

124 1 December 2013

November 2013 Trends



Deteriorated Situations

Bangladesh (p.6) Thailand (p.7)
Central African Yemen (p.11)
Republic (p.2)
China/Japan (p.5)
Lebanon (p.10)



Improved Situations

DR Congo (p.2)
Iran (p.11)



Unchanged Situations

Afghanistan (p.6), Algeria (p.11), Armenia (p.8), Azerbaijan (p.8), Bahrain (p.10), Bolivia (p.9), Bosnia (p.8), Burundi (p.2), Cameroon (p.2), Chad (p.2), Colombia (p.9), Côte d'Ivoire (p.4), Cyprus (p.9), Egypt (p.11), Eritrea (p.2), Ethiopia (p.2), Georgia (p.8), Guatemala (p.9), Guinea (p.4), Guinea-Bissau (p.4), India (non-Kashmir) (p.6), Indonesia (p.7), Iraq (p.11), Israel-Palestine (p.10), Kashmir (p.6), Kazakhstan (p.5), Kenya (p.2), Korean Peninsula (p.5), Kosovo (p.8), Kyrgyzstan (p.5), Liberia (p.4), Libya (p.11), Madagascar (p.3), Mali (p.4), Mauritania (p.12), Mexico (p.9), Morocco (p.12), Mozambique (p.3), Myanmar (p.7), Nagorno-Karabakh (Azerbaijan) (p.8), Nepal (p.6), Niger (p.4), Nigeria (p.4), North Caucasus (Russia) (p.8), Pakistan (p.6), Philippines (p.7), Rwanda (p.2), Somalia (p.3), South Sudan (p.3), Sri Lanka (p.7), Sudan (p.3), Syria (p.10), Tajikistan (p.5), Tunisia (p.12), Turkey (p.9), Turkmenistan (p.5), Uganda (p.3), Ukraine (p.8), Uzbekistan (p.5), Venezuela (p.9), Western Sahara (p.12), Zimbabwe (p.3)

December 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** New constitution draft sent to National Assembly for approval mid-Nov despite widespread opposition from civil society and opposition parties. UPRONA and FRODEBU Nyakuri and Batwa deputies 26 Nov asked govt to suspend draft bill, requesting wider consultations; FNL historical leader Agathon Rwasa 11 Nov called for March 2013 roadmap to be respected; civil society organisations 4 Nov launched protest campaign. 8 Alliance of Democrats for Change (ADC-Ikibiri) opposition coalition parties 24 Nov agreed to select common candidate and list for 2015 elections. Govt 7 Nov asked UNSC to close its office, BNUB, when current mandate expires.


- [“Le gouvernement demande la fermeture du bureau de l’ONU”](#), *Jeune Afrique*, 9 Nov. 2013.

 **Cameroon** Boko Haram 13 Nov kidnapped French Catholic priest in Mayo Moskota in far north, demanded liberation of members imprisoned in Cameroon; govt sent 3 Lamidos (traditional chiefs) to start negotiations. Defence Minister Edgar Alain Mebe Ngo'o 16 Nov said army clashed with unidentified assailants from CAR in Gbiti in East. 5 assailants and 2 Cameroonians killed; 17 assailants arrested, suspected of belonging to rebel Front démocratique du peuple centrafricain (FDPC) seeking liberation of general Abdoulaye Miskine arrested in Sept. Govt deployed additional 700 gendarmes, 2 support battalions and 2 helicopters. Unidentified CAR rebels 25 Nov killed 1 Cameroonian, kidnapped 3 children in Beke village near CAR border.


- [“Est Cameroun: Une nouvelle attaque des centrafricains”](#), *La Nouvelle Expression*, 26 Nov. 2013.

 **Central African Republic** Tensions and deadly violence increased, including in Bangui where residents repeatedly clashed with ex-rebels. Deadly clashes between ex-rebels and self-defence groups continued across country displacing thousands; interim President Djotodia 22 Nov announced countrywide curfew. Religious tensions also increased, with several massacres in NW. UNSG Ban 18 Nov called on UNSC to immediately back military action to protect civilians, considered option to transform AU force into UN operation with up to 9,000 troops and 1,700 police. French FM Laurent Fabius 21 Nov warned of genocide risk, President Hollande called for swift intervention; French govt 26 Nov confirmed will triple number of soldiers in CAR to 1,200 to support AU peacekeeping mission (MISCA) for 6 months; late month started deployment from neighbouring countries. U.S. Sec State Kerry 20 Nov pledged \$40mn aid for AU-led mission; Burundi and Rwanda said willing to deploy troops. Djotodia 21 Nov said holding surrender talks with LRA including leader Joseph Kony; U.S. and UN officials expressed doubts Kony taking part. Hundreds of ex-rebels 16 Nov crossed into Cameroon, attacked border village Gbiti.


- Thierry Vircoulon, [“Central African Republic is descending into Anarchy”](#), *Al Jazeera America*, 20 Nov. 2013.
- [“La France convainc l’ONU de la nécessité d’un recours à la force”](#), *Le Monde*, 26 Nov. 2013.

 **Chad** PM Dadnadji and cabinet resigned 21 Nov; motion of censure introduced to parliament 18 Nov citing govt instability after several cabinet reshuffles and failure to tackle high cost of living; President Déby 21 Nov named economist Kalezubet Pahimi Deubet new PM. Chadian troops reportedly joined forces with Sudan mid-month to tackle tribal clashes, rebels along joint border; several soldiers reportedly killed 14 Nov. UNSG Ban visited Chad 8 Nov.

- [“Chad’s PM, government resign ahead of censure vote”](#), *VOA*, 21 Nov. 2013.


 **DR Congo** Govt rapidly deployed state services to eastern provinces with support of MONUSCO in order to restore state authority to region following 30 Oct military defeat of M23 rebels. M23 3 Nov called for ceasefire, 6 Nov said would disarm, pursue political settlement. Negotiations between govt and M23 collapsed 11 Nov as govt refused to sign any doc titled “peace agreement”. UN 13 Nov emphasised need for comprehensive DDR plan. At least 20, including 12 children, reportedly killed in police operation to tackle “delinquency” in Kinshasa; UN called for immediate govt action to prevent abuses. Trial began of 39 govt soldiers accused of mass rape in Minova in Nov 2012.

- [“Congo, M23 rebels peace signing delayed over wording of pact”](#), *Reuters*, 11 Nov. 2013.


 **Rwanda** Following defeat of M23 rebels in DRC, Rwanda called on UN and Kinshasa to focus on defeating FDLR Hutu rebels operating in eastern DRC. U.S. Special Envoy to Great Lakes Russ Feingold early month said U.S. could lift sanctions on Rwanda if it is no longer supporting M23 rebels. Former presidential guard Joel Mutabazi, extradited from Uganda in Oct, charged 13 Nov alongside 14 others with terrorism, inciting revolt. French appeals court approved extradition of 2 Rwandans wanted for role in 1994 genocide.

- [“Rwandans face extradition over genocide”](#), *Al Jazeera*, 13 Nov. 2013.


Horn of Africa

 **Eritrea** 3 members of air force sought asylum in Saudi Arabia mid-month, fuelling rumours of increasing discontent within armed forces. President Afwerki 25 Nov met Sudan counterpart, discussed increased cooperation.

- [“A people under siege”](#), *AllAfrica*, 13 Nov. 2013.

 **Ethiopia** Govt 6 Nov said security services have evidence Somalia-based militant group Al-Shabaab preparing to conduct terrorist attack in Addis Ababa and elsewhere in Ethiopia, allegedly with Eritrean assistance. 4 killed, at least 8 wounded 5 Nov in anti-tank mine explosion in Gumuz state. Dozens reportedly arrested 15 Nov at demonstration in Addis Ababa protesting attacks on Ethiopians in Saudi Arabia. 6 “Eritrean-trained” Gambella rebels reportedly killed, 12 arrested 29 Nov. PM Desalegn 19 Nov met with Egypt interim President Mansour on sidelines of African-Arab summit to discuss building of dam on Nile, no agreement reached.

- [“Egypt and Ethiopia leaders meet over Nile row”](#), *Al Jazeera*, 20 Nov. 2013.

 **Kenya** Resolution to defer ICC trial of President Kenyatta and Deputy President Ruto failed to pass UNSC vote 15 Nov; govt 21 Nov proposed amendments to ICC’s Rules of Procedure and Evidence at Assembly of State Parties (ASP) including change to

require suspects be physically present; ASP adopted 3 new rules minimising obligation of accused to be present. Kenyatta 28 Nov vetoed controversial media bill imposing tighter regulations on journalists. Heavily armed militia from West Pokot attacked Lorogan village in Turkana over border disputes, access to natural resources. Joint Open Society Justice Initiative and Muslims for Human Rights report 20 Nov accused police of extrajudicial killing, torture and other rights abuses in counter-terror operations.

- [“Kenyan rights group accuses anti-terror police of unlawful killings”](#), *Guardian*, 19 Nov. 2013.

➡ **Somalia** PM Shirdon resisted pressure from President Sheikh to resign on grounds of ineffectiveness; AU SR Mahamat Saleh Annadif mediating. Shirdon 17 Nov called on fellow Darod tribe MPs to intervene; parliament 21 Nov requested vote of confidence. UNSC 12 Nov passed resolution approving additional 4,400 AMISOM troops to boost fight against Al-Shabaab; Ethiopia said willing to contribute. Clan fighting in Middle Shabelle region 7-8 Nov left 18 dead, 20 wounded near Jowhar; govt troops and gunmen reportedly involved in clashes in Lower Shabelle 17-18 Nov. Al-Shabaab attacks continued: at least 6 killed, 15 wounded in 8 Nov bombing outside Maka Al-Mukarama hotel, Mogadishu; Puntland forces same day repelled assault on Bossaso Central Prison; Al-Shabaab 19 Nov attacked police station in Beledweyne town, 19 killed. Jubaland Reconciliation Conference in Mogadishu 3-6 Nov ended in agreement between Somalia govt, Jubaland interim govt and rival parties on ending hostilities and federalism arrangements. At least 8 killed 28 Nov in clashes between Khatumo militia and Puntland govt troops in Taleh, Sool region.

- [“Despite setbacks, al-Shabab still a potent threat”](#), VOA, 19 Nov. 2013.

➡ **South Sudan** Early Nov results of unilateral unofficial referendum on Abyei status held by Ngok Dinka 27-30 Oct showed 99.98% of voters in favour of joining S Sudan; Sudan dismissed results, S Sudan govt has not officially endorsed results. UN 25 Nov extended Abyei peacekeeping mission to May 2014. President Kiir 20 Nov met Sudan President Bashir on sidelines of Africa-Arab summit, discussed bilateral relations. Dr Lam Akol, chairman of SPLM-DC who ran against President Kiir in 2010 elections, 2 Nov returned from self-imposed exile in Khartoum. UN SRSG Hilde Johnson 18 Nov said S Sudan “at crossroads”, warned that despite some positive signs, continuing deadly inter-communal conflict, abuses by security forces and challenges in extending govt authority could threaten security. 5 killed 29 Nov in civilian attack on security forces in Unity state. LRA rebels reportedly attacked 5 villages in W Equatoria state late Nov, killing 3.

- [“UN expresses ‘cautious optimism’ about South Sudan”](#), VOA, 18 Nov. 2013.

➡ **Sudan** Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF) 7 Nov began tour of Europe, met with French, German and UK representatives to discuss humanitarian situation in rebel-held areas and other issues; EU did not meet with SRF, citing SRF refusal to resume talks based on Doha Document for Peace in Darfur. Govt 19 Nov announced readiness to resume talks with SPLM-N. Govt 12 Nov announced new offensive against SRF in S Kordofan, Darfur and Blue Nile where clashes continue; UNOCHA 24 Nov said some 1,300 displaced since 12 Nov. JEM military leader Fidel Mohammed Rahoma reportedly killed in offensive against army facilities in Abu Zabad 17 Nov. Fighting between Salamat, Misseriya and

Ta’isha tribes along Sudan-Chad-CAR border resumed, over 100 reportedly killed. 2 health workers killed 29 Nov in W Darfur.

- [“100 killed in tribal clashes in Sudan’s Darfur”](#), AllAfrica, 18 Nov. 2013.

New Crisis Group Africa Report N°209, [Sudan: Preserving Peace in the East](#), 26 Nov. 2013. Unless the marginalisation of Sudan’s East is addressed, renewed war and further fragmentation of the country is a growing possibility.

➡ **Uganda** Opposition leader Kizza Besigye and close ally Kampala Lord Mayor Erias Lukwago charged 21 Nov with holding unlawful assembly; Lukwago found guilty of abuse of office by govt tribunal 14 Nov, arrested 18 Nov. Police 26 Nov fired tear gas to disperse protests against Lukwago’s impeachment. Gen. David Segusa 22 Nov said President Museveni cannot be ousted in elections, called on Ugandans to “build alternative capacity” to remove him. Ugandan LRA leader Joseph Kony reportedly engaged in surrender talks with Central African Republic. Uganda continued to push for “fast-tracking” of East African Community (EAC) integration ahead of 30 Nov EAC summit.

- [“Uganda police to prosecute detained politicians”](#), VOA, 20 Nov. 2013.

Southern Africa

➡ **Madagascar** Special Electoral Court (CES) confirmed results of 25 Oct first round presidential election; Jean-Louis Robinson, seen as close to ousted President Ravalomanana, won 21.16% votes against 15.85% for Hery Rajaonarimampianina, seen as close to transitional President Rajoelina; run-off expected 20 Dec.

- Brian Klaas and Piers Pigou, [“Will Madagascar’s Elections end the Perennial Crisis?”](#), *The African Peacebuilding Agenda*, 12 Nov. 2013.
- [“Doubt over election after Madagascar military handed control of regions”](#), Reuters, 22 Nov. 2013.

➡ **Mozambique** Ahead of 20 Nov municipal elections, almost 50 people injured during clashes between supporters of ruling party FRELIMO and opposition Mozambique Democratic Movement (MDM) 16 Nov. Preliminary results of 20 Nov vote suggest FRELIMO won landslide; RENAMO boycotted polls, arguing election laws need to be changed. Security forces 1 Nov captured 8 RENAMO gunmen in Rapale district, 10 Nov killed 1 RENAMO gunman in Canda, Nhamadzi administrative post. Number of RENAMO attacks reported during month: RENAMO gunmen 3 Nov attacked truck in Sofala province, 5 Nov wounded 5 in 2 attacks on convoy under military escort, 6 Nov killed 3 soldiers in Gorongosa district, 7 Nov attacked police post and adjacent health centre in Canda, 12 Nov attacked farm in Rapale district, 15 Nov killed 2 people in attack on convoy transiting main N-S highway.

- [“Gas-fired tension”](#), *Economist*, 9 Nov. 2013.

➡ **Zimbabwe** ZANU-PF factional struggles between Mujuru and Mnangagwa camps continued amid chaotic provincial elections. After results of 2 Nov polls in Manicaland, Midlands and Mashonaland Central disputed, politburo upheld Mujuru’s win at extraordinary meeting 23 Nov; elections in 7 other provinces postponed to 30 Nov. Govt held first meeting with IMF delegation 6 Nov since July elections, finance minister 14 Nov stated Zimbabwe open for foreign investment after briefing Western ambassadors about new economic blueprint ZIMASET. Govt set 1 Jan 2014 ultimatum on foreign shop owners to relinquish businesses in line

with March 2008 Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Act. Govt signed diamond export deal in Belgium 11-12 Nov, following EU's Sept lifting of sanctions.

- Trevor Maisiri, "[Hindering SADC from shaping Poll Landscape](#)", *Zimbabwe Independent*, 1 Nov. 2013.
- "[Mugabe succession - things fall apart?](#)", *Zimbabwe Independent*, 22 Nov. 2013.

West Africa

➡ **Côte d'Ivoire** ICC 11 Nov ruled former President Gbagbo must remain in detention pending possible trial for crimes against humanity; opposition Ivorian Popular Front (FPI) demanded his immediate release. Authorities 23 Nov arrested FPI Secretary General Laurent Akoun; reasons unclear. Court 6 Nov sentenced 15 former top officials to 20 years' prison for embezzling. Trial of Gbagbo-era security officer Jean-Noël Abehi, accused of atrocities, "desertion abroad" and "plotting" began 21 Nov. Fears over press freedom increased with mid-Nov killing of editor-in-chief of Tomorrow Magazine Désiré Oué and 18 Nov abduction of Dieusmonde Tade, journalist at Nouveau Réveil, close to coalition partner PDCI.

- "[Et si Laurent Gbagbo était libéré?](#)", *Jeune Afrique*, 11 Nov. 2013.

➡ **Guinea** Supreme Court 15 Nov confirmed provisional results of 28 Sept legislative elections giving ruling RPG and allies simple majority, rejected opposition's motions for annulment. Ruling severely criticised by opposition leaders; opposition supporters 16 Nov protested in Conakry against "electoral hold-up". Teenage demonstrator killed, 11 injured 17 Nov when police in Conakry clashed with supporters of Mandian Sidibé, head of private radio Planète FM critical of Condé's regime, following reported kidnapping attempt. Incidents during 25 Nov shutdown called for by opposition resulted in 1 dead, 17 wounded. Demonstrations over water and power shortages in Conakry, Fria and Dinguiraye turned violent, dozens injured. 25 Nov high-profile conference of Guinea's partners in Abu Dhabi presented as success, with announcement of \$6bn in investments.

- "[Les résultats des législatives confirmés par la Cour suprême](#)", RFI, 16 Nov. 2013.

➡ **Guinea-Bissau** President Nhamadjo 15 Nov announced presidential and parliamentary elections scheduled for 24 Nov delayed to 16 March 2014. Ousted PAIGC PM and ex-presidential candidate Carlos Gomes Júnior called on UN and AU to ensure his safety upon his return. PAIGC again postponed overdue party congress, set for 7 Nov, in attempt to control deep internal divisions. Transport minister Orlando Viegas 5 Nov beaten up by men in army fatigues. At 26 Nov debate, UN SRSG Ramos-Horta called for quick progress on electoral preparations and strengthened ECOWAS force; ECOWAS representative mentioned planned deployment of 2 more police units.

- "[Guinea-Bissau elections postponed until next year](#)", AFP, 15 Nov. 2013.

➡ **Liberia** Bong County residents 4 Nov protested outside launch of national consultation process on oil exploration. President Johnson Sirleaf met with visiting U.S. congressional delegation to assess UN work in Liberia; 25 Nov said youth unemployment major threat to peace and security.

- "[Liberia's oil policy draft hits the road, delegates weigh in, plea for more time](#)", *FrontPageAfrica*, 5 Nov. 2013.

➡ **Mali** MNLA representatives 29 Nov announced end to 5-month-old ceasefire, return to war following 28 Nov clash between security forces and several hundred Tuareg demonstrators blocking Kidal airport to prevent PM Tatam Ly visit. Other MNLA officials denied going back to war but warned against another incident. 2 RFI journalists abducted and killed 2 Nov near Kidal; drug trafficker and former AQIM affiliate Baye Ag Bakabo named 13 Nov as main suspect. MNLA and Malian army clashed east of Menaka 8 Nov leaving 3 dead. MNLA vacated public buildings in Kidal 14 Nov. National Conference on the North held in Bamako 1-3 Nov, legislative elections held 24 Nov in relative calm despite minor incidents: MNLA supporters in Kidal threw stones at voters arriving to cast ballots; unidentified assailants stole ballots in Goundam. Clashes between Tuaregs and Peuls north of Gao 23 Nov left uncertain number dead; officials said clashes unrelated to elections. General Sanogo arrested 27 Nov, charged with abduction; several hundred protesters demanding his release in Kati and Bamako 29 Nov.

- "[Législatives maliennes : un vote calme et sans enthousiasme](#)", *Jeune Afrique*, 25 Nov. 2013.

➡ **Niger** Security forces 17 Nov dismantled vast human trafficking network after death of 92 migrants in Sahara late Oct. EU 12 Nov announced General Francisco Espinosa Navas, former head of capacity-building mission "EUCAP Sahel Niger", will be replaced by Filip De Ceuninck.

- "[Démantèlement d'un vaste réseau de trafiquants de clandestins au Niger](#)", RFI, 18 Nov. 2013.

➡ **Nigeria** Presidential committee 5 Nov submitted final report on security in north to President Jonathan, recommended support fund for victims; committee chairman said many insurgents "positively responded to contacts and have accepted the dialogue options capable of full resolution of the conflict"; Boko Haram (BH) dismissed report as farce. Parliament 7 Nov approved 6-month extension of state of emergency in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states. Over 130 killed in BH attacks and military operations in Borno and Yobe states; army 29 Nov said up to 50 BH killed in airstrike near Cameroon border. U.S. 13 Nov named BH and BH offshoot "Ansaru" as terrorist organisations; designation strongly endorsed by Nigerian govt. Intercommunal violence and gunmen attacks on villages killed over 77 in Benue and Plateau states. Rift within ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP) deepened: police 3 Nov disrupted splinter nPDP group meeting; PDP executive 11 Nov suspended 4 leading members of group including party's national secretary Olagunsoye Oyinlola; 5 nPDP governors 26 Nov defected to opposition All Progressives Congress (APC). Deeply flawed gubernatorial election held in Anambra State 16 Nov.


- "[Boko Haram: Is terror designation a badge of honor?](#)", BBC, 15 Nov. 2013.

Asia


Central Asia

➡ **Kazakhstan** Govt expressed concern over Kazakh citizens fighting alongside Syrian rebels following Oct release of video purporting to show 150 Kazakh jihadists in Syria. President Nazarbayev 1 Nov met Russian President Putin in Astana, signed cooperation treaty.


- "[Kazakh border guards kill suspected Russian poacher](#)", RFE/RL, 26 Nov. 2013.

 **Kyrgyzstan** Facing continued opposition protests demanding bigger Kyrgyz share in Kumtor goldmine run by Canadian-listed Centerra Gold, President Atambayev 7 Nov in media interview said nationalization remained option, but warned of economic consequences. Prosecutor General early Nov announced 10 criminal cases against former govt officials related to 2004 Kumtor restructuring. Opposition Ata Jurt MP Akhmatbek Keldibekov detained 20 Nov on corruption charges; protesters 21 Nov demanded release, blocked highway in Osh.


- [“Kyrgyzstan president: key goldmine may be nationalised”](#), BBC, 7 Nov. 2013.

 **Tajikistan** President Rahmon, in power since 1992, re-elected for another 7 years in 6 Nov elections with 83.1% of votes. Most significant rival candidate barred from running; OSCE 7 Nov reported elections “lacked genuine choice and meaningful pluralism”. Rahmon 20 Nov replaced defence minister Sherali Hairullov, 23 Nov dismissed PM Akil Akilov. Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO) Sec Gen Nikolai Bordyuzha expressed concern over instability on Afghan-Tajik border, announced strengthening of border through CSTO forces by late Dec. Russia’s special envoy Zamir Kabulov 20 Nov expressed concern over security challenges in region from Islamist groups, said Russian military presence in Tajikistan would increase in significance.

- [“Tajik leader wins new term, faces challenge to ensure stability”](#), Reuters, 7 Nov. 2013.


 **Turkmenistan** President Berdymukhamedov 9 Nov called for “open and transparent” parliamentary elections scheduled for 15 Dec, however only opposition is party set up under his orders. Afghan media 20 Nov reported Pakistani Taliban fighting alongside and providing arms to Taliban fighters near Turkmen border, displacing hundreds of ethnic Turkmen families. Berdymukhamedov 25-27 Nov visited Uzbek President Karimov, signed 8 agreements on bilateral cooperation.

- [“Turkmen, Uzbek leaders to meet”](#), RFE/RL, 25 Nov. 2013.

 **Uzbekistan** Month saw confrontation between President’s daughter Gulnara Karimova and her family and state as Gulnara accused head of National Security Services of attempting to murder her and seize power; reported 2 of her bodyguards arrested and tortured; 2 business associates detained; and alleged individuals associated with her charity in Uzbekistan being held/harassed by security services; 21 Nov deleted twitter account through which she had documented accusations. Electricity, gasoline shortages reported in Tashkent and other cities. Workers clashed with police at day labour market in Tashkent 8 Nov. UN Committee Against Torture 22 Nov called on Uzbekistan to end “systematic” use of torture, citing “numerous, ongoing and consistent allegations” that detainees were tortured, including beatings, rape, sexual violence. Chairman of Uzbekistan National Human Rights Center Akmal Saidov 23 Nov said charges “unfounded”, “biased”.


- [“Torture rife in Uzbekistan, U.N. watchdog says”](#), Reuters, 22 Nov. 2013.

North East Asia

 **China/Japan** China 23 Nov created “East China Sea Air Defence Identification Zone” containing disputed Diaoyu/Senkaku islands, announced defensive measures will be taken against aircraft not obeying Chinese rules. Japan described move as “escalation”; PM


Abe said move “dangerous”, U.S. called it “destabilizing”, S Korea also protested. China responded angrily to criticism, lodging complaints with embassies. Japan, S Korea and U.S. all flew military aircraft through area in following days without incident; China 28 Nov sent military aircraft to patrol area. U.S. advised its civilian airlines to observe China’s air defence zone, Japan told its commercial flights to disregard China’s new rules. Japan held joint and combined military drills with U.S. early Nov with 34,000 troops, 6 vessels, 360 aircraft. Abe’s security adviser 6 Nov said Japan should be able to apply its right to fight in collective self-defence to other allies as well as U.S.. Japan scrambled fighter jets after Chinese aircraft sighted near Diaoyu/Senkaku islands 16 Nov; 4 Chinese coast guard vessels sailed near disputed area same day. 180 Japanese businessmen visited Beijing 18-22 Nov to promote economic cooperation. Abe mid Nov visited Cambodia and Laos in bid to strengthen ties.

- [“U.S., Japan slam China’s ‘destabilizing’ move on East China Sea airspace”](#), Reuters, 24 Nov. 2013.

 **Korean Peninsula** Continued diplomacy on resumption of six-party talks aimed at denuclearisation of DPRK: Chinese envoy for Korean Peninsula affairs Wu Dawei visited Pyongyang 4 Nov. ROK chief nuclear negotiator Cho Tae-yong 7 Nov held talks with U.S. and Japanese counterparts in Washington, parties agreed DPRK must take concrete steps to dismantle atomic program for talks to resume; Cho later met with Wu in Beijing. U.S. DPRK envoy Glyn Davies travelled to Beijing, Seoul and Tokyo. Chinese state councillor Yang Jiechi visited Seoul 19-22 Nov, together with ROK Director of National Security reiterated joint commitment to ease tensions in peninsula. Signs of possible shift in Seoul’s stance towards DPRK, with ROK unification minister 1 Nov saying govt considers lifting “24 May sanctions” preventing economic relations between Koreas; President Park said in interview she is open to talks with DPRK leader Kim Jong-un. Pyongyang issued aggressive statements towards ROK presidential office on third anniversary of its shelling of ROK’s Yŏnp’yŏng Island 23 Nov. IAEA 28 Nov said it was “seriously concerned” about activity observed at Yongbyon nuclear complex consistent with effort to restart reactor.

- [“U.S. N. Korea envoy in Asia amid push to revive nuclear talks”](#), VOA, 18 Nov. 2013.

South Asia

 **Afghanistan** Politicians, elders, scholars and other leading figures gathered 19-24 Nov for Loya Jirga (traditional council), endorsed Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA) with U.S.; President Karzai 24 Nov said will not sign deal into law until after 5 April presidential polls, but later backtracked, leaving his intentions unclear. Karzai 28 Nov condemned NATO airstrike in Helmand province that reportedly killed child, said will not sign BSA if killings continue; NATO apologised 29 Nov. Insurgent attacks continued: uptick in explosions, suicide attacks to coincide with Loya Jirga including at least 6 killed 17 Nov in explosion in central Kabul. Intelligence services 7 Nov reportedly foiled suicide attack on senior govt official in Kabul. Security forces 3 Nov seized some 50 tonnes of explosives in Paktia province. Pakistan PM Sharif visited 30 Nov, discussed peace efforts, bilateral relations. Independent Electoral Complaints Commission 19 Nov said only one disqualified presidential candidate, Daud Siltanzoi, reinstated to final list.

- Samina Ahmed, “Don’t sacrifice Afghan Women for a Deal with the Taliban”, Christian Science Monitor, 12 Nov. 2013.
- Mark Schneider, “Afghan Security Agreement Needed”, The Hill, 15 Nov. 2013.
- “What future does security pact give Afghanistan?”, BBC, 24 Nov. 2013.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°252, *Women and Conflict in Afghanistan*, 14 Oct. 2013.



Bangladesh Political crisis deepened. Awami League (AL) leader/PM Hasina formed “all-party” interim cabinet to supervise Jan 2014 elections, based on 19 Oct AL proposal to form joint election cabinet with opposition. Ministers submitted resignations 11 Nov, President Abdul Hamid 19 Nov swore in new 8-minister interim govt comprised entirely of pro-AL politicians after 19-party opposition led by Bangladesh National Party (BNP) refused to join, calling it “another version” of previous AL govt and continuing call for transfer of power to neutral caretaker govt ahead of elections. Opposition 4-7 Nov enforced 84-hour strike to protest new cabinet; clashes with AL-supporters and security forces left 2 dead, over 100 injured. Violence reignited 9 Nov after police arrested 5 senior BNP leaders for “instigating” attacks. Election Commission 26 Nov announced elections to be held 5 Jan, urged all parties to participate; 28 Nov said elections could be postponed if govt and opposition agree. Opposition rejected date, called for suspension of elections, 26-29 Nov held new strikes and demonstrations; 22 reported killed in unrest and clashes; 30 Nov started another 72-hour nationwide strike demanding postponement of elections. BNP leader Khaleda Zia 20 Nov requested President Hamid resolve political deadlock “within his constitutional limits”, said opposition would not participate in “one-sided election”. International Crimes Tribunal 7 Nov sentenced British Muslim leader Chowdhury Mueen Uddin to death in absentia for alleged 1971 war crimes; Uddin said trial “politically motivated”. Special court 4 Nov sentenced 152 ex-border guards to death for 2009 2-day mutiny over low wages; UN human rights chief Navi Pillay criticised trial for failure to meet international standards, said defendants were tortured.

- “Trench warfare”, *Economist*, 20 Nov. 2013.



India (non-Kashmir) Govt deployed over 100,000 security personnel to secure 11 Nov elections in restive Chhattisgarh region; polls saw 75% turnout despite Maoist boycott. Maoists killed village head and 2 bodyguards in Abkola village, Gaya District 11 Nov. Several security forces killed in reported Maoist attacks in Sukma, Bijapur and Munger districts.

- “Electoral rebuff in Chhattisgarh”, *EurasiaReview*, 18 Nov. 2013.



Kashmir Lull in Indian-Pakistani military exchanges across Line of Control (LoC). Indian military 22 Nov claimed Pakistani troops opened fire on Indian positions in Mendhar sector, Poonch district, 1 injured. Pakistan PM Sharif 23 Nov said India-Pakistan dialogue to resume after early 2014 Indian parliamentary elections. Indian Secretary of Commerce Arvind Mehta 15 Nov urged Pakistan to grant India Most Favoured Nation (MFN) trading status. Unidentified militants 7 Nov killed 2 policemen in Avantipur, next to Srinagar; 16 Nov injured 5 soldiers in ambush on army convoy on Kupwara-Srinagar road.

- “Talks likely only after elections in India: Nawaz Sharif”, *ZNews*, 23 Nov. 2013.



Nepal Elections for new Constituent Assembly (CA) held 19 Nov with little violence, turnout close to 70%, after dissenting groups, including breakaway Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (CPN-M), enforced shutdown days before polls but refrained from using violence or obstructing vote. Domestic and international monitors 21 Nov said elections “free and fair”. Near-complete results 28 Nov indicate lead for Nepali Congress and United Marxist Leninist (UML), unexpected major losses for Unified Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (UCPN-M), coming in distant third, and for Madhesi parties. UCPN-M, Madhesi People’s Rights Forum-Nepal and Federal Socialist Party 20-22 Nov claimed elections were rigged, boycotted counting. Parties did not present evidence but 27 Nov submitted request to Election Commission to probe irregularities. UCPN-M demanding constitutional amendment for consensus govt, NC and UML refuse. UML 26 Nov demanded parliament elect new president.

- “Nepalis give politicians another chance, vote for charter assembly”, *Reuters*, 19 Nov. 2013.



Pakistan Mullah Fazlullah 7 Nov replaced Hakeemullah Mehsud, killed 1 Nov in U.S. drone strike, as head of Pakistani Taliban; Fazlullah vowed to launch strikes in Punjab, stronghold of ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N). Govt condemned attack on Mehsud, lodged formal complaint with U.S. ambassador; Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) threatened to block NATO supplies transiting through Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) province in retaliation. PTI and KPK coalition partner Jamaati-i-Islami leaders and activists began Peshawar sit-in 23 Nov to block NATO supply trucks, disrupting domestic economic activity and Afghanistan-Pakistan trade. As part of anti-drone campaign PTI 27 Nov released name of alleged CIA chief in Pakistan, demanded he be tried. PM Sharif 27 Nov appointed Lt. Gen Raheel Sharif to replace army chief Kayani. Sectarian attacks in Karachi continued, including shooting of 5 Shias 5 Nov and killing of 7 Sunnis 6 Nov. Security operations to combat Karachi violence continued, Sindh police late Oct reported 6,840 suspected criminals arrested since start of operation on 7 Sept; 6 alleged militants killed 13 Nov in clash with police after 3 bombs targeting 2 Shia mosques injured 16. At least 9 killed 15 Nov in riots in Rawalpindi; incident also sparked sectarian violence in Punjab and KPK’s Kohat district 16-17 Nov.

- “Lt Gen Raheel Sharif chosen as new army chief”, *Dawn*, 27 Nov. 2013.



Sri Lanka Commonwealth Heads of Govt Meeting (CHOGM) held in Colombo 15-17 Nov with lowest attendance on record, with only 27 of 53 heads of govt attending; Indian PM Singh 11 Nov announced decision to boycott summit; Canada and Mauritian PMs also chose not to attend, citing human rights concerns. International media coverage extremely negative, focused on Sri Lankan record of human rights abuses, intimidation of Sri Lankan activists, attempts to block Tamil protests. British PM Cameron 15 Nov visited Jaffna, met with Tamil National Alliance (TNA) leaders, endorsed international investigation into alleged war crimes should Sri Lanka fail to complete credible and independent investigation by March 2014 UNHRC session. Chinese foreign ministry 18 Nov released statement asking govt to “make efforts to protect and promote human rights”. President Rajapaksa 17 Nov mooted truth commission after meeting with South African President Zuma during CHOGM; govt 26 Nov announced census to count civil war deaths. Northern Provincial Council 13 Nov passed resolution calling for replacement of provincial governor on grounds he is retired general.

- Alan Keenan, "SA Can influence Sri Lanka in Positive Way", IOL News, 18 Nov. 2013.
- "Shadows over commonwealth summit in Sri Lanka", BBC, 14 Nov. 2013.

New Crisis Group Asia Report N°253, *Sri Lanka's Potemkin Peace: Democracy Under Fire*, 13 Nov. 2013. Despite recent moves meant to show progress towards post-war reconciliation and respect for human rights, Sri Lanka's government has not altered the authoritarian direction of its policies, and the rights and security of all communities remain under threat.

South East Asia

➡ **Indonesia** Govt suspended cooperation with Australia on some anti-terrorist and other activities amid diplomatic storm over revelations of Australian phone-tapping of President Yudhoyono and other senior figures.

- "Otsus Plus: The debate over enhanced special autonomy for Papua", IPAC, 25 Nov. 2013.

➡ **Myanmar** Unprecedented meeting between leaders of almost all ethnic armed groups hosted by Kachin Independence Organisation (KIO) at their Laiza HQ 30 Oct-2 Nov followed by meeting in Kachin State capital Myitkyina between armed group leaders and govt 3-5 Nov. Discussed draft text for Nationwide Ceasefire Accord; no final agreement, but parties agreed to follow-up meeting in Karen State capital in Dec; govt still hopes to hold nationwide ceasefire signing ceremony early 2014. Senior KIO leader General Gun Maw visited Yangon mid-Nov for talks with Myanmar Peace Centre and Kachin community leaders, gave public speech, in govt-approved visit. Fighting flared in Mansi township, Kachin State in recent weeks, displacing several hundred civilians. Rakhine State authorities late Oct brought charges against 61 people (out of 78 initially arrested), majority Buddhists, for various offences including murder in relation to anti-Muslim violence in Thandwe town. Govt 15 Nov released 69 political prisoners; estimated 60 still in jail. EU began €10m program providing police training on riot control, community policing. OIC delegation visited Myanmar, including Rakhine State, to see situation of Muslims affected by communal violence. EU delegation led by foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton also visited.

- "Help Myanmar's peace talks to transform Asia", *Financial Times*, 21 Nov. 2013.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°251, *The Dark Side of Transition: Violence Against Muslims in Myanmar*, 1 Oct. 2013.

➡ **Philippines** More than 5,500 people confirmed dead, 1,700 missing, 3.6mn reported displaced after typhoon Haiyan struck country 8 Nov, hitting east and central regions. Govt's chief negotiator with MILF 5 Nov said confident that peace talks would be completed soon with agreement on power- and wealth-sharing annexes. MILF 7 Nov said it will evolve into political party after peace deal with govt is completed. EU donated additional €8mn to post-conflict recovery in Mindanao. Troops killed 2 New People's Army communist rebels outside Tacloban who were reportedly part of group seeking to hijack typhoon relief supplies. NPA rebels 2 Nov clashed with troops: at least 6 rebels killed, several rebels, soldiers wounded. Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) rebels 5 Nov kidnapped 2 telephone company workers. Taiwanese tourist killed and his wife kidnapped by suspected Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) rebels in Sabah, Malaysia

15 Nov. Suspected ASG rebels seized govt official in Sulu province 19 Nov. Marine killed in clash with ASG in Patikul, Sulu, 20 Nov.

- "MILF to stay beyond peace agreement, to evolve in political party", *Mindanao Examiner*, 7 Nov. 2013.



Thailand Bangkok saw largest protests since 2010 with anti-govt protesters occupying ministries and govt buildings late month in bid to oust elected Pheu Thai Party (PTP)-led govt of PM Yingluck Shinawatra. Lower House 1 Nov passed blanket amnesty bill that would allow exiled former PM Thaksin Shinawatra to return and absolve opposition Democrat Party leaders for role in 2010 crackdown-related deaths. Bill sparked wave of protests, led by Democrat MP Suthep Thaugsuban, swelling into movement to eradicate "Thaksin regime". Senate 11 Nov rejected amnesty bill. Suthep and 8 other Democrat MPs announced resignation in order to lead protests. Constitutional Court 20 Nov ruled Sept amendment to establish all-elected Senate unconstitutional, dismissed petition to dissolve PTP. Anti-govt rallies reignited 23 Nov. Under banner of Civil Movement for Democracy (CMD), protesters 25 Nov occupied foreign and finance ministries. Cabinet 25 Nov invoked Internal Security Act in Bangkok and neighbouring provinces, court issued arrest warrant for Suthep. CDM protesters 26-27 Nov surrounded other ministries and govt buildings, 29 Nov stormed army HQ, 1 Dec attempted to breach security barriers at Govt House; police responded with tear gas. At least 2 killed, dozens injured in protest-related violence 30 Nov. Thousands of Red Shirts gathered in Bangkok stadium in support of govt. PM Yingluck 28 Nov survived vote of no confidence 297-134, said no early election. ICJ 11 Nov affirmed Preah Vihear Temple complex situated in Cambodian territory, boundary to be determined bilaterally; ruling failed to galvanise public against govt. National Security Council chief Lt Gen Paradorn Pattanatabutr 27 Nov said next round of dialogue between govt and Barisan Revolusi Nasional (BRN) early Dec, postponed due to political turmoil. Deep South Watch reported 32 deaths, 72 wounded in 118 incidents in Oct in main conflict areas, mostly due to bombings. Gunmen shot dead village headman in Narathiwat's Muang District 7 Nov. Motorcycle bomb exploded in Rangae 7 Nov, killing 2 soldiers, wounding 6 others. Bomb injured 4 police, 8 civilians in Waeng District, Narathiwat, 13 Nov. IED attack wounded 3 rangers in Mae Kaen District, Pattani 14 Nov. Gunmen killed off-duty ranger in Muang District, Pattani, 19 Nov.

- "Bubbling over", *Economist*, 26 Nov. 2013.

Europe

Balkans



Bosnia High Representative Valentin Inzko in report to UNSC expressed concern over political crisis, need for reform, Bosnian Serb calls for secession. Preliminary results of Oct census show fall in population from 1991 level from 4.4mn to 3.79mn. Upper chamber of parliament 5 Nov adopted changes to Law on Personal Numbers, required for newborns to obtain personal documents. Prosecutors 27 Nov indicted Federation entity President Budimir and several other senior figures over suspicious amnesties.

- "Inzko laments Bosnia's stagnation in UN report", *Balkan Insight*, 13 Nov. 2013.

➡ **Kosovo** Local elections held across Kosovo 3 Nov, including first local polls to be held under Kosovo jurisdiction in country's 4 mainly-Serb northern municipalities. Polls marked by widespread fraud. Turnout among Kosovo Serbs low despite encouragement to vote from Belgrade, amid deeply flawed electoral preparations in north. Serb hardliners threatened Serbs who turned out to vote, attacked 3 polling stations, prompting OSCE staff to withdraw from N Kosovo; violence prompted widespread condemnation, plus criticism of police handling of security. Central Election Commission (CEC) ordered re-run of vote in 3 assaulted polling stations in North Mitrovica. Amid heavy security no incidents reported at re-run on 17 Nov, but turnout still low at 22% despite intensified pressure from Belgrade to vote; prosecutors subsequently opened investigation into whether Belgrade-backed "Srpska" list coerced people into voting. CEC also ordered re-vote in Zvečan after losing candidate presented evidence of fraud. 10 out of 35 municipalities saw outright winner in first round; run-off vote for others scheduled for 1 Dec. "Srpska" list won vote in 3 Serb municipalities, North Mitrovica headed for run-off.

- "Kosovo PM urges Serbs to vote in make-or-break elections", *Guardian*, 14 Nov. 2013.

Caucasus

➡ **Armenia** Govt 6 Nov signed cooperation agreement with Russia-led "Eurasian Economic Union", seen as larger political component of Customs Union which govt decided to join in Sept. Dozens of anti-govt protesters clashed with police in Yerevan 5 Nov, several arrested, some sent to psychiatric hospitals.

- "What next after the EU's Vilnius summit?", *EU Observer*, 27 Nov. 2013.

➡ **Azerbaijan** President Aliyev visited Turkey in reaffirmation of political and military alliance with Ankara regarding conflict with Armenia and coordination on energy projects. Council of Europe human rights commissioner called on Azerbaijan to make progress on human rights reforms ahead of its chairmanship of body beginning May 2014, amid reports of continuing pressure and detention of some opposition journalists.

- "Crackdown under way in wake of Azerbaijani presidential election", RFE/RL, 14 Nov. 2013.

➡ **Nagorno-Karabakh (Azerbaijan)** Armenian President Sargsyan and Azerbaijan President Aliyev met for first time in 2 years 19 Nov following pressure by OSCE mediators. EU and U.S. hailed meeting, no concrete results reported, presidents to meet again at unspecified date. Both sides accused other of hundreds of ceasefire violations during month. Sargsyan 12 Nov visited NK, inspected military forces. Formal ally Russia to send more troops to Armenia as well as a squadron of military helicopters; President Putin to visit 2 Dec.

- "Are Armenia, Azerbaijan closer to signing basic principles of Karabakh peace agreement?", RFE/RL, 22 Nov. 2013.

➡ **Georgia** Tensions with Russia increased, European Union Monitoring Mission expressed "concern" over Russian troops' continued "borderisation" of administrative boundary of largely unrecognised "South Ossetia" entity. PM Ivanishvili quit and left politics, naming Irakli Garibashvili, 31-year-old interior minister, new PM 18 Nov. New President Margvelashvili, whose powers under new constitution mostly moved to parliament, sworn in.

Country initialled Association Agreement with EU 28 Nov, hopes to formally conclude with signing in 2014.

- "Exiting president reflects on Georgia", *New York Times*, 17 Nov. 2013.

➡ **North Caucasus (Russia)** Suspected main organiser of Oct Volgograd bombing Dmitry Sokolov and 4 other militants killed 16 Nov during counter-terrorism operation (CTO) in Makhachkala, Dagestan. Security forces began anti-terrorist trainings ahead of Sochi Olympics. Increase in CTOs in Dagestan; almost daily security incidents: 3 militants killed in Makhachkala 27 Nov; 2 militants and 2 women killed during special operation in Novosaitli, Khasavyurt district 20 Nov; 2 police killed in Kumtorkalinsky district 14 Nov; 1 killed in terrorist attack on department store in Makhachkala 8 Nov; 3 militants including Levashinsky insurgent group leader killed 4 Nov during operation in Laksky district. In Kabardino-Balkaria 4 suspected militants killed in Baksan district 18, 20 Nov. Leader of Plievskaya insurgent group and another militant killed in Ingushetia 27 Nov. Sustained pressure on Salafi communities in Dagestan: 40 Salafis detained in Makhachkala 14 Nov; 6 injured in 15 Nov brawl when Salafis were denied entrance to mosque in Leninkent near Makhachkala. Tensions rose over land disputes: ethnic Kumyks protested after 11 Nov detention of 15 activists in Karaman, Dagestan; following long-term conflict with republican authorities ethnic Balkars took over distribution of land in Beleya Rechka village 18-19 Nov. Justice official Zainutdin Madanov gunned down 4 Nov in Makhachkala, fourth judge killed in N Caucasus this year. Moscow court 11 Nov sentenced 3 Ingushetians to life imprisonment for Jan 2011 Domodedovo Airport attack. Police detained 15 members of extremist Islamist organisation Al-Takfir Wal-Hijra in Moscow 27 Nov.

- "Dmitri Sokolov, bus bomber's husband, 4 others killed in Dagestan", AP, 16 Nov. 2013.

Eastern Europe

➡ **Ukraine** Mass protests in Kiev and other cities late month, clashes between police and protesters, after govt 21 Nov delayed association agreement with EU under economic pressure from Russia.

- "Stealing their dream", *Economist*, 30 Nov. 2013.

Western Europe/Mediterranean

➡ **Cyprus** New round of reunification talks between Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities, planned to begin by end Oct, delayed as negotiators unable to agree on joint statement. After informal meeting with Turkish Cypriot President Eroğlu 25 Nov, Greek Cypriot President Anastasiades said "still a long way to go" before "substantive dialogue" could start. Following talks with negotiators from both sides early Nov, UN special envoy Downer said efforts "inching ahead". Republic of Cyprus govt 22 Nov announced it will begin talks with Italian-South Korean venture on licensing 2 offshore blocks for natural gas exploitation.

- "U.N. struggles to break impasse in Cyprus talks", Reuters, 6 Nov. 2013.

➡ **Turkey** Flagging peace process between govt and Kurdish PKK insurgency reinvigorated as PM Erdoğan and Iraqi Kurdistan leader Masoud Barzani 16 Nov gave joint public address in Diyarbakır; Erdoğan used word "Kurdistan", visited Diyarbakır municipality run by pro-Kurdish BDP. On first visit to Turkey

since 1992, Barzani spoke of Turkish-Kurdish “brotherhood”, urged Turkish Kurds to support PKK peace process. Sporadic army-PKK clashes continue: PKK 15 Nov attacked army convoy in Nusaybin; 19 Nov set construction vehicles on fire on Şırnak-Van highway. Continued reports of smuggling along Syrian border: Turkish border control 2 Nov intercepted convoy carrying 1,000kg of chemicals; 7 Nov seized cargo truck loaded with 1,200 weapons. Govt figures show over 600,000 Syrian refugees in Turkey, over 200,000 of these in camps, rest in cities. Thousands 7 Nov participated in BDP-organised protests against construction of wall along Syrian border in Nusaybin. FM Davutoğlu denied Western accusations that Turkey allows jihadi fighters to transit through its territory to Syria. Interior ministry 27 Nov reported around 500 Turkish citizens fighting in Syria alongside al-Qaeda linked rebels. In attempt to mend ties with Shiite regional powers, Davutoğlu 1 Nov hosted Iranian FM Zarif; during 11 Nov trip to Iraq, visited Shiite shrine, met Shiite spiritual leader al-Sistani. Egypt 23 Nov announced expulsion of Turkish ambassador, citing govt’s “provocative” criticism of Cairo. Thousands of Turkish Alevis 3 Nov staged anti-govt demonstration in Istanbul demanding “equal citizenship”. Ending 3-year hiatus in accession negotiations, EU, Turkey 5 Nov opened chapter 22 on regional policy.

- “Kurdish leader makes historic Turkey visit”, Al Jazeera, 20 Nov. 2013.

Latin America and Caribbean

Bolivia Govt’s long-awaited study on domestic coca use said legal demand 20,690 metric tons, requiring 14,705ha of cultivation; compared with current legal limit of 12,000ha, 20,000ha demanded by coca growers, 25,300ha under cultivation in 2012.

- “Stalled Bolivia coca report delivers moderate verdict”, Insight Crime, 14 Nov. 2013.

Colombia Significant step forward in govt-FARC peace talks 6 Nov with announcement of partial agreement on political participation, 2nd of 5 agenda issues; agreement calls for end in using arms in politics and democratic opening of political system. President Santos 26 Nov appointed María Paulina Riveros and Nigeria Rentería to become first female lead negotiators. Talks resumed 28 Nov with discussions on issue of illegal drugs. Defence Minister Pinzón 12 Nov revealed alleged FARC plans to kill former President Uribe, critical of talks, and Attorney General Eduardo Montealegre, strong supporter of talks; FARC’s Southern Bloc 27 Nov denied plans. Hopes revived that progress in Havana could help overcome apparent impasse in attempts to start peace talks with National Liberation Army (ELN); ELN’s Central Command 11 Nov praised political participation accord as early “Christmas gift”, but also said “magic wand” needed to convert it into reality. ELN 4 Nov released 3 oil workers kidnapped in Arauca in Sept, 5 Nov announced plan to free engineer working for Chilean timber company held hostage since mid-2012. Military strike in Fortul (Arauca) 24 Nov killed at least 10 ELN members. Govt 27 Nov recalled ambassador to Nicaragua amid worsening row over maritime borders; decision comes day after country launched legal action at ICJ, alleging Colombia “made threats of force”.

- Javier Ciurlizza, “A Step Forward in Colombia Talks”, Latin America: Crime and Politics, 7 Nov. 2013.
- “Colombia agrees Farc political participation”, BBC, 6 Nov. 2013.

Guatemala Security forces 12 Nov arrested 8 people for allegedly organising Oct escape of suspected drug boss José Ranferi Ponce Rodríguez. Govt sent hundreds of soldiers, police to Izabal dept to search for Ponce and allies; President Pérez Molina said suspect may have fled to Honduras. Spanish judge 4 Nov indicted former minister Carlos Roberto Vielmann for extrajudicial killing of 10 prisoners in 2005 and 2006. Unknown gunmen 28 Nov killed municipal council member in eastern city Jalapa.

- “Capturan a familiares de hermanos Ponce”, *Siglo21*, 13 Nov. 2013.

Mexico Security forces 4 Nov took control of Lázaro Cárdenas, major seaport in Michoacán considered hub for importing chemicals to make methamphetamines. Takeover came week after assailants attacked gas stations and power plants in Michoacán, leaving half a million people without electricity; authorities suspected attacks were carried out by members of Knights Templar cartel, though no claim of responsibility. Troops 7 Nov arrested entire police force in Vista Hermosa municipality during investigation into disappearance of 2 federal agents, found mass graves containing over 53 bodies in border between Michoacán and Jalisco. Mayor of Santa Ana Maya kidnapped, tortured, found dead in car 7 Nov. Supreme Court 6 Nov ordered release of Israel Arzate Meléndez who claimed he was tortured into confessing his involvement in 2010 massacre of 15 people in Ciudad Juárez.

- “Mexican armed forces take over security in key Pacific port”, Reuters, 4 Nov. 2013.

Venezuela President Maduro mid-month announced prices of electrical appliances unjustifiably high, ordered them reduced and told consumers to rush to shops and “leave nothing on shelves”; price controls subsequently extended to other consumer goods. Retail sector representatives warned it will be virtually impossible to maintain commercial operations. National Assembly 19 Nov approved law giving Maduro power to legislate by decree, primarily on economic matters, for 12 months, after govt removed opposition legislator on corruption charges. Local elections appeared set to go ahead 8 Dec despite fears govt would postpone poll. Opposition MUD seen as likely to make gains amid declining support in polls for ruling party, which is defending some 80% of municipalities. Govt decreed 8 Dec “Chavez loyalty day”, apparently planning to hold political rallies to coincide with poll in violation of electoral law. Tens of thousands of opposition supporters marched 23 Nov; MUD leader Capriles’ national tours coordinator arrested by military intelligence agents before marches started.

- “Opposition marches in Venezuela ahead of local elections”, Reuters, 23 Nov. 2013.

Middle East and North Africa

Eastern Mediterranean

Israel-Palestine Secret peace negotiations stagnated amid mutual recriminations and continued Israeli settlement construction. Israeli govt 3 Nov approved construction of 1,700 new homes ahead of visit by U.S. Sec State Kerry; Kerry 6 Nov said settlements “illegitimate”, warned of “third Intifada” if peace talks fail. Palestinian negotiating team 13 Nov resigned in protest after 11 Nov details emerged of Israeli plan to construct 23,786 new settlement

homes in occupied W Bank and E Jerusalem. PA president Abbas 17 Nov rejected resignation but will replace negotiator Mohammad Shtayyeh, said talks to continue. Israeli PM Netanyahu 13 Nov cancelled settlement plan, said it created “unnecessary clashes with international community” as govt tries to stall Iran P5+1 nuclear agreement. Netanyahu 24 Nov again called interim P5+1 and Iran agreement “historic mistake” to which “Israel is not bound”, said deal allowed Iranians to produce nuclear weapons. Israeli troops 7-8 Nov shot and killed 2 Palestinian men at checkpoints in W Bank, 26 Nov killed 3 suspected militants near Hebron. Palestinian youth 11 Nov stabbed Israeli soldier to death on bus in Afula, N Israel. Humanitarian and economic situation in Gaza deteriorated with severe fuel shortages caused by Israeli blockade and Egyptian crackdown on tunnel economy: only power plant closed 1 Nov; large waste water treatment plant closed 14 Nov, caused sewage to flood Gaza City. Demonstrations in Hura and Haifa 30 Nov against plan to forcibly relocate 40,000 Bedouins from southern Negev. Swiss forensic tests 6 Nov revealed ex-PLO leader Yasser Arafat likely poisoned with polonium; Israel denied involvement.

- [“Palestinian peace talks delegation resigns, Abbas says”](#), Reuters, 13 Nov. 2013.

New Crisis Group Middle East and North Africa Report N°147, [Leap of Faith: Israel's National Religious and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict](#), 21 Nov. 2013. For peace talks to produce an agreement enjoying maximum legitimacy, Israel's national-religious community should be engaged lest it obstruct the path to peace.



Lebanon Al-Qaeda-linked Abdullah Azzam Brigade claimed 19 Nov suicide bomb outside Iranian embassy in Beirut, aiming to force “Iran's Hezbollah [to] withdraw from Syria”; 26 killed including Iranian official, 146 injured. Attacks against Alawites continued to multiply in Tripoli, including 2 Nov when Sunni gunmen beat and shot passengers on bus transporting Alawite workers through Sunni Bab al-Tebbaneh neighbourhood, wounding 9. Clashes between security forces and gunmen from Bab al-Tebbaneh and Alawite Jabal Mohsen neighbourhoods 30 Nov left 6 dead. Sectarian tensions inflamed after Internal Security Forces (ISF) 4 Nov issued search warrant for Alawite Arab Democratic Party (ADP) members, including General Secretary Ali Eid, charged with helping suspect in Aug Tripoli bombings escape to Syria. Syrian Army 5 Nov stationed troops near Lebanese border close to Eid's house, allegedly to deter his arrest; ADP leader Rifaat Eid 4 Nov said arrest could trigger civil war, ISF “legitimate” target. Unidentified gunmen 12 Nov killed pro-Syrian Islamic Labor Front member Saad Ghieh in Tripoli. 12,000 Syrian refugees fled into Beqaa Valley border villages 15-19 Nov to escape new offensive by Syrian govt and Hezbollah along border. Syrian army 14 and 19 Nov fired rockets into Aarsal in Beqaa Valley, no injuries reported. Hezbollah involvement in Syrian conflict proving major obstacle in attempts at cabinet formation: Future Bloc (FB) leader MP Fouad Siniora 13 Nov said FB would only accept formation of political cabinet if “Hezbollah returns from Syria” or a technocratic cabinet is formed; Hezbollah chief Nasrallah 14 Nov called withdrawal from Syria “impossible condition”.

- [“Beirut suicide blasts raise tensions in Lebanon as Sunni militants target Iran”](#), *Guardian*, 19 Nov. 2013.



Syria Major military offensives outside Aleppo and Damascus saw govt forces secure supply lines and push back rebels. Govt 1-15 Nov seized Safira, Tel Arn and Tel Hasel towns along Aleppo-Homs

supply road and military base near Aleppo airport. Pro-govt forces 7 Nov captured Sbeineh, large rebel enclave S of Damascus; 15 Nov started offensive along Lebanese border in Qalamoun mountains to disrupt rebel supply routes, capturing Qara village 19 Nov, Deir Attiya village 29 Nov. Amid increased disarray among rebel forces divided over brutality and growing influence of Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIS) in north, 7 mainstream Islamist rebel groups seeking to counter ISIS 22 Nov agreed to merge into “Islamic Front”. Commander of powerful Liwa al-Tawhid brigade killed in airstrike 18 Nov. Syrian Kurdish militias continued campaign against ISIS and al-Nusra rebels: Committees for the Protection of the Kurdish People (YPG) and militia of Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD) 4 Nov gained control from rebels over 19 towns and villages in NE. PYD 14 Nov unilaterally declared Syrian Kurdish self-rule over conquered territory, sparking widespread criticism: opposition Syrian National Coalition (SNC) 14 Nov said PYD “hostile” to Syrian revolution, Iraq's Kurdistan Regional Govt President Masoud Barzani accused PYD of “autocracy”. UNSG Ban 25 Nov said Geneva II peace talks to be held 22 Jan. SNC 11 Nov agreed to attend talks with preconditions: govt must create humanitarian corridors and release detainees, Assad to play “no role” in transitional period. Govt 27 Nov said it will attend Geneva talks, but not negotiate handover of power.

- Noah Bonsey, [“La coalition nationale syrienne minée par ses parrains étrangers”](#), *Orient XXI*, 19 Nov. 2013.
- [“Rebels v rebels”](#), *Economist*, 23 Nov. 2013.

Gulf



Bahrain Thousands of Shiites 22 Nov protested in Manama against continued govt convictions of high-profile activists. Courts 3 Nov charged Sheikh Salman, head of main opposition group al-Wefaq, with “insulting” interior ministry, 17 Nov extended travel ban on al-Wefaq member Khalil al-Marzooq; al-Wefaq 20 Nov said it was being “systematically targeted”. Court 4 Nov sentenced 4 Shiites to life, 6 to 15 years' jail over alleged Iranian-backed plan to assassinate public figures; 10 Nov sentenced 2 to life, 2 to 15 years' jail for planning July car bomb outside al-Riffa mosque. Protesters 13 Nov threw petrol bomb at Manama police patrol, wounding 1 officer.


- [“Bahrain charges top opposition leader”](#), Reuters, 3 Nov. 2013.




Iran Govt and P5+1 countries 24 Nov reached historic interim agreement over Iranian nuclear program in Geneva after decade of deadlock; described as first step towards final negotiations on normalisation of Iran's nuclear dossier. Agreement outlined mutual confidence-building measures to be executed over 6 months: Iran to restrict uranium enrichment, not install more centrifuges, freeze work on Arak heavy water reactor, and establish unprecedented transparency mechanisms in cooperation with IAEA; in return P5+1 will refrain from further sanctions, allow Iran to maintain current levels of oil export and establish channel for humanitarian trade, release over \$4bn in Iranian oil sales revenue from frozen accounts and suspend restrictions on key sectors of economy. U.S. President Obama 24 Nov hailed deal as historic “first step” to “roll back” Iranian nuclear program; Iranian Supreme leader Ali Khamenei 24 Nov said talks served as “basis for further intelligent actions”; 3 Nov had warned Iranian hardliners not to obstruct negotiations. Saudi Arabia and Israel led opposition to deal, demanding complete dismantlement of Iran's nuclear program. Tehran 12 Nov made separate agreement with IAEA, allowing IAEA inspections

of Arak nuclear facility and Gachin uranium mine ahead of 11 Dec IAEA-Iran talks; 28 Nov invited IAEA to inspect Arak. Govt 4 Nov acknowledged death of Mohammad Jamali Paghalleh, Revolutionary Guard Corps general killed in Syria during firefight near Shiite Sayyida Zainab shrine in Damascus. Unidentified attacker 10 Nov shot and killed Safdar Rahmat Abadi, deputy industry minister. Iran executed 16 rebels 26 Oct in reprisal after Sunni group killed 14 guards near Pakistan border.

- Ali Vaez, “Nucléaire iranien: une situation inquiétante mais sous contrôle”, *Rue89*, 12 Nov. 2013.
- “Secret talks helped forge Iran nuclear deal”, *Guardian*, 25 Nov. 2013.


 **Iraq** Violence across country continued including: at least 34 killed, 61 wounded in series of attacks 25 Nov; 25 killed in car bombing 21 Nov in Sadiya; at least 60 killed in bombings and shootings 20 Nov; over 50 reportedly killed execution-style across Iraq 29 Nov. Shia militia 21 Nov fired mortars across border with Saudi Arabia; Saudi Arabia deployed troops to border. UN envoy Nickolay Mladenov 25 Nov said Syrian conflict fuelling terrorism and sectarian tensions in Iraq; France 25 Nov offered weapons, training to combat violence. Turkish FM visited 10-11 Nov, met Iraqi counterpart and PM Maliki; officials pledged to cooperate further, end tensions between two states. Justice ministry official 26 Nov reported 12 hanged for terror-related charges.

- “Iraq violence leaves scores dead”, *Al Jazeera*, 27 Nov. 2013.

 **Yemen** Violence in northern provinces between Huthis and various adversaries increased. Serious clashes in Dammaj, Sadaa governorate, killed over 100 early Nov; Huthis claimed self-defence against influx of foreign fighters, Salafis said Huthis launched unprovoked strike; presidential mediation committee has proven unable to secure enduring ceasefire. Abdulkareem Jadban, Huthi MP participating in national dialogue (NDC), assassinated in Sanaa 22 Nov. NDC faltered when southern conference leader, Mohammed Ali Ahmed, withdrew 27 Nov. No agreement yet reached on implementing dialogue and continuing transition after Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) roadmap, originally scheduled to end in Feb 2014. Thousands demonstrated 30 Nov in Aden, called for independence of South. UN envoy Jamal Benomar 27 Nov warned spoilers against derailing transition process, said UN supports achieving tasks of transition, not specific timeline. 2 Belarusian military instructors shot 26 Nov in Sanaa. At least 5 killed in drone strike 7 Nov in Abyan; air raid reportedly killed 12 suspected al-Qaeda terrorists in Abyan 26 Nov. Tribesmen 29 Nov blew up main oil export pipeline east of Sanaa.

- “Yemen ceasefire unravels within hours”, *Al Jazeera*, 5 Nov. 2013.

North Africa


 **Algeria** Ruling National Liberation Front (FLN) 16 Nov designated President Bouteflika candidate for 2014 elections. Clashes between Chaambis (Arabs) and Mozabites (Berbers) 24 Nov in Ghardaïa wilaya left several injured. Hundreds of villagers east of Tizi Ouzou 7 Nov protested against insecurity.

- “Bouteflika et ses généraux”, *Jeune Afrique*, 20 Nov. 2013.


 **Egypt** Court 4 Nov postponed trial of deposed president Morsi and 14 co-defendants until 8 Jan; appeals court 11 Nov extended Morsi's detention for 30 days. Appeals court 6 Nov rejected legal challenge by Muslim Brotherhood against Sept ruling that banned group's

activities and seized its funds; MB 7 Nov said it will survive despite ban and media “campaign of slander”. “Alliance for the Support of Legitimacy” (ASL) coalition of Islamists 16 Nov called for dialogue to end crisis on condition that govt halt security crackdown, did not call for Morsi reinstatement; govt did not officially respond but made clear acceptance of roadmap a precondition. FM Fahmy 8 Nov said Egypt will hold parliamentary elections “between Feb and March” 2014, followed by presidential vote. Constitutional committee 30 Nov passed first 138 articles of draft constitution; PM Beblawy 25 Nov suggested referendum on new constitution would take place “second half of Jan 2014”. Govt 23 Nov withdrew ambassador from Turkey, expelled Turkish ambassador after Turkish PM Erdoğan reiterated condemnation of July coup. Mass protests and arrests continued on near-daily basis: large demonstrations 19 Nov commemorated 2011 clashes with security forces in Cairo; 2 killed by police in subsequent clashes. Govt 11 Nov ended 3-month state of emergency, 23 Nov introduced “protest law” requiring advance govt approval of all demonstrations; Human Rights Watch says law will “ban protests” in Egypt, UNSG Ban 27 Nov expressed concern over law, violent dispersal of protests. Army 20 Nov vowed to continue war on “terrorism” after series of attacks: unclaimed suicide car bomb 20 Nov targeted bus transporting soldiers in N Sinai killed 11 soldiers and injured dozens; Sinai-based Islamist militants 17 Nov assassinated officer, 21 Nov killed officer during firefight in Qalubiya; unidentified gunmen 3 Nov killed 2 police at checkpoint on Cairo-Ismailia road.


- “Egypt ex-president Morsi tells trial: ‘I am president’”, *BBC*, 4 Nov. 2013.

 **Libya** Misrata-affiliated armed groups 15 Nov opened fire against peaceful anti-militia demonstrators in Tripoli, killing over 40; public outrage and threat of further demonstrations pressured other armed militias to abandon capital and hand over bases. Army and civilians late Nov clashed with Ansar al-Sharia, armed Islamist group, in Benghazi; at least 9 killed. At least 10 killed in attack on weapons depot in Brak al-Shati 28 Nov. General National Congress (GNC) 12 Nov voted to place Libya Revolutionaries' Operation Room (LROR), controversial security body accused of kidnapping PM Zeidan in Oct, under command of military Chief of Staff. Assassination of former security officials, especially in Benghazi and Derna, continued. Over 40 killed in explosion 29 Nov when locals tried to steal ammunition from weapons depot near Sabha in south.


- “Militia in Benghazi flees after deadly gun battle”, *New York Times*, 25 Nov. 2013.

 **Mauritania** Legislative elections held 23 Nov with 60% turnout despite boycott by 10 parties belonging to Coordination for Democratic Opposition (COD). Party of President Abdel Aziz, Union for the Republic, likely winner; formerly banned Islamist party Tawassoul expected to win seats and come in second place.

- “Jour de vote en Mauritanie”, *RFI*, 23 Nov. 2013.

 **Morocco** King Mohammed VI met with U.S. President Obama in Washington 22 Nov, stressed counter-terrorism/extremism collaboration.

- “Obama praises leadership of Morocco's Mohammed VI”, *AFP*, 22 Nov. 2013.

 **Tunisia** Political roadmap suffered setbacks as National Dialogue (ND) suspended after parties 4 Nov failed to reach consensus on PM candidate and opposition accused ruling Islamist party

An-Nahda of stalling process to maintain power. Court 11 Nov rejected all nominees for Independent High Electoral Commission (ISIE) tasked with organising upcoming elections, said candidates failed to meet legal standards. Opposition politicians and ruling coalition member Ettakatol 7 Nov suspended participation in National Constituent Assembly (NCA) to protest amendments to NCA procedures by An-Nahda; An-Nahda 20 Nov withdrew amendments. President Marzouki 3 Nov extended state of emergency until June 2014. National Guard 12 Nov launched operations against radical Salafist group Ansar al-Sharia (AS): arrested AS deputy leader in Kairouan, spokesman in Sidi Bouzid, released them a few days later; killed 1 suspected militant, arrested 8 in Nagga firefight. 3 landmines exploded in Mount Chaambi area 17 Nov, woman injured; security forces said mines “recently planted by terrorists”. Police 6 Nov arrested suspect accused of involvement in 23 Oct Sidi Bouzid killing of 6 soldiers. Protests in towns of Siliana, Gafsa during general strike against govt 26 Nov led to dozens wounded, rioting.

- “Tunisian talks ‘suspended’ after hitting impasse on PM”, France24, 5 Nov. 2011.

New Crisis Group Middle East and North Africa Report N°148, *Tunisia’s Borders: Jihadism and Contraband*, 28 Nov. 2013. Unless the permeability of the country’s borders is addressed, cross-border trafficking will increase jihadis’ disruptive potential and intensify the corruption of border authorities.



Western Sahara Following “acts of provocation and hostility” from Algeria, including 28 Oct African Conference of Solidarity with Sahrawi people in Abuja where speech read out on behalf of President Bouteflika called on UN to support efforts aimed at setting up international mechanism to monitor “massive and systematic human rights violations”, Morocco 30 Oct called back ambassador in Algiers. King Mohammed VI 6 Nov accused “foes” of buying opinions hostile to Morocco; Algerian PM Sellaal 7 Nov said country “did not want to teach any of its neighbours lessons,

and only wanted to live in peace”. Nationalist Istiqlal party called for Morocco to “recover territory in south east that Algeria took by force”.

- “Tensions rise between Morocco, Algeria over Western Sahara”, Al-Monitor, 8 Nov. 2013.

Crisis Group Offices

Brussels	brussels@crisisgroup.org +32 2 502 9038
Washington	washington@crisisgroup.org +1 202 785 1601
New York	newyork@crisisgroup.org +1 212 813 0820

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