 2013.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°240, *The Philippines: Breakthrough in Mindanao*, 5 Dec. 2012

➤ **Thailand** Group of red shirt leaders and Pheu Thai Party MPs 10 Jan asked Constitutional Court to clarify its July 2012 ruling on necessity to hold referendum prior to amending constitution; Constitutional Court president declined to clarify ruling. Several people killed in insurgent attacks in Pattani and Narathiwat provinces in south. Court 17 Jan sentenced red shirt activist and adviser to deputy commerce minister Yotwarit Chuklom to 2 years' prison for lèse-majesté. Some 2,000 Thai Patriots Network members and People's Alliance for Democracy supporters rallied in Bangkok 21 Jan to submit petition calling on govt to reject ICJ jurisdiction on Preah Vihear temple dispute with Cambodia. Court 23 Jan sentenced editor Somyot Preuksakasemsuk to 11 years' prison for publishing 2 articles deemed offensive to monarchy.

- "School killings", *Economist*, 19 Jan. 2013.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°241, *Thailand: The Evolving Conflict in the South*, 11 Dec. 2012.

➤ **Timor-Leste** Former Justice Minister Lucia Lobato transferred to Gleno prison 22 Jan for 5-year sentence on charges of unlawful conduct in process of a procurement contract after second appeal rejected.

- "The UN's legacy in Timor Leste", *Jakarta Post*, 22 Jan. 2013.

Europe

Balkans

➤ **Bosnia** Political crisis in Mostar continued to worsen; city lacking lawful govt after it failed to hold local elections in Oct 2012, now has no budget for 2013. Bosnian Army war memorial in front of city hall destroyed by explosion 14 Jan. Local leaders rejected new attempt by Office of the High Representative 23 Jan to negotiate a solution. EU Enlargement Commissioner Štefan Füle warned EU will not recognise next elections if Bosnia fails to implement European Court of Human Rights Sejdić-Finci ruling. In Federation entity, coalition led by Social Democratic Party continued efforts to pass no-confidence vote in entity govt. Govt criticised after clearing way for formation of 4th, Croat-language public broadcaster.

- "Talks fail to end Mostar election impasse", *Balkan Insight*, 24 Jan. 2013.

➤ **Kosovo** Kosovo and Serbia PMs met in 4th round of EU-mediated talks in Brussels 17 Jan, agreed on compromise solution for customs duties, VAT for Serb-run north of Kosovo. PM Thaçi late month announced special fund to be set up in state budget for Serb-run north, to be financed from customs/taxes collected at border with Serbia; Serbia condemned proposal. Dozens of Serb graves attacked in Klokot and Prizren 20-21 Jan, in apparent retaliation for Belgrade's removal of monument to Albanian fighters in Preševo (see Serbia). 3 official vehicles found burnt out in Pristina 18 Jan; 2 blasts reported in north 17 Jan.

- "Serbia govt adopts Kosovo 'platform' and resolution", *Balkan Insight*, 9 Jan. 2013.

➤ **Macedonia** Political crisis that began 24 Dec with ejection of opposition MPs from parliament ahead of budget vote ongoing, as opposition continued to boycott parliament, staged protests and road blocks during month. Opposition demanding resignations of

ministers for police, justice and finance, early general elections in March, reform of electoral register. PM Gruevski accused opposition of attempting coup, rejected early general elections. Meeting between Gruevski and opposition leader Crvenkovski 22 Jan failed to resolve crisis. Several thousand participated in opposition march 27 Jan. Visiting EU Enlargement Commissioner Štefan Füle 23 Jan urged sides to resolve crisis, focus on EU accession agenda. UN mediator in name dispute between Macedonia and Greece Matthew Nimetz held talks in both countries' capitals 9-11 Jan, and with negotiators in New York late month; Füle also proposed new initiative on name.

- [“Macedonian opposition: EU ignores democratic backslide”](#), Euractiv, 4 Jan. 2013.

➡ **Serbia** Parliament 13 Jan passed resolution on high-level dialogue with Pristina, based on govt platform adopted earlier in month, which calls for territorial and political autonomy for Serb municipalities in Kosovo, accepts step-by-step approach in place of demand that “nothing is agreed until everything is agreed”, drops call to demilitarise Kosovo. Authorities 20 Jan removed controversial memorial to ethnic Albanian fighters in Preševo in south, prompting upheaval in Preševo, calls for secession.

- [“Serbian parliament adopts resolution on Kosovo”](#), SE Times, 15 Jan. 2013.

Caucasus

➡ **Armenia** 8 candidates registered for 18 Feb presidential election. Candidate Andreas Ghukasyan, manager of private radio station, began hunger strike 21 Jan after his bid to have incumbent president Sargsyan rendered ineligible for registration was rejected by electoral commission. Other opposition candidates questioned accuracy of voters list, warned of possible irregularities. Sargsyan reaffirmed pledges to ensure proper conduct of election. Candidate Paruyr Hairikian wounded in attack by unidentified gunman 31 Jan.

- [“Is Armenian presidential election an exercise in futility?”](#), RFE/RL, 21 Jan. 2013.

➡ **Azerbaijan** Thousands protested in central town Ismayili 23, 24 Jan demanding resignation of local governor Nizami Alekberov and setting fire to cars, buildings; dozens arrested. Hundreds rallied in Baku 26 Jan in solidarity with Ismayili protesters; dozens of protesters arrested. Hundreds protested in Baku 12 Jan calling for resignation of defence minister over allegations of hazing and bullying in military following 7 Jan death of army conscript; 21 men fined for participating in demonstration under new law on mass gatherings. Around 1,000 shopkeepers protesting against rent increases clashed with police in Baku 19 Jan.

- [“Popular frustration explodes in provincial town”](#), Eurasianet, 24 Jan. 2013.

➡ **North Caucasus (Russia)** At least 700 people killed, 525 injured in armed clashes in NC in 2012 according to Caucasus Knot website, down from 2011 (when at least 750 killed, 628 injured). Casualties decreased significantly among police and civilians; experts attribute increased militant losses to more assertive counter-terrorism efforts. Violence still worst in Dagestan, rose in Ingushetia. Terrorist attacks on high-ranking officials, clergy,

journalists during Jan included: in Makhachkala, Dagestan, unidentified perpetrators 11 Jan attempted to kill editor and journalist Akhmednabi Akhmednabiev; gunman 15 Jan shot dead Dagestan Supreme Court judge Madomed Magomedov; in Ingushetia, Mufti Council of Russia member's home shot at 14 Jan. Several suspected militants killed during month, including 2 men, 1 woman killed in counter-terrorist operation in Tyrnyauz, Kabardino-Balkaria (KB) 16 Jan, 3 militants killed in Chegem 25 Jan. Interior ministry reported main suspect in Dec killings of journalist and principal of agriculture university killed in special operation in Nalchik, KB 29 Jan. Chechen militant leader Khusein Gakayev, deputy leader of Dokku Umarov's Caucasus Emirate, reportedly killed with his brother and 10 other militants in Vedensky district 24 Jan; 2 police also killed. Increasing number of women caught/killed in security operations in Dagestan and KB in recent months. President Putin replaced Magomedislam Magomedov with former nationalities minister Ramazan Abdulatipov as acting head of Dagestan.

- [“Putin ousts Dagestan head Magomedov”](#), *Moscow Times*, 29 Jan. 2013.

➡ **Georgia** Georgian Orthodox Church Patriarch Ilia II visited Moscow 22-24 Jan, met with Russian President Putin; groups of Georgian entrepreneurs also visited Moscow to discuss economic relations. Defence minister Irakli Alasania relieved of his position as first deputy PM by PM Ivanishvili due to leaked internal discussion regarding his possible candidacy for position of president. Scandal broke after prosecutors announced high-ranking officials from previous govt had systematically blackmailed public figures after filming them engaged in homosexual activities; Saakashvili denied knowledge or involvement. 190 prisoners released as part of 13 Jan amnesty after being recognised as political prisoners by parliament Dec 2012.

- [“Fourth time lucky?”](#), *Economist*, 23 Jan. 2013.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°69, [Georgia: Making Cohabitation Work](#), 18 Dec. 2012.

➡ **Nagorno-Karabakh (Azerbaijan)** Azerbaijani and Armenian FMs met in Paris 28 Jan for internationally mediated talks on N-K conflict. In 19 Jan interview, Armenian President Sargsyan accused Baku of losing “sense of reality” over N-K, said his govt would continue to strengthen its armed forces in face of Azerbaijani military threat; said was ready to continue negotiations.

- [“Paris hosts talks over Nagorno-Karabakh”](#), Euractiv, 29 Jan. 2013.

Western Europe/Mediterranean

➡ **Cyprus** No movement on reunification talks ahead of 17 Feb presidential elections in Republic of Cyprus. Angry rhetoric towards Turkey continued; Republic of Cyprus FM Erato Kozakou-Marcoulli 15 Jan accused Turkey of “still [opting] for a hard power stance”, said it was “out of the question” for Cyprus to lift its veto on 6 of Turkey's EU negotiating chapters, including energy. Greek Cypriot govt 28 Jan said transporting Cypriot gas via pipeline to Turkey not possible until solution reached.

- [“Downer to meet Eroglu this month”](#), *Cyprus Mail*, 5 Jan. 2013.

➡ **Northern Ireland** As loyalist protests and violence continued early month over Belfast city hall flag dispute, police said senior loyalist paramilitaries orchestrating violence. 2 unionist parties set up Unionist Forum to address protests amid concern over

economic impact of protests. Fresh clashes between protesters and police late month.

- "Wrapped in the flag", *Economist*, 12 Jan. 2013.

➡ **Turkey** Optimism over prospect of govt-PKK peace negotiations followed PM Erdoğan's 19 Dec revelation that National Intelligence Organisation has been holding new round of talks with jailed PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan. Govt permitted pro-Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) and pro-Kurdish civil society organisation DTK to visit Öcalan 3 Jan; during meeting he reportedly said "era of armed struggle is over". PM adviser on Kurdish affairs 4 Jan said goal with Kurds was "final settlement", 11 Jan said military operations against PKK would continue until it disarmed. Govt 25 Jan passed law allowing defendants to speak Kurdish in court at will. Diyarbakır court 31 Jan acquitted 98 Kurdish mayors on one count of terrorism-related charges in trial with 106 suspects, suspended sentence for 3 years on another count. Crisis Group informally counted at least 22 people, mostly PKK, killed in clashes between govt and militants during month. Little progress on new constitution; AKP official 2 Jan said deadline may be extended from March to June 2013. 3 PKK women assassinated in Paris 10 Jan, including co-founder Sakine Cansız; thousands peacefully attended funerals in Diyarbakır province 17 Jan. French police arrested another PKK member as suspect in killings 21 Jan. Turkish police continued detentions of non-violent Kurdish activists in 1, 9, 11 Jan operations. Following Ankara's Dec request to NATO to boost defence capabilities against Syria, 6 Patriot anti-missile batteries from U.S., Germany, Netherlands became operational 25 Jan amid protests, some violent. Over 150,000 Syrian refugees now in 13 Turkish camps; estimated 60,000-150,000 outside camps.

- Hugh Pope, "Turkey and Its Rebel Kurds May Want Peace This Time", *Bloomberg*, 16 Jan. 2013.
- Hugh Pope and Didem A. Collinsworth, "For Now, Turkey Copes Well with Syrian Influx in Hatay Province", *Solving the EU-Turkey-Cyprus Triangle*, 17 Jan. 2013.
- "Kurdish initiatives compared: any difference?", *Today's Zaman*, 20 Jan. 2013.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Europe Report N°222, *Turkey's Kurdish Impasse: The View from Diyarbakır*, 30 Nov. 2012.

Latin America/Caribbean

➡ **Bolivia** President Morales early Jan secured re-admission into UN Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, obtained special dispensation clause on traditional local coca chewing. Ruling MAS party 20 Jan suffered electoral defeat in gubernatorial elections in opposition stronghold region Beni.

- "Bolivia achieves coca-chewing victory at United Nations", *BBC*, 11 Jan. 2013.

➡ **Colombia** Peace talks resumed 14 Jan; FARC presented 10-point plan for agricultural development concentrating on poverty reduction, land inequality, rural development, food sovereignty. FARC also called for creation of Constituent Assembly to confirm results of peace process; President Santos 16 Jan ruled out possibility of assembly but opened door to referendum mechanism. FARC resumed hostilities 20 Jan following expiration of 2-month unilateral ceasefire; ceasefire period saw great reduction

of FARC offensive operations compared to corresponding period in 2011/2012. FARC 25 Jan abducted 2 police officers in Valle del Cauca dept, provoking tensions at negotiation table; 29 Jan killed 1 soldier in La Guajira dept; 30 Jan killed 4 soldiers in Narino dept. Security forces 31 Jan killed 5 FARC in Antioqui dept. FARC late Jan declared group will carry on capturing military personnel despite warnings it could undermine peace talks. ELN 18 Jan kidnapped 6 mine workers, including 3 foreigners, in Bolívar dept. At least 9 people killed 31 Dec in Antioquia dept during meeting reportedly organised by criminal Envigado Office group. Justice Minister Correa 29 Jan said govt will seek to decriminalise personal use of synthetic drugs; also set up advisory commission including former president Gaviria tasked with analysing drug policy over the last 10 years.

- "Colombia peace talks 'in mambo rhythm', say Farc rebels", *BBC*, 25 Jan. 2013.

➡ **Guatemala** Court 28 Jan ordered ex-military leader Efraín Ríos Montt to stand trial for genocide and crimes against humanity committed during civil war, following 14 Jan lifting of immunity. President Pérez Molina 13 Jan hailed decline of violence in speech celebrating first year in office, cited falling urban crime rates as evidence that govt is fulfilling promises to improve security; murders fell for 3rd consecutive year in 2012, from 39 to 34 per 100,000 inhabitants. Gunmen same day killed mayor of Jutiapa town, Jutiapa dept. Armed men 11 Jan tried to block access to Escobal silver mine in south-eastern Santa Rosa dept; 2 security guards, 1 attacker killed. Pérez Molina denounced incident as "terrorist attack"; Interior Minister López Bonilla said attackers possibly linked to drug traffickers. Authorities also linked 23 Dec killing of prosecutor, local businessman and 5 other people in western Huehuetenango dept to drug traffickers. UN 15 Jan agreed to extend mandate of International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG) until 2015.

- "Ex-dictator is ordered to trial in Guatemalan war crimes case", *New York Times*, 28 Jan. 2013.

➡ **Mexico** President Peña Nieto 9 Jan signed General Victims Law designed to provide assistance and compensation to crime victims, including relatives of estimated 70,000 people killed in drug-related violence over past 6 years. Interior Secretary Miguel Ángel Osorio Chong 14 Jan confirmed govt plans to create new intelligence agency as part of effort to better coordinate fight against organised crime. Wave of violence in Mexico City and surrounding areas left 22 people dead 12-13 Jan. Police found 16 dismembered bodies in Toluca, Mexico state 14 Jan. Security forces early Jan killed 12 suspects in gun battle in Zacatecas state. Bar shootings in Torreón, Coahuila state, left 9 dead 6 Jan. Former PAN mayoral candidate murdered in Tlaquiltenango, Morelos state, 16 Jan along with wife and son. Authorities 27 Jan pulled 17 bodies from well in Nuevo León state; 14 identified as members of Kombo Kolombia music band.

- "Mexico's false dawn", *Foreign Policy*, 16 Jan. 2013.

➡ **Venezuela** Fears of instability after Supreme Court (TSJ) moved to keep cancer-stricken President Chávez in power despite his failure to attend 10 Jan inauguration for his third presidential term, prompting opposition challenge and signs of further radicalisation of both sides. TSJ 9 Jan ruled Chávez did not need to be sworn for new term before National Assembly but that he could take oath of office at unspecified later date before TSJ; also

argued that ministers could remain in power. Chávez 15 Jan appointed loyalist and former VP Elías Jaua as foreign minister and “political VP”. Opposition leader Capriles said govt “openly lies” about Chávez health. Electoral Commission 29 Jan said municipal elections initially scheduled 26 May now to be held 14 July. Prison riot in Barquisimeto 25 Jan left at least 61 people dead; UNOHCHR 29 Jan expressed concern over violence in prisons.

- “Chávez cancer sparks leadership fears”, *Financial Times*, 8 Jan. 2013.

Middle East and North Africa

Eastern Mediterranean

➡ **Israel/Occupied Palestinian Territories** 22 Jan Knesset elections saw Netanyahu-Lieberman’s right-wing Likud-Beiteinu alliance win with 31 seats; new centrist party Yesh Atid, led by TV personality Yair Lapid, came second with 19; coalition talks to form new govt underway. Israel 29 Jan became first nation ever to skip UNHRC periodic review of its human rights record. UNHRC report 31 Jan urged Israel to halt settlement construction unconditionally, remove all Israeli settlers in OPT. Fatah-Hamas reconciliation continued: Fatah 4 Jan staged first permitted mass rally in Gaza Strip since 2007; Fatah and Hamas leaders 9 Jan held first face-to-face meeting in over a year, pledged to implement stalled May 2011 reconciliation accord. PA FM Malki 23 Jan said Palestine would appeal to ICC if Israel settlement plans in occupied WB proceed. Month saw continued settler-related violence and Israeli military raids, arrests, clashes and shootings in WB. EU, UN 30 Jan expressed concern about Israel’s use of lethal force against Palestinians following rise in fatal shootings with several killed in Jan in WB and Gaza Strip. Several incidents of Israeli naval forces firing at Palestinian fishing boats within new 6 nautical mile limit. Surge in Israeli demolitions, including over 100 Palestinian-owned structures in Area C, displacing around 180. PA budget crisis continued: partially paid, late WB public sector salaries prompted more strikes, sit-ins. Israeli airstrike 30 Jan in Syria (see Syria). Israel 2 Jan completed main segment of border fence with Egypt.

- “Israeli vote is least of neighbors’ worries”, Ma’an News Agency, 21 Jan. 2013.
- For latest reports, see Crisis Group Middle East Reports N°134, *Extreme Makeover? (I): Israel’s Politics of Land and Faith in East Jerusalem*, and N°135, *Extreme Makeover? (II): The Withering of Arab Jerusalem*, 20 Dec. 2012.

➡ **Lebanon** Parliamentary subcommittee 8 Jan resumed talks over new electoral law for June parliamentary polls; 30 Jan deadline extended 15 days to discuss hybrid proposal combining proportional and majority systems. Rival Christian parties 13 Jan proposed joint “Orthodox Gathering” draft electoral law. Sunni-dominated Future Current leader Saad Hariri 31 Jan proposed “small district” law and creation of a Senate. Armed protestors in Tripoli 18 Jan assaulted March 8 coalition minister Faisal Karami’s convoy, 11 injured. Palestinian refugees displaced from Syria held sit-ins at Beddawi refugee camp protesting shortages in assistance: PM Mikati 26 Jan said situation had “reached dangerous levels”. 1 killed 3 Jan in armed clash in Sidon between Hizbollah-affiliated Resistance Companies and Popular Nasserite Organisation. Car

bomb 29 Jan injured 2 in Beirut. Supporters of Salafi Sheik Ahmed Assir 13 Jan protested in Sidon against Hizbollah weapons, alliance with Iran. Lebanon accused Israel of violating its airspace several times during month, including with 12 warplanes 22-23 Jan.

- “Electoral law proposal polarizes political arena”, *As-Safir*, 14 Jan. 2013.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Middle East Report N°132, *A Precarious Balancing Act: Lebanon and the Syrian Conflict*, 22 Nov. 2012.

➡ **Syria** Over 80 killed 15 Jan in reported govt missile strike at Aleppo University housing students, people displaced by conflict; over 100 killed same day in Basatin al-Hasawiya, outside Homs, reportedly by forces loyal to President Assad; over 70 bodies found massacred in Aleppo river 29 Jan. UN/Arab League Envoy Brahimi 29 urged UNSC to overcome differences, support plan for political transition, said country “being destroyed”. Following rare visit across conflict lines by UN humanitarian delegation, UN official 21 Jan said conditions “appalling”. President Assad 6 Jan pledged to continue fighting “terrorist” violence but offered national dialogue, constitutional referendum to end crisis; plan roundly rejected, as no indication he would step down as first stage of political transition. Islamist rebels 24 Jan reportedly raided civilian opposition organisations’ HQs in Saraqib. Rebels mid-month clashed with govt-leaning Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD) in NE; 11 Jan captured Taftanaz airbase, northern Idlib province. Israeli airstrike on convoy in Syria reportedly carrying weapons to Lebanon 30 Jan. Exiled Syrian National Coalition leader Khatib 30 Jan set conditions for opposition’s direct talks with regime representatives; prospect rejected immediately by Syrian National Council component of National Coalition. National Coalition 21 Jan failed to form transitional govt at talks in Istanbul. Over 50 UN member states 14 Jan requested ICC investigation into possible war crimes by both sides; Russia 15 Jan said it would block effort.

- “Peace envoy says Syria is ‘being destroyed’”, AP, 30 Jan. 2013.

New Crisis Group Middle East Report N°136, *Syria’s Kurds: A Struggle Within a Struggle*, 22 Jan. 2013. Syria’s conflict gives its Kurdish population an opening to rectify historic wrongs and push for more autonomy, but facing internal divisions, poor ties with the non-Kurdish opposition and regional rivalries, its challenge is to articulate clear, unified and achievable demands.

Gulf


➡ **Bahrain** Govt 23 Jan invited opposition to nominate delegates for national dialogue talks to break 2-year deadlock. Court of Cassation 7 Jan upheld prison sentences of 13 leaders of 2011 uprising, including activist Abdulhadi al-Khawaja; opposition al-Wefaq, U.S., UNSG Ban condemned ruling. 2 policemen sentenced 30 Dec to 7 years’ jail for killing Shi’ite opposition activist in custody during 2011 uprising. Appeals court 23 Jan upheld death sentence against anti-govt protester Ali al-Taweel, convicted of murdering policeman March 2011. Princess Noura Bint Ebrahim al-Khalifa appeared in court accused of torturing 3 anti-govt protesters in detention. Several police injured 30 Jan by bomb near Manama.

- “Bahrain clashes show divides over proposed talks”, AP, 24 Jan. 2013.


➡ **Iran** 11 journalists arrested 27 Jan, accused of cooperation with foreign-based media. EU 15, 22 Jan offered to resume negotiations over nuclear crisis. Iran rejected terms; Iranian FM Ali Akbar Salehi 23 Jan proposed different venues but UNSC P5+1 disagreed. Iran-

IAEA meeting 16-17 Jan failed to secure agreement on resolving outstanding issues; next meeting scheduled for 13 Feb. Iran 23 Jan reportedly told IAEA it plans to accelerate Uranium enrichment. U.S. 2 Jan broadened sanctions targeting Iran's energy, shipping sectors. Central Bank disclosed record 27.4% inflation for 2012. Iran 28 Jan launched monkey into space, increasing concerns over nuclear technology.


- "EU suggests Iran delaying new nuclear talks by changing venues, setting preconditions", AP, 23 Jan. 2013.

 **Iraq** Protests against PM al-Maliki, sparked by arrest of Finance Minister Rafie al-Issawi's bodyguards in Dec, continued despite al-Maliki 31 Dec warning rallies would not be tolerated indefinitely. Banned Baath party leader Izzat Ibrahim al-Douri 5 Jan urged Sunni protesters to continue until al-Maliki is toppled; Sunni and Kurdish ministers 8 Jan boycotted cabinet session to show solidarity with protesters; al-Qaeda-linked Islamic State of Iraq 31 Jan urged Sunni protesters to take up arms against al-Maliki. Speaking on crisis, Shiite religious leader Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani mid-Jan called for "building a civil state based on constitutional institutions". Troops 7 Jan dispersed hundreds of protesters in Mosul; anti-govt protester 20 Jan self-immolated. Traibil border post with Jordan closed 9 Jan due to protests. Sunni, Kurdish, Shiite lawmakers 26 Jan voted for law blocking al-Maliki from 3rd term; legislation needs president's approval. Al-Maliki's supporters rejected law as illegal. Bomb hit Finance Minister al-Issawi's convoy 13 Jan. Around 7,000 marched 8 Jan in support of al-Maliki in Basra, Kerbala. Govt 14 Jan released 335 detainees held under anti-terrorism laws to appease demonstrators; 22 Jan claimed to have freed 888 prisoners over 2 weeks. Al-Qaeda-linked Islamic State of Iraq 21 Jan claimed responsibility for 15 Jan suicide bomb attack killing Sunni lawmaker Ifan Saadoun al-Issawi. Sectarian violence continued with suicide bombings, blasts across country killing at least 124, wounding over 100.


- "Iraqi militants try to harness opposition rage, raising fears they will benefit from unrest", AP, 26 Jan. 2013.

 **Jordan** Muslim Brotherhood boycotted 23 Jan parliamentary elections claiming electoral system rigged in favour of govt; approximately 2,000 demonstrated in Amman in favour of boycott, demanding King Abdullah II cede some powers.


- "Jordanians vote in parliamentary polls", Al Jazeera, 23 Jan. 2013.

 **Kuwait** Protests in Kuwait City suburbs 6, 13 and 22 Jan drew hundreds demanding dissolution of parliament elected in Dec polls which opposition boycotted, and scrapping of controversial Nov 2012 amendment of electoral law. Security forces violently dispersed 6, 22 Jan protests, reportedly arrested 70. Unprecedented demonstration outside Palace of Justice 28 Jan protesting trial of opposition leader and former MP Mussallam al-Barrak on charges of insulting emir; police did not interfere.

- "Kuwaiti opposition loses momentum", *Financial Times*, 15 Jan. 2013.


 **Saudi Arabia** Prince Saud Bin Nayef appointed governor of restive, oil-rich Shiite minority-dominated Eastern Province 14 Jan. Group of women with children arrested in Buraida 5 Jan following small, rare, peaceful protest against long-term detention of relatives without trial; security forces 6 Jan dispersed protest outside prison where 3 of the women were still held. Clerics 15 Jan protested outside royal palace against King's decision to appoint 30 women to Shura Council.

- "Saudi royal family politics and the Arab Spring", *Foreign Policy*, 14 Jan. 2013.


 **Yemen** U.S. drone strikes continued, killing at least 23 suspected al-Qaeda militants. Second-in-command of al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) Said al-Shehri confirmed dead late Jan. Govt 27 Jan launched major military offensive against AQAP militants in Baydah accused of holding Finnish couple and Austrian man hostage; next day AQAP retaliated with suicide bombing killing at least 11 soldiers at military checkpoint, and attack on separate checkpoint killing 3 soldiers, both in Baydah. Hundreds of AQAP militants arrived next day to give support; govt suspended military operation while tribal leaders attempted to secure release. Tribal leader Al Mullah Zabahra, known for mediating between govt and al-Qaeda, killed 10 Jan at checkpoint in Abyan province. Deputy security chief of Dhamar province, Abdulwahab al-Mushki, killed 16 Jan by gunmen. 2 al-Qaeda militants arrested 14 Jan near Sanaa, security forces seized suicide bomb vests, assassination manuals, lists of targets. Main oil pipeline in central Maarib province sabotaged 10, 26 Jan by armed tribesmen. Southern movement Harak organised festival of reconciliation and tolerance to mark anniversary of 1986 civil war; over 100,000 gathered in Aden. President Hadi 7 Jan formed land, employment committees for southern governorates. UNSC envoys 27 Jan arrived in Yemen to show support for U.S.-backed power transfer deal. Ship carrying large weapons cache intercepted 23 Jan, suspected weapons smuggled from Iran for Yemen insurgents. 2 militants, 5 soldiers killed 31 Jan during army raid on mountainous area where al-Qaeda-linked Ansar al-Sharia have been taking refuge since being driven out of Jaar and Zinjibar last year.

- "Drone strikes in Yemen escalating, officials report", *Los Angeles Times*, 23 Jan. 2013.

North Africa

 **Algeria** AQIM splinter faction "Signatories in Blood" 16-20 Jan seized Tiguentourine gas plant near Ain Amenas, near Libyan border; at least 81 reportedly died in executions and multiple rescue attempts by security forces, official death toll 67. PM Sellal said attack coordinated by Canadian citizen, kidnappers from neighbouring states. Efforts to dislodge terrorist groups in Boumerdès-Tizi-Ouzou-Bouira triangle continued: security forces 31 Dec killed 6, including AQIM "financier" Izza Rezki alias Abou Djaffar, seized weapons cache in Keddara; 1 Jan killed 7 terrorists, reportedly part of El-Feth brigade, in Oued Bahara; 14 Jan killed 3 terrorists in Meskeline.

- "Algeria militants played shrewd media game", AP, 24 Jan. 2013.

 **Egypt** Eve of second anniversary of revolution 26 Jan marked beginning of days of severe unrest and violent clashes between protesters and security forces in major cities; dozens killed. Death sentences given 26 Jan to 21 Port Said soccer fans over Feb 2012 soccer riot sparked massive riots in Port Said, at least 30 killed, over 1,000 injured. President Morsi 27 Jan declared one-month state of emergency and curfew in Suez, Ismailia, Port Said, widely defied by tens of thousands protesting in following days. Morsi same day called for "national dialogue", rejected by opposition who demanded unity govt and amendments to disputed constitution. Rival factions 30 Jan pledged to condemn violence, participate in talks. Egyptian army chief Gen Abdul Fattah al-Sisi 29 Jan warned political crisis "could lead to a collapse of the state". As crisis continued Morsi 30 Jan approved law granting army officers

judicial arrest power. Court 11 Jan ordered retrial of former president Mubarak, sentenced to life in prison Jan 2012 for involvement in killing of protestors in 2011 uprisings, as well as other regime officials. Supreme Constitutional Court 15 Jan deferred ruling on legality of Egypt's Islamist-dominated Upper House and Constitutional Assembly. Instability in Sinai continued: policeman shot dead 5 Jan by unidentified gunmen; gunmen 11 Jan attacked patrol protecting cross-Sinai gas pipeline.

- [“In Port Said, alienation from Cairo makes anger burn hotter”](#), Christian Science Monitor, 29 Jan. 2013.

➤ **Libya** Continued attacks, killings, communal clashes. Italian consul Guido De Sanctis unhurt following 12 Jan gun attack on car. 2 police killed in separate attacks in Benghazi. Islamist leader Ahmed Abu Khatalla and National Assembly President Magarief both survived separate assassination attempts. Head of Benghazi criminal investigation unit Abdel-Salam al-Mahdawi kidnapped 2 Jan. 4 killed 8 Jan in clashes between Tebu tribesmen and army in Kufra. Several EU states 24 Jan urged nationals to leave Benghazi due to security threat. Following attack on Algerian gas field, Libya 23 Jan strengthened security at oilfields near Algerian border. PM Zeidan 12 Jan met with Algerian and Tunisian counterparts, agreed to enhance security along common borders. Zueitina oil terminal re-opened mid-Jan following over-2 week closure due to armed protesters. UK PM Cameron visited Tripoli 31 Jan to discuss bilateral relations, pledge help training Libya's security forces.

- [“Europe urges citizens to leave Libya's Benghazi”](#), Reuters, 24 Jan. 2013.

➤ **Mauritania** President Abdelaziz 14 Jan deployed troops to secure borders with Mali; 15 Jan said Mauritania could intervene if Mali requests support; 22 Jan called for greater unity between Arab countries in fight against terrorism, organised crime. 3 suspected AQIM jihadis fleeing Mali arrested 28 Jan in Chegar.

- [“Mohamed Ould Abdelaziz revient sur sa décision de ne pas engager la Mauritanie au Nord-Mali”](#), *Jeune Afrique*, 15 Jan. 2013.

➤ **Morocco** Protests over rising commodities prices that began late Dec continued into early Jan, several arrested. Authorities 19 Jan announced al-Qaeda recruitment cell dismantled.

- [“Sahel upheaval worries Morocco”](#), Magharebia, 23 Jan. 2013.

➤ **Tunisia** Socio-economic protests in Ben Guerdane turned violent mid-Jan as demonstrators set fire to police station, cars; police used teargas to disperse crowd. Police officers 16 Jan repelled stone-throwing protesters in Kef with tear gas. Roughly 8,000 protested outside Interior Ministry 14 Jan against Islamist-led govt on 2-year anniversary of former president Ben Ali's overthrow. 2 Muslim shrines destroyed 10, 12 Jan in Tunis suburbs, attacks blamed on hardline Salafists. Authorities 17 Jan said “terrorist” group arrested, large arms cache seized in southern town Medenin. Govt 29 Jan sent special combat units to borders with Algeria, Libya to protect oil and gas installations against potential attacks from Islamist militants. Thousands of policemen protested 31 Jan demanding better pay, equipment, protection.

- [“The perils of identity politics in Tunisia”](#), Al Jazeera, 27 Jan. 2013.

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