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## May 2013 Trends



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### Improved Situations

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## June 2013 Watchlist



### Conflict Risk Alerts



### 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.

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## Africa

### Central Africa

- **Burundi** Petition against proposed restrictive media-control law given to President Nkurunziza 6 May; Nkurunziza also under pressure from Burundi's main international partners to review law. Alleged former FNL rebels 18 May ambushed bus in Gatumba, 15km from Bujumbura, killing 3. Govt and opposition met 22-25 May to discuss electoral code for 2015 polls in line with March UN-backed roadmap. Ruling CNDD-FDD 16 May denied creation of militia following reports of increasing violence against civil society and opponents by party's youth movement Imbonerakure.
- ["Encontre entre pouvoir et opposition sur la question du code électoral"](#), RFI, 22 May 2013.

- **Central African Republic** Public prosecutor 31 May announced arrest warrant for former president Bozizé for crimes against humanity, incitement to genocide. PM Tiangaye 14 May met UNSG Ban, requested UN peacekeeping force. UN SRSG Margaret Vogt 15 May said neutral security force needed, asked UNSC to adopt individual sanctions against Seleka rebels for gross rights violations. Regional states reaffirmed desire to strengthen MICOPAX peacekeeping force to 200 at International Contact Group meeting and ECCAS Chiefs of Staff meeting. 200 Seleka rebel fighters relocated to central town Bria 13 May as part of operation to resettle fighters outside Bangui. Transitional National Council 23 May adopted new electoral code. CAR suspended from Kimberley Process 10 May.
- ["Central African Republic issues arrest warrant for ex-president"](#), Reuters, 31 May 2013.

- **Cameroon** President Biya 8 May again postponed parliamentary elections, now scheduled for Sept 2013, and extended mandate of municipal councillors by several months. Declaration of state of emergency in northern Nigeria sparked fears Boko Haram militants could cross into Cameroon (see Nigeria). Significant influx of Nigerian refugees reported 25 May in northern Kolofata border region. Presence of ousted CAR president Bozizé, who openly blames Chad for ouster, causing tensions with Chad.
- ["Le Tchad demande le départ de Bozizé du Cameroun"](#), Tchad actuel, 17 May 2013.

- **Chad** Govt 1 May said coup attempt by former UFCO rebel Mahamat Moussa Tao foiled; France expressed concern after several politicians, military and members of civil society accused of role in plot arrested. Refugee influx in Kinassero area following Nigerian crackdown on Islamist Boko Haram sect (see Nigeria).
- ["High-ranking army officers arrested after coup attempt in Chad"](#), Xinhua, 2 May 2013.

- **Democratic Republic of Congo** First contingent of UN intervention force arrived in Goma 13 May; UNSG Ban visited Goma 23 May, said full contingent of 3,000 soldiers ready within 2 months. 19 international NGOs 23 May sent letter expressing concerns over intervention force. Armed clashes between M23 rebels and army resumed 20 May on outskirts of Goma killing 19; M23 28 May repeated ceasefire call, said they could easily target airport. Opposi-

tion, civil society failed to meet 27 May deadline for submission of appointees to new enlarged election commission CENI. IMF 13 May agreed to unfreeze financial aid suspended in 2012. Govt 23 May appointed François Muamba, former Movement for the Liberation of the Congo (MLC) VP, as coordinator of National Oversight Mechanism of the Peace Agreement Framework; signatories agreed on Regional Oversight Mechanism.

- ["Congo has chance for peace, U.N. ready to enforce: Ban"](#), Reuters, 23 May 2013.

- **Rwanda** President Kagame 20 May questioned UN's record in DRC saying in some places security has deteriorated despite peacekeepers; again rejected allegations of supporting Congolese M23 rebels.
- ["Paul Kagame denounces UN forces in DR Congo"](#), BBC, 20 May 2013.

### Horn of Africa

- **Eritrea** UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in Eritrea conducted fact-finding mission to Ethiopia and Djibouti after Eritrean govt rejected appointment, denied visa; 16 May said human rights situation in Eritrea "unacceptable", called for close monitoring.
- ["UN human rights expert calls for close scrutiny of Eritrea"](#), Sudan Tribune, 16 May 2013.

- **Ethiopia** Director General of Revenue and Customs Authority Melaku Fenta, his deputy and 49 other officials and business people arrested on corruption charges. Govt 28 May announced diversion of Nile waters ahead of controversial Grand Renaissance Dam construction prompting concerns from Egypt, demonstrations outside Ethiopian embassy in Cairo demanding expulsion of Ethiopian ambassador, halt to project. Authorities 31 May arrested reporter seeking to interview farmers evicted by dam construction. At late-May AU summit, PM Desalegn 28 May accused ICC of "race-hunting", targeting Africans.
- ["Ethiopia diverts Nile to build mega-dam"](#), Independent, 31 May 2013.

- **Kenya** Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission report released 21 May, repeated allegations newly-elected President Kenyatta and VP Ruto involved in 2007-8 post-election violence; also documented widespread illegal killings, corruption and human rights violations by former presidents Kenyatta, Moi and Kibaki. Parliament 14 May approved President Kenyatta's 16 cabinet nominees. Security deteriorated in Wajir, Garissa and Mandera including attacks on security personnel. Clashes between Degodia and Gare clans in Mandera began 10 May killing at least 19, injuring 42 and displacing over 6,600. 6 killed, including 2 police, 25 May in suspected Al-Shabaab attack on police border posts in Garissa county. Two suspected terrorists, including Felix Otuko suspected of 2 grenade attacks in Oct 2011, killed by police 18 May in Nairobi. Muslim cleric accused of links to Al-Shabaab killed by police 26 May in Mombasa. Human Rights Watch 29 May reported "10-week rampage" late 2012 by Kenyan police, accused them of torture and abuse of refugees, Somali Kenyans. Kenyan ambassador to UN Macharia Kamau 2 May requested UNSC dismiss ICC cases against Kenyatta and VP Ruto; Ruto and attorney general disavowed letter, reaffirmed govt cooperation with ICC.
- ["Uhuru Kenyatta and William Ruto named in Kenya TRJC report"](#), BBC, 22 May 2013.

**New** Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°94, *Kenya After the Elections*, 15 May 2013. Though the 2013 general elections were relatively peaceful, Kenya is still deeply divided and ethnically polarised.

➡ **Somalia** Kismayo conference on formation of Jubaland regional administration 15 May elected Ras Kamboni militia leader Sheikh Ahmed Mohamed Islam Madobe president of Jubaland. Somalia PM Shirdon said Kismayo conference not recognised by federal govt. UNSC 2 May approved UN Political Mission to Somalia (UNSOM), to support “peace and reconciliation”, assist govt and AMISOM in peace and state building, monitoring rights violations. Sporadic Al-Shabaab bomb attacks in Mogadishu continued including 10 killed and several injured in attack targeting Qatar Interior Minister convoy, Qatari delegation unharmed. Journalist shot dead in Kismayo 29 May. Clashes between Al-Shabaab and govt forces continued: 13 militants killed 14 May in Gedo region, 5 soldiers killed and 9 wounded near Baidoa, 10 soldiers killed in 16-18 May clashes in Bakol region. 1 killed, 14 injured in 25 May grenade attack in Baidoa market. Chief administrator of Howl Wadag District in Jowhar killed in suspected Al-Shabaab attack 31 May. U.S. extremist Abu Mansoor Al-Amriki reportedly killed 7 May by Al-Shabaab militants in Rama Addey, S Somalia.

- “[Somalia’s security forces hamstrung by corruption, infiltrators](#)”, Reuters, 3 May 2013.

➡ **Somaliland** President Silanyo 7 May refused to participate in international London Conference on Somalia as conference did not recognise Somaliland statehood. Govt 14 May banned UN flights from landing in Somaliland airports following 13 May agreement between UNDP and Somalian govt allowing Somalia to take responsibility for airspace starting end-2013.

- “[Somaliland bans United Nations flights from its airports](#)”, Sabahi, 15 May 2013.

➡ **South Sudan** Govt accused Khartoum of involvement in 4 May killing of Abyei former Chief Kuol Deng Kuol and UNISFA peacekeeper. Govt 21 May said oil production halved in face of new “problems” exporting through Sudan; 27 May said oil will arrive in Port Sudan mid-June. Army 20 May retook Boma Town in Jonglei state, seized 7 May by David Yau Yau rebels; U.S. and several European states called on govt to find political solution to conflict. UN 31 May said 23,500 have fled fighting in Jonglei state. Members of security forces reportedly involved in looting in Pibor county. UN SRSG Johnson 27 May said UN peacekeepers lack capacity to protect civilians in Pibor. President Kiir 7 May dismissed Ajonge Perpetuar, deputy head of legal drafting team, and Elias Nyamlell Wako, deputy FM, following announcement that he will no longer tolerate criticism by members of his cabinet. UNAMID peacekeeping mandate extended by 6 months.

- “[South Sudan says oil still flowing](#)”, UPI, 29 May 2013.

➡ **Sudan** UN humanitarian chief Amos 22 May said some 300,000 people fled homes in Darfur since beginning of year due to upsurge in fighting. Rebel JEM-Bashar splinter group leaders Mohammed Bashar and Arku Tugod Dahiya killed 12 May in clash with JEM in Bahay area of Chad/Sudan border, reportedly on Chadian side; Chadian troops reportedly pursued JEM attackers into Darfur. Over 60 killed in renewed tribal clashes in S Darfur. UNOCHA report 19 May expressed concern over ongoing civilian displacement in S Kordofan, lack of aid access. Fighting erupted 27 May between govt forces and Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF) rebels

near regional capital Kadugli; SRF 31 May said rebel attack on Abu Karshola, S Kordofan, killed 30 govt soldiers and shot down govt jet; govt said plane crashed due to technical fault. President Bashir 27 May threatened to close oil pipeline from S Sudan to Port Sudan if Juba continues to support Sudan rebels.

- “[Darfur tribes clash over gum Arabic production, 64 killed](#)”, Reuters, 31 May 2013.

➡ **Uganda** Gen David Sejusa (formerly Tinyefuza) early May called on Internal Security Organisation to investigate letter accusing govt of ousting or assassinating critical officials who oppose “Muhoozi project” to organise Museveni succession to his son. Police raided Sejusa’s offices and blocked Entebbe Road to airport 10-11 May as Sejusa due to return from UK; 20 May closed Red Pepper and Daily Monitor newspapers as well as Dembe FM and KFM radio stations, sparking protests 29 May in Kampala; newspapers reopened. Amnesty Act, which lapsed May 2012, reinstated.

- “[Police raid Ugandan newspaper office](#)”, Al Jazeera, 20 May 2013.

## Southern Africa

➡ **Madagascar** Fears that SADC-brokered Sept 2011 roadmap for political transition unravelling as political figures reneged on agreements not to stand in forthcoming presidential elections; and transitional president Andry Rajoelina 27 May refused to step down as president as required by electoral law, prompting authorities to postpone planned 24 July elections aimed at bringing 4-year political crisis to an end. Following 14 April submission by former president Marc Ravalomanana’s Mouvanca coalition of former first lady Lalao Ravalomanana as presidential candidate, Rajoelina also submitted application to run, arguing that Marc Ravalomanana promoting wife as proxy (both men had pledged not to run). In surprise move electoral court 3 May validated applications of 41 candidates to run for election including Lalao Ravalomanana, Rajoelina and former president Didier Ratsiraka – whose April return from exile was also conditional on him not participating in elections. SADC 10 May called on all 3 to withdraw, said its further support for elections contingent on compliance with roadmap, 26 May said it will not recognise election if one of them wins; SADC position on withdrawal and non-recognition endorsed at AU summit 25-26 May. UNSG Ban also called on the three candidates to withdraw from race. Malagasy Council of Churches (FFKM) 5 May concluded inter-Malagasy dialogue, recommended elections be postponed and called for new roadmap.

- “[Madagascar delays crucial elections](#)”, *Business Day*, 31 May 2013.

➡ **Zimbabwe** GPA partners 22 May formally adopted new constitution. Calls by ZANU-PF and state media for election by 29 June continued. MDC-T primary process began 24 May after several delays, ZANU-PF yet to start. Zimbabwe Defence Forces commander General Chiwenga 5 May dismissed claims MDC-T met with security chiefs, said PM Tsvangirai needs “psychiatric treatment”, exacerbating fears of intimidation and possible violence in run-up to election. Editor of Zimbabwe Independent Dumisani Muleya and journalists Owen Gagare and Nqobile Ndlovu arrested 7 May for reporting MDC-T claims they met security chiefs. Political intimidation continued throughout month including in Matebeleland and Mashonaland Central. MDC-T youth wing leader Solomon Madzore arrested 2 May, charged with insulting



president. SADC heads of state 29 May agreed to start coordinating efforts to raise funds for election.

- [“Zanu-PF, MDC gear for primary elections”](#), VOA, 21 May 2013.

**New** Crisis Group Africa Report N°202, [Zimbabwe: Election Scenarios](#), 6 May 2013. The pervasive fear of violence and intimidation in Zimbabwe's 2013 elections contradicts political leaders' rhetorical commitments to peace, and raises concerns that the country may not be ready to go to the polls.

## West Africa

➡ **Côte d'Ivoire** Security forces 13 May used tear gas to disperse hundreds of students protesting poor conditions at Cocody university, Abidjan. President Ouattara 2-5 May visited western region, announced reforms on land tenure and nationality issues will be implemented soon, said Council of Ministers will be held in western region every 2 months. Security forces 18 May arrested Burkinabe militia leader Amadé Ouérémi, suspected of complicity in massacre of 300 people in Duekoué during 2011 post-electoral crisis. France 27 May revealed 10 Egyptian jihadis arrested in March/April, said French interests targeted because of involvement in Mali.

- [“Arrêté dans l'Ouest, Amadé Ouérémi va être transféré à Abidjan”](#), *Jeune Afrique*, 20 May 2013.

➡ **Guinea** Tensions between govt and opposition over electoral preparations continued: clashes between security forces and opposition supporters in Conakry left 1 policeman, 2 opposition supporters dead 2 and 3 May; at least 15 dead, 90 injured during clashes 22-25 May; President Condé 25 May dismissed security minister Maramanay Cissé, 28 May called for people to remain calm. Opposition leaders 28 May announced suspension of marches on account of school exams. President Condé 28 May announced pool of judges would investigate recent killings. Gendarme implicated in 2009 Conakry stadium massacre formally indicted with rape charges, signalling progress in case.

- [“15 morts en trois jours à Conakry, les forces de l'ordre mises en cause”](#), RFI, 25 May 2013.

➡ **Guinea-Bissau** Following initial collapse of talks over right to nominate new PM, African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC) and Social Renovation Party (PRS) 17 May reached memorandum of understanding over principles of cabinet reshuffle; PAIGC agreed to keep Rui Barros as PM while increasing its share of cabinet portfolios (8 ministries and 3 secretariats for PAIGC, 6 ministries to PRS, 2 to armed forces). UN SRSG Ramos Horta 9 May proposed new mandate for UNIOGBIS at UNSC, supporting “two-phase process towards full restoration of constitutional order and medium-term stability” and calling for increased international assistance; UNSC 22 May renewed mandate for 1 year. ECOWAS army chiefs met in Bissau 28 May to discuss “new role” for ECOMIB troops, mentioned possible increase in ECOMIB police presence. Transition president Serifo Nhamadjo reportedly diagnosed with cancer; former president Pereira Rosa 15 May died from illness.

- [“Principais partidos da Guiné-Bissau assinam memorando de entendimento”](#), RFI Português, 17 May 2013.

➡ **Mali** Low-frequency attacks continued in north. MUJAO 6 and 10 May claimed responsibility for attacks, bombing attempts in Gao, Gossi (Timbuktu region) and Hamakouladji (Gao region). Clashes between Tuareg and Arab communities reported in Ber (60km from Gao) and Anefis (90km from Kidal); French forces reportedly intervened 18 May to remove Arab Movement of Azawad (MAA) from Anefis. Govt 2 May appointed Colonel Adama Kamissoko as new governor of Kidal. Sons of Ifogha Amenokal (traditional leader) 19 May created new Tuareg movement Higher Council for Unity of Azawad (HCUA) and dissolved Islamic Council of Azawad (MIA). International donor conference in Brussels pledged €3.25bn for Mali; China 24 May said it wants to contribute 500 troops to newly-created UN peacekeeping mission. Burkinabé President Compaoré 27 May began mediation to resolve Kidal crisis; MIA said it would join talks in Ouagadagou; govt special envoy Tiebilé Dramé 29 May met with MAA delegation in Nouakchott. 1 French soldier injured during attack on convoy in Kidal 28 May.

- [“Vers un nouveau départ”](#), *Jeune Afrique*, 24 May 2013.

➡ **Nigeria** At least 55 killed 7 May in NE in coordinated attacks by Islamist sect Boko Haram (BH): 150 prisoners freed in raid in Bama, Borno state; security services and govt buildings burned. BH leader Abubakar Shekau 13 May released video purportedly showing Nigerian hostages. Military 24 May said 3 women, 6 children hostages taken 7 May rescued in Borno during military offensive against BH. President Jonathan 14 May declared state of emergency in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa, promised to send additional troops. Authorities 31 May said 58 women, child prisoners suspected of BH links released in Adamawa and Borno states. Nigerian delegation 16 May met with EU officials, EU voiced concern military action against BH could prove counterproductive. U.S. Sec State Kerry 25 May called on govt to respect human rights in fight against militants. Police 30 May announced weapons stockpile, “terrorist cell” with alleged links to Hizbollah found in Kano state, 3 arrested. President 26 May met with UNSG Ban on sidelines of AU summit, said state of emergency likely to be suspended within 6 months.

- [“Nigeria arrests trio over ‘Hezbollah cell’”](#), Al Jazeera, 31 May 2013.

➡ **Niger** At least 26 killed, dozens injured in coordinated suicide attacks on military barracks in Agadez and uranium mine in Arlit 23 May; Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO) claimed responsibility, said it is “punishing Niger for deploying troops to Mali”; “Blood Signatories” brigade led by Mokhtar Belmokhtar reportedly supervised operations. French-Nigerien special forces 24 May killed 2 more jihadis holding out at Agadez barracks. President Issoufou 25 May said assailants came from Libya; Libyan authorities vehemently rejected claim. UN OCHA announced 800,000 people will require food aid in coming months.

- [“Double attentat au Niger: le retour de Mokhtar Belmokhtar”](#), *Jeune Afrique*, 24 May 2013.

➡ **Senegal** Govt 3 May signed agreement with Chad on judicial cooperation in trial against former Chad president Hissène Habré, accused of war crimes and crimes against humanity. Casamance MFDC separatists 3 May abducted 12 mine-clearing employees from South African firm Mechem in Kailou village near Ziguinchor; Guinean authorities and armed forces reportedly involved in efforts to obtain their release; MFDC leader César Atoute Badiatte 27 May released 3.

- [“12 démineurs enlevés par les rebelles du MFDC”](#), Afrik.com, 7 May 2013.

## Asia

### Central Asia

➡ **Kazakhstan** Aqtobe city court sentenced 2 men to jail for religious extremism, illegal weapon possession. Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan opened new railway connection between countries. Authorities freed 6 men convicted for role in Dec 2011 Janaozen unrest.

- “Kazakh authorities free some Zhanaozen convicts”, RFE/RL, 28 May 2013.

➡ **Kyrgyzstan** Amid ongoing demands for nationalisation of country’s largest gold mine, anti-mine protests escalated late month and turned violent. Protesters near mine, demanding nationalisation of mine, social benefits and compensation from mining company for alleged environmental pollution, 28 May blocked road to mine, 30 May cut off power. Disruption of mine, one of country’s biggest sources of foreign earnings, could cause massive damage to faltering economy. Govt declared state of emergency after police 31 May clashed with some 3,000 protesters who were attempting to storm mining company offices. In southern city Jalal-Abad protesters seized govt buildings demanding release of 3 jailed Ata Jurt opposition politicians. Earlier in month protesters opposed to presence of foreign companies in mineral sector blocked operations of Chinese gold mining company Kaidi, Chon-Alai district 16 May. Despite environmental theme to demonstrations, much of unrest appeared to be organised by Ata Jurt party. U.S. court dropped extradition case against Maxim Bakiyev, son of former president, scheduled to face charges of securities fraud; U.S. ambassador to Kyrgyzstan cited lack of evidence. U.S. military refuelling plane crashed near Kyrgyz border with Kazakhstan 2 May, killing all 3 crew members. Govt 21 May drafted bill to cancel deal with U.S. on use of Manas airbase effective 11 July 2014; parliament yet to approve bill.

- “Kyrgyzstan imposes state of emergency to protect Centerra mine”, Reuters, 31 May 2013.

➡ **Tajikistan** Former industry minister Zaid Saidov, who in April announced he would create opposition party, charged with theft, polygamy; claimed allegations politically motivated. Supreme Court sentenced Islamic Renaissance Party (HINT) official Sherik Karamkhudoev to 14 years’ prison for founding organised criminal group, organising mass disorders, illegal weapons possession. Authorities reported 2 Tajiks killed while fighting with rebels in Syria. France informed authorities that French troops in Dushanbe supporting NATO in Afghanistan would withdraw by 1 July.

- “Emerging force in Tajik politics arrested”, IWPR, 20 May 2013.

### North East Asia

➡ **China/Japan** Chinese foreign ministry 27 April said disputed Diaoyu/Senkaku islands part of China’s core interests. Japanese and Chinese officials met in Beijing 28 April to discuss measures aimed at avoiding accidental military clashes in East China Sea (ECS), in first official contact between countries’ defence departments since Japanese govt purchased disputed islands Sept 2012.

Chinese presence in disputed waters off islands continued. China Ocean Development Report 9 May said China intends to increase offshore patrols of South China Sea and ECS. Foreign Ministry statement said that Chinese claims to islands are consistent with international law. Chinese scholars writing in People’s Daily 8 May questioned Japanese sovereignty over Ryukyu islands, annexed by Japan in 1900s. Analysts interpreted article as attempt to raise stakes in ECS dispute; Japan lodged diplomatic protest. People’s Liberation Army General Luo Yuan 15 May stated Ryukyu islands do not belong to Japan. Japanese Defence Ministry reported unidentified submarine cruised waters near Okinawa, PM Abe 14 May said submerged submarines entering Japanese waters to be met with military force, Defence Minister said submarine identified, Japan will call for “such encroachments to cease”. Chinese PM Li Keqiang 26 May said Japan should “return all occupied territories”.

- “China lays claim to Okinawa as territory dispute with Japan escalates”, *Guardian*, 15 May 2013.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°245, *Dangerous Waters: China-Japan Relations on the Rocks*, 8 April 2013.

➡ **North Korea** DPRK special envoy Vice Marshal Choe Ryong-hae visited China 22-25 May; Chinese media reported DPRK agreed to return to nuclear disarmament talks, Chinese leader Xi Jinping said denuclearised Korean peninsula is goal of all parties. DPRK fired projectiles into Sea of Japan 18-21 May, believed to be testing new long-range artillery rocket, sparking heavy criticism though not violating UNSC resolutions. ROK President Park met with U.S. President Obama 7 May; both expressed shared interest in strengthening bilateral alliance and tailored deterrence against DPRK, said open to talks. USS Nimitz carrier group visited ROK early May to participate in combined exercises with ROK navy. UN Panel of Experts 12 May said sanctions have not halted DPRK nuclear program, but have “choked off significant funding”. State-owned Bank of China 7 May closed accounts of DPRK Foreign Trade Bank, consistent with UNSCR 2096. DPRK 12 May appointed General Chang Jong-nam as new defence minister, General Kim Kyok-sik as chief of general staff. DPRK and ROK remain at impasse over resuming operations at Kaesong Industrial Complex (KIC); last 7 ROK managers returned to South 3 May after Seoul delivered \$13 million to settle accounts for unpaid wages, taxes. DPRK 28 May invited managers to join talks to reopen complex, ROK rejected offer. UN appointed 3 special investigators to investigate alleged rights violations in DPRK. DPRK court sentenced Korean American Kenneth Bae to 15 years’ labour for crimes against state.

- “China bluntly tells North Korea to enter nuclear talks”, *New York Times*, 24 May 2013.

### South Asia

➡ **Afghanistan** Security situation continued to deteriorate, including up to 10 killed when police opened fire on protesters in Kandahar province 9 May; suicide bombing in Baghlan province 20 May that killed chief of provincial council and 12 others; 13 killed 16 May in suicide bombing targeting NATO convoy in Kabul; 7 police killed 28 May by colleagues in Kandahar; suicide bombing by Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and Taliban in Panjshir valley targeting governor’s compound 29 May. Taliban 24 May launched 5-hour attack on International Organisation for Migration (IOM)

in Kabul killing 3 and wounding 3; 29 May attacked ICRC compound. Taliban leader Mullah Agha Jan Mutasim 14 May called on U.S. to support peace process, warned of renewed instability if parties do not agree on reconciliation talks. Defence Ministry 1 May said Afghan forces will take lead in all military operations in coming 2 months. Opposition 1 May accused President Karzai of interfering in elections through changes to law governing elections commission (IEC) and Electoral Complaints Commission (ECC), said IEC chairan Fazl Ahmad Manawi weak. IEC voter registration started 26 May. Indian govt delegation visited early May, discussed mining and other issues; Karzai 20-21 May visited India, discussed military and strategic cooperation. Intelligence agency (NDS) 8 May arrested man for plotting assassination of opposition leader Abdullah Abdullah and former VP Ahmad Zia Massoud; NDS reported detainee confessed Pakistan behind plot.

- ["Rally turns deadly in Southern Afghanistan"](#), *New York Times*, 8 May 2013.

➤ **Bangladesh** Jamaat-e-Islami (JeI) 6-7 May organised protests demanding blasphemy law; over 20 killed, scores injured in clashes with police. Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and JeI 8-9 May held nationwide strike protesting "mass killings by police". Home ministry 19 May imposed 1-month ban on political parties' "public meetings and processions" citing cyclone Mahasen; BNP and allies 26 May protested ban, called for caretaker govt. Country's International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) 9 May sentenced to death JeI assistant Sec Gen Muhammad Kamaruzzaman for mass killings during 1971 independence war. Police 12 May arrested JeI leader AKM Yusuf on charges of genocide during 1971 war. ICT indicted UK citizen Chowdhury Mueen-Uddin and U.S. citizen Ashrafuzzaman Khan for crimes during 1971 war, demanding extradition. Information Minister 29 May said war crimes verdict executions to be carried out by Aug 2013.

- ["Bangladesh sentences third Jamaat-e-Islami leader to death"](#), *Guardian*, 9 May 2013.

➤ **Kashmir** 1 soldier killed in 18 May gunfight with suspected militants on Indian side of Line of Control. Unidentified gunmen 10 May killed Indian police officer in Pulwama, S Kashmir. Police 19 May arrested suspected Lashkar-e-Tayyaba (LeT) treasurer in Baramulla. LeT militant Hilal Maulvi killed in 23 May gunfight with police in Srinagar. 4 soldiers and 1 Hizbul Mujahideen militant killed 24 May in heavy fighting in Pulwama. Police 31 May killed Hizbul Mujahideen divisional commander in Wandana, Pulwama.

- ["South Kashmir encounter toll rises: 4 soldiers, militant killed"](#), *Hindu*, 24 May 2013.

➤ **India (non-Kashmir)** 27 killed including local politicians in 26 May Maoist attack involving over 250 militants on convoy of National Congress prominent figures in Bastar, Chhattisgarh. Month saw heavy clashes between govt forces and Maoists, police killed in 12 May gunfight in Doordarshan, Chhattisgarh; 2 soldiers injured in 19 May clash with Maoists in Bijapur, Chhattisgarh; soldiers 17 May killed 9 civilians in Edesmeta, Chhattisgarh after reportedly mistaking them for Maoists.

- ["Indian forces hunt Maoist rebels after deadly attack on Congress leaders"](#), *AP*, 27 May 2013.

➤ **Nepal** Date for Constituent Assembly (CA) elections still not set; parties disagree on electoral provisions, composition of new CA. Breakaway Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (CPN-M) 10 May

set preconditions for talks with govt about elections, including withdrawal of 13 March 25-point presidential decree enabling interim govt formation. CPN-M continued obstructing voter registration, citizenship distribution; 5 injured in 15 May clashes in Surkhet between CPN-M cadres, police. Nepali Congress and Unified Marxist-Leninist 26 May demanded Interim Election Council Chairman Khil Raj Regmi's resignation as chief justice to appease parties opposed to current election framework. 8 May appointment as chief of Commission for Investigation of Abuse of Authority of Lokman Singh Karki, found guilty of suppressing 2006 People's Movement, protested by some Kathmandu civil society, political actors. Muslim former CA member Sadrul Miya Haque killed 21 May by unidentified assailant.

- ["In Nepal, battle for representation"](#), *Hindu*, 18 May 2013.

➤ **Pakistan** Despite threats and pre-election violence targeting candidates that killed at least 70 and injured over 350, 11 May elections recorded significant turnout at around 55%. Pakistan Muslim League (PLM-N) won with 125 National Assembly seats; Pakistan People's Party (PPP) 31, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) 28, and MQM 18. PLM-N will form majority govt; with addition of women and minorities reserved seats, PPP will lead opposition with over 40 seats. Parliamentary session called on 1 June, caretaker govt to transfer power to new govt 5 June. EU elections monitors reported 64 deaths on election day, said voting "satisfactory" in 90% of polling stations, but evidence of "serious irregularities" in some Sindh stations. Pakistani Taliban 29 May withdrew peace talks offer after top militant commander Waliur Rehman killed in reported U.S. drone strike; incoming PM Sharif condemned strike. Militant attacks continued including attack on police convoy near Peshawar that killed 7 policemen 24 May. Army 31 May said 19 militants, 3 soldiers killed in military operations in Khyber and Kurram Agencies.

- ["Pakistan's Nawaz Sharif locks down victory"](#), *Washington Post*, 12 May 2013.

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**New** Crisis Group Asia Report N°247, [Drones: Myths And Reality In Pakistan](#), 21 May 2013. Drone strikes alone will not eliminate the jihadi threat in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). Extension of Pakistani law and full constitutional rights to the region is the only long-term solution.

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➤ **Sri Lanka** Preparations for Sept northern provincial council elections continued though date not yet set. Indian FM Kurshad 17 May warned Sri Lankan govt against constitutional changes that would weaken provincial powers. Harassment of Tamil National Alliance (TNA) activists ongoing; police early May questioned Tamil National People's Front leader Gajen Ponnambalam; house of Federal Party (ITAK) leader C.V.K. Sivagnanam attacked 7 May. Tamil nationalist bishop of Mannar Rayappu Joseph mid-May called unity meeting, failed to quell tensions within TNA. Govt critic and Muslim politician Azath Salley arrested 2 May under Terrorism Act following comments that ongoing attacks on Muslims could provoke violent retaliation; President Rajapaksa 10 May ordered Salley's release following strong international and domestic criticism. Buddhist monk 24 May self-immolated in protest at halal cattle slaughter and Christian conversions of Buddhists. Fourth anniversary of end of civil war marked 18-19 May with military-dominated govt celebration in Colombo; over a dozen activists arrested in Mannar for involvement in banned commemorations of Tamils killed in war. More than 1,000 Jaffna residents filed lawsuits to block govt seizure of their land for



military base; army 22 May claimed military camps in Jaffna to be consolidated from 17 to 3.

- [“In Sri Lanka, a new divide brings back old fears”](#), *Hindu*, 17 May 2013.

## South East Asia

**Indonesia** 2 men shot dead by security forces in Aimas, Sorong district on eve of 1 May protests marking 50th anniversary of transfer of administration of Papua to Indonesia; at least 20 protest-related arrests made. Police in Musi Rawas, S Sumatra 29 April opened fire on crowd of about 500 demonstrators, killing 4. In series of raids across Java and S Sumatra, police arrested 25 terrorism suspects, killed 8. Hundreds of Sunni Muslims laid waste to 2 Ahmadiyah mosques in Tasikmalaya, W Java 5 May; police arrested 2 ringleaders but released them after mass protests 27 May. Another mob in Tulungagung, E Java vandalised Ahmadiyah mosque 15 May; local police chief, army commander, prosecutor and ulama council subsequently forced Ahmadiyah congregation to freeze activities, close down mosque. Incumbent Bali governor won 15 May election; losing camp to challenge tight result in Constitutional Court.

- Achmad Sukarsono, [“Oversight Needed to Make Police Accountable”](#), *Jakarta Globe*, 3 May 2013.
- [“Police to probe fatal Musi Rawas shootings”](#), *Jakarta Globe*, 1 May 2013.

**New** Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°139, [Indonesia: Tensions Over Aceh’s Flag](#), 7 May 2013. A dispute over a flag in Aceh is testing the limits of autonomy, irritating Indonesia’s central government, heightening ethnic tensions, reviving a campaign for the division of the province and raising fears of violence as the 2014 national elections approach.

**Malaysia** 13th general elections 5 May ended with narrow win by ruling Barisan Nasional (National Front) coalition in terms of parliamentary seats (133 out of 222), but with worst result for BN in 44 years as Anwar Ibrahim-led opposition coalition Pakatan won popular vote. Opposition 8 May began series of rallies to protest electoral fraud, first attended by almost 100,000. Police 23 May began crackdown of prominent opposition politicians under Sedition Act.

- [“A tawdry victory”](#), *Economist*, 6 May 2013.

**Myanmar** Govt and Kachin Independence Organisation (KIO) 30 May agreed 7-point peace pact at talks convened for first time in govt-controlled capital of Kachin state. Deal means that in principle hostilities with all major armed groups in country have stopped. Parties agreed to work on de-escalation, redeployment of troops on both sides, monitoring arrangements, and dialogue to address political issues. Serious clashes erupted in Shan State, with army overrunning Shan State Army-South ceasefire group base on Chinese border 10 May; both sides say they are committed to maintaining ceasefire, but these and previous clashes putting it under strain. Following release of investigation commission report into 2012 violence against Rohingya and other Muslims in Rakhine State, President Thein Sein 6 May urged end to violence, greater tolerance of diversity, committed to implement commission recommendations. However, local Rakhine State govt announced reactivation of 2-child limit for families in Muslim-majority areas of state, prompting local and international condemnation. Buddhist-on-Muslim violence in northern town Lashio 28-29 May, one person reported killed. Govt granted amnesty to

59 political prisoners 23 April, further 23 on 17 May. U.S. extended some sanctions for further year, eased visa restrictions on members of govt. President Thein Sein 20 May visited U.S., met President Obama, in first visit by Myanmar leader since 1966.

- Jim Della-Giacoma, [“Will Ethnic Tensions Undermine US Myanmar Relations?”](#), *Global Observatory*, 21 May 2013.
- [“A Burmese spring”](#), *Economist*, 25 May 2013.

**Philippines** President Aquino’s slate of candidates fared well in mid-term legislative and local elections 13 May; ruling coalition maintained control of House of Representatives, strengthened presence in senate, Aquino’s Liberal Party won 2 crucial races in Muslim Mindanao. Police documented 51 election-related killings 13 Jan-13 May. Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF)-led Bangsamoro Transition Commission, body that will draft basic legislation on autonomy, finally received funds to begin work. Govt and MILF task forces for welfare assistance scheme to deliver peace dividends to MILF agreed where program would be rolled out. Serious fighting erupted between MILF and Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) in North Cotabato 5 May; 1 killed, International Monitoring Team intervened. Another clash 16 May; over 10,000 displaced by late May. 7 soldiers, 7 militants killed in clash between Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) and military 25 May on Jolo; 6 ASG, 3 soldiers killed in other clashes. Communist New People’s Army (NPA) killed 5 soldiers in Negros Occidental 4 May, and 3 people it accused of providing intelligence to military 19 May. Coast guard 9 May shot dead Taiwanese fisherman in latest escalation of tensions in South China Sea, setting off serious diplomatic row. Tensions also increased with China as Philippines 10 May lodged protest with Chinese embassy over warship and 2 surveillance vessels in vicinity of Second Thomas Shoal/Ayungin.

- [“Bedevilled by the details”](#), *Economist*, 25 May 2013.

**Thailand** Violence continued in deep South: gunmen 1 May shot dead 6 people in Pattani shop including 2-year-old child; leaflets found in Yala’s Muang district claimed attack was revenge for deaths of 4 rebels killed by security officers, also claimed insurgents would kill people, including women and children, to pressure govt to accept Barisan Revolusi Nasional (BRN) demands in fledgling dialogue process; some indications that vigilantes or rogue security forces may have carried out attack. 5kg bomb in Asia Hotel in Sungai Kolok, Narathiwat 18 May injured 6. National political tensions rising as opponents of PM Yingluck denounced her 29 April speech at 7th Ministerial Conference of the Community of Democracies in Ulan Bator, Mongolia, which criticised democratic backsliding in wake of 2006 coup. Uptick in street protests by rival political camps, including tens of thousands of red shirts protesting in Bangkok 19 May, protracted yellow shirt rally at Sanam Luang starting 5 May. 26 May bomb blast in Ramkhamhaeng, Bangkok injured 7; authorities discount connection to southern insurgency.

- [“Savage escalation threatened in Thailand’s southern insurgency”](#), *Time*, 22 May 2013.

**Timor-Leste** PM and Minister of Defence and Security Xanana Gusmão scheduled to visit Singapore 3-5 June and Philippines 5-9 June to strengthen country’s bid for ASEAN membership.

- [“Timor-Leste poised to win ASEAN membership”](#), *Khabar Southeast Asia*, 16 May 2013.

**New** Crisis Group Asia Report N°246, *Timor-Leste: Stability at What Cost?*, 8 May 2013. Although swelling oil and gas revenues have bought Timor-Leste peace, political empowerment, security reforms and fiscal caution are needed to ensure stability can outlast the boom.

## Europe

### Balkans

➡ **Bosnia** High Representative Inzko's latest report to UNSG Ban cited concern over independence rhetoric from Republika Srpska. Constitutional Court 24 May ruled Federation entity president Živko Budimir, arrested late April for corruption, be released from detention along with 4 co-accused aides. State prosecutor's office said it would appeal decision. Budimir's Party of Justice and Trust claim arrest politically motivated. ICTY 29 May convicted 6 leaders of wartime Croatian Defence Council (HVO) of war crimes; also implicated Croatia for backing HVO campaign of ethnic cleansing and seeking to seize Bosnian territory. European parliament voted against proposal to suspend Bosnia from Council of Europe over its failure to enact constitutional reforms.

- "Bosnian court frees Federation entity president", *Balkan Insight*, 27 May 2013.

➡ **Kosovo** Kosovo PM Taçi and Serbian PM Dačić 24 May agreed on implementation plan for EU-brokered 19 April normalisation deal, covering 6 policy areas including legislative change, Association-Community formation, police, courts, elections. Serb leaders in north early month reiterated rejection of 19 April deal, wrote to Russia seeking help against "unilateral action" of U.S., EU and Pristina. Serbian deputy PM Vučić and Kosovo Serb leaders 12 May reached agreement on implementation of April deal, including Serbian support for northern Kosovo. Pristina police 5 May arrested alleged regional organised crime figure Naser Kelmendi. EULEX 23 May arrested 7 former KLA members on war crimes charges from 1998-99.

- "Behind bars at last?", *Economist*, 14 May 2013.

### Caucasus

➡ **Armenia** President Sargsyan's Republican Party of Armenia won 5 May municipal elections in Yerevan with over 58% of vote; opposition alleged vote rigged.

- "Opposition casting about for a new catalyst", *Eurasianet*, 3 May 2013.

➡ **Azerbaijan** Azerbaijan protested after Iran 30 April arrested 2 Azerbaijani citizens, released 19 May. Visiting EU Enlargement Commissioner Štefan Füle 3 May said country must meet commitments on democracy, rights. OSCE 2 May criticised Azerbaijan for failing on its commitment to decriminalise defamation. Parliament 15 May controversially voted to tighten internet libel laws, prompting criticism from opposition, media rights groups.

- "Sound bites aside, Baku has little to celebrate this Press Freedom Day", *RFE/RL*, 2 May 2013.

➡ **North Caucasus (Russia)** In Dagestan capital Makhachkala, 2 people killed in bomb blast 1 May; at least 4 people killed, over 50 injured 20 May as 2 car bombs exploded outside bailiff service building, headed by son of mayor and one of most powerful men in Dagestan; 2 died, at least 19 injured in female suicide bomb attack 25 May. Authorities 9 May reported 7 militants killed in Dagestan. In Buynaksk, security forces reportedly found explosive devices in homes of militants' relatives and detonated them 6 May; 30 Salafis reportedly detained 1-5 May. Alleged leader of "Gubden" insurgency group Magomed Abdusaidov killed 22 May. Police officer arrested 19 May for providing insurgency groups with arms, ammunition. 13 police officers injured in suicide bomb in Ordzhonikidzovskaya village, Ingushetia 17 May. Ingushetia parliament 8 May voted against direct elections of republican head. Trial began 13 May of Ali Taziyeu, top insurgency commander under warlord Doku Umarov, on various terrorism-related charges; accused of organising attempted assassination of Ingushetia leader Yunus-Bek Yevkurov in 2009.

- "Makhachkala bombing highlights Daghestani leader's Herculean task", *RFE/RL*, 22 May 2013.

➡ **Georgia** Deputy interior minister arrested on blackmail allegations; agriculture minister temporarily stepped down over corruption investigation involving senior ministry officials; former PM Vano Merabishvili and former health minister Zurab Chiaberashvili, both senior allies of President Saakashvili, arrested for corruption. Prosecutor General late month said Saakashvili may also be questioned over alleged misuse of state funds. Saakashvili criticised reported govt statements on possible resumption of Russian gas imports, citing need for independence from Russia. FM criticised Russian installation of barbed-wire fencing along administrative boundary around breakaway region South Ossetia; countries set to discuss early June. Russian troops 30 May reportedly detained Georgian national near administrative boundary. National Olympic Committee agreed that Georgian athletes will participate in Sochi 2014 Winter Olympics in Russia. Govt announced creation of special investigative group to look into Aug 2008 war with Russia and "possible criminal activities during and after".

- "Caucasian circles", *Economist*, 11 May 2013.

➡ **Nagorno-Karabakh (Azerbaijan)** Azerbaijani President Aliyev 7 May described Nagorno-Karabakh region as "major impediment" to regional integration, said Azerbaijan seeks to restore its territorial integrity, resolve issue in accordance with international law. Azerbaijan mid-May carried out military exercises near N-K, led by Defence Minister Safar Abiyev. Azerbaijan reported soldier shot dead near N-K border 27 May in Armenian ceasefire violation. Armenian President Sargsyan 9 May visited N-K for Victor Day celebrations marking end of World War 2.

- "Azerbaijan soldier shot dead near Nagorno-Karabakh border", *RFE/RL*, 27 May 2013.

## Western Europe/Mediterranean

➡ **Cyprus** Turkish PM Erdoğan 16 May said "there is a real opportunity to reach an agreement on the Cyprus issue", and that Turkey continues to focus on it. Turkish President Gül and Energy Minister Yıldız 10 May signalled possible cooperation with Cyprus on East Med gas. Republic of Cyprus FM Kasoulides 10 May said new



reunification talks cannot start until fall 2013. UNSG special envoy Downer 28 May said UN did not set a date for resumption of talks.

- “Turkey’s Erdogan says sees opportunity for Cyprus deal”, Reuters, 16 May 2013.

➤ **Turkey** Syrian crisis continues to spill over: 2 May clashes between Syrians trying to enter Turkey and Turkish security forces at Akçakale crossing in Şanlıurfa province left police officer dead, 11 wounded including 4 civilians. 2 car bombs in Reyhanlı town in border Hatay province 11 May killed 52; Ankara said attack linked to Syrian regime using local Turkish leftist group, investigation continues. After 16 May meeting between PM Erdoğan and President Obama, Turkey shifted position to support Syria political negotiations in Geneva II conference. PM Erdoğan 16 May said Turkey has spent \$1.5 billion on Syria. Showing Turkey-PKK peace process is gaining momentum, armed PKK militants started withdrawal from Turkey to northern Iraq 8 May; PKK military leader Murat Karayılan said withdrawal of 2,100 militants will be completed by Nov. No fresh violence between PKK-army thanks to current process, but 2 soldiers died 2 May after stepping on an old mine in Iğdır province. Violent clashes between police and thousands of protesters against govt construction in central Istanbul late month left several injured.

- Hugh Pope, “The Best-Laid Plans”, *Majalla*, 6 May 2013.
- “Arrests and calls for calm in Turkey”, *New York Times*, 12 May 2013.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Europe Report N°225, *Blurring the Borders: Syrian Spillover Risks for Turkey*, 30 April 2013.

## Latin America

➤ **Bolivia** President Morales 1 May expelled U.S. Agency for International Development, accusing it of political interference with peasant unions and other social organisations and conspiring against govt. Constitutional Court late April ruled Morales can run for re-election in 2014 election.

- “Bolivian President Evo Morales expels USAID”, BBC, 1 May 2013.

➤ **Colombia** Agreement announced 26 May between govt and FARC on rural development – 1st agenda item in peace talks – in major boost to process; details unlikely to be released until conclusion of entire process, but President Santos said 4 main points are access to/use of land, rural development programs, health and education for rural poor, food security/improved nutrition. Govt and FARC will discuss political participation next. Prospects that peace talks with ELN would begin in May suffered setback when ELN killed 11 soldiers; ELN currently holding one captive following ambush in Norte de Santander 22 May. Security forces 4 May killed FARC commander Caliche in Nariño dept; 20 May killed leader of FARC’s Antonia Santos mobile column El Negro Eliécer in Norte de Santander dept; 15 May killed ELN commander Almeida in Arauca dept; 29 May arrested top commander of New Illegal Armed Group (NIAG) Urabeños Martin Bala. Constitutional Court ruled 17 May that Victims Law protections must be extended to include victims of forced displacement caused by NIAGs.

- “Farc peace talks: Colombia unveils major breakthrough”, *Guardian*, 27 May 2013.

➤ **Guatemala** Following sentencing of former dictator Efraín Ríos Montt on 10 May to 80 years’ prison for genocide and crimes against humanity, Constitutional Court 20 May overturned conviction on procedural grounds. UN Committee against Torture 31 May denounced continued impunity and govt’s failure to investigate rights violations during civil war, said govt should enforce Law on National Reconciliation and ensure authors of acts of genocide, torture are not granted amnesties. President Pérez Molina 2 May sent army into 4 municipalities in eastern depts of Jalapa and Santa Rosa after residents took 23 police hostage; authorities said 1 police officer killed during attempt to rescue hostages.

- “Trial of Rios Montt has likely collapsed: lawyers”, Reuters, 21 May 2013.

➤ **Haiti** Victims of ongoing cholera epidemic 8 May gave UN 60-day deadline to begin talks on compensation or face legal action. Former President Aristide 8 May appeared in court as part of ongoing murder investigation into unsolved assassination of journalist Jean Léopold Dominique in 2000. UNSG Ban appointed Trinidadian diplomat Sandra Honoré as SRSG and head of MINUSTAH.

- “Ex-Haitian president Jean-Bertrand Aristide appears in court, draws crowd”, *Miami Herald*, 8 May 2013.

➤ **Mexico** President Peña Nieto met with U.S. President Obama 2 May to discuss security, trade and education; Obama pledged to continue cooperation despite recent restriction of access to drug intelligence for U.S. agents. Army and federal police 20 May arrived in Michoacán state in security operation against self-defence groups, organised crime. Attorney General Murillo Karam and Interior Minister Osorio Chong 17 May pledged to create special unit for missing persons. Attacks on press continued: gunmen 7 May killed press officer Cuauhtémoc Sánchez Arreola in Nayarit; El Mañana suffered cyber-attacks; author of Blog del Narco known as “Lucy” fled country following threats. Murders attributed to organised crime continued: 6 bodies found 4 May along highway in Sinaloa; 7 bodies found 5 May inside car in Mexico City suburb; 4 killed 9 May in attack against public security director Jesús Carrasco in Sinaloa; 6 killed during shoot-out at car dealership in Chihuahua 14 May; 2 men found hanging in Limón de Luna community, Michoacán.

- Louise Arbour et al., “Breaking the Taboo about Drugs”, *Guardian*, 18 May 2013.
- “The Mexico Bubble”, *Foreign Policy*, 1 May 2013.

**New** Crisis Group Latin America Briefing N°29, *Justice at the Barrel of a Gun: Vigilante Militias in Mexico*, 28 May 2013. The rise of civilian militias to combat lawlessness will make it harder than ever to defeat the cartels unless the government regulates the vigilantes.

➤ **Venezuela** Opposition Democratic Unity (MUD) alliance 2 May called on Supreme Court (TSJ) electoral chamber to annul 14 April presidential election on account of multiple alleged irregularities, including violence at polling stations, exclusion of opposition witnesses and coercion of voters; 8 May filed second suit calling for partial annulment of election, citing irregularities in 5,729 mesas (voting tables) which it said compromised over 2.3 million votes. MUD also challenged 3 electoral chamber judges on grounds of partiality to ruling party. President Maduro mid-month accused private sector of waging “economic war” on regime by slowing production and hoarding goods. Head of National Assembly Diosdado Cabello said meeting between MUD leader Henrique Capriles and Colombian President Santos in Bogotá 29 May amounted to putting


“bomb” in bilateral relations. FM Jaua said Venezuela recalled envoy to Havana peace talks, Maduro said meeting amounted to “backstabbing”; Santos dismissed allegations Colombia is trying to destabilise Venezuela as “crazy”. National Electoral Council announced municipal elections will be held 8 Dec.

- [“Venezuela’s election aftermath”](#), *Economist*, 11 May 2013.

**New** Crisis Group Latin America Briefing N°28, [Venezuela: A House Divided](#), 16 May 2013. Legal challenges to the close 14 April presidential election and the government’s reluctance to commit to a full review cast a shadow over the sustainability of the new administration in an already deeply polarised Venezuela.


## Middle East and North Africa

### Eastern Mediterranean

 **Israel/Palestine** Clashes erupted between Israelis and Palestinians over al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem after 40 Israelis 7 May ascended to holy esplanade; to avoid further escalation Israeli police 16 May denied tourists including Israeli Jews access to esplanade, but around 105 Israelis accessed site 27 May prompting further clashes; Arab League Sec Gen Nabil al-Araby 25 May urged UN take action to protect site. Israeli govt 9 May approved 296 additional housing units in West Bank settlement Beit El. Thousands protested against austerity measures in Israeli budget adopted by cabinet 14 May; budget not yet approved by Knesset. Plans to draft ultra-orthodox into army prompted mass protests in Jerusalem mid-May. At talks in Cairo Hamas and Fatah 14 May agreed to form unity govt in July 2013. Egypt 22 May reopened Rafah border crossing after Egyptian soldiers kidnapped in Sinai mid-May released. U.S. Sec State Kerry and UK FM Hague visited Israel, Palestinian territories, Jordan and Oman 20 May as part of efforts to revive peace process; speeches by Kerry, Presidents Peres and Abbas 27 May in support of negotiations and two-state solution prompted criticism from Hamas, elements in Israeli coalition.

- Nathan Thrall and Robert Blecher, [“Palestine’s Changing Politics”](#), *Foreign Policy*, 29 May 2013.
- [“Two-state solution to Israeli-Palestinian conflict slipping away, says Hague”](#), *Guardian*, 24 May 2013.


**New** Crisis Group Middle East Report N°142, [Buying Time? Money, Guns and Politics in the West Bank](#), 29 May 2013. The West Bank is experiencing rising instability and insecurity that palliative measures can help contain but can neither reverse nor end in the absence of a broad political settlement.

 **Lebanon** Hizbollah increased support for Syrian troops fighting rebels in Syrian city al-Qusayr near border with Lebanon: Hizbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah 25 May officially committed to fight against Syrian rebellion. At least 79 Hizbollah fighters killed in clashes with Syrian rebels 19-26 May. Germany 24 May backed UK efforts to add Hizbollah’s military wing to EU terrorist list. Syrian rebels mid-May fired more rockets into Hermel region and al-Qaa, no casualties reported. 30 killed and 200 wounded when renewed violence erupted between Sunni and Alawite residents in Tripoli 19 May. PM Tammam Salam continued consultations with political leaders to form cabinet and to agree on electoral

law; MPs 31 May extended parliament’s mandate to Nov 2014, delaying parliamentary elections. UNIFIL, Lebanese and Israeli military reps met 8 May to discuss Lebanese complaint regarding Israel’s withdrawal from northern village Ghaggar and allegation of Israeli violations along Blue line, 9 May vowed to maintain calm along border.


- [“Tripoli stuck in deadly spiral of violence”](#), *Daily Star*, 24 May 2013.

**New** Crisis Group Middle East Report N°141, [Too Close for Comfort: Syrians in Lebanon](#), 13 May 2013. As the Syrian conflict increasingly implicates and spills over into Lebanon, a priority for its government and international partners must be to tackle the refugee crisis, lest it ignite domestic conflict that a weak state and volatile region can ill afford.

 **Syria** Fears of wider regional conflict grew after Israeli jets 5 May targeted military base in Damascus reportedly housing Iranian missiles for Hizbollah, killing several in first major Israeli strike. Followed reported earlier strike on shipment of weapons headed for Lebanon. In response, President Assad and Hizbollah threatened to turn Golan Heights into “resistance front”. Opposition accused regime forces of massacre, killing at least 50 people in Baida 2 May. Fighting ongoing in al-Qusayr between Syrian rebels and govt troops backed by Hizbollah fighters. Regime forces 8 May retook strategic town Khirbet Ghazaleh after 2-month bombardment, reestablished control of supply route to Daraa. Rebel Yarmouk Martyrs’ Brigade 12 May freed 4 Filipino UN peacekeepers captured 5 days earlier near Golan Heights. U.S. and Russia 7 May agreed to convene a new peace conference in Geneva in June; Syrian govt 24 May agreed “in principle” to attend but opposition Syrian National Coalition (NC) 30 May threatened to boycott conference if Hizbollah and Iran keep “invading” Syria. NC failed to elect new leader during talks in Istanbul. UNGA 15 May adopted resolution condemning ongoing violence in Syria; 31 May added militant group Jabhat al-Nusra to sanctions list due to al-Qaeda ties. EU 27 May lifted arms embargo on Syria; EU foreign policy chief Ashton said no current plans to deliver arms. Russia 28 May said it would honour contract to deliver S-300 anti-aircraft missile system to Syrian govt; Israel suggested it could strike any Russian arms shipment to Syria.

- [“Syrian war seen dragging on for years”](#), Reuters, 31 May 2013.

### Gulf

 **Bahrain** Political climate deteriorated during month: opposition suspended its participation in National Dialogue for 2 weeks in protest against 17 May security forces’ raid on house of senior Shiite cleric Issa Qassem, reiterated its initial demands including media access, adequate representation of opposition. Raid sparked mass protest 24 May. Al-Wifaq general secretary 12 May called for intensifying protests in run up to 2014 polls. 7 police wounded in home-made bomb attack in Bani Jamri 29 May. Parliament 8 May proposed draft law on rallies which would require organisers to deposit \$53,000 to gain licence to demonstrate. King 10 May defended previous reforms, said “terrorists” in country “losing steam”. Govt 27 May banned political groups from contact with Hizbollah. Repression continued including: 28 May arrest of 22 for role in anti-govt protests; 6 Twitter users sentenced to one year’s jail for remarks against king; man sentenced to 3 months’ jail for hanging flag from truck during 2011 protest.

- [“Iran decries Bahrain move to ban contact with Hezbollah”](#), Al-Arabiya, 28 May 2013.

➤ **Iran** IAEA-Iran nuclear talks 15 May failed as govt again refused IAEA access to nuclear sites. Iranian chief negotiator Saeed Jalili 16 May met with EU foreign policy chief Ashton, said Iran ready for nuclear talks with P5+1. IAEA quarterly report 23 May said Iran installed almost 700 advanced centrifuges in Natanz nuclear plant, compared to 180 in Feb; IR-40 reactor, which could provide second path to nuclear weapons through plutonium reprocessing, nearing completion. U.S. Congress 9 May imposed new sanctions on 4 Iranian companies; bill introduced 8 May proposed blocking Iran access to some \$100bn in overseas banks. U.S. Treasury Dept 30 May announced exemptions from sanctions for U.S. companies supplying “Iranian people with communications equipment to communicate among themselves and with the outside world”. Iran 19 May executed two individuals accused of being Mossad and CIA agents. List of 8 presidential candidates approved by Guardian Council for 14 June elections published 21 May, all close allies of Supreme Leader Khamenei. President Ahmadinejad 22 May said he will appeal exclusion of his Chief of Staff Esfandiar Rahim Mashaei from final list; exclusion of former president Rafsanjani also controversial. Iranian General Ahmad Reza Pourdastan 5 May said Iran ready to offer training support to Syrian army.

- Ali Vaez, “Iran’s Nuclear Program and the Sanctions Siege”, Arms Control Association, 6 May 2013.
- “Iran’s election: a domesticated affair that could make waves far from home”, *Guardian*, 22 May 2013.

➤ **Iraq** Ongoing political crisis saw rising violence, with prospects of political breakthrough decreasing as PM Maliki and parliamentary speaker Osama al-Nijaifi continued to trade accusations, branches of govt failed to reach power-sharing agreement. Security continued to deteriorate following govt’s April deadly crackdown on Sunni protests, with sectarian attacks and bombings killing over 1,000 in May, deadliest month in 5 years. Armed forces 25 May launched military operation in west, reportedly to tackle dangers of Syrian conflict spillover. Kurdish ministers 3 May returned to cabinet following almost two-month boycott.

- “Iraq’s future uncertain amid political turmoil”, *Al-Monitor*, 24 May 2013.

➤ **Jordan** UN 23 May confirmed Jordan now hosting nearly 500,000 registered Syrian refugees; World Bank pledged \$150mn loan, Russia earmarked \$3.5mn through UNHCR to help with influx. Parliament 8 May called on govt to expel Israeli ambassador, recall Jordan’s ambassador from Tel Aviv, in protest at dispute over al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem (see Israel/Palestine).

- “World Bank boosts funds for Syria refugees”, *Reuters*, 21 May 2013.

➤ **Saudi Arabia** State media reported 10 additional suspects in Iranian spy ring arrested.

- “Saudi Arabia arrests 10 Iran-spy suspects”, *AFP*, 21 May 2013.

➤ **Yemen** Southern separatist movement Hiraak staged large pro-separation demonstrations in southern city Aden 21, 22 May. Police 27 May forcibly dispersed protesters attempting to storm hotel in Aden where National Dialogue meeting being held, 5 wounded. Hundreds staged sit-in outside prosecutor’s office in Sanaa 28 May demanding release of detainees arrested for participation in 2011 uprising. Suspected U.S. drone 27 May killed 2 militants outside Radda, Bayda province; reported drone strike killed at least 4 militants 18 May in Abyan governorate. Gunmen 27 May kidnapped 2 South Africans from Taiz prompting demonstrations 30 May; 3 journalists kidnapped 16 May by local tribesman in Maarib, later

released. Maarib tribesmen 11, 19, 27 May attacked electrical grid causing severe power outages; main export pipeline sabotaged 24 May in Maarib province. Attacks on security officials continued: gunmen 26 May shot dead security official in Hadhramawt, east; 2 soldiers killed 25 May by roadside bomb in Hadhramawt; 3 airforce pilots shot dead 8 May in Lahj province. Media 30 May reported Huthi rebels participating in Syrian conflict.

- “Yemen seeks to answer southern grievances”, *Financial Times*, 24 May 2013.

## North Africa

➤ **Algeria** Security forces 8 May killed 4 suspected terrorists in Tizi Ouzou, 3 in Bouhmidane region; 26 May violently dispersed youths protesting against unemployment near PM’s office. Military operations against AQIM in Bouira 14 May left 3 soldiers dead. Bomb attack near Boumerdès 8 May left 2 dead, several injured. Govt 15 May deployed 6,000 troops to Tunisia border to “prevent infiltration of armed Islamist groups”. Court 5 May sentenced 2 Islamists for complicity in murder and rape of some 500 people between 1996 and 2004; court 20 May sentenced 14 members of Malian National Movement for Liberation of Azawad (MNL) for arms trafficking, entering illegally. Political uncertainty related to President Bouteflika’s health since hospitalisation in Paris in April continued; govt 19 May censored *Mon Journal* and *Djaridati* newspapers for attempting to report on president’s “coma”; press denounced lack of transparency from govt. Bouteflika transferred to Hôpital des Invalides 21 May, prompting speculation that his condition has worsened. Socialist Forces Front leader Hocine Aït Ahmed 24 May announced resignation.

- “Algeria censors dailies over Bouteflika ‘coma’ reports”, *AFP*, 19 May 2013.

➤ **Egypt** Political stalemate between President Morsi’s administration and opponents continued. Morsi 7 May reshuffled cabinet replacing 9 ministers, raising number of officials affiliated with his Freedom and Justice Party from 8 to 10; prompted criticism from opposition National Salvation Front, which had refused to participate in new cabinet unless PM Qandil is replaced. Anti-govt protests continue, though much reduced in number and frequency: young activist group launched “Rebellion” campaign aimed at gathering 15mn signatures in petition to oust Morsi. Tensions in Sinai ongoing; armed group 16 May abducted 7 security officers, called for release of jailed militants; army 22 May freed officers. Supreme Constitutional Court (SCC) 25 May rejected draft elections law and demanded right to vote be given to army and police; some MPs threatened to sue SCC. No date yet set for parliamentary elections. Ethiopia’s diversion of Nile waters met with protests (see Ethiopia).

- “Egypt announces cabinet reshuffle”, *Al Jazeera*, 7 May 2013.

➤ **Libya** General National Congress (GNC) 5 May passed controversial and sweeping “political isolation” law following severe pressure from militias, sparking protests in major cities; law prohibits high-ranking Qadhafi-era officials from political office for decade. Implementation of law expected to result in major cabinet reshuffle, replacement of some 30 GNC members; GNC president and former Qadhafi-era diplomat Mohammed Magharief resigned 28 May. New interior minister Mohammed al-Sheikh took office 30



May following resignation of Ashour Shwayel. 4 killed, 20 injured 13 May in explosion at Benghazi hospital; govt said explosion accident but residents blamed govt for failing to protect city and take action against militias. Govt forces 22 May reportedly arrested armed group in Benghazi, seized 22 anti-tank mines. Militia 26 May reportedly attacked gas complex near Zwara in West. Interior Affairs Minister Omar al-Khadraoui 27 May announced new security plan for foreign embassies following increased threats. ICC 31 May rejected Libya's admissibility challenge in Saif al-Islam Qadhafi case, said Libya not ready to conduct trial.

- "Why Libya's 'isolation law' threatens progress", CNN, 21 May 2013.

➤ **Mauritania** Court 13 May sentenced Canadian citizen Aaron Yoon to 10 years' prison for links with terrorist group responsible for Jan 2013 In Amenas hostage crisis. Court 14 May sentenced gendarme convicted of spying for al-Qaeda to 10 years' hard labour. Mali Islamist rebel group Ansar Dine spokesman surrendered to authorities 18 May.

- "L'un des porte-parole d'Ansar Dine se serait rendu", RFI, 20 May 2013.

➤ **Morocco** Istiqlal party 11 May announced decision to withdraw from coalition govt, ostensibly over PM Benkirane's inability to take into consideration "grave socio-economic crisis". King Mohamed VI appeared to have convinced Istiqlal to provisionally remain in govt. Leftist Socialist Union of Popular Forces (USFP), Labour Party and Socialist Party 22 May joined forces citing aim of combating spread of conservative ideology. Security forces arrested 8 Islamists suspected of belonging to al-Mouahidoun and at-Tawhid terrorist groups that allegedly sent jihadis to Mali; trial began 14 May. Authorities continued vigorous crackdown on 20 February movement and unemployed graduate protests; one protester critically wounded 29 May.

- "L'Istiqlal claque la porte du gouvernement Benkirane", *Jeune Afrique*, 12 May 2013.

➤ **Tunisia** Tensions between An-Nahda govt and Salafi group Ansar al-Sharia increased. Ansar al-Sharia 20 May staged banned rally; 1 killed, 15 wounded, 274 arrested in clashes with police in Tunis and Kairouan. Group's annual meeting scheduled for 19 May banned by govt; PM Larayedh 19 May called group "illegal", said group "involved in terrorism". Troops deployed 1 May to Mount Chaambi region to hunt al-Qaeda-affiliated group believed responsible for increase in landmines in area; 12 security officers reportedly injured 6 May by landmines; pursuit of another jihadist group in the northern Kef region, near Algerian border, ongoing.

- "National dialogue rejects violence", Magharebia, 21 May 2013.

➤ **Western Sahara** Pro-independence rallies held almost daily following April renewal of MINURSO peacekeeping mandate, especially in Laâyoune, Smara and Boujdour. Amnesty International 23 May condemned authorities' use of "excessive force" to quell protests and continued targeting of Sahrawi human rights defenders and self-determination advocates. MINURSO 17 May discharged Egyptian soldier accused of inciting young Sahrawis from Tindouf to "claim their rights".

- "Sahara. Tension maximale", *Tel Quel*, 13 May 2013.

## Crisis Group Offices

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| <b>Brussels</b>   | brussels@crisisgroup.org<br>+32 2 502 9038    |
| <b>Washington</b> | washington@crisisgroup.org<br>+1 202 785 1601 |
| <b>New York</b>   | newyork@crisisgroup.org<br>+1 212 813 0820    |

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