

123 1 November 2013

October 2013 Trends



Deteriorated Situations

Bangladesh (6)
Kashmir (6)
Mozambique (3)



Improved Situations



Unchanged Situations

Afghanistan (5), Algeria (11), Armenia (8), Azerbaijan (8), Bahrain (10), Bolivia (9), Bosnia (7), Burundi (2), Cameroon (2), Central African Republic (2), Chad (2), China/Japan (5), Colombia (9), Côte d'Ivoire (3), Cyprus (9), DR Congo (2), Egypt (11), Georgia (8), Guatemala (9), Guinea (4), Guinea-Bissau (4), India (non-Kashmir) (6), Indonesia (7), Iran (11), Iraq (11), Israel-Palestine (10), Kazakhstan (4), Kenya (2), Korean Peninsula (5), Kosovo (8), Kyrgyzstan (5), Lebanon (10), Liberia (4), Libya (12), Madagascar (3), Mali (4), Mauritania (12), Mexico (9), Myanmar (7), Nagorno-Karabakh (Azerbaijan) (8), Nepal (6), Niger (4), Nigeria (4), North Caucasus (Russia) (8), Pakistan (6), Philippines (7), Rwanda (2), Saudi Arabia (11), Somalia (2), South Sudan (3), Sri Lanka (6), Sudan (3), Syria (10), Tajikistan (5), Thailand (7), Tunisia (12), Turkey (9), Turkmenistan (5), Uganda (3), Uzbekistan (5), Venezuela (10), Western Sahara (12), Yemen (11), Zimbabwe (3)

November 2013 Watchlist



Conflict Risk Alerts



Conflict Resolution Opportunities

CrisisWatch

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

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

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Africa

Central Africa

➡ **Burundi** At least 5 wounded 6 Oct in street clashes in Gihanga between opposition Movement for Solidarity and Democracy (MSD) supporters and ruling CNDD-FDD “Imbonerakure” youth wing; opposition, civil society expressed concern Imbonerakure becoming CNDD-FDD militia. VP Sinunguruza (UPRONA) resigned 14 Oct; President Nkurunziza 16 Oct appointed Bernard Busokoza (UPRONA) as replacement despite discontent within CNDD-FDD over his alleged role in 1993 coup. Journalist Hassan Ruvakuki, jailed on terrorism charges, granted conditional release 22 Oct. Police 6 Oct arrested 11 in Bujumbura in terrorist crackdown following Nairobi Westgate mall attack.

- [“Burundi reporter, previously jailed for life, resumes work”](#), AFP, 22 Oct. 2013.

➡ **Cameroon** Ruling People’s Democratic Movement (CPDM) won 148 of 180 seats in 30 Sept legislative elections, gained control of 305 of 360 councils. Boko Haram militants 28 Oct attacked military checkpoint on Bama-Banki road close to Nigerian border, 4 security operatives killed.

- [“Le parti du président Biya grand vainqueur des législatives”](#), *Jeune Afrique*, 17 Oct. 2013.

➡ **Central African Republic** Violence deepened throughout month. MSF reported over 30,000 fled clashes between ex-Seleka rebels and armed groups in NW. Rebels 11 Oct clashed with miners in Garga killing several; 8 Oct clashed with self-defence groups leaving tens dead; 11 Oct attacked security forces. 6 killed 11 Oct in clashes between rebels and armed groups in Bomboro, south of Bangui. At least 5 killed 5 Oct in intercommunal clashes in Bangassou in east. At least 12 killed 26 Oct in clashes between Seleka and self-defence groups in Bouar, NW. UNSC 29 Oct approved deployment of 560 additional peacekeepers including some 250 to protect UN peacebuilding office (BINUCA); UN 10 Oct reinforced mandate and scope of BINUCA, in particular human rights component, supported establishment of AU stabilisation mission (MISCA). Visiting French FM 13 Oct said France would increase troop presence by year-end; French President Hollande 14 Oct repeated warning CAR insecurity could destabilise wider region. Regional leaders meeting at ECCAS summit in Chad 25 Oct called for inclusive national conference in CAR, called on CAR authorities to follow stabilisation strategy drafted by ECCAS steering committee; appointed Cameroonian Martin Tumenta as head of new MISCA force. Former CAR PM Dologuélé 25 Oct created new political party “Union pour le Renouveau Centrafricain” (URCA).

- [“Anarchy, violence grip Central African Republic”](#), *Deutsche Welle*, 18 Oct. 2013.

➡ **Chad** Newspaper editor Samory Ngaradoubé arrested 14 Oct, accused of spreading malicious rumours after publishing article on mutiny in Baida military camp following Sept defection of Chadian peacekeepers in Mali. 2 Chadian peacekeepers killed 23 Oct in suicide attack in Tessalit, Mali. Amnesty International accused govt of violently repressing critics, opposition.

- [“Amnesty: hundreds of illegal detentions in Chad”](#), *Deutsche Welle*, 25 Oct. 2013.

➡ **DR Congo** Heavy fighting between govt forces and M23 rebels in east resumed 25 Oct after peace talks suspended, reportedly over disagreement on amnesties for M23 rebels. Congolese army and UN forces quickly took control of M23 strongholds Kiwanja and Rutshuru 27 Oct, 1 peacekeeper killed by M23; last M23 stronghold Bunagana captured by govt troops 31 Oct; UN said M23 in disarray. U.S. and UN envoys mid-month attended peace talks where consensus reached on 8 of 12 articles of agreement including release of political prisoners, end of M23 rebel movement and resettlement of refugees and IDPs; no agreement reached on DDR or immunity for M23. Mayi Mayi attacks in east killed at least 34; UN condemned “unimaginable atrocities”. National dialogue on crisis in east ended late Sept without major incident. 15 UNSC representatives visited President Kagame and DRC President Kabila, 7 Oct said regional states to determine peace in DRC.

- [“DR Congo M23 rebels ‘all but finished’, says UN”](#), BBC, 29 Oct. 2013.

➡ **Rwanda** Govt late-Oct said mortar shells from eastern DRC fell on territory, warned of retaliation. U.S. 3 Oct blocked military assistance to Rwanda on basis of use of child soldiers by DRC M23 rebel group; MONUSCO 9 Oct said M23 recruiting child soldiers in Rwanda; govt said claims “ludicrous”.

- [“Rwanda warns DRC of deadly retaliation”](#), Al Jazeera, 26 Oct. 2013.

Horn of Africa

➡ **Kenya** Fears of violent backlash against Somali and Muslim communities following Sept al-Shabaab attack on Westgate mall grew; radical Muslim cleric Sheikh Ibrahim Rogo and 3 others killed by gunmen in Mombasa 3 Oct; Rogo’s supporters claimed shooting was reprisal by Kenyan security forces. Muslim youths 4 Oct clashed with police in Mombasa, 4 killed and church set on fire. Interior Minister Joseph Ole Lenku 25 Oct criticised Dadaab refugee camp near Somalia border, echoing sentiments of Kenyan Parliamentary Committee on Defence which 30 Sept called for closure, claimed camp “a nursery for terrorists”. Military 31 Oct bombed al-Shabaab camp in Somalia (see Somalia). AU leaders 22 Oct requested UNSC defer ICC trials of President Kenyatta and VP Ruto, AU also called for immunity for serving heads of state; trial of Kenyatta delayed from 12 Nov to 5 Feb 2014.

- [“Kenya calls for Somalis to leave world’s largest refugee camp”](#), Al Jazeera, 25 Oct. 2013.

➡ **Somalia** U.S. special forces 5 Oct raided home of al-Shabaab commander Abdulkadir “Ikrima” in Barawe, Lower Shabelle region, failed to capture him. U.S. drone strike 28 Oct killed 2 senior al-Shabaab members in Middle Juba region. Targeted bombing by Kenyan military 31 Oct destroyed al-Shabaab training camp in Dinsoor region, estimated 300 killed. Suicide bomb targeting Ethiopian troops killed at least 17 including 4 Ethiopian soldiers, wounded over 30 in Beledweyne 19 Oct. AU 12 Oct agreed to increase AMISOM troops by 6,000; decision awaiting UNSC approval. Al-Shabaab clashes with govt/AMISOM forces continued. Govt 7 Oct declared all oil exploration permits signed with Puntland and Somaliland regions invalid, companies should negotiate with govt.

- EJ Hogendoorn, [“What Next for Al-Shabaab?”](#), CNN, 15 Oct. 2013.

- [“African Union backs Peace and Security Council call for more AMISOM troops”](#), Garowe Online, 15 Oct. 2013.

➡ **South Sudan** Media reported rumours rebel leader David Yau Yau in talks with govt; Murle elders and former rebels who have already accepted President Kiir's amnesty offer reportedly serving as facilitators. Nearly 80 reportedly killed in rebel attack in Jonglei state mid-month. Govt continued to encourage return of displaced Ngok Dinka to Abyei, pressured AU to go ahead with proposed referendum or refer case to UNSC; Ngok Dinka tribe held unilateral referendum, voted to join S Sudan.

- Jerome Tubiana, "Sudan and South Sudan Inch Toward War", *Foreign Affairs*, 8 Oct. 2013.
- "S Sudan's Dinka hold unilateral vote on Abyei", Al Jazeera, 28 Oct. 2013.

➡ **Sudan** Protests against govt continued early-month despite use of tear gas to disperse demonstrators; 7 university professors arrested late-Oct in crackdown. Ghazi al-Attabani, former adviser to ruling National Congress Party (NCP) and ex-majority leader in parliament, 26 Oct announced defection from NCP, intention to form new party. President Bashir 28 Oct referred to "reform and change" at opening of new parliamentary session. Bashir 22 Oct met with S Sudan President Kiir in Juba to discuss bilateral issues including Abyei dispute; some concessions but no overall breakthrough. AU High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) mandate extended to Dec 2014 and to whole Horn of Africa. AUHIP-proposed referendum on Abyei slated for Oct unilaterally undertaken by local Ngok Dinka community despite warnings from AU. AU 27 Oct condemned Sudan govt for preventing planned AU visit to Abyei. Govt 31 Oct condemned renewed U.S. sanctions.

- Cedric Barnes, "Sudan: Riots, Reforms, and a Divided Regime", *The African Peacebuilding Agenda*, 11 Oct. 2013.
- "Is Sudan on the brink of another civil war?", Al Jazeera, 27 Oct. 2013.

➡ **Uganda** President Museveni 30 Sept ordered enquiry into alleged theft and mismanagement of military supplies by UPDF soldiers deployed in Somalia. Police raised terror alert following warnings of imminent attack following Sept al-Shabaab attack on Westgate Mall in Kenya.

- "Uganda raises security alert to maximum", Al Jazeera, 19 Oct. 2013.

Southern Africa

➡ **Madagascar** 25 Oct presidential elections deemed free and fair by SADC, EU and local observers; preliminary results show ally of ousted president Ravalomanana, Jean-Louis Robinson, with early lead with 27% of votes; main rival Hery Rajaonarimampianina, close to transitional president Rajoelina, just over 15%; run-off likely to be held in Dec. Electoral Commission head 28 Oct indicated provisional results will be available 8 Nov. Reported incidents include: district chief killed at polling station in southern town Benenitra; 1 kidnapped from voting site in Bezaha; polling station burned down in northern district Tsaratanana. Security forces 4 Oct imposed curfew on Nosy Be island after mob lynched 3, including 2 Europeans, suspected of killing child and organ trafficking; 35 arrested.

- Piers Pigou and Brian Klaas, "Madagascar's Back on Track – Destination Unknown", *City Press*, 6 Oct. 2013.
- "Présidentielle malgache: une bataille électorale par procuration", *RFI*, 22 Oct. 2013.

➡ **Mozambique** RENAMO 21 Oct said it is abandoning 1992 peace accord with ruling FRELIMO party that ended country's 15-year-long civil war, prompting fears of return to violence. RENAMO 18 Oct ambushed army in Sofala killing 7 soldiers; army retaliated, 21 Oct took over RENAMO Gorongosa base. U.S. 22 Oct urged parties to "move back from brink", prevent escalation; 31 Oct condemned "reprehensible attacks" on civilians, expressed concern over escalating violence. RENAMO 26 Oct ambushed passenger minibus in central Sofala province, killing 1 and injuring 10. 29 Oct clash between army and RENAMO in Sofala resulted in deaths of 17 soldiers, 41 RENAMO rebels; 29 Oct RENAMO attack in Niassa province left 1 dead; reports of 12 kidnapped. President Guebuza 30 Oct said country "not going back to war". Tens of thousands marched 31 Oct in Maputo, Beira, Quelimane to protest against threat of armed conflict and recent spate of kidnappings by criminal gangs.

- "Mozambique faces uncertainty as Renamo ends 1992 peace pact", *Reuters*, 21 Oct. 2013.

➡ **Zimbabwe** Amid mounting economic problems in aftermath of July election, including food shortages, high unemployment, ZANU-PF blaming Western sanctions while opposition and business point to uncertainty and unclear govt policies undermining confidence. President Mugabe's ZANU-PF 23 Oct unveiled 5-year economic plan, Zimbabwe Agenda for Socio-Economic Transformation (ZIMASET). ZANU-PF held Provincial Executive Committee elections late Oct amid intense competition between 2 main factions led by justice minister Mnangagwa and VP Mujuru; polls will be decisive in electing party leadership at Dec elective congress. MDC-T motion in parliament to debate July elections blocked by ZANU-PF 16 Oct. MDC objected to ZANU-PF motion for parliament to send message to international community to remove remaining sanctions. MDC-T 27 Oct revealed dossier which it says contains evidence that ZANU-PF rigged July elections.

- Trevor Maisiri, "Zim's Elusive Reconstruction Agenda", *Zimbabwe Independent*, 29 Oct. 2013.
- "Mugabe unveils five-year plan to save Zimbabwe economy", *Business Day Live*, 23 Oct. 2013.

West Africa

➡ **Côte d'Ivoire** Preparations for 2015 presidential elections began but agreement on election mechanics still lacking. Democratic Party of Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI)'s 12th congress began 3 Oct; former PM Konan-Bédié re-elected head of party. President Ouattara 19 Oct called on estimated 58,000 refugees in Liberia to return home; same day signed peace and security agreement with Liberian President Sirleaf-Johnson. 22 Oct shoot-out in Yopougon military garrison prompted rumours of mutiny. ICC 1 Oct confirmed pending arrest warrant for Charles Blé Goudé, minister under former president Gbagbo and leader of Young Patriots. ICC 29 Oct rejected appeal by former president Gbagbo, said he must remain in detention in The Hague pending possible trial on charges of crimes against humanity. International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) 22 Oct published report criticising govt for lack of progress on impunity, notably justice ministry's decision not to renew mandate of special investigation cell due to expire in Dec.

- Rinaldo Depagne, "Côte D'Ivoire: a Need for Facilitation", *The African Peacebuilding Agenda*, 21 Oct. 2013.
- "Côte d'Ivoire sees sharp rise in banditry", *IRIN*, 16 Oct. 2013.

➡ **Guinea** Controversy over legislative elections continued as opposition 4 Oct called for annulment of 28 Sept vote in which ruling RPG and small allies were expected to have narrow majority. Electoral commission (CENI) 18 Oct released provisional results stating 8.3% of voting stations rejected for various reasons. RPG and international partners insisted opposition follow established appeal procedures and go to Supreme Court. International partners pressed Supreme Court to pay special attention to 8 problematic districts. Opposition 14 Oct preparing appeals to Supreme Court, mentioned 14 other problematic districts.

- Vincent Foucher, [“Guinea: Salvaging \(Once Again\) the Elections in Guinea?”](#), AllAfrica, 8 Oct. 2013.
- [“Security Council urges restraint, calm ahead of election certification”](#), UN News, 25 Oct. 2013.

➡ **Guinea-Bissau** UN SRSG José Ramos-Horta 1 Oct said country nearly a failed state, insistence on ethnic balance within armed forces “not realistic”. ECOWAS 9 Oct announced it will provide \$12mn of \$19.4mn needed to finance upcoming general elections. Following 17 Oct meeting on elections with authorities, diplomats and political parties, Ramos-Horta confirmed polls likely to be delayed until early 2014; ECOWAS late Oct reiterated preference for elections before Dec 2013. Protesters 8 Oct attacked Nigerian embassy, lynched Nigerian national and called for departure of ECOWAS force following rumours of Nigerian residents’ involvement in human organ trafficking; Nigerian ambassador accused local media of spreading false rumours. Security forces enacted reprisals against protesters following day, 20 arrested.

- [“A um mês das eleições gerais, Guiné-Bissau aguarda marcação de nova data”](#), LUSA, 24 Oct. 2013.

➡ **Liberia** UN SRSG Karen Landgren 3 Oct reported police law-enforcement capabilities still weak, progress in fight against corruption slow; police called for international donor support to reinforce logistical capabilities. Anti-Corruption Commission (LACC) 6 Oct published list of 22 officials who have “deliberately refused to cooperate” including defence minister Brownie Samukai, Police Director Chris Massaquoi. Protesters taking part in “Ellen Step Down” campaign, including campaign leader Mulbah Morlu, Vice-Chairman of Congress for Democratic Change, arrested 9 Oct for planning mass protest, charged with criminal conspiracy, sedition.

- [“Liberian officials accused of resisting anti-corruption probe”](#), VOA, 8 Oct. 2013.

➡ **Mali** Security in north deteriorated: first-ever suicide attack on MINUSMA peacekeepers 23 Oct near Tessalit killed 7; 1 killed in MUJAO mortar attacks on Gao 7 Oct. Demonstrators gathered in Gao 10 Oct to protest insecurity, weak state presence. France, MINUSMA, Malian army 24 Oct launched joint military operation “Hydre” “to avoid revival of terrorist movements” in north. Govt 2 Oct released 23 war prisoners; MNLA 5 Oct announced 3 main armed groups resumed participation in peace talks; IBK 29 Oct lifted arrest warrants against 4 Tuareg leaders in name of “national reconciliation”. Political situation in Bamako remained tense: govt 3 Oct launched Operation Saniya to retake control of barracks in Kati, following late Sept mutiny; bodies of 4 soldiers, including General Sanogo’s head of security, found at barracks; court 31 Oct summoned Sanogo over alleged violence involving men under his command.

- Jean-Hervé Jezequel and Jonathan Prentice, [“The War in Mali is Not Yet Won”](#), The African Peacebuilding Agenda, 7 Oct. 2013.
- [“UN troops from Chad killed in Mali’s Tessalit town”](#), BBC, 23 Oct. 2013.

➡ **Niger** Main political parties remain divided over participation in new national unity govt; new parliament opened 4 Oct but composition of presidential majority remains unclear. Main opposition leaders, including current National Assembly president Hama Amadou, 5 Oct formed coalition Republican Alliance for Democracy and Reconciliation (ARDR). Demonstrators 15 Oct gathered in Arlit to protest French Mining Company Areva’s lack of investments and impact on environment. AQIM 29 Oct released 4 French hostages abducted 2010, allegedly in return for immunity for Mali Ansar Dine leader Iyad ag Ghali. At least 87 migrants found dead near Algerian border 30 Oct.

- [“La fronde de l’opposition contre le président Issoufou”](#), RFI, 6 Oct. 2013.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°208, [Niger: Another Weak Link in the Sahel?](#), 19 Sept. 2013.

➡ **Nigeria** Authorities reported continuing gains in military operations against Islamist sect Boko Haram (BH) including 40 suspected insurgents reportedly killed 13 Oct near Bama, Borno State, more than 70 BH members killed during military operation in Borno State 24-25 Oct. UNHCR 29 Oct said violence in north forced some 10,000 to flee to neighbouring states. BH attacks continued: attack on Damaturu, Yobe State, 23 Oct, and fight with military left 128 dead including 95 suspected insurgents, 23 soldiers, 8 police. Video of man claiming to be BH leader Abubakar Shekau surfaced 8 Oct, man vowed to continue fight until govt “of Allah, by Allah and for Allah” established. Suspected Fulani herds-men 12 Oct attacked several communities in Benue State, killing 21; over 20 killed 10 Oct in Barkin Ladi, Plateau state by unknown attackers; more than 10 killed 29 Oct in communal clash in Ukhuru, Edo State. Factional crisis within ruling People’s Democratic Party (PDP) deepened; reconciliation meeting between President Jonathan and leaders of splinter group (nPDP) planned for 7 Oct did not happen; govt 12 Oct sealed off nPDP temporary secretariat in Abuja; Federal High Court 18 Oct barred nPDP from opening parallel offices across country, barred electoral commission from recognising or dealing with group. nPDP leaders opened talks with main opposition All Progressives Congress.

- [“Nigeria’s bitter battle with Boko Haram”](#), Deutsche Welle, 24 Oct. 2013.

Asia

Central Asia

➡ **Kazakhstan** President Nazarbayev 16 Oct appointed longstanding ally and former director-general of UN Geneva office Kassym-Jomart Tokayev as Senate chairman, sparking discussion on Nazarbayev’s still undisclosed succession plan. Nazarbayev 2 Oct approved new counter-terrorism strategy, focused on domestic prevention.

- Deirdre Tynan, [“In the End is the Beginning: Kazakhstan After Nazarbayev”](#), Across Eurasia, 8 Oct. 2013.
- [“Diplomat Tokayev returns to Kazakh politics as Senate head”](#), Reuters, 16 Oct. 2013.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°250, [Kazakhstan: Waiting for Change](#), 30 Sept. 2013.

➡ **Kyrgyzstan** Violent protests demanding nationalisation of mines continued, with 3 attacks on British-, Chinese- and Australian-held mines. During 7 Oct protests at Kumtor gold mine, local governor kidnapped for several hours; 400 protesters 8 Oct barricaded highway; 10 charged with hostage-taking. President Atambayev described protests as “banditry”, “terrorism”. Parliament 23 Oct rejected Sept deal between govt and Canada-listed Centerra Gold, demanded new deal to raise Kyrgyz ownership to 67%. U.S. confirmed it will vacate Manas airbase July 2014, shifting logistical hub for Afghanistan withdrawal to airbase in Romania.

- “Kyrgyzstan presses for 67 pct share in Kumtor gold venture”, Reuters, 23 Oct. 2013.

➡ **Tajikistan** Main opposition candidate Oynihol Bobonazarova 11 Oct dropped out of 6 Nov presidential elections after narrowly missing 210,000 signatures required to register as candidate; said campaign subject to pressure, harassment from authorities, police, media. Parliament 1 Oct ratified agreement with Russia to extend Russia’s 201st military base until 2042, in return for duty-free oil imports from Russia, preferential treatment for Tajik migrant workers, military assistance. Govt also began negotiations with Russia on use of Ayni airbase. Rakhmon 21 Oct held talks with Afghan President Karzai on security, energy cooperation, creating Tajikistan-Afghanistan-Turkmenistan railway line.

- “Afghan neighbour Tajikistan ratifies base deal with Russia”, Reuters, 1 Oct. 2013.

➡ **Turkmenistan** Rights groups 2 Oct called on govt to release information about prisoners arrested for alleged participation in 2002 coup attempt against former President Niyazov, including former FM Shikhmuradov; campaign supported by U.S.. Govt 5 Oct announced start of campaign for Dec parliamentary elections; elections will for first time feature 2 parties, but 2nd party set up under orders of President Berdymukhamedov. Media report OSCE, EU and CIS to send observers. EU Special Envoy Patricia Flor 3 Oct met Berdymukhamedov during Central Asia Border Security Initiative conference, said EU continues to support security, energy, trade cooperation.

- “Prove they are alive”, Civic Solidarity Platform, 7 Oct. 2013.

➡ **Uzbekistan** Amid discussions over President Karimov’s succession after Dec 2014 elections, president’s daughters Lola and Gulnara Karimova engaged in public spat. Karimov’s nephew Akbarali Abdullaev arrested for tax fraud, corruption, organised crime. Tashkent reportedly in talks with Taliban to allow them to open office in country. Local media reported Uzbekistan secured \$1bn in cotton sales this year; Walk Free Foundation index on slavery ranked Uzbekistan as having second highest prevalence of slavery in world during cotton harvesting season. UN Committee Against Torture 30 Oct expressed concern over reports of widespread torture in Uzbekistan.

- “Uzbek cotton-picking claims eighth victim”, RFE/RL, 24 Oct. 2013.

North East Asia

➡ **China/Japan** Beijing denied reports that China sent senior foreign ministry official to Japan for secret talks early Oct to repair frayed bilateral ties, though confirmed countries’ diplomats maintain communications; Japanese govt spokesman acknowledged coun-

tries maintained “dialogues and communications at various levels”. Following Sept meeting between Japanese PM Abe and Chinese President Xi at G20 summit, China declined second meeting at early Oct APEC summit in Bali. U.S. and Japan 3 Oct agreed to modernise defence alliance for first time in 16 years, citing growing concerns about DPRK’s nuclear program and other threats. Citing “increasingly insecure environment” PM Abe in speech to parliament 15 Oct proposed establishing security council within his office, and plans to reinterpret Article 9 of constitution to allow Japanese troops to fight when country’s allies are attacked; 26 Oct said Japan will stand up to China. Chinese analysts criticised Abe’s “aggressive” stance. Parliament 22 Oct approved plan allowing for interception of foreign drones in Japanese airspace. Chinese defence ministry 26 Oct said shooting down of Chinese drones would be seen as an act of war. China summoned Japanese ambassador in Beijing to express anger after over 100 Japanese MPs 17 Oct visited Yasukuni Shrine honouring WWII dead including war criminals; PM Abe refrained from visiting shrine, but made offering and expressed regret that he was unable to make trip; aide told media he is likely to visit before year-end.

- “Japan’s Abe likely to visit Yasukuni shrine by the end of year: aide”, Reuters, 20 Oct. 2013.

➡ **Korean Peninsula** U.S. and ROK 2 Oct signed tailored deterrence agreement during annual Security Consultative Meeting reaffirming military alliance; DPRK reacted putting army on “high alert”. Seoul 1 Oct staged largest military parade in decades, displaying recently deployed ballistic and cruise missiles; President Park spoke of “very grave” threat from DPRK. ROK, U.S. and Japan 10-11 Oct held combined naval drill; Pyongyang criticised as highly provocative. At “1.5-track diplomacy” meeting between DPRK officials and U.S. experts in London 1-2 Oct, Pyongyang stressed desire to return to six-party talks. China and ROK 21 Oct announced renewed bilateral cooperation amid growing nuclear threats from Pyongyang. Pyongyang 22 Oct claimed U.S. openly threatening DPRK, warned it could react with war. ROK and DPRK 23 Oct signed follow-up deal covering operation of Kaesong Industrial Complex. DPRK Foreign Ministry 24 Oct said country will not take steps towards nuclear disarmament. Increased activity reported at main underground nuclear test site Punggye-ri in NE. Pyongyang 25 Oct released 6 S Korean detainees.

- “South Korea, U.S. sign new pact to deter North Korea nuclear threat”, Reuters, 2 Oct. 2013.

South Asia

➡ **Afghanistan** Independent Election Commission 22 Oct announced 16 of 27 presidential candidates disqualified. U.S. Sec State Kerry visited 11 Oct, discussed with President Karzai bilateral security agreement setting out plan for some U.S. troops to remain after 2014 NATO withdrawal; agreed remaining U.S. troops would not conduct unilateral operations, could not agree on immunity for U.S. soldiers. Foreign ministry 27 Oct urged Pakistan to facilitate direct talks with deputy Taliban leader Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, reportedly recently freed to encourage Afghan peace process; govt 29 Oct announced meeting with Baradar agreed during London talks. Senior Pakistani Taliban commander Latif Mehsud reportedly seized 12 Oct by U.S. forces in East. Logar province governor and close Karzai ally Arsallah Jamal killed,

15 wounded in bomb attack on mosque 15 Oct. Roadside bomb killed 18 civilians on way to wedding in east 27 Oct. 4 coalition soldiers killed 6 Oct during operation in Zhari district, Kandahar province; suicide bomber 18 Oct attacked Green Village foreign compound on outskirts of Kabul.

- Louise Arbour, "Afghanistan Future Uncertain as Presidential Polls Loom", *Daily Star*, 29 Oct. 2013.
- Louise Arbour, "Fighting for Women's Rights in Afghanistan", *Foreign Policy*, 22 Oct. 2013.
- "Afghanistan says differences remain on U.S. security pact", Reuters, 21 Oct. 2013.

New Crisis Group Asia Report N°252, *Women and Conflict in Afghanistan*, 14 Oct. 2013. Women are increasingly exposed to violence and exclusion from the public sphere as Afghanistan nears the 2014 security transition and conservative forces gain momentum.

Bangladesh Violence erupted late-month as opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) activists clashed with police and supporters of ruling Awami League (AL), after PM Sheikh Hasina 14 Oct said session of present parliament would continue after 24 Oct, rejecting deadline set by BNP for transfer of power to caretaker govt ahead of Jan 2014 elections. Reportedly over 100,000 BNP supporters rallied in Dhaka 25 Oct; at least 6 people reported killed by security forces. BNP leader Khaleda Zia 25 Oct called for 60-hour nationwide strike starting 27 Oct; in rare direct contact, PM Hasina telephoned Zia 26 Oct in partially televised call in attempt to cancel strike, but no deal reached. Strike saw violent street fights across country, over a dozen killed, hundreds wounded. Local BNP leader 28 Oct bombed and knifed to death in Jhenaidah by pro-AL demonstrators, 1 AL supporter reportedly hacked to death 27 Oct in Jessore. Police 27 Oct opened fire on BNP demonstrators in Nagarkanda; 29 Oct killed at least 2 Jamaat-e-Islami demonstrators on Kutubdia island. Situation further inflamed as controversial International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) 9 Oct sentenced BNP politician Abdul Alim to life imprisonment for killing at least 600 people during 1971 war of liberation; followed 1 Oct sentencing to death of another BNP MP Salauddin Quader Chowdhury.

- "Bangladesh rivals end 10-year silence – but fail to find peace", *Independent*, 27 Oct. 2013.

Kashmir Regular gun- and mortar fire exchanges between Pakistan and India despite late Sept agreement between leaders to stop attacks. India accused Pakistani troops of firing at over 50 Indian border posts 24 Oct in what it called most serious ceasefire violation in a decade, killing 1 Indian soldier and injuring 6; claimed Pakistan shelled Indian military post in Uri sector of LoC 28 Oct, killing 1 soldier. Indian troops 4 Oct reportedly fired across LoC, killed infant, injured 5 civilians. Pakistan PM Sharif 10 Oct said normalised relations with India a priority, but finance minister same day said India's Most Favoured Nation trading status to be suspended until May 2014 Indian parliamentary elections. Indian President Mukherjee 5 Oct accused Pakistan of exporting state-sponsored terrorism.

- "India accuses Pakistan of fresh attacks on Kashmir border posts", AP, 23 Oct. 2013.

India (non-Kashmir) 3 policemen killed 17 Oct in suspected Maoist rebel ambush in Gadchiroli district; 5 arrested. Security forces 9 Oct killed suspected Maoist during firefight near Malingwar vil-

lage, Chhattisgarh district. Communist Party of India-Maoist 15 Oct called for boycott of Nov assembly elections in Chhattisgarh.

- "Polls are just a farce, says Naxalite leader", TNN, 16 Oct. 2013.

Nepal Ahead of 19 Nov Constituent Assembly (CA) elections unidentified gunmen 4 Oct killed Unified Marxist-Leninist (UML) candidate Mohammad Alam in Bara. Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (CPN-M) 2 Oct said "foreign power centres" caused Sept failure of talks to include CPN-M in elections; party vowed to "actively boycott" elections: 19 Oct enforced strike in 3 western districts, banned other parties from campaigning in Bardiya district. Party cadres engaged in numerous low-intensity clashes; 5 UCPN Maoist cadres seriously injured after 20 Oct clash with Nepali Congress cadre in Aathbiskot. Army deployed over 60,000 soldiers to maintain order during polls.

- "Nepal election process gathers momentum", *Hindu*, 5 Oct. 2013.

Pakistan PM Sharif 23 Oct reportedly urged U.S. to end drone strikes in Pakistan during trip to U.S., met with President Obama; condemned U.S. drone strike 31 Oct that killed 3 in N Waziristan. Govt report 31 Oct said only 67 civilians killed in drone strikes prompting scepticism from Amnesty International, Bureau of Investigative Journalists. Sharif 31 Oct said talks with Pakistani Taliban underway. Attacks in 4 provincial capitals 11 Oct including 8 killed in Quetta marketplace, 1 in Lahore marketplace. Khyber Pakhtunkwa (KPK) law minister and Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) member Israullah Gandapur among 8 killed 16 Oct in attack in KPK's Dera Ismail Khan district; PTI said not responsible, reiterated calls for peace talks. Suicide bomber 2 Oct killed 8 at Chaman border crossing with Afghanistan. Remote-controlled bomb targeting police protecting anti-polio workers killed 2, injured 13 in Peshawar 7 Oct. At least 3 killed, 15 injured 29 Oct in Quetta bombing. Army chief General Ashraf Parvez Kayani 4 Oct announced retirement end-Nov amid rumours he would retain senior military position.

- "Pakistani PM pleads with Obama to put an end to drone strikes", *Guardian*, 23 Oct. 2013.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°249, *Parliament's Role in Pakistan's Democratic Transition*, 18 Sept. 2013.

Sri Lanka Newly-elected Tamil National Alliance (TNA)-controlled northern provincial council held first session 25 Oct. Some dissent within TNA over allocation of provincial ministers and decision of newly-elected chief minister Wigneswaran to take oaths of office before President Rajapaksa 7 Oct. Govt 21 Oct announced 2014 budget including increased defence spending to record \$1.95bn. Militant Buddhist organisation Bodhu Bala Sena (BBS) 22 Oct renewed campaign against "halal" meat as part of larger aim to counter threat of "muslim extremism". UK parliament Foreign Affairs Committee mid-Oct criticised govt decision to back Sri Lanka's hosting of Nov Commonwealth leaders' meeting despite human rights concerns; Canada early Oct announced it will not attend in protest at govt human rights record, will review financial support for Commonwealth; India's Tamil Nadu Assembly 24 Oct demanded Indian govt boycott meeting.

- "Sri Lanka Northern Council holds historic first session", *Hindu*, 26 Oct. 2013.

South East Asia

➡ **Indonesia** Civilian shot dead in food convoy in Puncak Jaya district, Papua 21 Sept; police 23 Sept shot dead teenager during protest against police weapons searches in Waghete town. After meeting with President Yudhoyono 30 Sept, Australian PM Abbot said he admired what Indonesia had “done to improve the autonomy and the life of the people of West Papua”, called provinces “integral part of Indonesia”. Anti-terrorism squad Densus 88 shot dead 1 suspect, arrested 2 others in 17 Oct raid in S Sulawesi, allegedly connected to group behind recent attacks on police in Poso, Central Sulawesi. Anti-corruption agency 2 Oct arrested chief justice and head of Constitutional Court on corruption charges linked to regional elections in Banten and Central Kalimantan provinces.

- [“Indonesian anti-terror squad kills suspected terrorist”](#), *Wall Street Journal*, 18 Oct. 2013.

➡ **Myanmar** Govt and Kachin Independence Organisation (KIO) armed group signed agreement following latest round of peace talks 8-11 Oct; representatives of most other ethnic armed groups attended as observers, also Chinese envoy and UNSG’s Special Adviser for Myanmar. KIO committed to strive to end armed clashes, and reached agreement with army on implementing ceasefire monitoring arrangements and other issues. KIO also expressed support for President’s idea for conference to sign Nationwide Ceasefire Accord with all armed group leaders, possibly in Nov/Dec. Would mean country in peace for first time in 65 years, enshrine govt commitment to next political steps, timeframe. KIO also convened meeting of ethnic armed group leaders at its HQ 30 Oct-1 Nov for discussions ahead of nationwide ceasefire meeting; leaders of Wa armed group, country’s largest, did not attend. Govt 8 Oct released 56 political prisoners, most charged with contacts with ethnic armed groups. Fresh anti-Muslim violence in Thandwe in Rakhine State early Oct, with attacks on Kaman Muslim minority villages; 7 killed, scores of houses burned down; 78 arrested for role in violence, which coincided with visit by President Thein Sein to area. Series of bomb blasts 11-14 Oct, killing policeman and one other person in Taungoo 11 Oct, and injuring several including in upscale Traders Hotel in Yangon. Several small IEDs also found in various locations. No claim of responsibility; several arrested including suspect in Traders Hotel bombing. Thein Sein 8-10 Oct attended ASEAN Summit, ahead of Myanmar’s chairmanship of grouping in 2014.

- Jim Della-Giacoma, [“Reforms Hinge on Treatment of Minorities”](#), *Myanmar Times*, 7 Oct. 2013.

- [“Hold fire, if not ceasefire”](#), *Economist*, 15 Oct. 2013.

New Crisis Group Asia Report N°251, [The Dark Side of Transition: Violence Against Muslims in Myanmar](#), 1 Oct. 2013. Unless there is an effective government response and change in societal attitudes, violence against Myanmar’s Muslim communities could spread, jeopardising the country’s transition as well as its standing in the region and beyond.

➡ **Philippines** Govt and MILF negotiators met for 41st round of talks in Malaysia 8-13 Oct, discussed remaining annexes of Oct 2012 framework agreement on power sharing and normalisation; sides reported progress but no agreement. Military officer 9 Oct accused MILF commander Malista Malanka of aiding Abu Sayyaf (ASG) militant group during army-ASG clash in which 2

soldiers, 3 ASG militants reported killed. Following Sept siege of Zamboanga City by MNLF, arrest warrants issued for 4 suspected leaders of group responsible for attack. At least 22 candidates and supporters reported killed, 27 injured in run-up to 28 Oct village elections across country. 4 MILF reported killed during clash between 2 MILF factions in Maguindanao 23 Oct, reportedly over rival candidates in polls; one of several intra-MILF skirmishes during month.

- [“22 killed ahead of Philippine village elections”](#), AP, 28 Oct. 2013.

➡ **Thailand** National Security Council (NSC) 10 Oct postponed indefinitely 4th round of flagging peace dialogue with Barsan Revolusi Nasional (BRN), originally scheduled for 20 Oct. Army chief Gen Prayudh Chan-ocha said splits within militant movement on whether to participate contributed to decision to postpone. NSC said more time needed to study BRN demands. Officials insist process will continue. Sources report next plenary meeting expected before end-Nov. Violence in southernmost provinces included 4 soldiers killed in IED attack targeting teacher-escort patrol in Krong Pinang District, Yala 3 Oct. 2 rangers killed in IED attack in Rangae District, Narathiwat, 11 Oct. Insurgents 9 Oct detonated 27 small IEDs at banks and shops in Narathiwat, Pattani, Yala and Songkhla provinces, 3 injured; army ranger killed, 4 wounded in IED attack in Cho Airong District, Narathiwat Province same day; teacher executed in Saiburi District, Pattani. 3 killed in gun battle between security forces and suspected militants in Thung Yang Daeng District, Pattani, 15 Oct. Constitutional Court twice decided in favour of govt-backed legislation, dismissing petitions against draft constitutional amendment for all-elected senate and 2014 budget bill. Cabinet 9 Oct approved imposition of Internal Security Act (ISA) for 3 Bangkok districts in response to protest by People’s Democratic Force To Overthrow Thaksin. Larger protests anticipated following 18 Oct revision by governing Pheu Thai Party of draft bill to provide amnesty for offences related to political unrest since 2006, in apparent bid to allow exiled former PM Thaksin Shinawatra to return without serving 2-year sentence for abuse of power. Revised bill angered Thaksin opponents plus some pro-Thaksin Red Shirts, as it would absolve former PM Abhisit Vejjajiva and deputy of causing deaths by ordering 2010 crackdown on anti-govt protesters.

- [“Thailand looks to restart southern peace talks, despite little progress”](#), VOA, 30 Oct. 2013.

Europe

Balkans

➡ **Bosnia** Bosnian leaders again failed to agree on constitutional reforms required to implement 2009 European Court of Human Rights Sejdić-Finci ruling, as required by EU. EU responded saying it would cut €47mn in pre-accession assistance, around half of 2014 allocation. Annual EU Progress Report 22 Oct criticised lack of reform, emphasised Brussels does not intend to impose solutions. Bosnia finally performed first post-war population census 1-15 Oct amid accusations of fraud and irregularities.

- [“EU slashes funding for Bosnia”](#), *European Voice*, 10 Oct. 2013.

➡ **Kosovo** Scattered violence marred preparations for first local elections to be held under Kosovo jurisdiction in Serb-held northern municipalities 3 Nov, fuelled fears for violence on election day. 3 explosions targeted local politicians 14-19 Oct. Belgrade and Pristina traded accusations of fraud related to voter registration process. UNDP survey early Oct found almost half Serbs in N Kosovo do not plan to vote, only half of voters aware of who was running for mayor. Most of region's established politicians supporting boycott campaign. EU Progress Report said Kosovo must strengthen anti-corruption efforts; Kosovo began talks on Stabilisation and Association Agreement 28 Oct.

- "Something completely different in Northern Kosovo", Balkans Policy Research Group, 23 Oct. 2013.

Caucasus

➡ **Armenia** Speaking at Parliamentary Assembly of Council of Europe 2 Oct, President Sargsyan denied widespread opinion of politicians and commentators that pressure from Russia played role in Sept decision to join Russian-led Customs Union, expressed hope that Armenia could still initial association agreement (AA) with EU. EU officials say not possible as AA agreement contains free trade clauses incompatible with Russian-led Customs Union membership.

- "Armenia's receding European ambitions", IWPR, 18 Oct. 2013.

➡ **Azerbaijan** President Aliyev, in power since 2003, won third 5-year term in 9 Oct presidential election with 85% of vote; main opposition candidate Camil Hasanli received around 5%. Polls criticised by OSCE as "seriously flawed", marred by "restrictive media environment", allegations of intimidation; govt rejected "biased" report. U.S. said vote fell short of international standards. Opposition denounced vote as "fraudulent and illegitimate". A few thousand opposition supporters rallied against result, also called for release of "political prisoners", end to govt pressure on media. Ahead of vote, UN human rights agency expressed concern over "restrictive environment" faced by activists; EU also expressed concern over "continued pressure" on opposition activists, civil society, independent media; OSCE called situation "quite worrying". Aliyev sworn in 19 Oct in unusually low key ceremony, replaced long-serving defence minister, more changes expected. Govt 21 Oct said no plans to join Russian-led Customs Union.

- "OSCE says Azerbaijan election 'seriously flawed'", RFE/RL, 10 Oct. 2013.

➡ **Nagorno-Karabakh (Azerbaijan)** Speaking at Parliamentary Assembly of Council of Europe 2 Oct, Armenian President Sargsyan urged body to initiate contact with N-K de facto authorities to help resolve conflict; also criticised Azerbaijan for its threatening rhetoric. Serious fighting along international frontier left 1 soldier dead, 3 wounded on Armenian side (according to Armenian defence ministry) and forced authorities to close main road leading to border with Georgia; both sides blamed other for incident. Re-elected Azerbaijani President Aliyev said country will increase efforts to isolate Armenia economically and politically to force it to leave occupied Azerbaijani districts; Baku 29 Oct accused Yerevan of resettling 200 Syrian refugees in sensitive occupied districts adjacent to N-K. Some Armenian analysts expressed concern over Aliyev's appointment of new defence minister, say it may indicate more aggressive military posture and increase risk of war.

- "Syria Armenians move to Nagorno-Karabakh: Azerbaijan", AFP, 2 Oct. 2013.

- For latest report, see Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°71, *Armenia and Azerbaijan: A Season of Risks*, 26 Sept. 2013.

➡ **Georgia** Ruling Georgian Dream coalition candidate Giorgi Margvelashvili won 27 Oct presidential election with 62% of vote; outgoing president Saakashvili's UNM party candidate Davit Bakradze won 22%, former parliament speaker Nino Burdzhanadze 10%; turnout reported at 46.6%. PM Ivanishvili 22 Oct again said Saakashvili may face prosecution following election. Former defence minister under Saakashvili Davit Kezerashvili detained on Interpol warrant in France 15 Oct on corruption charges, govt seeking extradition. Former defence minister Bacho Akhalaia sentenced to nearly 4 years' prison for abuse of office. NATO SG Fogh Rasmussen 2 Oct called on Russia to reverse recognition of breakaway Georgian regions Abkhazia and South Ossetia (SO), expressed concern over Russia's demarcation of SO administrative boundary line and effect on local Georgians.

- "Mikheil Saakashvili's polarizing legacy", RFE/RL, 24 Oct. 2013.

➡ **North Caucasus (Russia)** Female suicide bomber from Dagestan 21 Oct targeted bus in southern Russian city Volgograd, killing 6 and injuring 55, in country's first terrorist attack outside N Caucasus since 2011. Director of Federal Security Service and head of National Anti-terrorist Committee Alexander Bortnikov 8 Oct declared progress in fight against terrorism; cited decrease in number of terrorist attacks this year (144 attacks) compared with 2012 (270 attacks); most attacks in Dagestan. Also mentioned threats to Feb 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics from militants from Syria and Afghanistan-Pakistan, reiterated commitment to increasing security in run-up. Major security incidents included: 4 insurgents, 3 police and 3 militia members killed in Levashinsky district, Dagestan 2 Oct; 2 suspected suicide bombers killed in failed attack after devices detonated early 18 Oct in Dygulubgey village, Kabardino-Balkaria; series of attacks on police officers in Dagestan, 2 killed 9 Oct; 1 killed, 15 injured in double bombing near shop selling alcohol in Makhachkala 30 Oct. Aznaur Khizriev, leader of local terrorist group in Khasavyurt, Dagestan, killed in shoot-out 12 Oct. Continued pressure on Salafi community in Dagestan: police raids in Leninkent village mosque and on halal cafes in Makhachkala; security services closed Muslim kindergarten in Makhachkala and women's madrasa in Novosaitli. Killing of ethnic Russian by North Caucasian in Biryulovo district, Moscow, sparked tensions between Russian nationalists and Caucasian, Central Asian immigrants, riots in Moscow 13 Oct. Russian parliament adopted law on compensation of damage caused by terrorists at expense of their relatives. European Court of Human Rights ordered Moscow to pay over €1mn to relatives of Chechens killed in artillery bombardment in 2000; also found Russia guilty of disappearances of Ingushetian residents 2000-2005.

- "Suicide bomber attacks bus in Volgograd, killing at least 6", *Moscow Times*, 21 Oct. 2013.

- For latest report, see Europe Report N°226, *The North Caucasus: The Challenges of Integration (III), Governance, Elections, Rule of Law*, 6 Sept. 2013.

Western Europe/Mediterranean

➤ **Cyprus** Republic of Cyprus President Anastasiades 4 Oct called for “new impetus” ahead of peace talks expected to start in coming weeks, 27 Oct said his govt wants to reunify island, but would not give in to pressure. Turkish FM Davutoğlu 9 Oct said there is “window of opportunity for peace”. Turkish Cypriot FM Özdil Nami 9 Oct expressed hope to reach agreement on peace plan by March 2014.

- Hugh Pope, “[Israël tente de rapprocher Chypre et la Turquie](#)”, *L’Orient Le Jour*, 8 Oct. 2013.
- “[Turkey eyes new talks to solve Cyprus crisis](#)”, *Hürriyet*, 10 Oct. 2013.

➤ **Turkey** Peace process between govt and Kurdish PKK insurgency looking increasingly fragile, though PKK did not end ceasefire after 15 Oct as threatened. PKK 1 Oct said not satisfied with govt’s 30 Sept “democratisation package”; leader Cemil Bayik 19 Oct said “process has come to an end”, requires “deep and meaningful negotiations” with Kurdish movement “or there will be a civil war in Turkey”, demanded direct access for jailed leader Öcalan to outside world. Parliament 3 Oct voted to extend mandate authorising deployment of troops to Syria citing threat of chemical weapons. Incidents continue on border with Syria: 1 Turkish civilian killed in Ceylanpınar 28 Oct by stray shell from fighting in Ras al-Ayn between Kurdish and Islamist fighters, Turkish army returned fire. Protests against Turkey’s 7 Oct decision to build wall along Syrian border turned violent 20 Oct as police dispersed protesters in Mardin province. Turkey’s Disaster and Emergency Directorate 22 Oct said over 600,000 Syrian refugees in Turkey. After EU 16 Oct published relatively positive Progress Report on Turkey’s accession process, new negotiating chapter on regional policy to be opened 5 Nov, first in 3 years.

- Hugh Pope, “[Ottoman Ghosts](#)”, *Majalla*, 1 Oct. 2013.
- “[Kurdish rebels threaten new fight in Turkey as Syria clashes intensify](#)”, *Reuters*, 22 Oct. 2013.

New Crisis Group Europe Report N°227, *Crying “Wolf”: Why Turkish Fears Need Not Block Kurdish Reform*, 7 Oct. 2013. Turkey’s government needs to recover lost momentum, press forward with democratic reforms and constitutional revision, and recognise that steps that benefit the country’s Kurds must be decoupled from disarmament talks with the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK).

Latin America

➤ **Bolivia** Parliament 3 Oct approved controversial law changing number of legislative seats awarded to departments, strengthening legislative presence of wealthier eastern department Santa Cruz with 3 additional seats; 3 other departments, Chuquisaca, Potosí and Beni, lost 1 each. 4 people killed in 19 Oct clash between drug eradication team and coca growers in Apolo municipality, La Paz department; details unclear, coca growers said “provoked”, interior minister blamed Peruvian drug-trafficking gangs.

- “[Bolivia’s government raises death toll to 4 from attack by coca growers on eradication team](#)”, *AP*, 22 Oct. 2013.

➤ **Colombia** 16th round of govt-FARC peace talks started 23 Oct with discussions still centred on political participation. With 2014 electoral cycle approaching fast, President Santos 8 Oct discussed with senators and representatives of his party whether to pause, continue or end negotiations, with majority of Congress supporting continuation of talks but parties yet to discuss option in Havana. Amid increased FARC attacks on military targets and energy infrastructure mainly in E and SE, Santos 9 Oct launched large-scale counter-insurgency initiative targeted at FARC’s southern strongholds; denied contradiction with peace talks. FARC released former U.S. marine Kevin Scott Sutay 27 Oct after 4 months’ captivity. ELN 14 Oct said its delegation for exploratory talks with govt has been “ready” for a year, but process has not gone beyond “attempts to start”. Regional leader of New Illegal Armed Group Urabeños in Norte de Santander department “El Mico” surrendered and was captured alongside 17 members 23 Oct. Authorities 12 Oct arrested governor of La Guajira department Juan Francisco “Kiko” Gómez, accused of involvement in 1997 murder of local politician and 2 other killings. Convention of Democratic Centre movement led by former president Uribe 26 Oct elected former Finance Minister Óscar Iván Zuluaga as presidential candidate. Constitutional Court 23 Oct struck down over “procedural defects” constitutional reform and implementing legislation aimed at expanding military jurisdiction. Indigenous communities and govt 23 Oct signed agreement to boost judicial, administrative and political autonomy.

- “[Negociación con Farc, mínimo, necesita otro año: analistas](#)”, *El Colombiano*, 13 Oct. 2013.
- Christian Voelkel, “[A Troubled Anniversary: After One Year, Colombia’s Peace Process Reaches a Critical Juncture](#)”, *Latin America Crime and Politics*, 18 Oct. 2013.

➤ **Guatemala** Police 16 Oct captured then released 2 reputed drug traffickers in NE Izabal dept. Initial news reports stated authorities forced to flee after being attacked by crowd demanding men be released; newspaper *elPeriodico* suggested traffickers negotiated freedom. Authorities 22 Oct confiscated nearly 1 ton of cocaine during operation in Izabal. Mexican authorities 4 Oct captured Eduardo Villatoro Cano (“Guayo”), suspected of killing 9 police, 8 Oct arrested Gerardo Jaramillo (“El Yanqui”) who reportedly led gang linked to Mexican Zetas cartel. Finance Minister Pavel Centeno, who pushed for intervention to combat “mafias” controlling Guatemalan ports, resigned citing health issues. Following weeks of heavy criticism, govt 28 Oct backtracked on previous decision and carried out “operational intervention” consisting of military and police presence in 6 customs offices, under supervision of ministries of govt and defence and of tax authorities, amid complaints smuggling is undermining legitimate businesses.

- “[Mexico captures man wanted in killing of Guatemalan police](#)”, *Reuters*, 4 Oct. 2013.

➤ **Mexico** National Public Security Council 16 Oct extended by one year deadline for purging and certifying local and federal police officers, second extension. Authorities early Oct arrested 18, including 13 federal police, suspected of involvement in Acapulco kidnapping ring. Gunmen 18 Oct killed Francisco Arrellano Félix, former drug cartel leader. 7 inmates killed in prison riot in Tamaulipas state 26 Oct. Clashes between self-defence groups from Michoacán state and Knights Templar drug cartel 26-27 Oct triggered shoot-out in centre of Apatzingán and attacks on regional power stations leaving hundreds of thousands without electricity;

at least 1,000 soldiers deployed to region. Mexico 23 Oct underwent Universal Periodic Review by UN Human Rights Council; urged to rein in security forces and investigate disappearances.

- “Out of sight, not out of mind”, *Economist*, 19 Oct. 2013.

➡ **Venezuela** Finance Minister Nelson Merentes, seen as leading advocate of more flexible economic policy, stripped of role as “economic VP” early Oct and replaced by oil minister and chief of state-owned oil company *Petróleos de Venezuela* Rafael Ramirez. Ramirez’s appointment seen as strengthening hardliners led by Planning Minister Jorge Giordani who oppose détente with private sector, market economy. Rights activists voiced concern at revival of Strategic Center of Security and Homeland Protection, military-led body mandated to gather information on national security and determine which information should remain “restricted”.

- “Gov’t removes Nelson Merentes as Economy Vice-president”, *El Universal*, 8 Oct. 2013.

Middle East and North Africa

Eastern Mediterranean

➡ **Israel-Palestine** Secret peace talks continued between Israeli and Palestinian negotiators; unnamed senior Palestinian negotiators 7 Oct stated U.S. requested to “up the tempo” of negotiations but talks achieved “nothing”, and that Israel obstructing discussion of borders with its security demands concerning Jordan Valley. U.S. Sec State Kerry and Israeli PM Netanyahu discussed talks during 23 Oct meeting in Rome. Israel 30 Oct freed 26 Palestinian prisoners; announced plans for series of controversial construction plans in E Jerusalem and West Bank. In hardline speech, Netanyahu 7 Oct said Israeli military occupation not a cause of conflict, no peace possible unless Palestinians recognise Israel as “Jewish state”. Hamas leaders Haniyeh and Meshal called on Palestinian Authority to cease peace negotiations immediately, said only armed struggle against Israel could achieve right of return and protect Jerusalem. Relations between Hamas and Egypt remained sour, Rafah border terminal mostly closed. Israeli forces 13 Oct discovered tunnel from Gaza into Israel: Hamas 21 Oct claimed responsibility, said tunnel part of plan to force Israel to free Palestinian prisoners; Israel retaliated stopping flow of building materials to Gaza. Hamas 31 Oct attacked Israeli forces destroying tunnel, injuring 5; Israeli forces reportedly killed 4 Hamas militants. Netanyahu 1 Oct criticised improved U.S.-Iranian relations, 14 Oct called U.S. diplomatic track with Iran “historic mistake”, advocated tougher sanctions. U.S. official 31 Oct reported Israeli airstrike targeting shipment of Russian missiles bound for Hizbollah in Latakia, Syria; no confirmation from Israel.

- “Binyamin Netanyahu: occupation is not cause of conflict”, *Guardian*, 7 Oct. 2013.

➡ **Lebanon** Military court 16 Oct charged 7 members of pro-Syrian President Assad Alawite Arab Democracy Party over 23 Aug bombings of Sunni mosques in Tripoli that killed 47, claimed defendants instructed by Syrian intelligence services. Charges triggered renewed clashes between Tripoli’s Sunni Bab al-Tebbaneh and Alawite Jabal Mohsen neighbourhoods 16 Oct: violence quickly

contained, but reignited 23 Oct after televised interview with Assad, leaving 16 dead, 80 wounded; army deployed to restore order 28 Oct, 1 soldier killed. During interview Assad criticised Lebanese govt for allowing “terrorists” to enter Syria; President Suleiman responded saying Lebanon will continue “disassociation policy” with Syrian conflict. Lebanese Sunni militant Omar Atrash, main suspect in 9 July and 15 Aug Dahiya bombings, killed in ambush in Nehmat, Syria 11 Oct. 8 Syrian rockets hit Lebanese city Hermel in Bekaa valley 21 Oct, 5 rockets hit Wadi Rafi area 22 Oct. Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL) 14 Oct issued public arrest warrant for Hassan Merhi, alleged Hizbollah “supporter” and 5th suspect in 2005 assassination of PM Rafiq Hariri. Political deadlock between March 14 and Hizbollah-led March 8 alliance over cabinet formation continued as March 14 rejected March 8 cabinet proposal granting 9 seats to each camp and 6 seats to centrists.

- “Lebanese authorities tie attacks on mosques to pro-Assad political party”, *McClatchyDC*, 16 Oct. 2013.

➡ **Syria** Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) 6 Oct began destruction of Syria’s chemical weapons (CW) arsenal, 31 Oct stated Syria had destroyed all of its declared CW production/mixing facilities, meeting 1 Nov deadline. U.S. Sec State Kerry and Russian FM Lavrov 7 Oct agreed to press UN to set date for Geneva II peace conference in Nov; Arab League (AL) chief Nabil el-Araby 20 Oct said talks will begin 23 Nov, but UN/AL Special Envoy Brahimi 20 Oct said talks unlikely in absence of “credible” opposition. “Friends of Syria” grouping 22 Oct urged opposition Syrian National Coalition (NC) to participate in Geneva II, called for transitional govt; NC to vote 1 Nov on participation, but largest member Syrian National Council 13 Oct said it will not negotiate before fall of Assad regime, will not attend Geneva II, will quit NC if it participates. Militant groups rejecting Geneva talks, highly critical of prospect of political opposition’s participation. Islamist opposition militia Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) continued expansion in N and E Syria: ISIL fighters 2 Oct fought rebel militia Northern Storm in Azaz; coalition of militant rebel groups 3 Oct called for immediate ceasefire. ISIL 27 Oct lost Yaaroubiyeh border crossing to Syrian Kurdish militiamen linked to Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK). Syrian army, Hizbollah, and Iraqi Shiite militia forces reclaimed key strategic areas and corridors: 3 Oct retook northern town Khanasser from rebels, 7 Oct reopened crucial supply road linking govt-held central area with Aleppo, 9 Oct retook Sheikh Omar suburb of Damascus. 6 ICRC workers and 1 Syrian Red Crescent employee kidnapped 13 Oct by unidentified gunmen in Idlib, 4 released 14 Oct. WHO 29 Oct reported outbreak of polio in Deir al-Zour province.

- Crisis Group Syria Statement, “UN Should Mandate Unhindered Humanitarian Access To and Within Syria”, 1 Nov. 2013.
- “Will the jihadists overreach?”, *Economist*, 12 Oct. 2013.

New Crisis Group Middle East Report N°146, *Anything But Politics: The State of Syria’s Political Opposition*, 17 Oct. 2013. Often derided for its infighting or dismissed as irrelevant, Syria’s political opposition reflects the contradictions and conflicting geopolitical interests upon which it was founded.

Gulf

➡ **Bahrain** Court 1 Oct sentenced 50 activists to 5-15 years’ jail for links to February 14 movement, spying for Iran; police 5 Oct charged prominent al-Wefaq opposition member Khalil al-Mar-

zooq with “inciting terrorist crimes” and supporting February 14. Al-Marzooq joined thousands of people 25 Oct in nationwide anti-govt protest. Security forces 12 Oct violently dispersed protests in Manama after funeral of Yousif Ali al-Nashmi, detainee who died in hospital 11 Oct with signs of torture. Homemade bomb 27 Oct injured unspecified number of police in Demistan near Manama.

- “Ignoring Bahrain’s iron fist”, *Foreign Policy*, 14 Oct. 2013.

➡ **Iran** Govt continued diplomatic offensive at 15-16 Oct P5+1 talks in Geneva where FM Zarif and deputy FM Araqchi discussed nuclear program with UNSC P5 plus Germany; no details released, off-record U.S. negotiator called meetings “first true negotiations” on Iranian nuclear program. IAEA and Iranian representatives met 28-29 Oct to discuss IAEA investigation into “possible military dimensions” of Iranian nuclear program; 29 Oct jointly stated talks “very productive”, next meeting 11 Nov in Tehran. U.S. Sec State Kerry 3 Oct said it would be “diplomatic malpractice of the worst order” not to engage Iranian offer to negotiate nuclear program; 17 Oct announced it might offer Iran access to \$billions in frozen funds if govt takes certain actions to curb nuclear program. 230 out of 290 MPs 2 Oct signed statement supportive of President Rouhani’s conciliatory UNGA speech in Sept. Supreme leader Khamenei 5 Oct expressed support for strategy but said some parts “improper”, possibly hinting at 27 Sept phone call between Rouhani and U.S. President Obama. On Syria, U.S. 7 Oct said Iran could join Geneva II peace conference if it publicly backed 2012 Geneva Communique calling for transitional govt; Iran called condition “unacceptable”. Baluchi Sunni group Jaish al-Adl 25 Oct killed 14 border guards in ambush near Saravan in retaliation for unspecified Iranian “massacre” in Syria and “cruel treatment” of Sunnis in Iran; govt 26 Oct executed 16 men allegedly linked to Jaish al-Adl.

- Ali Vaez, “Don’t Expect Miracles in Iran Nuclear Talks”, *CNN*, 14 Oct. 2013.
- Ali Vaez, “Iran’s Nuclear Program: Cause for Concern, But Not Alarm”, *Al Jazeera*, 9 Oct. 2013.
- “Iran presents ‘timetable’ to end nuclear talks deadlock”, *Guardian*, 15 Oct. 2013.

➡ **Iraq** Parliament 8 Oct set national parliamentary elections for 30 April 2014; political forces began vying to change election laws in their favour. PM Maliki 29 Oct visited U.S., discussed need for arms to stem Iraq violence, terrorism. Govt figures suggested Oct deadliest month since April 2008 with over 900 killed including: some 35 killed in 10 car explosions in predominantly Shia areas in Baghdad 27 Oct; at least 19 police and 3 civilians killed 22-23 Oct in series of bomb attacks in Anbar; 13 children killed 6 Oct in attack on school in Qabak; string of car and roadside bombings 14 Oct killed at least 44.

- “As Iraq seeks U.S. arms, bombs kill another 55”, *Reuters*, 27 Oct. 2013.

➡ **Saudi Arabia** U.S.-Saudi relations deteriorated after U.S. withdrawal of threat of military intervention in Syria and Iranian-Western diplomatic thaw: intelligence chief 22 Oct vowed govt will undertake “major shift” in relations with U.S.. Govt 18 Oct rejected 2-year UNSC seat in protest at deal, denounced UNSC’s “inability to perform its duties” on Syrian conflict.

- “Why the snub?”, *Economist*, 21 Oct. 2013.

➡ **Yemen** Political tensions within National Dialogue grew more acute: Huthi and part of Hiraak delegation 8 Oct boycotted opening plenary session, arguing their issues, including regarding state

structure and number of federal units, had not been fully resolved in working groups. Divisions continued within Hiraak delegation over acceptable compromises; tensions between head of delegation and President Hadi increased. State Minister Hassan Sharafuddin 30 Oct resigned from national consensus govt. Thousands of Hiraak rallied in Aden mid-month commemorating anniversary of independence from British, demanding independence from “northern occupation”. Tenuous truce between Huthis and Salafis in Dammaj began to unravel mid-month with renewed clashes; at least 30 reportedly killed, over 100 injured. German security guard killed 6 Oct in Sanaa; same day, UNICEF employee kidnapped on airport road. At least 5 soldiers killed, 15 injured 18 Oct in attack on base in Abyan province; 2 soldiers and civilian killed at checkpoint in Abyan province 31 Oct. Al-Qaeda leader Omar Salem arrested 29 Oct in Hadramawt province.

- “Yemen’s slide into chaos risks militant haven on Saudi border”, *Bloomberg*, 30 Oct. 2013.

North Africa

➡ **Algeria** Security forces 2 Oct arrested 5 Tunisians belonging to Salafi movement Ansar al-Sharia; 16 Oct killed 1 suspected terrorist on Bejaia-Bordj Bou Arredji border; 16 Oct captured prominent AQIM member Bousad “Hanafi” Hammadi in Tamanrasset; 18 Oct arrested 2 alleged jihadis returning from Iraq. Bomb 3 Oct near Bouira left 3 injured; 15 Oct bomb targeted gendarmerie in Bordj Bou Arredji. Authorities reported 190 terrorists killed since beginning of year. Govt 1 Oct deployed security forces in Ghardaïa following intercommunal clashes between Chaâmbis (Arabs) and Mozabites (Berbers). Authorities mid-month reportedly arrested blogger Abdelghani Aloui on suspicion of inciting terrorism, criticising President Bouteflika.

- “Insécurité à la frontière algéro-libyenne: la grande inquiétude”, *El Watan*, 23 Oct. 2013.

➡ **Egypt** Political transition roadmap moved forward as constitutional committee 22 Oct began final negotiations, amid continued exclusion of most Islamist political forces from process, heavy casualties at almost daily pro-Muslim Brotherhood (MB) rallies. Security forces 6 Oct killed dozens, arrested over 400 MB supporters in clashes across Egypt; 53 people killed, 271 wounded. Leaked audio files from interview with defence minister General al-Sisi 16 Oct revealed he may run for president. Former president Morsi to stand trial 4 Nov on charges of espionage for Hamas and prison escape during 2011 revolution; MB 2 Oct said will not backtrack on its demand for Morsi reinstatement as president. Political violence continued to escalate with army operations in restless Sinai Peninsula as unclaimed attacks on govt targets increased, fuelling fears of Islamist insurgency. Unidentified gunmen 4 Oct killed 2 soldiers in attack on army convoy east of Cairo, 7 Oct killed 6 soldiers in Ismailia and fired grenades at satellite station in Cairo, 28 Oct killed 3 policemen at university in Mansoura. U.S. 10 Oct suspended delivery of military hardware to Egyptian army in response to crackdown on MB, said “credible progress” needed towards fair elections; continued economic assistance, support for counter-terrorism operations and Egyptian-Israeli border security.

- “Recording reveals Sisi’s political ambitions in Egypt”, *Financial Times*, 16 Oct. 2013.

➤ **Libya** Gunmen 10 Oct kidnapped PM Ali Zeidan for several hours, allegedly in retaliation for Zeidan's tacit approval of U.S.-led capture of former al-Qaeda operative Abu Anas al-Libi early Oct. Zeidan blamed abduction on 2 congressmen Mohammed al-Kilani and Mustafa al-Triki and Libya Revolutionaries' Operation Room (LROR), controversial security body with ties to Islamist groups that operates under authority of Libyan Congress (GNC) head. Abdelmonem Essid, member of other state-approved security group, subsequently took responsibility, said group seized Zeidan over drug and corruption allegations. 94 congressmen 27 Oct boycotted GNC to protest obstruction of investigation into Zeidan's abduction, called for LROR's dismissal. Russian embassy attacked 3 Oct, 2 killed and diplomatic staff evacuated; car bomb 11 Oct struck Swedish-Finish consulate in Benghazi. Attacks targeting security officials increased: gunmen 5 Oct killed 16 army officers at checkpoint near Tarhouna, SW of Tripoli; at least 10 security officials killed in separate attacks in Benghazi. Muslim cleric Abdulsalam al-Hassi of Benghazi killed 12 Oct. Oil shutdowns in west reduced crude exports to below 10% of capacity late Oct. ICC 12 Oct gave Libya green light to try Qadhafi-era security chief Abdullah Senussi.

▪ "Libya's premier accuses two rivals in abduction", Reuters, 20 Oct. 2013.

➤ **Mauritania** Opposition coalition Coordination for Democratic Opposition (COD) 2 Oct suspended participation in first dialogue with govt in 4 years, but authorities 3 Oct said they will maintain 23 Nov date for legislative elections. 10 of 11 COD parties 4 Oct announced boycott but Islamist party Tawassoul and Union of Forces of Progress (UFP) 5 Oct said they will participate, prompting uncertainty over future of coalition.

▪ "L'unité de la Coordination de l'opposition démocratique vole en éclats", RFI, 6 Oct. 2013.

➤ **Tunisia** National Dialogue (ND) began 25 Oct based on new political roadmap signed 5 Oct following months of negotiations. Roadmap stipulates govt to step down within 3 weeks of

start of ND, Constituent Assembly to finish constitution within 4 weeks, with new technocratic caretaker govt to govern until elections (date of which to be set prior to govt dissolution). Ruling Islamist party An-Nahda signed document, but 15 Oct said it will only leave office once constitution is ratified, electoral law reformed, independent electoral commission established, dates set for parliamentary, presidential elections; opposition National Salvation Front 23 Oct held demonstrations in protest, said An-Nahda delaying transition. Security situation remained unstable amid increased Islamist militant attacks. Suicide bomber 30 Oct detonated bomb in tourist resort Sousse, no injuries; police arrested second would-be suicide bomber in Monastir and 5 suspects in Sousse, said all belong to Salafi group Ansar al-Sharia. Militants 23 Oct killed 7 security officers near Sidi Ali Ben Aoun in Sidi Bouzid governorate, 17 Oct killed 2 police in Goubellat. PM Laraayedh 18 Oct said Tunisia would defeat "terrorism"; army stepped up operations, 21 Oct killed 9 militants in Goubellat, including Lotfi Ezzine, allegedly involved in assassinations of Chokri Belaïd and Mohamed Brahmi; 20 Oct killed 10 militants allegedly belonging to Ansar al-Sharia near Algerian border.

▪ "Tunisia Islamists ready to hand over power, see spring election", Reuters, 11 Oct. 2013.

➤ **Western Sahara** Police 19 Oct violently dispersed pro-independence protesters in Laayoune during 3-day visit by UN envoy Christopher Ross aimed at breaking deadlock; 20 Oct reportedly wounded 20 protesters in Smara. Ross 30 Oct presented report to UNSC, announced launch of new phase in negotiations based on discreet and separate bilateral exchanges with each party. UN Special Committee on Decolonisation 14 Oct adopted resolution reiterating need for negotiated settlement. Morocco 30 Oct recalled ambassador to Algeria over President Bouteflika's remarks accusing Morocco of "massive and systematic human rights violations" in W Sahara.

▪ "Christopher Ross termine sa visite au Sahara occidental sur fonds de violence à Smara", *Jeune Afrique*, 21 Oct. 2013.

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