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February 2014 Trends



Deteriorated Situations

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Improved Situations

Cyprus (p.8)



Unchanged Situations

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March 2014 Watchlist



Conflict Risk Alerts

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Yemen (p.11)



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** Relations between ruling CNDD-FDD and minority coalition partner UPRONA sharply deteriorated: first VP Busokoza from UPRONA dismissed 1 Feb after annulling govt's decision to replace UPRONA chairman; all 3 UPRONA ministers resigned in protest 4-5 Feb. Reshuffle mid-Feb to replace UPRONA ministers highly contested, new UPRONA VP Prosper Banzombanza appointed 13 Feb without UPRONA majority support. 3 UPRONA activists arrested 16 Feb in police raid on party meeting; 5 injured. Former rebel opposition National Forces of Liberation (FNL) leader Agathon Rwasa warned political crisis risks sparking new unrest ahead of 2015 presidential election. UNSC 13 Feb unanimously renewed BNUB mandate until end of 2014.

- Thierry Vircoulon, "Danger de rechute au Burundi: question foncière et consolidation de la paix", *Afrique Décryptages*, 20 Feb. 2014.
- "Sacking of vice president tilts Burundi into crisis", *Deutsche Welle*, 21 Feb. 2014.

New Crisis Group Africa Report N°213, *Fields of Bitterness (I): Land Reform in Burundi*, 12 Feb. 2014. Unless the government revives land governance reform in Burundi, long-term peacebuilding efforts will remain compromised. Crisis Group Africa Report N°214, *Fields of Bitterness (II): Restitution and Reconciliation in Burundi*, 17 Feb. 2014. To avoid a revival of past ethnic tensions between Hutu and Tutsi, Burundi needs to find the right balance between land restitution and national reconciliation.


 **Cameroon** UNHCR 21 Feb reported almost 20,000 CAR refugees crossed into Cameroon in Feb. Over 5,000 Cameroonian citizens reportedly repatriated from CAR so far as result of crisis. President Biya 18 Feb granted amnesty to prisoners charged with alleged corruption; French citizen Thierry Michel Atangana, detained since 1997, released.

- "Cameroon frees French national after 17 years behind bars", *Reuters*, 24 Feb. 2014.


 **Central African Republic** Widespread violence continued unabated, including increasing attacks on Muslims, despite Jan political transition and increase of MISCA forces to nearly 6,000. UNSG 20 Feb recommended establishment of UN peacekeeping mission, appealed to international community for additional 3,000 troops to reinforce MISCA in interim. France 25 Feb extended Sangaris mission indefinitely; EU said would send 1,000-strong force, troops expected to deploy in March. Attacks on Muslims by anti-balaka escalated, scores killed throughout month including several killed in repeated attacks on MISCA-escorted convoys of Muslims departing CAR. Transitional Council member assassinated 9 Feb after denouncing anti-Muslim violence. Joint French-MISCA disarmament operation 15 Feb in Bangui led to dozens of anti-balaka arrests including leaders. Seleka retreat to NE continued as anti-balaka expanded territorial control beyond Bangui; spokesman 22 Feb said militia would disarm only after all Seleka laid down weapons. Anti-balaka split between supporters of ex-President Bozizé and supporters of new national authorities. President Samba-Panza expressed concern over risk of sectarian partition of CAR, 17 Feb asked France to remain until elections

early 2015. French President Hollande 28 Feb visited Bangui, met president to discuss crisis. ICC prosecutor 7 Feb announced investigation into possible war crimes, crimes against humanity.


- Thierry Vircoulon and Thibaud Lesueur, "Central African Republic - Making the Mission Work", *AllAfrica*, 25 Feb. 2014.
- "U.N. chief wants 3,000 more troops for Central African Republic", *Reuters*, 20 Feb. 2014.

 **Chad** President Déby 17 Feb called for establishment of UN peacekeeping mission to neighbouring CAR despite previous reservations. Govt condemned attacks on Chadian troops escorting civilians fleeing CAR violence, announced successful repatriation of most Chadian citizens from CAR capital.

- "Chad says U.N. force needed to stabilize Central African Republic", *Reuters*, 18 Feb. 2014.


 **DR Congo** UN SRSR Martin Kobler early Feb visited Katanga province, called on militias to disarm; MONUSCO 18 Feb announced reinforcements to be sent to Pweto territory after surge in deadly attacks on civilians by local militias; UN 25 Feb deployed some 100 troops to Katanga. MONUSCO 20 Feb denounced execution of over 70 civilians by armed groups in N Kivu, started investigation. Govt 14 Feb claimed victory in offensive against ADF-NALU in east. Parliament 4 Feb approved law granting amnesty for acts of insurgency and war, excluding genocide and war crimes: law welcomed by UN envoys, opposed by rights groups. Major opposition figure Vital Kamerhe of Union for the Congolese Nation (UNC) repeatedly obstructed during planned tour of east; supporters in Bukavu violently dispersed by police 20 Feb, UN reported nearly 50 injured.

- "UN to boost troops in DRC's troubled Katanga Province", *IRIN*, 13 Feb. 2014.


 **Rwanda** UN Special Rapporteur Maina Kiai 2 Feb criticised President Kagame's regime as dictatorial following 10-day visit to country. 6 opposition parties met 15 Feb in Brussels to discuss potential alliance. Ex-Mayor Onesphore Rwabukombe sentenced to 14 years jail by German court for involvement in 1994 genocide. French Court de Cassation 26 Feb blocked extradition of 3 genocide suspects, overturning prior court ruling; Rwanda strongly criticised ruling.

- "14 year jail term in Germany's first Rwandan genocide trial", *Deutsche Welle*, 17 Feb. 2014.

Horn of Africa


 **Ethiopia** PM Desalegn 12 Feb said Egypt would lose if it referred Renaissance Dam issue to UNSC. Regional tensions over Ugandan intervention in S Sudan escalated: PM called on parties to S Sudan conflict to withdraw troops to guard against possible regional conflict.

- "Egypt and Ethiopia spar over the Nile", *Al Jazeera*, 6 Feb. 2014.


 **Kenya** Police 2 Feb raided Masjid Musa mosque, Mombasa; clashes with worshipers left several dead, many others injured; over 100, including children, arrested; police claimed jihadi convention underway. Fighting between Borana and Burji youths continued in Moyale, Marsabit County, NE. Nairobi police 13 Feb forcibly dispersed peaceful protests over insecurity, corruption, impunity

and high cost of living; 4 rights activists arrested. National Security Advisory Committee 13 Feb reported it had intelligence proving USAID planned to destabilise govt through ICC process.



- [“Deadly clashes after police raid Kenya”](#), Al Jazeera, 2 Feb. 2014.

 **Somalia** Al-Shabaab carried out several high-profile attacks amid beginnings of renewed AMISOM and govt offensive: at least 11 killed, including 2 senior officials, in car bomb and assault on presidential palace 21 Feb; Al-Shabaab carried out series of bombings in Mogadishu 2-3 Feb; at least 12 killed in bomb attack on intelligence HQ in Mogadishu 27 Feb. Car bomb near Mogadishu airport 13 Feb targeting UN convoy killed 7, injured 15 civilians. Al-Shabaab, govt and AMISOM forces clashed across Somalia throughout month. PM Sheikh Ahmed 25 Feb laid out govt security plans to counter terrorism. Kenyan govt 1 Feb announced Sierra Leonean troops will replace departing Kenyan AMISOM forces in Kismayo. Jubaland Interim Administration security head Issa Kamboni killed 17 Feb by Al-Shabaab defector in Kismayo. Ethiopian AMISOM troops began anti-Shabaab security operations in Bay, Bakool regions, as local intra-clan dispute continued over creation of new regional “South West State” administration. Newly appointed president of Puntland autonomous region Abdiweli Gas 4 Feb suggested disputed Sool, Sanag and Ayn regions should be under Puntland administration; ministers early Feb visited disputed areas heightening local tension (see Somaliland). UN Monitoring Group report leaked mid-Feb accused Somali Federal Govt of diverting weapons to Al-Shabaab. Telecom companies early Feb applied Al-Shabaab-ordered internet ban in militant controlled south-central Somalia, as well as some govt-controlled areas.


- Cedric Barnes and Zakaria Yusuf, [“Puntland’s Boundary Issues: What Will Abdiweli Gas’s Call for Unity Really Mean?”](#), The African Peacebuilding Agenda, 13 Feb. 2014.
- [“Somalia’s al Shabaab say attack meant to get president ‘dead or alive’”](#), Reuters, 22 Feb. 2014.

 **Somaliland** Somaliland authorities reportedly strengthening military capacity in Laascaanood city, Sool region, in response to comments by Puntland.

- [“Puntland rumours of war results in massive deployment”](#), Somaliland Sun, 27 Feb. 2014.


  **South Sudan** Violence escalated ahead of rainy season despite 23 Jan ceasefire with reports of atrocities on both sides; tens of thousands fled fighting. Second round of talks between govt and “SPLM/A-in-Opposition”, including “SPLM 7” released from detention last month, have not begun; SPLM/A-in-Opposition leader and former VP Riek Machar reiterated calls for release of 4 remaining political detainees currently charged with treason, withdrawal of Ugandan forces. Govt and SPLM/A-in-Opposition forces continued to clash; SPLM/A-in-Opposition 21 Feb took control of Malakal; currently moving towards oil-producing areas in Upper Nile. Govt increasingly fiscally unstable, threatening non-payment of salaries to soldiers. UNMISS late Feb reported civilians targeted by both sides; UN OCHA said 740,000 displaced by conflict, FAO issued famine warning.

- [“New clashes erupt in South Sudan”](#), VOA, 24 Feb. 2014.

 **Sudan** Talks between govt and SPLM-N began 13 Feb under AUHIP auspices but quickly reached stalemate with both parties accusing other of inflexibility; AUHIP head Thabo Mbeki 18 Feb suspended talks for 10 days; govt 25 Feb agreed to draft


framework agreement put forward by Mbeki. Some 5,000-6,000 Arab militiamen from S Darfur returned from deployment against SPLM-N in S Kordofan; militia accused of abuses against civilians in neighbouring N Kordofan prompting demonstrations in N Kordofan capital al-Obeid. Govt negotiations with JEM-Bashar on implementation of April 2013 power-sharing deal resumed 26 Feb. National Assembly 13 Feb urged govt to revoke Humanitarian Aid Commission’s (HAC) 1 Feb decision to suspend work of ICRC. UNSC 13 Feb extended sanctions monitoring panel for Sudan for 13 months.

- [“Govt, SPLM-N peace talks adjourned until next month”](#), Sudan Tribune, 18 Feb. 2014.


 **Uganda** FM Sam Kutesa 18 Feb confirmed Ugandan forces (UPDF) to leave S Sudan in next 2 months. UPDF 17 Feb sought agreement with S Sudan govt that they would not be prosecuted for any crimes in S Sudan; S Sudan defence minister 17 Feb said govt funding UPDF offensive against S Sudan rebels. President Museveni 24 Feb signed controversial anti-gay bill; World Bank 28 Feb postponed \$90mn loan.

- [“Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni signs anti-gay bill”](#), BBC, 24 Feb. 2014.


Southern Africa

 **Madagascar** Former transitional president and 2009 coup leader Andry Rajoelina 21 Feb ruled out seeking PM role in new govt; his dominant MAPAR coalition 24 Feb proposed Haja André Resampa (former Rajoelina aide) and secured Christine Razananahosoa, former justice minister in transition, as speaker of house.

- [“Former Madagascar president rules himself out of PM job”](#), Reuters, 21 Feb. 2014.

 **Mozambique** Parliament 21 Feb approved changes to election laws ahead of Oct 2014 polls in response to RENAMO demand and agreed further delay to voter registration demanded by RENAMO in effort to bring revived rebel movement back into political sphere. Security forces 21 Feb arrested 7 RENAMO gunmen in Inhambane province. Renamo 26 Feb ambushed military convoy in Gorongosa, leaving 5 injured.

- [“Mozambique at crossroads as election battle looms”](#), BDIve, 25 Feb. 2014.

 **Zimbabwe** EU 17 Feb suspended sanctions against 8 ZANU-PF and security officials; travel ban, asset freeze on President Mugabe and wife, Zimbabwe Defence Industries sanctions and arms embargo remain in place. EU ministers 18 Feb paved way for resumption of direct development aid to govt. Govt 11 Feb acknowledged lack of funds to help 60,000 people affected by floods in Tokwe Mukosi dam areas, launched \$20mn international appeal. Govt deferred promised civil servant salary increase to end April. Mugabe travelled to Singapore for eye operation; spokesperson denied reports of ill health. Mugabe marked 90th birthday 23 Feb with \$1m party; voiced frustration over succession battle, said he couldn’t leave helm with party in tatters in 20 Feb TV interview. Increased pressure on MDC-T leader Morgan Tsvangirai: MDC-T youth assaulted deputy Sec Gen Tendai Biti and treasurer Elton Mangoma 15 Feb after calling for Tsvangirai’s resignation.

- [“EU eases Zimbabwe sanctions, keeps them on Mugabe”](#), Reuters, 17 Feb. 2014.

West Africa

➡ **Côte d'Ivoire** President Ouattara hospitalised in France 9 Feb, officially for sciatica surgery, sparked speculation over health. Opposition Ivorian Popular Front (FPI) leader Pascal Affi N'Guessan met with Democratic Party of Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI) head Henri Konan Bédié for first time in 4 years. FPI 14 Feb started series of 9 political meetings, marking first time party allowed to organise such rallies since 2010-2011 post-electoral crisis, though FPI meeting in Abobo cancelled 16 Feb for security reasons. Ouattara 4 Feb renewed 12-month mandate of Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

- ["Alassane Ouattara opéré: une communication a minima"](#), RFI, 11 Feb. 2014.

➡ **Guinea** President Condé 6 Feb held first cabinet meeting, set priorities. Opposition leaders threatened to resume protests after electoral commission (CENI) executive 10 Feb admitted deadline for preparation of local elections set by July 2013 political accord would not be met; leader of strongest opposition party, Union of Democratic Forces of Guinea (UFDG), 15 Feb called for urgent dialogue. Inter-communal tensions in Boké following unexplained death of ethnic Landouma moto-taxi driver 3 Feb; riots in Dubreka same day over land and quota of employment for local youth at new cement factory. Riots in Kindia and several districts of Conakry against power cuts.

- ["Cabinet présidentiel: Alpha Condé recycle ses anciens ministres"](#), Afriqinfos, 5 Feb. 2014.

➡ **Guinea-Bissau** Electoral census completed 8 Feb; legislative and presidential elections initially scheduled for March officially delayed to 13 April. ECOWAS chiefs of staff gathered in Bissau 17 Feb, discussed elections security, reform of armed forces. UNSC 26 Feb insisted on no further delay, threatened spoilers with targeted sanctions. PAIGC 9 Feb elected Domingos Simões Pereira as new party leader to replace Carlos Gomes Júnior. UNSC 26 Feb urged govt to abide by election plans, warning of sanctions against those opposing return to constitutional order.

- ["Eleições gerais marcadas para 13 de abril na Guiné Bissau"](#), RFI, 22 Feb. 2014.

➡ **Liberia** Lieutenant Colonel Daniel Dee Ziankan appointed head of army 11 Feb, first Liberian appointed to post since civil war.

- ["Liberian takes charge of Liberia's army"](#), VOA, 11 Feb. 2014.

➡ **Mali** Talks between govt and armed groups, stalled since Nov 2013, resumed 13 Feb in Bamako; parties 15 Feb reached agreement on cantonment but no precise timeframe yet; Arab Armed Group (MAA) left negotiations. Insecurity remained high: rockets launched on Gao 13 Feb, Timbuktu 16 Feb. 31 Tuareg civilians killed 6 Feb near Tamkoutat, Gao region; MNLA claimed responsibility. MUJAO affiliate Yoro Abdoussalam claimed responsibility for 10 Feb abduction of 4 ICRC staff. Further fighting reported in Tin-Hama near Ansongo 10 Feb. Court mid Feb ordered arrest of prominent military figures connected to former junta. Médecins Sans Frontières vehicle 26 Feb ran over landmine in Kidal, leaving 2 injured.

- ["Mali: avancée sur les négociations entre pouvoir et groupes armés"](#), RFI, 16 Feb. 2014.

➡ **Niger** Regime cracked down on media: govt briefly arrested 3 radio journalists 13 Feb following interview with union leader Ismael Salifou, accused trio of using "offensive language" against President Issoufou. Justice Minister Marou Amadou warned he would not tolerate media "abuses", which he claimed "foment ethnic hatred". Agadez police 20 Feb arrested 20 protesters, 2 local civil society leaders 26 Feb. Authorities 17 Feb arrested some 20 Boko Haram militants suspected of planning attacks in SE. Interior minister 5 Feb called on France and U.S. to intervene in southern Libya to "eradicate terrorist threat".

- ["La paix et la stabilité menacées dans le pays, selon une quarantaine d'ONGs"](#), AFP, 14 Feb. 2014.

➡ **Nigeria** Violence escalated in NE; several hundred killed, mostly civilians, in Boko Haram (BH) attacks, including at least 106 in attacks on 2 villages in Borno 15 Feb; 98 killed 19 Feb in Bama, Borno State; 59 students killed 25 Feb in Yobe State. Gunmen 1 Feb killed influential Muslim cleric and critic of BH Sheikh Adam Albani. BH leader Shekau 20 Feb issued new video claiming responsibility, vowed to bomb Niger Delta oil refineries and kill several national leaders. Communal violence in Kaduna, Plateau and Zamfara states left dozens dead: gunmen 3 Feb attacked 3 villages in Kaduna killing at least 30; suspected Fulani herdsmen same day killed at least 31 in Plateau state; armed bandits 10 Feb killed 20 in 2 villages in Zamfara State.

- Crisis Group Africa Program Staff, ["Nigeria: Boko Haram's Deadly School Attack"](#), The African Peacebuilding Agenda, 27 Feb. 2014.
- ["Boko Haram kill over 100 in village massacre"](#), AFP, 17 Feb. 2014.

➡ **Senegal** U.S. embassy 3 Feb announced new special adviser for Casamance, Mark Boulware. Robert Sagna, mediator in Casamance conflict supported by President Sall, 22 Feb said hardliner separatist leader Salif Sadio obstacle to reunification of MFDC factions. State-approved mediator Sant'Egidio 25 Feb announced Sall envoys and Sadio representatives met in Rome. Authorities 26 Feb confirmed no arrest warrant for Sadio, both sides agreed "to behave in such a way to favour negotiations".

- ["Dakar négocie avec les rebelles"](#), BBC, 25 Feb. 2014.

Asia

North East Asia

➡ **China/Japan** China angered by governor of Japanese state broadcaster's speech 3 Feb in which he denied 1937 Nanjing massacre; Beijing called comments "barefaced challenge to international justice and human conscience". U.S. Sec State Kerry 7 Feb reiterated commitment to defend ally Japan in case of escalation in East China Sea, affirmed non-recognition of China's air defence identification zone after meeting Japanese FM in Washington; China stated U.S. should refrain from remarks that "harm regional stability and China-U.S. relationship". Beijing 12 Feb expressed anger about Japanese move to seek compensation over 2010 ship collision in waters near Diaoyu/Senkaku islands. 3 Chinese coast guard vessels briefly entered disputed waters in East China Sea 23 Feb. U.S. Naval intelligence head mid-Feb claimed Chinese forces being trained to conduct "short, sharp war" against Japan; Penta-

gon later downplayed remarks. U.S.-Japan forces practiced island takeover during 4-week joint military drills. Chinese legislature 27 Feb designated 2 annual holidays to commemorate victory over Japan and Nanjing massacre. Japanese govt announced it will set up body to review 1993 Kono statement which apologised for its use of sex slaves during WWII.

- [“China criticizes Japan over comments doubting Nanjing massacre”](#), Reuters, 5 Feb. 2014.

➡ **Korean Peninsula** DPRK and ROK held first high-level talks in 7 years 12-14 Feb in P’anmunjŏm border village; reaffirmed plans for family reunions that took place 20-25 Feb in DPRK’s Mt. Kŭmgang resort. U.S. Sec State Kerry visited Seoul 13-14 Feb to discuss DPRK policies, during Beijing visit urged China to exert greater pressure on DPRK; China reiterated commitment to denuclearisation “through peaceful dialogue”. U.S. and ROK 24 Feb commenced annual multinational simulation exercise Key Resolve and large-scale joint and combined field exercises Foal Eagle; DPRK 27 Feb fired 4 short-range missiles into sea off east coast. UN Commission of Inquiry 17 Feb released report on DPRK human rights abuses, in letter to Kim Jung-un warned him of possible prosecution at ICC; DPRK and China rejected report findings. Satellite images showed DPRK has expanded primary its Sŏhae Satellite Launching Station creating potential ability to launch larger rockets.

- Daniel Pinkston and Yanmei Xie, [“Cross Purposes: Beijing, Washington and the Korean Peninsula”](#), 27 Feb. 2014.
- [“Rival Koreas end senior-level meeting”](#), AP, 12 Feb. 2014.

South Asia

➡ **Afghanistan** Presidential election campaign began 2 Feb, first televised debate held 4 Feb with 5 out of 11 candidates. Taliban 18 Feb attacked presidential candidate Abdullah Abdullah’s convoy in Surobi, Kabul; 2 elections campaigners killed in Herat 1 Feb. Govt 13 Feb released 65 Bagram prison detainees despite U.S. objections; President Karzai accused U.S. of not respecting Afghan sovereignty. Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA) with U.S. still unsigned; NATO Sec Gen 20 Feb said Karzai’s successor likely to sign deal. U.S. President Obama 25 Feb informed Karzai plans underway for full U.S. troop withdrawal by end 2014; NATO 27 Feb agreed to plan for all options, including full withdrawal. Hezb-i-Islami suicide bomb attack in Kabul killed 2 NATO contractors 10 Feb; 2 U.S. troops killed, 4 injured 12 Feb in attack in E Kapisa province. Roadside bomb 9 Feb killed 7 Afghan soldiers in Farah province. Taliban killed 21 Afghan soldiers, kidnapped 7 after storming army outpost in Kunar 24 Jan. Karzai 17 Feb ordered last-minute changes to domestic abuse law after pressure from Western, Afghan women’s rights activists.

- [“Obama orders Pentagon to prepare for full troop withdrawal from Afghanistan”](#), *Guardian*, 25 Feb. 2014.

➡ **Bangladesh** PM Sheikh Hasina consolidated new govt following Jan re-election of her Awami League (AL) party; opposition street protests subsided, reflecting apparent loss of appetite domestically, international pressure on opposition BNP. Following its boycott of Jan elections, BNP decided to contest upazila (local body) polls, technically a non-party election; achieved significant lead over other parties in 1st and 2nd phase of polls 20, 27 Feb. Some

violence during polls; 1 AL activist killed following clash between AI and BNP supporters in Chaugachla, 1 killed after police fired on Jamaat-e-Islami supporters in Sonaimuri. 2 main parties yet to enter into talks to improve relations despite international pressure; BNP top party committee passed resolution 6 Feb calling govt and 10th parliament illegal and unconstitutional. 30 Jan sentencing of 14 men, mostly with links to opposition parties, to death for involvement in 2004 arms smuggling case, further aggravated BNP-AL tensions. Audio tape purportedly from al-Qaeda chief Ayman al-Zawahiri mid-Feb called on Bangladesh’s Muslims to wage “intifada” and “massive public uprising in defence of Islam against enemies of Islam”; citing police action against May 2013 Islamist rally charged that “massacre of Muslims is being carried out”. AL MP 16 Feb accused BNP and ally Jamaat-e-Islami of maintaining ties to al-Qaeda; BNP strongly refuted, accusing govt of “suicidal ploy to divide the nation and the people for its own political interests”. Jamaat and Islamist umbrella group Hefajete-Islam also denied links to al-Qaeda. Cabinet 17 Feb approved 5-year extension of speedy trial bill, which has seen due process subverted in high-profile cases against Jamaat and its allies, aggravating tensions between the 2 main parties.

- [“Al-Qaeda chief calls on Muslims in Bangladesh to resist evil plan against Islam”](#), *Financial Express*, 15 Feb. 2014.

➡ **India (non-Kashmir)** 7 Maoists reported killed 17 Feb in clash with police close to rebel stronghold in Gadchiroli district, Maharashtra state. Police 9 Feb killed 3 Maoists in joint operation near Maharashtra-Chhattisgarh border. 2 police killed, 8 injured in 9 Feb bomb blast in S Chhattisgarh during anti-naxal operation; 6 police killed in Maoist attack in Chhattisgarh 28 Feb.

- [“India police ‘kill seven Maoists’ in Maharashtra”](#), BBC, 18 Feb. 2014.

➡ **Kashmir** Cross-Line of Control (LoC) trade resumed after Pakistan and India 12 Feb agreed to release stranded trucks and drivers, following 17 Jan detention of Pakistani truck driver for alleged drug smuggling. Indian trade minister cancelled planned attendance at India Trade Show in Lahore mid-Feb amid concerns about operationalisation of Jan trade pact to grant liberalised trade status by end-Feb. Protests broke out in Kupwara region after Indian army 24 Feb killed 7 civilians mistaken for rebels; strike in Kashmir Valley 28 Feb. 2 Hizbul Mujahideen Indian separatist group members killed 13 Feb in encounter with security forces in Sopohan, S Kashmir.

- [“Cross-LoC trade resumes in Jammu, freeze continues in Kashmir”](#), PTI, 20 Feb. 2014.

➡ **Nepal** Constituent Assembly (CA) 10 Feb elected Sushil Koirala of Nepali Congress (NC) new PM with 405 out of 601 votes after political parties failed to agree on consensus PM. Koirala 25 Feb formed cabinet, 10 members each from NC and main coalition partner Communist Party of Nepal (CPN-UML), latter awarded home and foreign ministries. CPN-UML’s Subash Chandra Nembang elected CA chair 18 Feb; appointment supported by NC.

- [“Meet the new cabinet of ministers”](#), *Nepali Times*, 25 Feb. 2014.

➡ **Pakistan** Govt 6 Feb restarted talks with militant group Tehreek-e-Taliban (TTP); talks suspended 17 Feb after TTP revealed 23 Frontier Corps (FC) soldiers held since 2010 executed. Govt 18 Feb set unconditional ceasefire as requirement for continuation of negotiations; TTP 21 Feb said prepared to talk if military operations end, 26 Feb fully rejected proposal. At least 100 killed, including

civilians, in series of govt airstrikes targeting insurgent bases in N Waziristan and Khyber Agency 20-25 Feb. Senior army officer killed 18 Feb in TTP attack. Taliban leader Mawlawi Abdul Raqib assassinated 17 Feb in Peshawar. Sectarian violence continued: Shia scholar Haji Sardar Ali shot dead by TTP 4 Feb in Peshawar; 9 Shia killed, 50 injured by bomb in Peshawar 5 Feb; gunmen 10 Feb attacked Sufi religious gathering in Karachi, killed 8. Militant extremists 2 Feb issued ultimatum to minority Kalash “kafirs” threatening attacks if they do not convert to Islam. 8 killed in 16 Feb train bombing between Peshawar and Karachi, Baloch radicals claimed responsibility.

- “Pakistan plans military operation in North Waziristan, targeting extremist groups”, *Washington Post*, 25 Feb. 2014.

➡ **Sri Lanka** U.S. 1 Feb officially announced intention to table resolution at March UN HRC calling for Sri Lankan govt to “do more to promote reconciliation, democratic governance, justice and accountability”; resolution expected to call for international inquiry into war crimes allegations. EU Foreign Affairs Council 10 Feb confirmed support for accountability efforts, including independent investigation. UN OHCHR report to HRC 24 Feb called for “independent, international inquiry mechanism” into allegations of war crimes by govt and LTTE forces; govt rejected report as “unwarranted interference in the internal affairs of a sovereign state”. Senior govt delegation 19 Feb visited newly appointed South African special envoy to Sri Lanka in Pretoria to discuss reconciliation issues. Govt using HRC process to bolster support in western and southern provincial council elections scheduled for 29 March. Main opposition United National Party (UNP) 13 Feb announced support for domestic war crimes inquiry, criticised govt human rights and governance record. Over 80 bodies recovered in past 2 months from mass grave outside northern town Mannar.

- “Doubts over Sri Lanka’s reconciliation plan”, *Deutsche Welle*, 26 Feb. 2014.

South East Asia

➡ **Indonesia** Diplomatic dispute with Australia continued as evidence emerged that Australia spied on U.S. law firm representing Indonesian govt on trade talks. Security forces reportedly shot dead separatist rebel in Papua 2 Feb, arrested 11 others. Aceh provincial administration 7 Feb approved law obliging all Aceh residents, including non-Muslims, to follow sharia law.

- “Laying down God’s law”, *Economist*, 13 Feb. 2014.

➡ **Myanmar** UN 23 Jan stated it had credible information of killings of at least 48 Rohingyas in N Rakhine State, in connection with apparent killing of police officer by villagers. Govt “strongly objected” to claims; 2 out of 3 national investigations arranged by govt failed to find evidence of Rohingya killings, 3rd yet to report. Govt reportedly suspended operations of Médecins Sans Frontières in Rakhine state, saying NGO was biased in favour of Rohingya minority. Rights NGO Fortify Rights issued report citing evidence of govt discrimination against Rohingyas. 2 political leaders from Rakhine Buddhist community allegedly victims of assassination attempt 7 Feb while visiting Malaysia. 20-25 Jan conference of nearly all ethnic armed groups at Karen National Union HQ reached agreement on common position in negotiations with govt on nationwide ceasefire accord; formal negotiations

between ethnic armed groups and govt currently scheduled mid-March. Clash broke out between army and Kachin Independence Organisation (KIO) 10 Feb near KIO’s Laiza HQ, most serious in several months. Constitutional Review Joint Committee submitted report to legislature 31 Jan; new 31-member “Implementation Committee for Amendment of the Constitution” established 3 Feb, tasked with making specific recommendations for constitutional change including draft bill with proposed new constitutional language. Speaker 18 Feb issued instructions to committee indicating it should complete tasks at least 6 months before 2015 elections. Authorities early Feb arrested several journalists and editor of local Unity journal, charged them under Official Secrets Act for publishing article about alleged military chemical weapons factory. Alliance of main ethnic political parties 2 Feb issued statement calling for review of how census planned for late-March will be conducted, particularly system of classifying ethnic identity.

- Crisis Group Alert, “Myanmar Conflict Alert: A Risky Census”, 12 Feb. 2014.
- “Critics worry Myanmar census could be fiasco, worsening ethnic repression and persecution”, *Reuters*, 26 Feb. 2014.

➡ **Philippines** Ahead of Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro (CAB) between govt and Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) planned for March, MILF protested after police 23 Feb arrested Wahid Tundok, key MILF commander wanted on murder and other charges; MILF claim Tundok immune under ceasefire agreement. Tundok released 25 Feb after court rescinded arrest warrant. MILF commander Yusoph Kusain killed by police in Maguindanao 17 Feb during attempt to arrest him. Military 2 Feb announced completion of 8-day operation against Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters, rebel splinter group opposed to govt-MILF peace deal. MILF and Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) clashed in Carmen town, N Cotabato 20 Feb, reportedly over land. 5 injured in Zamboanga City 2 Feb after unknown attackers threw grenade into church; Abu Sayyaf Group suspected. Govt reported it was working with Norwegian govt on possibility of reopening peace talks with communist insurgents. Govt 25 Feb formally protested 27 Jan firing of water cannon by Chinese vessel at Filipino fishermen near disputed Scarborough Shoal.

- “Philippines President Aquino set to sign Muslim group peace deal”, *AFP*, 27 Feb. 2014.

➡ **Thailand** Month saw wave of political violence in Bangkok and several provinces, with several killed, dozens injured during month, rhetoric growing more heated on both sides. General election took place with relatively little incident 2 Feb despite opposition Democratic Party (DP) boycott, with 47.72% turnout. Anti-govt protesters succeeded in stopping/disrupting polling in over 10% of polling stations, voting partially/completely cancelled in 18 provinces, preventing formation of govt; PM Yingluck’s caretaker govt and election commission at odds over when and how to complete election. People’s Democratic Reform Committee (PDRC) and affiliated groups consolidated main protest sites early Feb, number of protesters dwindled. Deadly attacks on PDRC rallies and other political targets continued, including 6 injured in gunfight between protesters and pro-election Red Shirts in Lak Si district, Bangkok 1 Feb; 1 policeman, 4 protesters killed, 64 people injured in clashes after police attempted to disperse protesters in Bangkok 18 Feb; 30 injured, 3 killed in attack on PDRC rally in Trat 22 Feb; 3 killed, 21 injured in 23 Feb explosion at protest site in Bangkok. Around 20 grenades exploded near PDRC’s Lumpini Park stage 25

Feb, at least 2 injured. 2 grenades fired at Centre for Maintenance of Peace and Order 26 Feb, no injuries. Yingluck's caretaker govt under increasing pressure from courts, independent watchdog agencies. Constitutional Court 12 Feb dismissed petition by DP to annul 2 Feb poll; same day rejected request by Yingluck's Pheu Thai Party to charge PDRC with violating constitution. Bangkok Court 19 Feb stripped govt of authority under Emergency Decree to use force against protesters. National Anti-Corruption Commission 18 Feb resolved to charge Yingluck with malfeasance, abuse of power in connection with rice-pledging scheme; Yingluck sent legal team to hear charges. Army 26 Feb set up 176 positions near protest sites and some govt agencies in Bangkok. PDRC 28 Feb announced end to "shutdown Bangkok" rallies, plan to open 4 major intersections and consolidate protests at Lumpini Park from 3 March. Amid deteriorating situation in Bangkok militants in southernmost provinces stepping up attacks; 3 Feb murder of 3 young Muslim brothers in Narathiwat Province, which locals blamed on state-supported vigilantes, sparked series of reprisal killings of civilians by militants.

- "What is to come in Thailand?", *ISEAS Perspective*, 10 Feb. 2014.

Europe and Central Asia

Balkans

➡ **Bosnia** Protests began in over 30 towns early Feb, triggered by collapse of privatised companies in Tuzla and resulting layoffs. Hundreds of redundant workers gathered in front of govt building in Tuzla 5 Feb calling for compensation; over 30 injured, 27 arrested. Several thousand joined protests 6 Feb, scores injured; protests began in Sarajevo and other places same day in support of Tuzla protesters and over economic conditions; 8 Feb spread to 32 towns in Bosniak-Croat entity, with protesters in some cities attacking and setting fire to govt buildings, clashing with police; several hundred injured, scores detained. Several politicians resigned, including canton govts in Tuzla and Zenica. Situation calmed 9 Feb, though protests continued demanding further resignations, measures to curb corruption, improve economy. Small protest also in Republika Srpska capital. Governing Social Democratic Party 12 Feb submitted proposal to parliament to change state-level electoral law to enable early elections. Sarajevo canton govt late Feb accepted protesters' demands for govt of experts, lower wages for officials.

- "On fire", *Economist*, 13 Feb. 2014.

➡ **Kosovo** In 23 Feb re-run of local election in Mitrovica North, Goran Rakic, candidate from Belgrade-backed "Srpska" list, won with 52.6% of vote. Pristina and Belgrade in disagreement over whether voting in Serbia's March parliamentary elections can also be held in Serb areas of Kosovo. UNSG Ban in report to UNSC praised progress by Kosovo and Serbia on normalisation of relations.

- "Kosovo celebrates anniversary as economic woes continue", *Balkan Insight*, 17 Feb. 2014.

Caucasus

➡ **Armenia** PM Sargsyan met with Russian PM Medvedev in Sochi 24 Feb to discuss bilateral relations, including Russian-led Customs Union that Armenia plans to join. Authorities late Jan arrested former police officer for allegedly spying for Azerbaijan. Govt critics expressed dismay over more restrictive rules introduced for Armenian migrant workers in Russia.

- "Russia puts squeeze on migrant workers", *Eurasianet*, 24 Feb. 2014.

➡ **Azerbaijan** During visit to Baghdad FM said Azerbaijan could ship Iraqi natural gas to Europe. New defence minister visited Brussels for talks with NATO 26 Feb on Azerbaijan's role in Afghanistan mission. RFE/RL journalist questioned for "grave crimes" over allegations of passing "state secrets" to U.S. officials; U.S. embassy called charges "absurd".

- "RFE/RL journalist 'summoned' in Azerbaijani state secrets probe", *RFE/RL*, 18 Feb. 2014.

➡ **Nagorno-Karabakh (Azerbaijan)** U.S. co-chair of OSCE Minsk Group mediating between Azerbaijan and Armenia in media interview early Feb cited progress in negotiations. Sporadic armed clashes across front line which began mid-Jan continued, albeit less intense, with several reports of troop deaths from both Yerevan and Baku.

- "OSCE mediator sees progress in Nagorno-Karabakh talks", *RFE/RL*, 4 Feb. 2014.

➡ **Georgia** Govt strongly protested quickened pace of "borderisation" by Russian troops in South Ossetia, said building of fortifications and fences along administrative border picked up immediately after end of Sochi Olympics. PM Garibashvili met European Commission President Barroso 3 Feb, said Georgia's EU integration "irreversible" and expects to sign Association Agreement by Aug. Russian President Putin early Feb said open to talks with Georgian President Margvelashvili; officials reportedly preparing to discuss possible meeting. PM Garibashvili, FM and other officials visited U.S. late month for talks with U.S. VP Biden; President Obama unexpectedly joined meeting. Former PM Merabishvili sentenced to 5 years for abuse of office, bribing voters, inefficient use of funds. Trial in absentia of ex-defence minister under former President Saakashvili Davit Kezerashvili began, but France ruled out his extradition over corruption allegations.



- "President condemns 'borderization'", *Civil Georgia*, 26 Feb. 2014.

➡ **North Caucasus (Russia)** 7-23 Feb Sochi Winter Olympics passed off without major security incidents despite concerns ahead of games. Ukrainian passenger 7 Feb unsuccessfully attempted to hijack Turkey-bound plane and force diversion to Sochi; Turkish forces seized man without incident. Several human rights, environmental and Circassian protesters detained during Olympics including 37 Circassian activists for 7 Feb demonstration against Olympics in Kabardino-Balkaria capital Nalchik. 70th anniversary commemorations of Stalinist deportation of Chechen and Ingush people banned or postponed in Chechnya, Ingushetia and Dagestan due to clash with Olympics closing ceremony. Security forces 5 Feb killed alleged organiser of Volgograd bombings Dzhambaldin Mirzayev in Izberbash, Dagestan. Kabardino-Balkaria Islamic insurgent leader Tengiz Guketlov 9 Feb claimed responsibility for Jan murder of 6 civilians in Stavropol, said they were in retali-

ation for 35 civilian deaths by security forces. Over 10 suspected militants killed during special security operations including 5 Buynaksk militants in Makhachkala 8 Feb; 3 militants killed in Khasavyurt District, Dagestan 12 Feb. Security services blew up house of relatives of killed insurgent during special operation in Novy Agachaul village, Dagestan 20 Feb.


- [“A four-and-a-half-ring circus ends, and a relieved Russia roars”](#), *New York Times*, 23 Feb. 2014.

Eastern Europe


  **Ukraine** Scores killed as anti-govt protesters clashed with police in worst violence since independence; following opposition ouster of President Yanukovich new interim govt confronted by grave concerns over weak central authority, economic crisis, role of nationalist and rightist elements in new govt; mounting threat of separatism in east as unrest broke out in majority ethnic Russian Crimea, West warned Russia against intervention. Anti-govt protesters vacated Kiev City Hall 16 Feb after govt released all 234 jailed protesters, but clashes broke out between protesters and police 18 Feb after protesters marched to parliament demanding progress on constitutional reform to reduce presidential powers; at least 26 killed including 10 police. Govt and opposition announced truce 19 Feb, but renewed clashes broke out 20 Feb; dozens killed, hundreds injured, many reportedly from gunshot wounds. Health ministry reported 83 killed in political violence since 18 Feb. EU, U.S. responded with targeted sanctions. Yanukovich and opposition 21 Feb agreed to form new govt, hold new election under EU-mediated deal; parliament voted to release former PM Yulia Tymoshenko from jail, restore 2004 constitution. Yanukovich 22 Feb fled capital; parliament same day voted to remove president, hold early presidential election 25 May; 23 Feb elected opposition leader Olexander Turchynov interim president. Yanukovich called events coup, backed by Russia which granted him protection. Interim govt issued warrant for Yanukovich arrest, parliament voted to try him at ICC for protester deaths. As Turchynov warned of economic crisis, Russia suspended financial assistance, recalled ambassador; EU, U.S. said ready to provide financial assistance. Interim govt presented new cabinet to protesters in Kiev 27 Feb to mixed reception. In autonomous Crimea region pro-govt ethnic Russians and anti-govt ethnic Ukrainians and Muslim Tatars staged rival rallies late month. Anti-Russia protesters stormed parliament in regional capital Simferopol 26 Feb; well-armed and equipped troops calling themselves pro-Russian self-defence militia reportedly took over govt buildings, airport next day. Kiev 28 Feb said Russian forces occupying Crimea's Sevastopol airport in “armed invasion”. Russia claims these are also local self-defence groups; Russian official media claim similar armed groups protecting Perekop isthmus connecting Crimea to Ukrainian mainland. Crimean govt announced it had taken control of all security forces on peninsula, pro-Russian Crimean PM 1 March appealed to Russia for help ensuring security; Kremlin said would not ignore call. U.S. and Western powers warned Russia against military intervention in Ukraine.

- [“With military moves seen in Ukraine, Obama warns Russia”](#), *New York Times*, 28 Feb. 2014.

Western Europe/Mediterranean


 **Cyprus** Reunification talks restarted 11 Feb after 18-month pause; leaders of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities issued Joint Declaration emphasising future reunified Cyprus to be based on political equality for Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots, single united Cyprus citizenship, single international legal personality and single sovereignty. Agreement welcomed by EU, U.S.; Turkey supported talks but FM Davutoğlu 9 Feb suggested two-state solution as alternative path if Greek Cypriots reject new settlement deal, saying “talks cannot and will not last forever”. For first time in more than 4 decades, chief negotiators from both Cypriot communities held official talks in Athens and Ankara respectively 27 Feb.

- Hugh Pope, [“New Hope for Peace in Cyprus”](#), *Majalla*, 14 Feb. 2014.
- Hugh Pope, [“A Little Something New: Cyprus Talks Begin”](#), *Solving the EU-Turkey-Cyprus Triangle*, 11 Feb. 2014.
- [“High stakes as Greeks and Turks revive Cyprus peace talks”](#), *Guardian*, 10 Feb. 2014.

 **Turkey** Month saw several demonstrations in Istanbul and other provinces against new laws criticised for increasing authoritarian turn of PM Erdoğan's govt; police used tear gas, water cannon. Controversial laws included bills on internet regulation and Supreme Board of Judges and Prosecutors, both approved by President Gül, and a proposal to broaden powers of National Intelligence Organisation. EU officials sent messages critical of legal changes. 24 Feb tapes of phone conversations allegedly between Erdoğan and son about hiding large sums of cash leaked; PM claimed recordings fake, more recordings emerged in following days. Court 28 Feb released last 5 suspects detained in Dec corruption probe targeting PM's inner circle, including 2 sons of ministers. Month saw deterioration in peace process between govt and Kurdish insurgency PKK. Cease fire violations continued, particularly in SE Şırnak province; PKK militants 17 Feb fired on road construction machines near border, Turkish military responded, skirmish continued for several days. At Geneva II conference on Syria conflict (see Syria) Syrian FM Muallem accused Erdoğan of backing “terrorists”. Turkish officials continued to intensify high-level contacts with EU; PM Erdoğan 3 Feb visited Germany, FM Davutoğlu 10-11 Feb visited Brussels.

- [“Turkey's embattled Erdogan seeks wider powers for spy agency”](#), *Reuters*, 20 Feb. 2014.

Central Asia

 **Kazakhstan** National bank 11 Feb unexpectedly devalued currency 19%, prompting series of small protests with some arrests, panic buying, run on 3 banks, expectations of price increases. Move generated much public criticism; govt blocked internet petition calling for President Nazarbayev to resign. Column of military vehicles including armoured personal carriers appeared in Almaty 13 Feb; defence ministry said it was test drive. SMS messaging services and apps unavailable same day, observers speculated test of blocking equipment. In 13 Feb media interview Nazarbayev did not rule out seeking presidency again in 2016. In parliament 14 Feb Nazarbayev defended currency devaluation, ordered govt

to monitor and control prices for consumer goods and exchange bureaus; threatened to dismiss govt if they fail to attract foreign investment; said pensions and student stipends will be increased by 14% and 10% as of April; also called on 3 major firms to increase salaries 10%.

- [“Tenge fever”](#), *Economist*, 20 Feb. 2014.

➡ **Kyrgyzstan** Following Jan tensions along Kyrgyz-Tajik border, countries attempted to resolve border demarcation issues around Tajik enclave Vorukh diplomatically with 2 rounds of talks 31 Jan and 14 Feb, but with little progress. Tajik side announced land corridor joining Vorukh to Tajikistan would be created, Kyrgyz side denied; next high-level meeting due March. Points of contention reportedly include disagreement over what Soviet era agreements and maps should be used as basis of negotiation. CSTO head 20 Feb said situation along Tajik-Kyrgyz border had improved, however intercommunal violence simmering around Vorukh enclave with series of incidents ratcheting up tensions between ethnic Tajiks and Kyrgyz in area. Border troops 23 Jan killed 11 alleged Uighur separatists in remote valley in east. Men reportedly entered from China’s Xinjiang province, armed with knives and rifle but no ammunition, said to have murdered Kyrgyz national who apprehended them; authorities claim they were planning to carry out terror attacks in Karakol or Bishkek, refused to surrender. New opposition coalition formed with aim of overthrowing President Atambayev, bridging north-south divide: includes Ata-Jurt and former Osh mayor. MPs early Feb approved memo on new ownership structure of Kumtor gold mine, proposing equal stake by Kyrgyzstan and Canadian partner in new joint company until 2026. Russia and Kyrgyzstan 19 Feb signed preliminary agreement for Russia to take control of Manas airport. Authorities 17 Feb announced 6 alleged members of terrorist ring, some trained in Syria, arrested in Osh.

- [“Kyrgyz MPs give government deadline for Kumtor mine”](#), Reuters, 6 Feb. 2014.

➡ **Tajikistan** Govt in talks with Kyrgyzstan over border tensions that erupted Jan (see Kyrgyzstan). Tajik and Russian FMs 6 Feb signed protocol on Russian 201st military base in Tajikistan, following over a year of negotiations. Amid continued Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) attempts to reinforce Tajik-Afghan border with military equipment transfers, CSTO head in Dushanbe for talks with President Rahmon 19 Feb. Senior U.S. diplomat visited Tajikistan late Feb to discuss bilateral cooperation, Afghanistan. 4 men in northern district Istaravshan, Sughd province, reportedly arrested late Jan on suspicion of being members of outlawed religious extremist group Jamaat Ansarullah.

- [“Tajiks claim travel to Kyrgyzstan hindered”](#), IWPR, 4 Feb. 2014.

➡ **Turkmenistan** Media reported deputy FM met with Afghan clerics linked to Taliban, suggesting Ashgabat may be seeking to rekindle accord it had with Afghanistan during 1990s. 3 border guards reportedly killed by Taliban in NW province Baghdis 26 Feb.

- [“The Achilles heel of Central Asian security”](#), RFE/RL, 16 Feb. 2014.

➡ **Uzbekistan** In ongoing public battle between President Karimov’s daughter Gulnara Karimova and powerful head of National Security Service (SNB) Rustam Inoyatov, president’s chief of security Muidjon Tokhiri 17 Feb led raid on Karimova’s apartment, arrested 3 close associates. 10 close associates reportedly being investigated including for involvement in forgery, illegal business activities,

money laundering, tax evasion and concealment of foreign currency. Karimova and her daughter, a U.S. citizen, were in apartment when raid happened; Karimova claims she is under house arrest. Umbrella organisation of opposition groups in exile calling for armed struggle against Karimov.

- [“Birdamlik leader on the split in power in Uzbekistan and Gulnara Karimova”](#), Uznews, 26 Feb. 2014.

Latin America and Caribbean

➡ **Colombia** 20th cycle of negotiations ended 13 Feb with parties claiming they “worked non-stop” on construction of agreement on illicit drug problem. Weekly news magazine *Semana* 3 Feb revealed military intelligence running covert operations under code-name “Andrómeda” against number of targets including govt’s chief negotiator in Havana and High Commissioner for Peace. Defence minister next day dismissed army’s chief of intelligence and head of technical intelligence. *Semana* 16 Feb published details of alleged corruption network within army; evidence from taped conversations also seemed to confirm that corrupt or diverted monies benefited some officers sentenced for involvement in extrajudicial executions. President Santos 18 Feb fired head of armed forces Gen Leonardo Barrero, recorded advising to “organise mafia” in effort to put pressure on prosecutors and stop human rights investigations. Presidential candidate of left-wing Patriotic Union Aída Avella suffered attack 23 Feb in Tame (Arauca); After initial denial, ELN took responsibility, apologised. 25 Feb bomb attack in Quibdó (Chocó), carried out by unknown perpetrators, left 4 dead, 10 injured. Santos 24 Feb named former Interior Minister Germán Vargas Lleras as running mate for May electoral contest. “We are Defenders” coalition annual report noted increase in killings of human rights defenders to 78 in 2013.

- [“Internacional Crisis Group llama a pronto diálogo de paz entre Gobierno y ELN”](#), AFP, 26 Feb. 2014.

New Crisis Group Latin America Report N°51, [Left in the Cold? The ELN and Colombia’s Peace Talks](#), 26 Feb. 2014. Bringing the National Liberation Army (ELN) into the current round of negotiations is vital for durable peace.


➡ **Guatemala** High-risk court 21 Feb sentenced 9 Zetas drug cartel members to more than 100 years’ prison for May 2011 massacre of 27 farm workers in Petén department. Gunmen 8 Feb killed 9, including 2 children, in San Luis village, Petén, highlighting violence in border regions. Constitutional Court 5 Feb ruled Attorney General Claudia Paz y Paz must step down in May, 7 months before completing 4-year term; local and international rights groups condemned ruling, saying it was engineered by those opposed to high-profile prosecutions of former officials on human rights charges.

- [“Seven adults, two children shot to death in Guatemala jungle”](#), Reuters, 10 Feb. 2014.

➡ **Mexico** Federal authorities 4 Feb said army in Michoacán state registered 523 “self-defence” militia members and 813 weapons. Under pact signed with federal govt, some “self-defence” leaders promised to join rural and municipal police, others rejected agreement. Prosecutor’s office 10 Feb confirmed investigation into human remains found in Coahuila state near U.S. border; media reported mass graves possibly contain hundreds of corpses. Clash

between armed groups 21 Feb reportedly left at least 20 dead in S Guerrero. Govt 22 Feb announced arrest of world's most wanted drug lord, Sinaloa cartel leader Joaquín "El Chapo" Guzmán, in Mazatlán.


- Mary Speck, "The Arrest of El Chapo: What's Next for Mexico?", Latin America Crime and Politics, 28. Feb. 2014.
- "Guzman arrest: A coup for Mexican President Peña Nieto?", BBC, 24 Feb. 2014.

 **Venezuela** Month saw biggest anti-govt demonstrations in years as students took to streets across country; over dozen killed in clashes with security forces, scores injured; hundreds arrested, most subsequently released. Over 500 complaints of abuses by security services according to rights groups. Events threatening to further erode stability, human rights in already polarised nation. Demonstrations protesting violent crime, economic crisis began in San Cristobal city in SW state Táchira 2 Feb. Students backed by "La salida" movement, comprising wing of opposition alliance Democratic Unity (MUD), 12 Feb staged march to HQ of chief prosecutor Luisa Ortega Díaz to demand release of those jailed and protest food shortages, inflation, crime. Violence broke out between small group of demonstrators and armed civilian supporters of govt; 2 people died in initial clashes and third later, all shot in head. Over 300 reportedly detained over following week, 2 more killed; detainees reported beatings, torture, death threats, other abuses. Govt 16 Feb issued arrest warrant for Voluntad Popular (VP) party founder Leopoldo López accusing him of instigating violence, claimed opposition seeking violent overthrow of President Maduro. López 18 Feb turned himself in; called for protesters to stay in streets but remain non-violent; taken to military prison to await trial. As protests continued govt sent in riot squads accompanied by civilian gunmen; forces attacked protesters, destroyed and stole property. Govt 20 Feb sent troops to Táchira, threatened to declare state of emergency there. 3 U.S. diplomats given 48 hours to leave country 17 Feb for alleged involvement in supposed conspiracy. Govt 27 Feb issued arrest warrant for second opposition leader Carlos Vecchio, also from VP party.

- Crisis Group Alert, "Venezuela Conflict Alert: Respect for Human Rights and Dialogue Must Replace Violence", 21 Feb. 2014.
- Javier Ciurlizza, "De la polarización a la violencia", *El Colombiano*, 21 Feb. 2014.
- "Rash Repression in Venezuela", *New York Times*, 24 Feb. 2014.


Middle East and North Africa

Eastern Mediterranean


 **Israel/Palestine** U.S. Sec State Kerry continued to work toward framework for extended negotiations by end-April. Following 19-20 Feb talks with Palestinian President Abbas in Paris Palestinian official rejected Kerry's ideas as unacceptable, not recognising "legitimate rights of the Palestinian people". Abbas early Feb voiced support for 5-year phase-out of Israeli troops and settlements from future Palestinian state, proposed U.S.-led NATO forces could patrol it; Israel 9 Feb rejected proposal. Jerusalem municipality 5 Feb approved construction plans for 558 new homes in W Bank settlements. Thousands of Israelis, including ministers, lawmakers

13 Feb protested against peace efforts and for more settlement construction. 25 Feb Knesset Plenary session on Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif sovereignty saw PM Netanyahu intervening to ensure no operative steps are taken; session nevertheless triggered violent protest by young Muslims on holy esplanade, strong condemnations from Jordan and Arab League. UN reported Israeli demolitions of Palestinian homes in W Bank displaced nearly 600 in 2013, double 2012 figure. Army shot dead 1 Palestinian in Gaza near border 13 Feb, another in W Bank 27 Feb. In latest Israeli targeting of Hizbollah weapons shipment, airstrikes hit Hizbollah position near Lebanon-Syria border 24 Feb (see Lebanon).

- "Palestinian official criticises Kerry's 'unacceptable' framework for peace", *The National*, 21 Feb. 2014.

 **Lebanon** New govt formed 15 Feb following 10 months of talks; cabinet split equally between Hizbollah-dominated March 8 coalition, rival March 14 coalition, and ministers appointed by President Suleiman. Sunni jihadis continued suicide bombing campaign in retaliation for Hizbollah and Iranian involvement in Syria; Jabhat al-Nusra claimed 1 Feb attack in eastern Hermel which killed 4, and 22 Feb attack in same town killing 3 including 2 soldiers. Abdullah Azzam (AAB) brigades claimed 19 Feb twin attack outside Iranian cultural centre in Beirut killing 8. March 14 coalition head Saad Hariri 15 Feb urged Hizbollah to end involvement in Syria to avoid "sectarian holocaust". Gunmen 20 Feb killed senior leader of Arab Democratic Party which favours Syria's President al-Assad in Tripoli. Lebanese army arrested 2 suspected AAB leaders, uncovered booby-trapped cars in Beirut and Aarsal near Syrian border. In latest Israeli targeting of Hizbollah weapons shipment airstrikes 24 Feb hit Hizbollah position near eastern border with Syria, Hizbollah vowed retaliation.


- "Lebanon's precarious new government", CEIP, 19 Feb. 2014.

 **Syria** Second round of Geneva II talks 10-15 Feb failed to generate meaningful discussion on political resolution to conflict or improve humanitarian conditions; govt delegation refused to discuss opposition's transition plan, emphasising instead need to fight "terrorism". Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) NGO said more killed every day since beginning of talks than any other time during civil war. U.S., Saudi Arabia reportedly reacted to diplomatic breakdown by planning increase of weapons supplies to rebels in south who reorganised into Southern Front, 18 Feb announced spring offensive. Exiled opposition group Syrian National Coalition's 16 Feb attempt to replace General Selim Idriss as leader of organisation's military arm rebuffed by regional commanders inside Syria. UNSC 22 Feb adopted resolution to increase aid access to and within Syria, threatening to consider "further steps" in case of non-compliance. Around 1,400 evacuated from besieged old city of Homs beginning 7 Feb following UN-mediated agreement; several hundred males detained and interrogated by govt forces, 91 still held 27 Feb according to governor, at least 11 killed during evacuation by mortar, sniper fire. Rebel infighting continued with jihadi group Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) conducting assassination campaign against senior leaders of Islamic Front-affiliated groups: 1 Feb killed leaders of Liwa al-Tawhid, Suqour as-Sham in separate suicide bombings; 23 Feb killed senior Ahrar as-Sham commander appointed by al-Qaeda to mediate inter-jihadi conflict. 3 Feb statement by al-Qaeda general command said no organisational links to ISIL, no responsibility for group's actions. Al-Qaeda-linked Jabhat al-Nusra gave ISIL 1 March deadline for accepting mediation or face expulsion from

Syria, Iraq. SOHR 27 Feb estimated 3,300 killed in rebel infighting since early Jan. Govt forces gained ground on Aleppo's NE outskirts taking advantage of rebel infighting; indiscriminate "barrel" bombing campaign continued with hundreds killed. Govt 5 Feb missed UN-endorsed deadline for handing over all chemical weapons stockpiles, accepted new 27 April deadline.

- "Syrian rebels split over FSA leader's sacking", Al Jazeera, 19 Feb. 2014.


Gulf

 **Bahrain** Demonstrators 13 Feb clashed with police on first of 3 days of protest to mark third anniversary of uprising, 29 arrested; tens of thousands demonstrated 15 Feb, 1 policeman died in bomb blast. More clashes reported 24 Feb in Shiite villages west of capital, 28 Feb following funeral for villager who died in detention 2 days earlier. King approved law imposing jail sentence of up to 7 years on anyone publicly insulting King, flag or national emblem.

- "Bahrain policeman dies after bomb blast", Al Jazeera, 15 Feb. 2014.


 **Iran** Talks on final comprehensive agreement on Iran's nuclear program 18-20 Feb in Vienna ended with agreement on timetable, framework agenda; next technical level meeting 3 March and political level 17 March in Vienna, EU HR/VP Ashton to visit Tehran 9-10 March. Although conflicting interpretations remain regarding path set out for coming talks by Nov Joint Plan of Action, IAEA 20 Feb reported Iran complying with confidence-building measures. Iran and IAEA 8-9 Feb agreed on additional steps to clarify aspects of nuclear program to be implemented by 15 May 2014, including access to uranium mine in Yazd, Ardakan concentration plant, information on Iran's stated need for exploding-bridgewire detonators; first time aspect of what IAEA considers program's "possible military dimensions" will be addressed. U.S. 6 Feb targeted businesses for evading sanctions, second such move since Nov deal; President Obama 11 Feb warned U.S. will come down hard on companies breaching sanctions. President Rouhani same day vowed to pursue peaceful nuclear technology "forever"; Supreme Leader Khamenei 17 Feb said not opposed to talks but predicted they will lead nowhere. Sunni insurgent group Jaish al-Adl abducted 5 Iranian soldiers on border with Pakistan; interior minister 17 Feb threatened troop incursion into Pakistan to retrieve them, Iran-Pakistan border commission 21 Feb agreed on joint efforts to track them down. Reuters 24 Feb reported Iran Nov 2013 signed deal to sell arms to Iraq breaching UN weapons embargo; govt denied claims.

- "Iran agrees to explain nuclear detonators to IAEA", *Guardian*, 9 Feb. 2014.



 **Iraq** Anbar province remained under siege by army following early-Jan seizure of key areas by Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL): army continued shelling of Falluja and Ramadi suburbs, govt withheld electricity and water; hundreds killed during fighting which also saw militants bring down army helicopter 22 Feb killing all 4 crew. ISIL mid-month seized parts of northern town Suleiman Pek, govt forces 22 Feb retook city and surrounding areas after over a week of fighting which left dozens dead. Ahead of April elections Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr 16 Feb announced retirement from politics, saying no bloc in govt or parliament will represent Sadr Movement which had held 6 cabinet posts, 40 parliament seats; many Sadrist reacted by resigning their posts.

Sadr 18 Feb called PM Maliki "tyrant", "dictator", govt corrupt. In first assassination of candidate for April election gunmen 7 Feb killed Sadr supporter in W Baghdad. Car bombings across central Iraq continued with multiple deadly attacks; at least 34 killed 5 Feb in central Baghdad, at least 49 killed 18 Feb in attacks in Baghdad and southern Hillah, at least 31 killed in 27 Feb blast in Baghdad.

- "Withdrawal from politics of disillusioned Shia leader Muqtada al-Sadr will only add to Iraq's political turmoil", *Independent*, 17 Feb. 2014.


 **Saudi Arabia** 4 killed 20 Feb in clashes in eastern Shiite area, including 2 police. 7 protesters jailed for up to 20 years for demonstrating against govt.

- "Four die during Saudi police raid to arrest wanted people", Reuters, 20 Feb. 2014.


  **Yemen** Tensions in North continued, threatening shaky ceasefires in Dammaj, Arhab and Amran and rekindling of larger-scale violence, fracturing of delicate political consensus. Huthis 3 Feb won significant battle in Amran, defeating Ahmar fighters in Ahmar's home village; Huthis consolidated gains through deals with Hahsid tribesmen. Security forces 28 Feb clashed with Huthis in Hizm, Jawf province, at least 13 killed. 2 weeks after its formation, presidential committee charged with defining federal structure 10 Feb announced Yemen to be divided into 6 regions, 2 in South and 4 in North. Rushed announcement stoked political opposition; majority of Hiraak rejected outcome, claiming not sufficiently included in process; Huthis also opposed. UNSC 26 Feb established sanctions regime to impose travel bans and asset freezes on individuals or entities obstructing transition. Mass anti-govt protest held in Sanaa 21 Feb. Suspected al-Qaeda militants 20 Feb killed Salafi Shaikh Ali Bawazir in Hadramawt. 29 prisoners freed 13 Feb in attack on central security prison in capital. 2 foreigners kidnapped early Feb in Sanaa. South remained volatile: military clashes with armed Hiraak in al-Dalia governorate and with tribesmen in Hadramawt continued including at least 12 killed, 14 soldiers kidnapped in Daleh province 18 Feb.

- Crisis Group Alert, "Yemen: Conflict Alert", 26 Feb. 2014.
- "Conflict in Yemen's north threatens political transition", IRIN, 24 Feb. 2014.

North Africa

 **Algeria** PM Sellal 23 Feb announced President Bouteflika would seek re-election for 4th term; elections scheduled for 17 April against backdrop of rare public battle between presidential clan and military intelligence.

- "Restless Algeria set for another term of ageing Bouteflika", *Financial Times*, 26 Feb. 2014.

 **Egypt** Following late-Jan escalation of conflict in Sinai army struck several targets, jihadi group Ansar Beit al-Maqdis (ABM) continued attacks. Army raids and airstrikes killed dozens throughout month, officials claimed senior ABM members among dead. ABM bombing 16 Feb killed 3 S Korean tourists, 1 bus driver near Israeli border. Attacks in and around Cairo continued including 7 Feb bombing near Giza police station injuring 6, claimed by new militant group Ajnad Misr. Several killed in drive-by shootings targeted police. Military-backed govt 24 Feb announced resignation in move expected to pave way for Field Marshal Abdelfattah el-Sisi to

announce presidential run; candidacy requires Sisi to step down as defence minister, exiting Housing Minister Ibrahim Melheb tasked with forming new govt. 2 presidential contenders announced: former armed forces chief of staff Sami Enan, neo-Nasserist and 3rd runner-up in 2012 presidential election Hamdeen Sabahi. 4th runner-up in 2012 election Abdel-Moneim Abul-Fotouh 9 Feb announced boycott; described polls as “mockery”. Sisi’s expected candidacy received endorsements from former President Mubarak, Russian President Putin. Sisi, FM Fahmy visited Russia 12 Feb, reportedly to discuss arms-deal. Prosecutor general 4 Feb referred nearly 200 to trial including Muslim Brotherhood spiritual leader Mohammed Badie, other senior members: more than 500 Morsi supporters referred to trial 24 Feb, 220 sentenced to up to 7 years’ jail next day.

▪ “Egypt’s new dictator was made in the USA”, *Politico*, 18 Feb. 2014.

Libya Armed violence and unrest increased across country; UNSMIL 25 Feb expressed “deep concern” over ongoing assassinations, bombings and other attacks. Peaceful protests across country early Feb calling for General National Congress (GNC), whose mandate some argue ended 7 Feb, to disband; at least 8 congressmen resigned in protest at Jan extension of GNC’s mandate. Several armed groups threatened to disband GNC by force: Zintan military council 12 Feb accused GNC of being “new dictatorship”, announced intention to use force if necessary; brigades affiliated with pro-autonomy group in east 18 Feb supported calls to suspend GNC. Retired army commander Khalifa Hiftar, claiming to speak for national army, 18 Feb demanded GNC transfer power to interim presidential body entrusted with emergency legislative powers. Mostly Islamist rival armed groups across country publicly supported GNC. GNC early Feb accepted 8 possible candidates to replace PM Zeidan. 20 Feb polls to elect assembly to draft constitution marred by low turnout, minor violence that halted voting in Derna, Murzuk and Awbari. Assassinations continued across country including air force colonel killed 3 Feb and first post-Qadhafi prosecutor-general killed 8 Feb in Derna; residents of Benghazi protested assassinations, deteriorating security follow-

ing 26 Feb killing of 2 policemen. Bodies of 7 Egyptian Christians found on beach near Benghazi late Feb; all killed execution-style.

▪ “Libya’s turmoil: little to celebrate”, *Economist*, 22 Feb. 2014.

Tunisia New technocratic govt headed by PM Mehdi Jomaa in place, easing political tensions. Islamist An-Nahda and secular Nida Tounes party struggling to reach agreement on legal framework for upcoming elections and unwritten rules to help avoid clashes. Security concerns remain: armed jihadis 16 Feb killed 4, including 3 security force members, near Jendouba city. Interior minister announced around 400 Tunisians returned from fighting in Syria. U.S. Sec State Kerry visited 18 Feb to discuss security, praised transition progress, promised help in fight against radical Islamist militants.

▪ “Electoral law next step for Tunisian Assembly”, *TunisiaLive*, 5 Feb. 2014.

Western Sahara Security forces 15 Feb violently dispersed march in Laayoune chanting slogans calling for freedom, self-determination and extension of MINURSO prerogatives to include human rights monitoring in W Sahara.

▪ “Western Sahara activists feel full force of Moroccan intimidation”, *Guardian*, 25 Feb. 2014.

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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