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CrisisWatch:

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

CrisisWatch is compiled by Crisis Group's Brussels Research Unit, drawing on multiple sources including the resources of our nearly 120 staff members across five continents, who already report on some 50 of the situations listed here. Comments and suggestions can be sent to crisiswatch@crisisgroup.org.

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Africa

CENTRAL AFRICA

↓ Burundi Tension rose in Bujumbura over government's uncovering of alleged coup plot; former President Ndayizeye and 8 others charged. Allegations government tortured suspects and claim by 1 plotter coup conceived by authorities fueled international concern; government requested recall of UN envoy after he convened meeting of diplomats to discuss plot. Government prepared 2 laws regulating press and civil society in another perceived attempt to clamp down on dissent. Negotiations between FNL rebels and government on hold ahead of Dar es Salaam regional summit 7 September, where heads of state expected to set agenda for agreement on ceasefire. Demobilisation of non-FNL former combatants and government soldiers expanded to include officer level for first time.

- "Former president's arrest seen as part of pattern of abuse", IRIN, 25 Aug. 2006.
- "Officers in demobilisation for the first time, official says", IRIN, 21 Aug. 2006.
- "Alleged coup plotters tortured", Human Rights Watch, 4 Aug. 2006.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°31, *Elections in Burundi: A Radical Shake-Up of the Political Landscape*, 25 Aug. 2005.

↪ Central African Republic Rebel leader Larmassoum received life sentence for September attacks along Chadian border and plot to assassinate President Bozize. Government denied reports Ugandan LRA leader Kony asked for asylum.

- "Central African Republic jails rebel leader for life", *Mail & Guardian*, 19 Aug. 2006.

↪ ↘ Democratic Republic of Congo Situation fragile as election process continued. Results of 30 July vote released 20 August, showing regional divide and potential for further unrest: eastern provinces voted for incumbent Kabila, while contenders Bemba, Gizenga and Mobutu strongest in western districts. After no candidate received majority of votes, run-off between Kabila (44.8%) and Bemba (20.03%) scheduled to coincide with provincial elections 29 October, but Kabila pushing for earlier poll. 3-day gun battle in Kinshasa between supporters of Kabila and Bemba before presidential results announced killed 23. EU observers deemed election free and fair but called for greater transparency in vote counting. 7 election officials arrested on allegations of vote-rigging; Supreme Court to give verdict on 8 cases 5 September. 250 EU troops called in as reinforcements to patrol streets before candidates agreed truce 22 August. Parliamentary results expected 4 September. Angola moved troops to border in advance of electoral results and sent 1,700 Katangan Tigers back to country. UPC militia leader Thomas Lubanga charged by ICC with recruiting child soldiers despite calls for wider charges of murder, rape and torture.

- "War crime charge for Congo rebel", BBC, 28 Aug. 2006.
- "The results come in with a bang", *The Economist*, 24 Aug. 2006.
- "Congolese face tense Round 2 of voting", *Christian Science Monitor*, 22 Aug. 2006.

- For most recent report, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°114, *Escaping the Conflict Trap: Promoting Good Governance in the Congo*, 20 July 2006.

↪ Rwanda Parliament set to debate draft law repealing Rwanda's death penalty; would remove obstacle to transfer of ICTR cases to Rwandan jurisdiction before tribunal mandate ends 2008.

- "Rwanda may review death penalty", BBC, 16 Aug. 2006

↪ 🇺🇬 Uganda Government and LRA broke 4-week deadlock in Juba peace talks by signing truce 26 August. Under terms of deal, LRA have 3 weeks to assemble at designated safe zones in South Sudan, protected by SPLA, before proceeding to further talks. Stumbling blocks for further negotiations remain, including status of ICC arrest warrants, security guarantees for LRA leaders and substantial discrepancies between sides' agendas. Government earlier refused to match 4 August ceasefire declared by LRA leader Kony, instead continuing attacks on LRA and seeking Kinshasa's approval to attack LRA camps in northeast DRC. Reports indicated Kony might be seeking asylum in CAR.

- "Daunting post-conflict challenges in the north", IRIN, 31 Aug. 2006.
- "Uganda: when international justice and internal peace are at odds", *Christian Science Monitor*, 24 Aug. 2006.
- "Talks on hold as rebels demand cessation of hostilities", IRIN, 10 Aug. 2006.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°35, *A Strategy for Ending Northern Uganda's Crisis*, 11 Jan. 2006.

HORN OF AFRICA

↪ Chad Full restoration of diplomatic relations with Sudan after surprise attendance of Sudanese President Bashir at President Déby's third-term inauguration. N'Djamena cut ties in April after alleged Sudanese support for rebel coup attempt. Government announced arrest of 3 JEM rebel leaders and handed them to AU, in keeping with July agreement with Khartoum. Déby launched commission to renegotiate terms of oil consortium, seeking greater share for new national company, after ordering Chevron and Petronas, who together hold 60% stake, to leave Chad over tax disagreements. N'Djamena also restored relations with Beijing 7 August ending decade of relations with Taipei.

- "Chad oil tax row 'not asset grab'", BBC, 30 Aug. 2006.
- "Taxes, not nationalism, prompted oil dispute, Chad says", *International Herald Tribune*, 28 Aug. 2006.
- "Diplomatic ties reopened", IRIN, 9 Aug. 2006

↪ Ethiopia Security situation tense in Ogaden region as military said it killed 13 ONLF ethnic Somali separatists crossing into Ethiopia, days after ONLF said "ready for talks". Addis Ababa continued to deny any incursion of Ethiopian troops into Somalia.

- "Ethiopia troops head for Baidoa", BBC, 20 Aug. 2006.
- "Ethiopian army kills 13 rebels crossing from Somalia", *Sudan Tribune*, 12 Aug. 2006.
- "Ethiopia rebels 'ready for talks'", BBC, 10 Aug. 2006.

↪ Ethiopia/Eritrea Former Ethiopian commander defected with several senior officers and 150 soldiers to join secessionist, Eritrea-backed OLF rebels; clashes killed 2.

- "Ethiopian army commander defects to Eritrea", AlertNet, 10 Aug. 2006.

- For most recent report, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°101, *Ethiopia and Eritrea: Preventing War*, 22 Dec. 2005.

- ➔ Somalia Union of Islamic Courts (UIC) further consolidated control over much of south and east, seized coastal towns north of Mogadishu and vowed to eliminate piracy. Transitional Federal Government (TFG), weakened after string of July cabinet resignations, dissolved cabinet in Ethiopian-brokered initiative 7 August and appointed smaller cabinet 2 weeks later. UIC and TFG due to meet in Khartoum for talks 1 September. U.S. and UN called on Ethiopia and Eritrea to end interference in Somalia, threatening sanctions in response to any violation of arms embargo. Ethiopian troop presence reported in Baidoa, Wajid and Galkayo but denied by Addis Ababa. UIC head Aweys rejected IGAD proposals for regional peacekeeping force.
 - "Somali rivals heading for talks", BBC, 28 Aug. 2006.
 - "Somalia's High Stakes Power Struggle", Council on Foreign Relations, 7 Aug. 2006.

Crisis Group Africa Report N°116, *Can the Somali Crisis Be Contained?*, 10 August 2006. The stand-off between Somalia's Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and its Ethiopian ally, and the Islamic Courts controlling Mogadishu threatens to become a wider conflict unless both parties and the international community make urgent efforts to produce a genuine government of national unity. Somalis want a revived central government but are disappointed with the TFG. The Courts, the most powerful military and political group in the south, cannot be ignored or isolated. Misguided international interventions, including U.S. counter-terrorism efforts and Ethiopian military deployments, are partly responsible for the crisis but coordinated mediation is now needed to head off a war that could spread beyond Somalia's borders.



- ➔ Somaliland (Somalia) Ministerial delegation due to travel to Washington in September to seek support against threat of Union of Islamic Courts militia pursuing Somali reunification. President Kahin told on visit to UK that U.S. and UK see AU as primary forum for discussion of recognition issue.
 - "Somaliland seeks US help in battle for recognition", *Financial Times*, 24 Aug. 2006.
 - For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°110, *Somaliland: Time for African Union Leadership*, 23 May 2006.

- ➔ Sudan Sudanese military launched strike 29 August on Darfur rebel groups not party to May Darfur Peace Agreement. Reports indicated government offensive drove back rebels from Kulkul 29 August as Khartoum continued to build military presence in North Darfur. UN Security Council voted 31 August to approve force for Darfur with some Chapter VII powers, "inviting" consent from Khartoum. Sudanese approval nonetheless considered prerequisite for deployment; President Bashir continued to reject any UN force for Darfur and Sudan refused to attend UNSC discussions on the issue prior to vote, pointing to plan for its own force of 12,000 new troops. Resolution does authorise existing UNMIS force to provide support to cash-strapped AU force already in Darfur, whose mandate currently expires end September. Minni Minnawi, leader of rebel SLA faction that signed the May peace deal and now fighting alongside government forces, appointed senior assistant to President Bashir. Chronic insecurity continued: UN official Jan Egeland called situation

worst since 2004; WFP said 500,000 cut off from food aid. Relations between Khartoum and Chad improved as border opened and diplomatic ties re-established. Asmara talks between Khartoum and Eastern Front rebels led to agreement for more regional development.

- "Shaky Darfur peace at risk as new fighting looms", *New York Times*, 31 Aug. 2006.
- "Former Darfur rebel leader named presidential assistant", IRIN, 7 Aug. 2006.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°39, *Darfur's Fragile Peace Agreement*, 20 June 2006.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

- ➔ Angola Peace deal signed with Front for the Liberation of Cabinda Enclave separatists following July ceasefire, but smaller factions refused to sign. Parliament approved amnesty deal for separatists and pledged Cabindan integration into civil service and army.
 - "Angola parliament approves Cabinda amnesty deal", *Mail & Guardian*, 11 Aug. 2006.
 - "Angola signs deal with Cabindans", BBC, 1 Aug. 2006.

- ➔ Swaziland Tensions over new constitution highlighted by police clampdown on opposition party rally 9 August. Debate emerged over future of political parties, banned under old laws, as royalist Sive Siyinqaba cultural organisation formally declared itself party.
 - "Traditional chiefs find new constitution disagreeable", IRIN, 18 Aug. 2006.
 - "Politics makes a tentative comeback", IRIN, 9 Aug. 2006.

- ➔ Zimbabwe President Mugabe's proposal for limited talks on land reform with London rejected in SADC closed-door session 17 August, as the regional body reserved its approval for talks with a broader agenda that encompassed internal divisions. Mugabe had first proposed talks mediated by former Tanzanian President Mkapa at July Abuja summit, leading Kofi Annan to cancel Harare visit. "Non-aggression pact" signed between twin factions of opposition MDC party, but both denied reports of talks on cooperation. Trial launched against justice minister on charges of witness intimidation in case involving intelligence minister, in possible sign of continued government interference into judiciary. Government imposed 21-day price freeze and redenomination of Zimbabwean dollar at \$1:\$1000 in effort to curb effects of inflation.
 - "MDC factions assent to 'non-aggression' pact", ZimOnline, 29 Aug. 2006.
 - "Shaky start to new currency", IRIN, 21 Aug. 2006.
 - "Fury as Mugabe let off the hook again", IOL, 20 Aug. 2006.

Crisis Group Africa Report N°117, *Zimbabwe: An Opposition Strategy*, 24 August 2006. To avoid an explosion that could cost thousands of lives and shatter Southern Africa, the opposition may need to launch a risky strategy of nationwide, non-violent protest. Zimbabwe is more polarised today than ever, and in many ways, prospects for change seem to be slipping further away. Political reform is blocked, and nearly every economic indicator is heading downward. The opposition and civil society have yet to tap effectively into dissatisfaction based on declining living standards, but this could be the spark that sets Zimbabwe toward change.



WEST AFRICA

- ↪ Côte d'Ivoire Disarmament process, prerequisite for scheduled October elections, suspended 4 August over low weapons yield. UN peacekeeping mission chief said elections likely to be delayed. President Gbagbo recalled magistrates supervising voter identification in dispute over process. Gbagbo vowed not to step down before next elections, pre-empting UN decision on transitional government's mandate, due in September.

 - "Ivory Coast struggles to ID its citizens", *Christian Science Monitor*, 17 Aug. 2006.
 - "Ivorian president says he'll rule until polls held", AlertNet, 7 Aug. 2006.
 - "Disarmament suspended as militia fail to turn in arms", IRIN, 4 Aug. 2006.
 - For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°109, *Côte d'Ivoire: Peace as an Option*, 17 May 2006.

- ↪ Liberia Reconstruction progress continued as UN-backed government forces repossessed lawless Guthrie Rubber Plantation from 500 former LURD rebels, ending 3-year illegal tapping scheme. President Sirleaf signed 2006/07 budget into law 29 August, granting pay rise for civil servants, and launched program to bring 15,000 child labourers back to school.

 - "Gov't reclaims rubber plantation from former fighters", IRIN, 16 Aug. 2006.
 - For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°107, *Liberia: Resurrecting the Justice System*, 6 Apr. 2006; and Briefing N°36, *Liberia: Staying Focused*, 13 Jan. 2006.

- ↪ Nigeria President Obasanjo vowed crackdown in Niger Delta region after 16 foreign oil workers kidnapped in 2 weeks. Security forces launched raids in Port Harcourt 19 August, arresting hundreds, and 10 MEND rebels killed 21 August in Bayelsa state. Oil unions met 30 August to protest security situation in Delta and threatened strike 13 September. Cameroon assumed sovereignty over formerly disputed Bakassi peninsula 14 August, after Nigerian troops withdrew in peaceful handover despite reported local opposition. Resignation of FM Okonjo-Iweala seen as blow to Nigerian reform efforts, while riots in Ekiti state following assassination of gubernatorial candidate - third killed in 2 months - deepened concern over security for 2007 elections, now set for 21 April.

 - "Obasanjo orders crackdown to curb oil region hostage taking", IRIN, 16 Aug. 2006.
 - "Riots follow killing in Nigeria", BBC, 15 Aug. 2006.
 - "Nigeria hands Bakassi to Cameroon", BBC, 14 Aug. 2006.

Crisis Group Africa Report N°115, *The Swamps of Insurgency: Nigeria's Delta Unrest*, 3 August 2006. The Nigerian government and international oil corporations must change direction if they are to reduce the risk of violent meltdown in the Niger Delta, where a potent cocktail of poverty, crime and corruption is fuelling a militant threat to the country's reliability as a major oil producer. Several steps are required to reverse the situation. The government needs to forge far-reaching reforms to administration and its approach to revenue sharing. Oil companies should involve credible, community-based organisations in their development efforts. And Western governments must pay immediate attention to improving their own development aid.



- ↪ Senegal (Casamance) Further violence between MFDC fighters and Senegal military near Ziguinchor caused 300 residents to flee across border into Gambia.

 - "Residents flee gunfire in Casamance", IRIN, 18 Aug. 2006.
 - "Senegal rebel factions clash in south, army says", AlertNet, 17 Aug. 2006.

- ↪ Sierra Leone President Kabbah set July 2007 date for next presidential elections. Joint security patrols began along Liberian border, closed since 2003.

 - "Sierra Leone sets 2007 poll date", BBC, 4 Aug. 2006.
 - For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°87, *Liberia and Sierra Leone: Rebuilding Failed States*, 8 Dec. 2004.

- ↪ Togo Government signed elections accord with opposition Union of Forces for Change, ending 12-year stalemate. EU restored aid funding, suspended since 1993, after parties agreed to hold 2007 parliamentary elections with loosened voter eligibility requirements.

 - "Refugees beginning returning home but many still reluctant", IRIN, 30 Aug. 2006.
 - "Political agreement aims to end 12-year feud", IRIN, 21 Aug. 2006.

Asia/Pacific

CENTRAL ASIA

- ↪ Kazakhstan Former security officer Rustam Ibragimov sentenced to death for February murder of opposition leader Sarsenbaev; 9 other defendants given prison sentences of between 6 and 20 years. Sarsenbaev's family called trial farce, saying real blame lay with national security committee.

 - "Convicted killer of Kazakh politician sentenced to death", RFE/RL, 31 Aug. 2006.
 - "Kazakhstan murder trial 'a farce'", BBC, 15 Aug. 2006.

- ↪ Kyrgyzstan Tensions rose in southern town Karasuu after prominent Imam Kamalov killed with 2 Tajik citizens by security forces: government initially claimed Kamalov Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan "terrorist" but, after mounting local anger, said cleric may have been accidentally killed in clash between militants and armed forces. Security services called on Islamist militants in southern Osh region to lay down weapons by 1 September, while 6 went on trial accused of May border checkpoint attacks. UNHCR condemned extradition to Uzbekistan of 5 refugees, 4 of whom fled after 2005 Andijon uprising; 4 other refugees disappeared from Osh under suspicious circumstances (see Uzbekistan, below). 2 Washington-based Kyrgyz diplomats declared persona non grata following July expulsion of 2 U.S. diplomats from Bishkek. 3 sentenced to death for 2005 killing of MP Tynychbek Akmatbaev, who died while mediating prison revolt.

 - "Fury over imam death", IWPR, 18 Aug. 2006.
 - "UN says shocked by Kyrgyz extraditions to Uzbekistan", AlertNet, 10 Aug. 2006.
 - For background, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°109, *Kyrgyzstan: A Faltering State*, 16 Dec. 2005.

Crisis Group Asia Report N°118, **Kyrgyzstan's Prison System Nightmare**, 16 August 2006. Kyrgyzstan's badly underfunded, neglected prison system threatens to destabilise the fragile state's security and public health unless government and donors launch an urgent process of penal and judicial reform. Criminal leaders control the 16,000 inmates, not prison administrators. Corruption is rife at all levels; tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS rates are very high. The prisons are a microcosm of problems in post-Akayev Kyrgyzstan – a shortage of funds, collapsed health sector, corruption and influential criminals are all in the civilian world as well. Trouble in prisons has already led to serious conflicts outside their crumbling walls and without extensive reform the spillover will be impossible to contain.



- Tajikistan Opposition Islamic Renaissance Party leader Said Abdullo Nuri died after long illness 9 August; his deputy, Muhiddin Kabiri, nominated as successor. Suspected Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan militant and police officer killed in attempted arrest 3 August. Sogd regional court sentenced ethnic Uzbek to 15 years for spying in at least fourth such sentence since May. Former presidential guard chief Mirzoyev given life sentence for alleged 2004 coup plot. Attempt to remove two former opposition field commanders from posts in eastern province of Badakhshon led to protests by commanders' supporters in regional capital Khorog. Parliament set presidential elections for 6 November.
 - "Tajikistan loses an influential peacemaker", ISN, 23 Aug. 2006.
 - "Questions raised over militant threat", IWPR, 17 Aug. 2006.
 - For background, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°33, *Tajikistan's Politics: Confrontation or Consolidation?*, 19 May 2004.
- Turkmenistan Former presidential spokesman Kakamurat Ballyev reportedly sentenced to 17 years prison; latest in series of senior officials to fall foul of President Niyazov. Ballyev dismissed from post shortly before arrest but charges remain unclear. OSCE condemned 25 August closed-trial sentencing of 2 rights activists and journalist to long prison terms, reportedly for ammunition possession.
 - "Turkmen president's ex-spokesman reportedly jailed", RFE/RL, 14 Aug. 2006.
 - "Turkmen civil society under threat", IWPR, 11 Aug. 2006.
 - For background, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°85, *Repression and Regression in Turkmenistan: A New International Strategy*, 4 Nov. 2004.
- Uzbekistan Russia suspended extradition of 13 refugees who fled after 2005 Andijon uprising, pending appeals to European Court of Human Rights. UNHCR condemned Kyrgyzstan's return to Uzbekistan of 5 asylum-seekers. Activists said 4 more refugees disappeared from Osh and 2 then appeared in Andijon detention; Uzbek government denied involvement. 53 of 150 Andijon refugees in U.S. returned to Uzbekistan in July and August under unclear circumstances. 14 suspected Hizb ut-Tahrir (HuT) members sentenced to 7-12 years prison on religious extremism charges; 3 Tashkent residents also on trial for HuT membership. Crackdown on civil society continued as dissident website closed down and 3 U.S. NGOs faced closure.
 - "Third group of Uzbek refugees prepares to return", RFE/RL, 30 Aug. 2006.
 - "Internet under surveillance", IWPR, 17 Aug. 2006.

- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°45, *Uzbekistan: In for the Long Haul*, 16 Feb. 2006.

SOUTH ASIA

- Afghanistan NATO, U.S. and Afghan forces battled daily with militants in south and east with increased NATO and coalition troops casualties. NATO-supported Afghan police reportedly killed 71 suspected militants in southern Kandahar 19 August, while heavy fighting in northeast near Pakistan border left 3 U.S. soldiers dead. Suicide bombers continued to target civilians and NATO troops: attack on NATO convoy 3 August killed 21 civilians. In second round of confirmations, National Assembly approved new Supreme Court and final 5 cabinet ministers; also made first moves as lawmaking body by giving more powers to provincial councils.
 - "Losing Afghanistan", *International Herald Tribune*, 24 Aug. 2006.
 - Comment by Nick Grono and Joanna Nathan (Crisis Group), "Afghanistan: Keep up the war on terror at its source", *The Australian*, 8 Aug. 2006.
 - For background, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°116, *Afghanistan's New Legislature: Making Democracy Work*, 15 May 2006.
- Bangladesh Significant shift in electoral politics as former military ruler HM Ershad's Jatiya party agreed to join BNP-led government alliance for January 2007 polls. 5 killed when police fired into crowd demonstrating against coal mine in Dinajpur district 26 August; plans for mine subsequently dropped. India and Bangladesh involved in cross-border shelling, killing 2 civilians on each side; exchanged mutual accusations of initiating clash following alleged land-grab by Bangladeshi farmers. 3 members of banned Jamatul Mujahideen Bangladesh sentenced to death in connection with August and October 2005 bombings.
 - "Deal to end Bangladesh mine row", BBC, 30 Aug. 2006.
 - "Ershad: New 'queen maker' in Bangladesh's 'battle of Begums'", *Daily India*, 27 Aug. 2006.
 - "'Casualties' in border shelling", BBC, 10 Aug. 2006.
- India (non-Kashmir) United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) rebels and government agreed to temporarily suspend operations as talks to prepare for direct negotiations continued. ULFA repeated demand that government release 5 leaders in detention as condition for direct negotiations. Previously in month 3 civilians, 5 police and 4 ULFA killed in separate incidents in Assam state. Explosion at Hindu temple in Imphal, Manipur state 16 August killed 5: Government suspected militant Meitei Manipur separatist group Kanglei Yawol Kunna Lup; KYKL denied involvement. 2 Indian and Bangladeshi civilians killed in cross-border shelling. Maoists killed 3 members of security forces at Atmakur police station in Andhra Pradesh 19 August. Andhra Pradesh government extended ban on Communist Party of India (Maoist) and 6 of its front organisations for 1 year.
 - "Maoist rebels spread across rural India", *Christian Science Monitor*, 22 Aug. 2006.
 - "A spectre haunting India", *The Economist*, 17 Aug. 2006.
- Kashmir India and Pakistan engaged in tit-for-tat expulsion of diplomats in moves reminiscent of pre-normalisation process antagonism. Clashes continued throughout month with surge of grenade attacks in run up to 15 August Indian independence

day. 5 Pakistan-based militants killed in attempt to cross Line of Control 16 August. Pakistan alleged violations of Line of Control ceasefire by Indian forces. Further 9 killed, including 3 soldiers, in security operations in Kulgam-Qazigund area. Lashkar-e-Toiba militant allegedly linked to 11 July Mumbai bombings charged with establishing terror network in Mumbai.

- [“Pak protests India’s violation of ceasefire”](#), The News, 27 Aug. 2006.
- [“Six killed in violence in Jammu & Kashmir”](#), *Hindustan Times*, 17 Aug. 2007.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°51, *India, Pakistan and Kashmir: Stabilising a Cold Peace*, 15 June 2006.

↳ Maldives Jennifer Latheef, daughter of Maldivian Democratic Party founder, rejected presidential pardon for 10-year house arrest on charges of inciting 2003 riot; wanted charges dropped and release of other MDC detainees.

- [“Maldives dissident rejects pardon”](#), BBC, 16 Aug. 2006.

↳ Nepal 7-party alliance government and Maoists finally agreed on joint request for UN assistance in peace process, writing 9 August letter to UNSG Annan. UN responded by appointing OHCHR office head Ian Martin to lead new political mission to prepare assistance plan, including monitoring ceasefire, arms management and observation of constituent assembly elections. Controversy remained over king’s position in period before constituent assembly in place. Government and Maoists also failed to agree on interim constitution - due in June; incomplete draft only submitted 25 August. Serious disturbances over fuel-price hike forced government u-turn and highlighted fragile security situation. Maoist cadres clashed with People’s Democratic Tarai Liberation Front in Siraha District in southern Nepal 17 August; locals protested Maoist violence next day. 2 Nepali Congress Party cadres reportedly killed after kidnapped by Maoists 5 August. Outgoing army chief succeeded by his deputy despite allegations of serious human rights violations and royalist bias; draft Army Bill criticised domestically and internationally for violating human rights provisions.

- [“Maoists strive to win hearts and minds”](#), BBC, 26 Aug. 2006.
- [“Poised between revolutions?”](#), *The Economist*, 24 Aug. 2006.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°115, *Nepal: From People Power to Peace?*, 10 May 2006.

↳ Pakistan Major Balochistan leader, Nawab Akbar Bugti, killed by security forces 26 August. Violent protests and province-wide strikes in Balochistan and Baloch majority areas of Karachi followed. Curfew imposed on Balochistan’s capital Quetta. Bugti’s killing condemned by all major political parties, including opposition Alliance for Democracy: 21 soldiers and 37 rebels also killed in operation. International attention focused on Pakistan’s failure to rein in jihadis as 22 suspects, mostly UK citizens of Pakistani origin, arrested in UK in alleged plot to blow up transatlantic flights. Pakistani intelligence agencies detained UK citizen in Punjab along with 6 nationals countrywide.

- [“A death Pakistan can ill afford”](#), Asia Times Online, 29 Aug. 2006.
- [“Problems for Pakistan’s president”](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 17 Aug. 2006.
- [“The Pakistan connection: suspicion falls on al-Qaida”](#), *The Guardian*, 12 Aug. 2006.
- For most recent report, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°46, *Pakistan: Political Impact of the Earthquake*, 15 Mar. 2006.

↳ Sri Lanka Security situation deteriorated with full-scale military clashes in eastern and northern regions. 200,000 displaced in areas of conflict and hundreds killed. Fighting engulfed predominantly Muslim town of Muttur, forcing 50,000 to flee; casualties included 17 workers of French NGO that Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) later accused security forces of “assassinating”. Air force bombing in Mullaitivu district 14 August reportedly killed dozens of young students; government claimed training camp for young LTTE rebels. Fighting broke out in northern Jaffna peninsula 11 August. In Colombo, LTTE shot dead Tamil deputy head of government peace secretariat Kethesh Loganathan, 12 August. 7 killed in explosion near residence of President Rajapakse 14 August in LTTE attack suspected to have been aimed at Pakistan’s envoy amidst enhanced defence cooperation between Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Clashes over Mavilaru waterway in east continued, despite deal that saw LTTE lift 14 day blockade. Military reported at least 100 killed in operations in northeast Sampur area from 27 August. Monitors from EU states left 1 September after having been ordered out by LTTE in response to EU listing of group as terrorists.

- [“Sri Lanka blamed in deaths of aid workers”](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 30 Aug. 2006.
- [“Sri Lanka army battles rebels in northeast”](#), AlertNet, 29 Aug. 2006.
- [“Beyond euphemism”](#), *The Economist*, 17 Aug. 2006.

NORTH EAST ASIA

↳ China (internal) Beijing court dismissed charges *New York Times* employee Zhao Yan leaked state secrets, but sentenced him to 3 years for fraud. Hong Kong journalist for Singapore’s *Straits Times* Ching Cheong jailed in mainland China for 5 years for spying. Authorities accused of clamping down on lawyers and rights advocates representing those aggrieved about land seizures, environmental abuses, religious persecution and population controls.


- [“China reporter jailed for spying”](#), BBC, 31 Aug. 2006.
- [“Activist in China sentenced to 4 years”](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 24 Aug. 2006.

↳ Kuril Islands/Northern Territories (Russia/Japan) Worst incident in 50 years as Russian patrol boat reportedly shot dead Japanese fisherman near disputed Southern Kuril islands/Northern Territories. 3 other fishermen taken into Russian custody, 2 released 30 August.

- [“Russians free Japanese fishermen”](#), BBC, 30 Aug. 2006.

↳ North Korea Tensions continued to mount on Korean peninsula after July missile tests and speculation North aiming for nuclear test. Joint U.S.-South Korean annual military exercises started 21 August and led to North threat of “pre-emptive action”. North and South troops exchanged fire across border 1 August; no injuries reported.

- [“North is capable of a nuclear test, Seoul official says”](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 28 Aug. 2006.
- [“North Korea threatens attack due to war drills”](#), Reuters, 22 Aug. 2006.

Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°52, [After North Korea’s Missile Launch: Are the Nuclear Talks Dead?](#), 9 August 2006. In the wake of Pyongyang’s provocative missile test and Washington’s... 

...hardline negotiating strategy, the 6-party talks on North Korea's nuclear program have been reduced to "dead man walking" status. Unless they can be resumed quickly with both sides showing more flexibility, the U.S. and North Korea could be on a collision course with Seoul caught in the middle. A new approach is needed in Washington, including readiness to talk bilaterally and less name calling, to test the North's willingness to return to the table and work towards a deal. Otherwise the North could be pushed to further escalating an already perilous situation.

- ✦ Taiwan Strait Both sides stepped up diplomatic war of attrition: China lured Chad to re-establish ties, and continued negotiations with 3 Taiwan allies - Guatemala, Paraguay and Sao Tome & Principe - for oil/gas exploration. Taiwan rallied support in Central America and Solomon Islands, and made 14th attempt at UN membership 10 August when several supporting states wrote to UNSG Annan requesting issue be raised in September General Assembly. Beijing called proposal attempt for Taiwanese independence.
 - "Gov't to consider push for U.N. entry as 'Taiwan'", *China Post*, 29 Aug. 2006.
 - For background, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°42, *China and Taiwan: Uneasy Détente*, 21 Sept. 2005.

SOUTH EAST ASIA

- ✦ Indonesia Officials announced landmark Aceh elections for governor and local positions to be held 11 December. Election preparations revealed split in GAM between Sweden-based leaders and younger, Aceh-based group. Anniversary of peace deal saw huge demonstration in Banda Aceh organised by GAM and pro-referendum organisation, SIRA: both celebration of peace and protest against Jakarta for reducing level of autonomy offered in original agreement. Signs of progress in resolving partition of Papua under Special Autonomy. President Yudhoyono stated his commitment to single Papuan People's Council and tasked legal experts with drafting revisions to autonomy law to accommodate West Irian Jaya.
 - Comment by Sidney Jones (Crisis Group), "Papua shrouded by misperception", *Australian Financial Review*, 29 Aug. 2006.
 - "Aceh marks year of peace", *Jakarta Post*, 16 Aug. 2006.
 - For most recent report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°117, *Islamic Law and Criminal Justice in Aceh*, 31 July 2006.
- ✦ Myanmar/Burma FM Nyan Win told Thai counterpart that junta looking for way to release opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi. Thai PM Thaksin Shinawatra met junta leader Than Shwe 2 August and announced oil find in Myanmar by Thai state-owned company. Philippine FM Romulo visited Myanmar to encourage democratic reform but earlier in month Than Shwe emphasised ASEAN principle of non-interference. Myanmar diplomat said new constitution 75% complete and national convention to resume in October, but Suu Kyi to be excluded.
 - "Burma envoy: constitutional convention could restart after end of rainy season", *Voice of America*, 15 Aug. 2006.
 - "Time to act on Burma", *Washington Post*, 9 Aug. 2006.
- ✦ Philippines Communist New People's army attacks on military and police continued, including raid on army outpost in Mindanao 23 August and army convoy ambush 26 August. President Arroyo appointed commission to investigate series of killings and kidnappings of left-wing activists: Amnesty International report accused military of being involved. 6 killed in attack by Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) members on

Tulunan town 12 August. Sporadic attacks by MILF on military posts in Mindanao also continued. Government spokesman said peace talks with MILF to resume but without any public deadline. 1 civilian and 2 rebels killed in military offensive and airstrikes against Abu Sayyaf on southern island of Jolo.

- "Manila says no new deadline for Muslim peace deal", *AlertNet*, 29 Aug. 2006.
 - "Crisis brewing in the Philippines", *Asia Times Online*, 24 Aug. 2006.
 - For background, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°110, *Philippines Terrorism: The Role of Militant Islamic Converts*, 19 Dec. 2005.
- ✦ Papua New Guinea Government declared state of emergency in energy-rich Southern Highlands province. PM Somare said troops deployed to restore law, order and good governance in province after suspending provincial administration for alleged corruption.
 - "Papua New Guinea careens toward a political implosion", *Taipei Times*, 26 Aug. 2006.
 - "State of emergency in PNG region", *BBC*, 1 Aug. 2006.
 - ✦ Thailand Political uncertainty and southern violence continued. Opposition parties threatened to restart mass demonstrations after clashes between protestors and supporters at caretaker PM Thaksin Shinawatra's public appearances. Interior Minister Wantana said credible reports of assassination plot against PM. Although royal decree on 15 October election came into effect 24 August, 10 August deadline for Senate to approve new Election Commissioners missed, possibly delaying poll. Insurgency continued in south with 53 deaths reported in various attacks on civilians and security forces: 2 August mine on rail bridge killed 3 police; 20 coordinated blasts outside banks in Yala province 31 August killed 1; while night of 1 August saw 128 separate bombing and shooting incidents. In Yala province locals received insurgent leaflets telling Buddhists to leave south.
 - "Violence against anti-PM protesters an attack on basic democratic freedoms", *The Nation*, 23 Aug. 2006.
 - "Thailand's troubled premier may still win election", *Bangkok Post*, 23 Aug. 2006.
 - For background, see Crisis Group Asia Reports N°105, *Thailand's Emergency Decree: No Solution*, 18 Nov. 2005; and N°98, *Southern Thailand: Insurgency, Not Jihad*, 18 May 2005.
 - ✦ Timor-Leste Situation remained tense with local trust in international police/defence forces and government greatly reduced. Process of removing illicit weapons and holding those responsible for April/May violence yet to begin; 56 prisoners, including Alfredo Reinado, rebel leader arrested in July, escaped from Dili jail 30 August. UN Security Council unanimously approved new and expanded UN mission (UNMIT) 26 August. Mission to consist of 1,600 police and 35 military liaison officers, but no troops. Previous request by Dili, UNSG Annan, China, France and others for UN control over all international troops rejected in resolution - allowing Australia, with 1,500 troops in multi-national force of 2,300, to retain control and financial burden for military component; Annan to review arrangements by 25 October. Intermittent violence persisted in Dili despite President Gusmao's suspension of emergency rule. Attacks by youths on refugee camps saw Australian police fire warning shots. 25 gang members arrested for arson and attack on police 21 August.
 - "UN starts new East Timor mission", *The Age*, 26 Aug. 2006.

- [“Refugees in East Timor camps are afraid”](#), *Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 Aug. 2006.

PACIFIC

- Solomon Islands PM Sogavare announced intention to dismiss attorney-general in dispute over inquiry commission's power to investigate 2 jailed MPs' involvement in April unrest. Sogavare visited Taiwan reaffirming diplomatic relations and support for Taiwanese UN membership.
 - [“Solomon PM dismisses fears over top post for Australian”](#), *Sydney Morning Herald*, 22 Aug. 2006.



BALKANS

- Albania All 7 seats of Central Electoral Commission filled 4 August after months of wrangling between ruling Democratic Party and opposition Socialists. Further opposition threats to boycott winter elections followed, before parties compromised 31 August to increase number of electoral commissioners to 9 and local government terms from 3 to 4 years.
 - [“Albanian parties reach deal on electoral reform, paving way for municipal elections”](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 31 Aug. 2006.
 - For most recent report, see Crisis Group Europe Report N°153, [Pan-Albanianism: How Big a Threat to Balkan Stability?](#), 25 Feb. 2004.
- Bosnia & Herzegovina Tensions mounted ahead of 1 October presidential and parliamentary polls. Republika Srpska (RS) and Bosniak-Croat Federation leaders' rhetoric over RS status intensified after broadcast of controversial war-time footage and bomb attack on former President Izetbegovic's tomb. Belgrade television aired apparent recordings of war crimes against Serbs during Bosniak and Croatian offensive in 1995. Serbia passed footage to BiH and Croatian governments; prosecutors from 3 countries agreed to cooperate in investigation. High Representative Schwarz-Schilling appealed to politicians to curb rhetoric.
 - [“Ethnic tensions rising as Bosnian vote nears”](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 27 Aug. 2006.
 - [“War, crimes and videotapes”](#), IWPR, 11 Aug. 2006.
 - For most recent report, see Crisis Group Europe Report N°164, [Bosnia's Stalled Police Reform: No Progress, No EU](#), 6 Sept. 2005.
- Kosovo Sixth round of decentralisation talks in Vienna ended without progress 7 August. Kosovo Serb representatives, refusing label of minority, boycotted first round of negotiations on minorities 8 August, which failed to produce results. UN envoy Ahtisaari and team subsequently negotiated altered decentralisation proposal with Pristina. Contact group called for practical solution for North of province, expressing concern over deteriorating political and security situation. UNMIK reinforced international police presence in area but tensions stoked by grenade attack on north Mitrovica cafe 26 August; 7 Serbs and 2 foreigners wounded. German diplomat Joachim Rucker appointed new head of UNMIK from 1 September.

- [“New UN chief rules out Kosovo partition”](#), AlertNet, 15 Aug. 2006.
- [“Kosovo Serbs boycott Vienna talks”](#), BBC, 8 Aug. 2006.
- For most recent report, see Crisis Group Europe Report N°174, [An Army for Kosovo?](#), 28 July 2006.

- Macedonia Parliament approved new government 27 August: coalition, led by VMRO-DPMNE leader Nikola Gruevski, includes Democratic Party of Albanians (DPA) and several smaller parties. Ethnic Albanian Democratic Union for Integration continued to protest opposition status, arguing party gained more ethnic Albanian votes than DPA in July elections.
 - [“Macedonia gets new government, DUI uses militant rhetoric”](#), *Southeast European Times*, 28 Aug. 2006.
 - [“Macedonia violence unlikely despite protests”](#), ISN, 18 Aug. 2006.
 - For background, see Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°41, [Macedonia: Wobbling toward Europe](#), 12 Jan. 2006.

- Montenegro Parties prepared for 10 September parliamentary and local elections with series of coalition agreements: 7 coalitions, 4 parties and 1 civic-group submitted electoral lists. Military conscription abolished as part of efforts to join NATO Partnership for Peace by end 2006.
 - [“Montenegro cancels compulsory army service”](#), UPI, 30 Aug. 2006.
 - [“Country for sale”](#), *Christian Science Monitor*, 21 Aug. 2006.
 - For most recent report, see Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°42, [Montenegro's Referendum](#), 30 May 2006.

- Serbia EU progress remained deadlocked over failure to arrest war-crime suspects. PM Kostunica and President Tadic struggled publicly over who will control army's newly created combined special forces unit. EU and OSCE criticised parliament's planned restrictive amendments to broadcasting law vetoed by Tadic in July but due for re-discussion in assembly. Coordination Centre for Kosovo head Raskovic-Ivic floated idea of Kosovo partition 11 August, but Belgrade disowned proposal after international criticism. Government accused UN envoy Ahtisaari of bias after he said Serbs had to bear burden for crimes committed in Kosovo 1998-9.
 - [“Ahtisaari comment draws fire in Serbia”](#), *Southeast European Times*, 30 Aug. 2006.
 - [“Serbia says EU progress depends on Mladic capture”](#), AlertNet, 17 Aug. 2006.
 - For most recent report, see Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°43, [Southern Serbia: In Kosovo's Shadow](#), 27 June 2006.

CAUCASUS

- Azerbaijan Campaign for October municipal elections started 8 August; opposition Azadliq bloc said planning boycott, citing past vote-rigging. Former official accused of plotting coup committed suicide in custody 24 August. Baku court sentenced opposition Popular Front Party (AHCP) activist Sakhavat Babayev to 3 years' prison for “commercial crimes”; followed similar sentencing of AHCP activist in July.
 - [“Jailed Azerbaijani official commits suicide”](#), RFE/RL, 24 Aug. 2006.
 - [“Assassination, scandal taints Baku”](#), ISN, 23 Aug. 2006.
 - For background, see Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°40, [Azerbaijan's 2005 Elections: Lost Opportunity](#), 21 Nov. 2005.
- Chechnya (Russia) Russian President Putin asked defence and interior ministries to formulate plan for withdrawal

of all non-permanent troops from Chechnya by 2008. Pro-Kremlin Chechen PM Kadyrov welcomed proposal. Separatist leader Umarov's brother reportedly surrendered to Chechen authorities 18 August. Russian rights group reported major decrease in number of people killed or disappeared in republic in 2005 in comparison to 2004.

- "The hidden war", IWPR, 16 Aug. 2006.
- "Big drop' in Chechnya killings", BBC, 3 Aug. 2006.

North Caucasus (non-Chechnya) Russia extended deadline for militants to surrender in North Caucasus and Chechnya to 30 September, but low-level violence continued throughout region. In Dagestan, local prosecutor killed by roadside bomb and 2 others killed in follow-up attack; 4 suspected rebels killed 26 August. In Ingushetia, at least 6 killed in rebel attacks, while 3 suspected militants reportedly killed in Ingushetia and Kabardino-Balkaria. North Ossetian President Mamsurov dismissed government and nominated Nikolai Khlyntsov as PM 29 August.

- "Seven die in south Russia battles", BBC, 27 Aug. 2006.
- "Armed mob kills two Russian police in their homes", AlertNet, 20 Aug. 2006.

Georgia Tbilisi confirmed plans to install pro-Georgian Abkhaz government-in-exile in upper Kodori gorge, near Abkhazia conflict zone, and pledged major investment in infrastructure. De facto Abkhaz authorities and Russia objected to Georgian police presence in area, saying violation of 1994 Moscow agreement. Tbilisi agreed to UN inspection of gorge without Russian peacekeeping participation; CIS peacekeepers and UN observers carried out joint monitoring of rebel-held lower gorge 15 August. Joint Control Commission discussed South Ossetia 17-18 August: Georgia sought revisions of 1992 agreement on Russian-led peacekeeping and negotiation mechanisms before launch of internationally-funded rehabilitation program; Russia and South Ossetians reject any changes. Georgian local elections set for 5 October.

- "Georgia to build town in Kodori gorge", RFE/RL, 15 Aug. 2006.
- "Extent of 'victory' in Kodori offensive unclear", RFE/RL, 1 Aug. 2006.
- For most recent report, see Crisis Group Europe Report N°173, *Conflict Resolution in the South Caucasus: The EU's Role*, 20 Mar. 2006.

Nagorno-Karabakh (Azerbaijan) Minsk Group U.S. co-chair Matthew Bryza visited Armenia, Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan 29 July-1 August. U.S., French and Russian co-chairs met in Paris 2 August; discussed "new proposals" to resolve current deadlock.

- "The last of the Azeris in Karabakh", ISN, 21 Aug. 2006.
- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Report N°167, *Nagorno-Karabakh: A Plan for Peace*, 11 Oct. 2005.

EASTERN EUROPE

Belarus OSCE and EU condemned sentencing of 4 election monitors to between 6 months and 2 years in prison for "infringing on rights and interests" of citizens. 2 released after serving 6-month pre-trial detention. Diplomatic row erupted with Latvia after Minsk accused embassy official of involvement in pornography. Poland called for release of 3 ethnic Pole activists detained ahead of Union of Poles in Belarus meeting 18 August.

- "Election activists sentenced in closed-door trial", RFE/RL, 4 Aug. 2006.
- "Latvia expels Belarus' diplomat", BBC, 2 Aug. 2006.

Moldova President Voronin visited Moscow 8 August for first talks with Russian President Putin in 3 years; discussed Transdniestria and ban on Moldovan wine imports. Bomb blast on bus in Transdniestrian capital Tiraspol killed 1, month after similar blast killed 7.

- "Bus blast in separatist Moldovan region kills one", AlertNet, 13 Aug. 2006.
- "Moldovan president makes rare visit to Moscow", RFE/RL, 8 Aug. 2006.

Crisis Group Europe Report N°175, *Moldova's Uncertain Future*, 17 August

2006. Moldova, which has recently turned away from Moscow and toward the West, will not become a stable part of the European Union's neighbourhood until its conflict with breakaway Transdniestria is settled, and that is still a long way off despite recent EU and Ukrainian initiatives. While a reunited country remains a realistic long-term goal, the immediate priorities should be increasing Moldova's political and economic attractiveness and confidence-building measures. Given Russia's export bans, energy cut-offs and the continued deployment of unwanted troops, the EU must do far more with both incentives and pressures.

Ukraine After months of negotiations, 2004 presidential candidate and leader of Party of Regions Viktor Yanukovich appointed as PM. New government includes ministers from Party of Regions, President Yushchenko's Our Ukraine party, as well as Socialist and Communist parties. Yanukovich met Russian counterpart 16 August to discuss controversial gas deal, announcing current price would remain until end 2006.

- "Russia, Ukraine make progress in gas talks", RFE/RL, 16 Aug. 2006.
- "Yanukovich approved as Ukraine PM", BBC, 4 Aug. 2006.

WESTERN EUROPE/MEDITERRANEAN

Basque Country (Spain) Separatist ETA said peace process in crisis as result of ongoing Spanish and French arrests of members. Group threatened to "respond" if policy continued; government denied promising to halt arrests. Large pro-independence march held in Bilbao 25 August.

- "Eta warns peace process in crisis", BBC, 18 Aug. 2006.

Corsica (France) 2 suspected separatists died in north after bomb, reportedly intended for French-owned fire-fighting helicopters, exploded prematurely: Corsican National Liberation Front "October 22" section claimed responsibility.

- "Island strife", *The Guardian*, 30 Aug. 2006.

Cyprus Senior-level talks between representatives of Turkish and Greek Cypriot presidents continued under UN auspices amid media blackout. Representatives Pertev and Tzionis discussed extensive lists of bicommunal issues submitted by both sides in July, but establishment of technical committees delayed. UNSC urged both sides to fully implement July agreement without further delay.

- "Glimmer of light on Cyprus?", BBC, 8 Aug. 2006.
- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Report N°171, *The Cyprus Stalemate: What Next?*, 8 Mar. 2006.

- ↳ Northern Ireland (UK) Dissident republicans launched wave of minor attacks and disruptions, including firebombing of shops in Newry and devices on Dublin-Belfast rail track; Real IRA claimed responsibility for both. Apprentice Boys march in Londonderry 12 August passed peacefully despite violence against police before march and rioting afterwards. British government indicated plans to abolish controversial non-jury Diplock courts for terrorism suspects by mid-2007.
 - [“Pledge to end dissident violence”](#), BBC, 17 Aug. 2006.
 - [“Northern Ireland’s Diplock courts to be abolished soon”](#), *The Guardian*, 12 Aug. 2006.

- ↳ Turkey Bombs in Istanbul and southern towns Adana, Marmaris, Antalya and Mersin killed 3, injured at least 60; Kurdish Liberation Hawks claimed responsibility for most of attacks. Low-level violence between PKK and armed forces left at least 9 dead, including in northeast Gumushane province where 4 soldiers killed in rebel ambush. Turkey and Iran reported to be shelling PKK camps in Northern Iraq; Turkish military confirmed planes targeted PKK positions along border 24 August. New chief of staff Buyukanit said army would be downsized by as much as 30% in modernisation drive.
 - [“Turkey sharpens response to upsurge in Kurd violence”](#), *Christian Science Monitor*, 29 Aug. 2006.
 - [“Big army cuts planned by Turkey”](#), BBC, 9 Aug. 2006.



Latin America / Caribbean

- ↳ Bolivia President Morales convened inaugural session of constituent assembly 6 August, designed to give more power to indigenous population. Nationalisation of hydrocarbons hit snags as state energy company YPFB ran short of funds to expand control over gas sector and YPFB head resigned, while Morales spoke of “conspiracy” raising obstacles to nationalisation. Troops sent to Argentine border 29 August after protests by Guarani Indians briefly halted gas exports; leaders threatened further protests at gas fields over investors’ failure to realise promised local development.
 - [“In Bolivia, new setbacks to a leader’s lofty vision”](#), *Washington Post*, 31 Aug. 2006.
 - [“Push for new Bolivia constitution”](#), BBC, 6 Aug. 2006.
 - For background, see Crisis Group Latin America Report N°18, [“Bolivia’s Rocky Road to Reforms”](#), 3 July 2006.

- ↳ Colombia President Uribe sworn in for second term; promised further emphasis on security. Government appeared to take harder line on demobilisation of paramilitaries, as Uribe warned AUC fighters they must comply with new terms of supreme court’s May review of 2005 Justice and Peace Law, which require full confessions and withhold some protections. Bulk of AUC leaders – except “Jorge 40” and Vicente Castaño – assented to government’s request that they serve house arrest-style detention in government facility. FARC claimed hostage exchange program with government stalled.
 - [“Uribe warns fighters to confess”](#), BBC, 15 Aug. 2006.
 - [“Colombian rebels try to show government who is boss”](#), AlertNet, 14 Aug. 2006.
 - For background, see Crisis Group Latin America Report N°17, [“Uribe’s Re-election: Can the EU Help Colombia Develop a More Balanced Peace Strategy?”](#), 8 June 2006.

- ↳ Ecuador Highest court struck down challenge filed by business groups against new law forcing foreign oil companies to hand over greater share of oil revenues. Reports of new oil pipeline attacks in Sucumbios region.
 - [“Ecuador court upholds new oil law”](#), AlJazeera, 23 Aug. 2006.

- ↳ Guyana Country voted peacefully 28 August in presidential and parliamentary elections amid stepped-up security, after fears ethnic violence might mar polls. Incumbent candidate Jagdeo made strong showing in early results.
 - [“Guyana votes amid tight security”](#), BBC, 29 Aug. 2006.

- ↳ Haiti Government hardened line on disarmament of armed gangs after July upsurge in violence. PM Alexis said gang leaders who did not disarm under terms of UN DDR plan would be arrested or killed. Leaders of notorious Cité Soleil slum failed to proceed with self-scheduled disarmament ceremony 21 August, citing hostility of MINUSTAH forces. Acknowledging chronic insecurity, UNSG Annan, in visit to Port-au-Prince, announced hopes for 12-month extension of MINUSTAH mandate. Security Council voted for standard 6-month extension, but increased both military and police peacekeepers.
 - [“Haitian gang leaders shelve disarmament plan”](#), AlertNet, 21 Aug. 2006.
 - [“Haiti tells gangs to disarm or face death”](#), AlertNet, 10 Aug. 2006.
 - For background, see Crisis Group Latin America/Caribbean Briefing N°10, [“Haiti after the Elections: Challenges for Préval’s First 100 Days”](#), 11 May 2006.

- ↳ Peru Opposition leader Ollanta Humala, runner-up in June’s presidential run-off election, indicted on charges of human rights abuses allegedly committed during Peru’s 1990s struggle against Shining Path guerrillas. Abimael Guzman, Shining Path leader, asked government for general amnesty for crimes committed during 1980-2000 conflict.
 - [“Peru judge indicts presidential runner-up Humala on human rights charges”](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 31 Aug. 2006.
 - [“Peru nationalist Humala faces human rights charges”](#), AlertNet, 16 Aug. 2006.

- ↳ Venezuela Opposition rallied behind candidacy of Manuel Rosales, governor of Zulia state, to run against President Chavez in December elections. Chavez continued to seek international support for Security Council bid, with visits to China and Syria; while U.S. expressed its support for Guatemala’s bid. Chavez called Israeli intervention in Lebanon “new Holocaust” and said likely to cut ties with Israel after both countries recalled their ambassadors.
 - [“Venezuela strengthens, tired of U.S. influence, its relationships in the Middle East”](#), *New York Times*, 21 Aug. 2006.
 - [“Chavez opponent rallies followers”](#), BBC, 20 Aug. 2006.




Middle East / North Africa

EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

- ↳ Israel/Occupied Territories Clashes continued in Occupied Territories and particularly Gaza Strip as

international attention focused on conflict between Israel and Hizbollah (see Lebanon, below). Israel launched daily incursions, air strikes, and persistent shelling into Gaza in effort to end Palestinian rocket fire and secure return of soldier kidnapped in June. 5-day Israeli operation in West Bank killed up to 19 militants and top al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades commander. UN reported more than 200 Palestinians, including 44 children, killed since 28 June, one of bloodiest periods since October 2000. 1 Israeli soldier killed and 26 Israelis injured during same period. UN warned humanitarian situation as serious as southern Lebanon. Pressure on Hamas increased as Israel arrested deputy PM al-Shaer, parliamentary speaker Dweik and other senior Hamas MPs. 2 Fox News journalists kidnapped by unknown gunmen in Gaza 14 August, released 27 August. Israeli politics shaken by repercussions of war with Hizbollah: Defence Minister Peretz ordered inquiry into conduct of military campaign, while embattled PM Olmert said plan to unilaterally withdraw from parts of West Bank to be suspended.

- [“Palestinian despair as donors meet”](#), BBC, 1 Sept. 2006.
- [“Hamas aide blames Palestinians for Gaza chaos”](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 28 Aug. 2006.
- [“Israel army chief admits failures”](#), BBC, 24 Aug. 2006.
- For background, see Crisis Group Middle East Report N°57, [Israel/Palestine/Lebanon: Climbing Out of the Abyss](#), 25 July 2006.

  Lebanon Fragile UN-brokered ceasefire commenced 14 August following 34 days of war between Israel and Hizbollah: approximately 1,000 Lebanese and 159 Israelis killed. Hizbollah leader Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah claimed “historic victory”, while Israeli PM Olmert said ceasefire agreement eliminated Hizbollah’s “state within a state”. Amid public criticism, Israeli army chief admitted failures in logistics, operations and command. UNSC Resolution 1701, which led to ceasefire, calls for Hizbollah to move north of Litani river to allow Lebanese army and strengthened UN force (UNIFIL) of 15,000 to deploy to southern Lebanon. Slow response from EU nations over troop contributions reflected concern about UN force’s mandate and rules of engagement, particularly relating to disarmament of Hizbollah. After initial offer of only 200 additional troops (to existing 200 in UNIFIL) France announced would deploy total of 2,000; Italy pledged further 3,000. Israel said would maintain sea and air blockade until full UN force deployed. UNSG Annan embarked on 11-day tour of region to seek compliance with resolution 1701. U.S. \$940 million pledged by international donors at Stockholm conference to help rebuild after what PM Sinoira called, an “unjustified war”.


- [“Lebanon’s uneasy truce grows more fragile”](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 31 Aug. 2006.
- [“Chirac offer of 2,000 troops breaks impasse on Lebanon peacekeepers”](#), *The Guardian*, 25 Aug. 2006.
- [“Lebanon faces new challenges”](#), ISN, 21 Aug. 2006.
- For background, see Crisis Group Middle East Report N°57, [Israel/Palestine/Lebanon: Climbing Out of the Abyss](#), 25 July 2006.

 Syria President Assad welcomed Hizbollah’s “victory” and “emergence of new Middle East”; rejected Israel’s suggestion UN troops patrol Lebanese-Syrian border to stop smuggling of arms to Hizbollah, saying move would be seen as “hostile act”. UNSG Annan met Assad 1 September to push Syria to fulfil obligations under resolution 1701 – including end of illegal arms traffic. Israeli FM Livni announced formation of ministerial


working group on Syria “to raise all issues and interests of Syria...and make a diplomatic assessment”: seen as possible first step towards renewal of peace talks, stalled for 6 years.

- [“Syria allows arms into Lebanon, UN asserts”](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 31 Aug. 2006.
- [“Syria warns over UN peacekeepers”](#), BBC, 24 Aug. 2006.
- For background, see Crisis Group Middle East Report N°39, [Syria After Lebanon, Lebanon After Syria](#), 12 Apr. 2005.


GULF

 Bahrain Demonstrations held by Shiites in support of Hizbollah after 14 August UN-brokered ceasefire.

- [“Castles built on sand”](#), Open Democracy, 23 Aug. 2006.

 Iran International Atomic Energy Agency reported Iran continued to enrich small amounts of uranium despite 31 August UN deadline for it to stop. IAEA report opens way for “appropriate measures” under UN Security Council resolution 1696 but UNSC remains divided, with U.S. in support of sanctions, Russia and China against, and UK and France calling for further dialogue. Tehran made several provocative gestures ahead of deadline, as President Ahmadinejad inaugurated new phase of Arak heavy-water reactor 26 August and long-range missile test-fired from submarine in Gulf 27 August. Earlier in month, U.S. said Tehran’s response, which offered “serious talks” but refused to suspend enrichment, to incentive package offered by UNSC P5 and Germany “fell short”. EU foreign policy chief Solana due to meet Iran’s head of national security Larijani early September.

- [“Bush demands action as Iran snubs UN”](#), *The Guardian*, 1 Sept. 2006.
- [“After starting reactor, Iran fires Gulf missile”](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 27 Aug. 2006.
- For background, see Crisis Group Middle East Report N°51, [Iran: Is There a Way Out of the Nuclear Impasse?](#), 23 Feb. 2006.

 Iraq Acute security problems continued with over 3,300 civilians killed in month - similar to July casualty figures. Top U.S. military commander in Middle East, General John Abizaid, told U.S. Congress Iraq “could move toward civil war” if sectarian violence in Baghdad not stopped. PM Al-Maliki insisted Iraqi forces able to fill vacuum if multinational forces withdraw. Kidnappings, executions and roadside bombs continued in and around Baghdad, including 5 apparently coordinated bombings in southern Baghdad Shiite neighbourhood 13 August killing 57, and gas explosion triggered by car bomb killing 63 day before. Al-Maliki sharply criticised U.S.-Iraqi attack on Sadr City in Baghdad, stronghold of radical Shiite cleric Muqtada Sadr. Dozens killed in clashes between Iraqi security forces and Shiite militias in southern town of Diwaniya 28 August. Suicide bomber attacked revered Shiite mosque in Najaf 10 August, killing 35. Violence continued in Mosul, Basra and Ramadi. Second trial of Saddam Hussein commenced 21 August concerning 1980’s Anfal campaign against Kurds. Verdict in first trial on 1982 Dujail killings due 16 October.

- [“Shiite cleric asks politicians to remain in Iraq”](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 24 Aug. 2006.
- Comment by U.S. Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad, [“The battle of Baghdad”](#), *Wall Street Journal*, 23 Aug. 2006.
- For most recent report, see Crisis Group Middle East Report N°56, [Iraq and the Kurds: The Brewing Battle over Kirkuk](#), 18 July 2006.

- Yemen Violence marred launch of campaigns for 20 September local council and presidential election: 3 killed, including ruling General Peoples' Congress council candidate for al-Jawf province and member of Islamist Islah party. Incumbent President Ali Abdullah Saleh faces unprecedented challenge from 4 other candidates - including main opposition candidate Faisal Bin Shamlan.
 - "New president or new Yemen?", Al-Ahram, 31 Aug. 2006.
 - "Three killed in Yemen in pre-election clash", AlertNet, 25 Aug. 2006.

NORTH AFRICA

- Algeria Government said up to 300 Islamist militants have surrendered with weapons under amnesty since February; estimated 800 still at large. Reports of increase in government troops near rebel strongholds as amnesty.
 - "Algeria masses forces as rebel amnesty winds down", AlertNet, 22 Aug. 2006.
 - For background, see Crisis Group Middle East/North Africa Report N°29, *Islamism, Violence and Reform in Algeria: Turning the Page*, 30 July 2004.
- Egypt Crackdown on Muslim Brotherhood continued: at least 34 members, including General Secretary Mahmoud Izzet, arrested; court order to release 2 politburo members reversed after state prosecutor appeal. President Mubarak appointed

- Mamdouh Mara'i, head of constitutional court, as new justice minister in cabinet reshuffle. 1,300 additional police deployed on border to increase security amid heightened Gaza tensions.
 - "17 Muslim Brotherhood members arrested", *Jerusalem Post*, 19 Aug. 2006.
 - "Human rights abuses in Egypt and Jordan", Reuters, 22 Aug. 2006.
 - For background, see Crisis Group Middle East/North Africa Report N°46, *Reforming Egypt: In Search of a Strategy*, 4 Oct. 2005.

- Mauritania Parliamentary and municipal elections set for 19 November. 8 suspected Salafi Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC) members released end July after 14-month detention.
 - "Mauritania sets legislative, municipal polls for 19 November", Angola Press, 22 Aug. 2006.
 - For background, see Crisis Group Middle East/North Africa Report N°53, *Political Transition in Mauritania: Assessment and Horizons*, 24 Apr. 2006.

- Morocco Government said had broken "terrorist network" after arresting 56 people alleged to belong to previously unknown El Mehdi Support Group and suspected of planning attacks in north.
 - "Morocco arrests 56 after foiling militant attacks", AlertNet, 31 Aug. 2006.

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