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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 FNL rebels signed surprise ceasefire agreement with government 7 September in Dar es Salaam. Deal seen as positive, but thought doubtful will hold given unrealistic 30-day deadline for demobilisation and lack of political incentives for FNL. Few rebels adhered to provisions requiring them to assemble at specified sites, saying government must first negotiate outstanding issues such as freeing of FNL prisoners and immunity for ex-combatants. Police clashed with splinter FNL Sindayigaya faction in Bubanza province 27 September. Domestic politics remained in turmoil as second most powerful member of CNDD-FDD ruling party, second Vice-President Alice Nzomukunda, resigned 6 September, accusing party leader Hussein Rajabu of human-rights violations, lying and corruption.
 - ["Burundi rebel delegation arrives in Bujumbura"](#), Reuters, 28 Sept. 2006.
 - ["Peace is nice unless it's phoney"](#), *The Economist*, 14 Sept. 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 Tens of thousands of those displaced by January violence in northwest began moving back to villages and towns. But many more fear returning due to continued rebel activity, including targeting of relief agencies.
 - ["Tens of thousands homeless for nine months in northwest"](#) IRIN, 28 Sept. 2006.

-   Democratic Republic of Congo Tensions rose ahead of 29 October presidential run-off vote between President Kabila and Vice-President Bemba. Third- and fourth-placed finishers in 30 July poll, Antoine Gizenga and Nzanga Mobutu, pledged support for Kabila, while Bemba failed to secure alliance with influential Etienne Tshisekedi and his UDPS party, which boycotted first round. Following interventions by South African President Mbeki, EU foreign policy chief Solana and others, Kabila and Bemba met 13 September to discuss confinement of army and militia to barracks during electoral period. Bemba and Kabila representatives signed agreement 25 September to make Kinshasa weapons-free zone during and immediately after vote. Bemba-owned media outlets destroyed in 19 September arson attack, leading to demonstrations and mass arrests. First democratically elected parliament in 20 years inaugurated 22 September, with Kabila's AMP alliance holding biggest share of seats (approx 300 of 500). Army head in Ituri claimed militias belonging to Front des Nationalistes et Intégrationnistes rearming around Bunia. In North Kivu, dissident General Laurent Nkunda warned that deployment of troops to territory under his control would trigger violence. MONUC mandate extended by UN Security Council until 15 February 2007.
 - ["Majority coalition in parliament backs Kabila"](#), IRIN, 29 Sept. 2006.
 - ["Presidential hopefuls agree to disarm for next election"](#), IRIN, 25 Sept. 2006.



- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°114, ["Escaping the Conflict Trap: Promoting Good Governance in the Congo"](#), 20 July 2006.

-  Rwanda Friction between Kigali and ICTR over employment of genocide suspects at tribunal reduced as trial of former defence investigator Simeon Nshamihigo commenced, and lawyer Callixte Gakwaya resigned. Government provided list of 13 suspects and threatened to break with tribunal if Gakwaya not removed from position.
 - ["Lawyer goes on trial for genocide"](#), BBC, 25 Sept. 2006.
-  Uganda Peace process between government and LRA inched forward after 26 August ceasefire agreement. LRA leader Kony and deputy Otti remained in DR Congo despite agreement to move to assembly points in southern Sudan. Approx. 1,000 LRA fighters assembled at designated safe zones but LRA negotiators temporarily recalled after LRA claimed their fighters were under siege from Ugandan army. Third round of negotiations, mediated by Vice-President of South Sudan Riek Machar, got underway 28 September. President Museveni said would not assent to LRA demands to lift ICC war crimes indictments in favour of traditional justice system until LRA leaders "fully embrace" peace talks. Earlier in month LRA agreed to release 1,500 non-combatants and abductees but objected to government's negotiating team on grounds its members lacked political credibility. No new date set for signing comprehensive peace agreement after 12 September deadline now seen as irrelevant following progress in talks and 26 August truce.
 - ["Government resumes peace talks with rebels"](#), IRIN, 28 Sept. 2006.
 - ["ICC indictments against rebels should stay, says President"](#), IRIN, 21 Sept. 2006.

Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°41, ["Peace in Northern Uganda?"](#), 13 September 2006. Peace negotiations between the Ugandan government and the rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) have shown surprising promise, but they will need a new two-phase mediation strategy to move beyond the current talks. Phase one would focus on the technical issues necessary to end the immediate conflict, such as the LRA's return from the bush and disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration. Phase two would be a more inclusive discussion on the broader questions dealing with the political and structural issues that have fuelled the cycle of conflict in the north, including Acholi political grievances.



HORN OF AFRICA

-  Chad Fighting escalated between government and rebels in eastern Chad allied to Mahamat Nour's FUCD. Government reportedly resumed offensive 10 September, ending lull that had prevailed since rebels expelled from N'Djamena in April. Army chief claimed 168 rebels killed in major operation 13 September around Aram Kolle; FUCD claimed hundreds of soldiers killed in same operation. UN and aid agencies expressed concern about military build-up around Abeche.
 - ["New fronts open in eastern fighting"](#), AlertNet, 21 Sept. 2006.
 - ["Govt and rebels clash in east"](#), IRIN, 13 Sept. 2006.
-  Ethiopia Police reported arrest of 9 suspected Oromo Liberation Front rebels for allegedly planning assassination of government leaders. United Western Somali Liberation Front

rebel group kidnapped 2 ICRC engineers 20 September in eastern Ogaden, prompting suspension of ICRC operations in area for first time in 11 years; both released unharmed 5 days later.

- [“2 Red Cross workers kidnapped in eastern Ethiopia, agency halts operations”](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 20 Sept. 2006.

➡ Ethiopia/Eritrea Tensions over disputed town of Badme continued as Eritrea expelled 5 UN security staff accused of espionage. UNMEE mandate extended by Security Council until 31 January 2007. 2 more senior Ethiopian army officers reportedly defected to join Oromo Liberation Front secessionist rebels, after similar August defections of officers and soldiers. Hundreds of Ethiopian troops sighted in Somali town of Baidoa in late September (see Somalia, below).

- [“Eritrea challenges Annan over expelled UN ‘spies’”](#), AlertNet, 7 Sept. 2006.
- [“Ethiopian officers ‘join rebels’”](#), BBC, 15 Sept. 2006.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°101, [Ethiopia and Eritrea: Preventing War](#), 22 Dec. 2005.

➡ Somalia Progress early in month between Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and Union of Islamic Courts (UIC) largely negated by assassination attempt on president, UIC capture of Kismayo and Ethiopian troop deployment to Baidoa. President Yusuf survived country’s first suicide bombing 18 September, but 12 others killed, including Yusuf’s brother. UIC extended control over southern Somalia by taking Kismayo port 25 September; angry protests against Courts’ burning of Somali flag there led to shooting and death of 3. In response TFG again called for international arms embargo to be lifted to enable it to train security forces to protect its citizens. Hundreds of Ethiopian troops sighted in Baidoa in late September; believed to be in reaction to UIC capture of Kismayo, and part of continued Ethiopian effort to support TFG. Earlier in month, TFG and UIC had pledged commitment to 22 June agreement on mutual recognition, agreed in principle to unify armed groups and not seek help from foreign powers, and committed to work towards power-sharing arrangement at 30 October talks. IGAD proposal to send peacekeepers, strongly opposed by UIC, endorsed by AU 13 September.

- [“UIC disarms militia, tightens control over Kismayo”](#), IRIN, 28 Sept. 2006.
- [“Govt tells UN debate Islamic Courts’ actions are threatening peace negotiations”](#), allAfrica.com, 26 Sept. 2006.
- [“Ethiopian troops are in Somalia, say witnesses”](#), *Mail & Guardian*, 25 Sept. 2006.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°116, [Can the Somali Crisis Be Contained?](#), 10 August 2006.

➡ Somaliland (Somalia) Somaliland sent militias to block Puntland President Muse’s planned trip to disputed region of Togdheer. Tensions eased after Muse cancelled trip.

- [“Border tension between Somaliland, Puntland”](#), Garowe Online, 13 Sept. 2006.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°110, [Somaliland: Time for African Union Leadership](#), 23 May 2006.

➡ Sudan As UN human rights monitors reported worsening violence including government bombing of villages in north Darfur and continuing sexual violence against women, AU’s Peace and Security Council 20 September extended mandate of its peacekeeping force in Darfur (AMIS) until end 2006 - temporarily averting security vacuum. AU announced

additional deployment of 4,000 troops: UN pledged further logistical and material support, Arab states pledged funding. President Bashir continued to reject UN force for Darfur, authorised by UNSC resolution 1706, but agreed to AMIS extension having previously given AU force departure ultimatum. In move likely to undercut urgent international calls (and Security Council resolution) for UN deployment, UN Special Envoy Pronk suggested international community should focus on AMIS reinforcement and extension given Khartoum’s position on UN force; also warned Darfur Peace Agreement in poor condition, and commission set up to monitor and implement accord dysfunctional. UN Deputy SG Malloch Brown also questioned efficacy of U.S. and UK “megaphone” diplomacy and veiled threats at Khartoum. Sudanese military intensified operations in north Darfur against National Redemption Front alliance, non-signatories of 5 May Darfur Peace Agreement. U.S. administration promised renewed attention to Darfur: new special envoy Andrew Natsios appointed and U.S. Sec. State Rice stated Khartoum failing to protect citizens. Asmara talks between Khartoum and Eastern Front rebels progressed with signing of draft security protocol 28 September.

- [“U.N. chief in Sudan says U.N. peacekeeping mission to Darfur unlikely, calls for strategy change”](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 29 Sept. 2006.
- Comment by John Prendergast (Crisis Group), [“U.S.’s deadly errors in Darfur”](#), *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 14 Sept. 2006.
- Comment by Mark L. Schneider (Crisis Group), [“The U.N.’s Darfur moment”](#), TomPaine.com, 6 Sept. 2006.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°39, [Darfur’s Fragile Peace Agreement](#), 20 June 2006.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

➡ Zimbabwe MDC opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai led anti-Mugabe march 1 September, but government prevented larger nationwide trade unions protest against living conditions scheduled for 13 September by blocking roads, and assaulting and arresting key leaders and supporters. President Mugabe’s ZANU-PF reportedly discussed plans to postpone 2008 presidential election to 2010; seen as attempt to avoid potentially damaging succession battle. ZANU-PF claim delay would harmonise presidential with parliamentary elections but spokesman later denied plans. Mugabe pledged to return or compensate foreign company owners of over 100 farms occupied as part of fast-track land distribution program. Meanwhile, inflation hit record of 1200% and acute coal shortages exacerbated economic crisis.

- [“UN Slams Mugabe”](#), *Independent* (Harare), 29 Sept. 2006.
- [“Plans to harmonise elections leading to discord”](#), IRIN, 28 Sept. 2006.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°117, [Zimbabwe: An Opposition Strategy](#), 24 August 2006.

WEST AFRICA

➡ Côte d’Ivoire Concern mounting as UN-sponsored 12-month extension of President Gbagbo’s mandate approaches expiry 31 October. Foreign diplomats monitoring peace plan proposed increasing PM Banny’s powers vis a vis Gbagbo. UN Security Council to discuss proposals 17 October, while ECOWAS and AU to suggest new poll date to UNSC. Gbagbo boycotted meeting on sidelines of UN General Assembly 20 September where AU-endorsed mediator Mbeki

met rebel and opposition chiefs, regional leaders and UNSG Annan to break deadlock. Gbagbo dismissed UN peace process and vowed to present own solutions to AU Peace and Security Council. Banny government reconstituted largely intact after briefly resigning 6 September amid toxic waste scandal.

- [“Mbeki battles to unlock Côte d'Ivoire's peace process”](#), *Mail & Guardian*, 27 Sept. 2006.
- [“Ivory Coast's Gbagbo must go to allow peace – rebel”](#), AlertNet, 21 Sept. 2006.

Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°40, *Côte d'Ivoire: Stepping Up the Pressure*, 7 September 2006. The international community must remain actively engaged, and implement a range of new measures, if the country is to avoid a bloodbath. As in 2005, the country will miss this year's UN deadline for a presidential election, 31 October 2006. Without new rules to govern the post-October period or the necessary pressure on the political leaders who attempt to block “clean” elections, no transitional Ivorian government will be able to organise a presidential poll in the foreseeable future. Urgent measures should be implemented, including granting PM Banny extraordinary executive power for a six-month period.



➤ Gambia President Jammeh won 22 September presidential poll with 67% of vote; stated intention to continue firm rule for another 3 decades. Opposition claimed election marred by voter intimidation.

- [“Gambia leader signals firm rule after election win”](#), AlertNet, 24 Sept. 2006.

➤ Liberia Mounting lawlessness and roving gangs threatened security in Monrovia. UN Security Council extended UNMIL mandate to 31 March 2007. UNSG Annan lauded “tangible progress” in government reform and fight against corruption but pointed to major challenges in reconstruction efforts. Police officials reported force consists of only 1,600 unarmed officers; government encouraged community justice groups to help combat banditry. UN-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone set tentative April 2007 date for trial of former President Taylor.

- [“Liberia sees green in reform of ‘blood timber’”](#), *Christian Science Monitor*, 20 Sept. 2006.
- [“Liberia calls for citizen vigilantes to fight crime”](#), AlertNet, 6 Sept. 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 and Vice President Abubakar continued to trade corruption accusations ahead of April 2007 elections, from which Obasanjo constitutionally barred. Abubakar suspended by his Peoples Democratic Party for 3 months for “anti-party activities”. Authorities imposed night curfew on northern town of Dutse after Muslim mobs set fire 11 churches over alleged blasphemy by Christian woman. Christian-owned houses and shops also torched in capital of Jigawa state during religious riot. Oil unions held 3-day strike protesting poor security for oil workers; 1 Nigerian worker killed 12 September in attack on offshore oil field operated by Chevron. Military suffered major loss as 11 high-ranking officers died in plane crash.

- [“PDP edges out Atiku”](#), *This Day*, 29 Sept. 2006.
- [“Heightened risk of violence and displacement ahead of 2007 elections”](#), Norwegian Refugee Council, 21 Sept. 2006.

Crisis Group Africa Report N°118, *Fuelling the Niger Delta Crisis*, 28 September 2006. Militant groups in the Niger Delta are proliferating, and the country's security situation will worsen unless the government urgently addresses the region's grievances. Attacks against government and oil targets have increased and threaten to cripple the oil industry. While the militant groups have legitimate grievances, such as poverty and government corruption, they are using them to justify these damaging attacks, and feed on popular anger against the government. Reform is the only way to promote stability in the Delta.



➤ Senegal Violence continued in Casamance region in wake of mid-August army operations against Casamance separatist MFDC. Armed rebels looted convoy of cars 20 September near Kaparan, fourth such event in 10 days. Officials attributed string of robberies to rebels' growing need for supplies.

- [“New attacks in Casamance”](#), AlertNet, 20 Sept. 2006.
- [“As Casamance fighting continues, displaced bed in”](#), IRIN, 15 Sept. 2006.

➤ Sierra Leone UNSG Annan expressed concern over delays in trial of former Revolutionary United Front spokesman, Omrey Golley. Government began planning talks to resolve dispute with Guinea over border town of Yenga.

- [“Kofi Annan raises concern over Golley's trial”](#), *Concord Times*, 20 Sept. 2006.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°87, *Liberia and Sierra Leone: Rebuilding Failed States*, 8 Dec. 2004.

Asia/Pacific

CENTRAL ASIA

➤ Kazakhstan Court upheld 5-year sentence of ‘For a Just Kazakhstan’ movement activist Alibek Zhumabaev for organising “mass disturbance”; opposition said trial political. In Qaraghanda, court upheld 3-year suspended prison sentence of opposition Naghiz Aq-Zhol party co-chairman Bolat Abilov.

- [“Kazakh court upholds verdict against opposition activist”](#), RFE/RL, 15 Sept. 2006.

➤ Kyrgyzstan Relations between President Bakiev and parliament deteriorated further after apparent attempt to frame opposition leader MP Omurbek Tekebaev: arrested Warsaw airport 6 September, but released after Polish court ruled heroin probably planted. Kyrgyz parliamentary probe alleged National Security Service (SNB) involvement; SNB Chairman Tabaldiev and deputy, Bakiev's brother Janybek, resigned. Assembly also declared formal alliance between President Bakiev and PM Kulov unconstitutional and suggested criminal case be opened against Janybek Bakiev. Opposition Asaba party and “For Reform!” movement held rally in southern Aksy district; movement threatened Bishkek demonstrations against Bakiev if no reforms by November. Alleged Islamic Movement of Turkestan leader Rasul Akhunov died after reportedly refusing to surrender to security forces 2 September; authorities later ruled he had heart attack during raid. Osh court released 4 suspected Akramiya members, including daughter of leader Akram Yuldash who Uzbekistan say masterminded 2005 Andijon uprising.

- "Kyrgyz opposition urges political reforms, removal of president's relatives from government jobs", *International Herald Tribune*, 18 Sept. 2006.
- "Democracy lite", *Transitions Online*, 12 Sept. 2006.
- For most recent report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°118, *Kyrgyzstan's Prison System Nightmare*, 16 August 2006.

↳ Tajikistan Islamic Renaissance, Democratic, and Social Democratic parties announced boycott of November presidential election, saying poll would not be free or fair; 4 other opposition candidates to run. IRP elected Muhiddin Kabiri as new leader. 3 men sentenced to 5-8 years for involvement in January jailbreak in Qayroqqum in which suspected Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan member Rahimov escaped.

- "Shadow-boxing with militant threat", IWPR, 29 Sept. 2006.
- "Tajikistan's main opposition party to boycott election", RFE/RL, 25 Sept. 2006.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°33, *Tajikistan's Politics: Confrontation or Consolidation?*, 19 May 2004.

↳ Turkmenistan Journalist and activist Ogulsapar Muradova died in prison; family reported head and neck injuries, disputing official "natural causes" verdict. Official obstruction and harassment of family condemned by international rights activists; UN expressed "grave concern".

- "Turkmenistan takes terror to new level", *Eurasia Insight*, 14 Sept. 2006.
- "Jailed RFE/RL journalist died in custody - rights group", IRIN, 14 Sept. 2006.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°85, *Repression and Regression in Turkmenistan: A New International Strategy*, 4 Nov. 2004.

↳ Uzbekistan Clampdown on dissidents continued. Prominent imam Fakhruddinov sentenced 17 years for heading Tashkent branch of Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan. Trial of alleged Hizb ut-Tahrir leader Usmanov began 21 September; 7 further HuT members sentenced up to 13 years. In Jizzakh, journalist and rights activist Ulughbek Haidarov arrested on extortion charges, journalist Jamshid Karimov (nephew of president) reportedly confined to mental institution, and prominent activist Hamroev's son jailed 3 years for "hooliganism". Dissident poet Hasanov given 3-year suspended sentence for song about 2005 Andijon uprising. Rights groups condemned UNESCO prize to president in light of rights violations.

- Comment by Michael Hall (Crisis Group), "Time to get tougher on Uzbekistan", *European Voice*, 28 Sept. 2006.
- "Popular Uzbek Muslim cleric sentenced to 17 years in jail for alleged terrorism", *International Herald Tribune*, 18 Sept. 2006.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°45, *Uzbekistan: In for the Long Haul*, 16 Feb. 2006.

SOUTH ASIA

↳ Afghanistan Major NATO-led offensive brought heavy fighting in southern provinces, while incidence of suicide bombings spiked. NATO claimed 1,000 Taliban fighters killed in south as part of Operation Medusa, while thousands of families displaced in Panjwayi and Zhari districts outside Kandahar. Separate major offensive, Operation Mountain Fury, launched by U.S. and local security forces in eastern provinces, where a U.S. report noted 2 to 3-fold rise in attacks in September after Pakistani deal with North Waziristan

militants. Assassinations claimed prominent figures including governor of Paktia and provincial head of women's ministry in Kandahar. President Musharraf and Karzai traded accusations about source of increasing violence, later met with President Bush in Washington: no specific agreements reached beyond possibility of cross-border jirgas. U.S. said 12,000 troops in east would be placed under NATO command; 10,000 more remain under U.S. command.

- "After the fighting, a battle for hope", *The Guardian*, 25 Sept. 2006.
- "Afghanistan hit by wave of suicide bombings", *The Guardian*, 19 Sept. 2006.
- "U.S., Afghan troops launch offensive", *Washington Post*, 16 Sept. 2006.
- For most recent report, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°116, *Afghanistan's New Legislature: Making Democracy Work*, 15 May 2006.

↳ Bangladesh Ruling BNP agreed electoral reform talks with opposition after series of opposition rallies in Dhaka turned violent. Opposition parties reject nomination of Former Chief Justice KM Hasan to head constitutionally required interim administration ahead of January 2007 elections, claiming former member of ruling BNP not "impartial". Tens of thousands of opposition supporters rallied in Dhaka 18 and 21 September; Awami League head Sheikh Hasina promised nonstop action if Hasan takes power.

- "Bangladesh election talks offered", BBC, 29 Sept. 2006.
- "Dozens hurt in Bangladesh rally", BBC, 21 Sept. 2006.

↳ India (non-Kashmir) Army launched operation against ULFA separatist rebels in northeast Assam state 24 September, ending peace process that began with August ceasefire. Operation reportedly launched in response to 2 killings by rebels. Bomb blasts killed over 35 in Malegaon, Maharashtra state 8 September as Muslims left mosque; protests followed but little violence. Government continued fighting Maoist rebels, killing 5 in clashes in Warangal, Andhra Pradesh state and sacking 29 Chhattisgarh police who refused to fight. In talks with Myanmar, India urged action to root out Indian insurgents based in the country.

- "Army launches Assam operation", BBC, 25 Sept. 2006.
- "Bombs fail to incite as Indian imams urge calm", *Christian Science Monitor*, 14 Sept. 2006.

↳ Kashmir Indian PM Singh and Pakistani President Musharraf agreed at Havana Non-Aligned Summit 16 September to resume normalisation talks, and set up joint mechanism against terror; foreign secretary-level discussions in Delhi to be first step. Singh said process success would depend on Pakistan's efforts to end cross-border attacks. Talks jeopardised 29 September when Mumbai police alleged Pakistani intelligence service ISI assisted Lashkar-e-Tayyaba group in planning July train bombings. Hizb-ul-Mujahideen militants and government failed to agree Ramadan ceasefire, violence continued in and around Srinagar: 7 killed on 25 September.

- "India's police say Pakistan helped plot July train bombings", *New York Times*, 30 Sept. 2006.
- "South Asia rivals to resume talks", BBC, 16 Sept. 2006.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°51, *India, Pakistan and Kashmir: Stabilising a Cold Peace*, 15 June 2006.

➤ Maldives Maldivian Democratic Party leader Nasheed released after 14-month house arrest under terms of British-mediated Westminster House Agreement. Island uprisings continued; protests against poor infrastructure and corruption recorded on 3 islands.

- ["Maldives opposition leader says change inevitable"](#), AlertNet, 22 Sep. 2006.

➤ Nepal Summit talks between Maoist rebels and 7-party alliance postponed again 28 September due to disagreement over process towards interim legislature and Maoist participation in government; new talks due 8 October. Rebels blocked roads in and around capital 13 September in protest at alleged arms imports from India, violation of terms of ceasefire. Parliament officially stripped King of army command 22 September. Supreme Court asked parliament to explain legal basis for original May proclamation curtailing royal powers. Government gave details of 174 disappeared during 10-year conflict after violent protests by pro-Maoist supporters calling for information; more than 1000 believed to have been disappeared by both sides.

- ["Nepal talks fixed for 8 October"](#), BBC, 28 Sept. 2006.
- ["Nepal rebels slam government ahead of peace talks"](#), AlertNet, 28 Sept. 2006.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°115, [Nepal: From People Power to Peace?](#), 10 May 2006.

➤ Pakistan President Musharraf made controversial deal with North Waziristan tribal militants allied to Taliban 5 September: ends military operations against border militants in exchange for end to attacks on army and across border in Afghanistan. But heightened tensions between Islamabad and Kabul may also have strained Pakistan's relations with NATO, while local governor admitted presence of hundreds al-Qaeda-linked militants in North Waziristan. In Kabul, Musharraf called for new approach against "common enemy" while citing "Talibanisation" of regional terrorism, but relations with Afghan president Karzai remained frosty as both leaders traded blame for ongoing cross-border attacks: state dinner with President Bush and Karzai in Washington 27 September failed to ease tensions. 85 Baloch tribal chiefs held grand jirga in Kalat 21 September, first in 126 years, and called for recognition of Baloch autonomy and end to military operations.

- ["In Pakistan, the delicate dance of a key US ally"](#), *Christian Science Monitor*, 26 Sept. 2006.
- ["Pakistan lets tribal chiefs keep control along border"](#), *New York Times*, 6 Sept. 2006.

Crisis Group Asia Report N°119, [Pakistan: The Worsening Conflict in Balochistan](#), 14 September 2006. The Balochistan insurgency will not recede until Islamabad ends its heavy-handed, armed response to legitimate Baloch grievances and negotiates matters of political and economic autonomy. After almost seven years of military rule, deprived of representative participatory institutions and with their natural resources exploited by Islamabad, Baloch alienation is at an all time high, and some militants have picked up the gun. The conflict will escalate further if the government continues to insist on a military solution to what is a political problem. The international community, especially the U.S., should recognise the price involved for security in neighbouring Afghanistan.



➤ Sri Lanka Heavy fighting between Tamil Tigers (LTTE) and government forces continued. Deadly naval battle off coast of

Jaffna 2 September; military claimed it sank 11 Tiger boats and killed 80; government claimed similar LTTE losses after another battle 25 September north of Trincomalee. In first shift of territorial control since 2002 truce, government forces claimed town of Sampur, strategic entry point to Trincomalee harbour, and made gains in Muhamalai area at tip of Jaffna peninsula mid-month, where fighting cut off food supplies to Jaffna residents. SLMM monitoring mission said 200 civilians killed since 22 July. Colombo dismissed Norwegian mediators' 12 September announcement both sides agreed to Oslo talks without preconditions, saying full cessation of hostilities strict prerequisite for talks.

- ["Sri Lanka says sinks 11 rebel boats in naval clash"](#), AlertNet, 25 Sept. 2006.
- ["Sri Lanka denies rebel talks deal"](#), BBC, 13 Sept. 2006.
- ["Sri Lankan army's strategic gain"](#), BBC, 4 Sept. 2006.

NORTH EAST ASIA

➤ North Korea U.S. announced plans for increased sanctions on North Korea while China opposed them, urging "flexible" approach. Australia, Japan followed U.S. in placing sanctions on North Korean bank accounts and companies. Pyongyang reportedly due to remove fuel rods from Yongbyon reactor in significant boost to plutonium harvesting; reports seen as bid to prod U.S. into bilateral talks and dropping sanctions. Chinese negotiator Wu Dawei visited Seoul to discuss new approach to full 6-party talks after South Korean President Roh and U.S. President Bush agreed "joint comprehensive approach" in Washington, but gave few details of new approach.

- ["China back plan for N. Korea nuke talks"](#), *Washington Post*, 29 September 2006.
- ["North Korea to challenge U.S. on nuclear fuel"](#), *New York Times*, 25 Sept. 2006.
- For most recent report, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°52, [After North Korea's Missile Launch: Are the Nuclear Talks Dead?](#), 9 Aug. 2006.

➤ Taiwan Strait Taiwan exchanged promises of aid and economic cooperation for recognition of its sovereignty at 4 September summit with Pacific Island nations, while China focused on fostering links with Central American countries. Taiwan's bid to enter UN blocked by China for 14th time on 13 September. Direct cross-strait medical flights began; 3-day application process involves obtaining both sides' approval. Rallies called for President Chen to step down over corruption scandal and opposition called again for referendum on his ouster: Chen's constitutional reform proposal dismissed by some as attempt at distraction.

- ["Taiwan's opposition proposes referendum to recall embattled president"](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 25 Sept. 2006.
- ["Chen proposes change of Constitution"](#), *Taipei Times*, 25 Sept. 2006.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°42, [China and Taiwan: Uneasy Détente](#), 21 Sept. 2005.

SOUTH EAST ASIA

➤ Indonesia 3 Christians executed 22 September for role in May 2000 Poso religious violence: sparked rioting in Sikka, Flores and Atambua, West Timor, where over 1,000 targeted government buildings and broke into jail, freeing inmates. Rioters' anger fuelled by belief trials unfair and lighter sentences given to Muslim attackers. Police reinforcements

sent to Poso 30 September to address rising communal tension after church burned and man stabbed by mob. EU extended mandate of Aceh Monitoring Mission until 15 December but sharply reduced size to 36 monitors from 85. 11 teams formally applied to contest 10 December gubernatorial elections in Aceh, including GAM team running as independents and GAM member on another party slate. Fighting broke out again between Dani and Damal tribes in Kwamki Lama, Papua in war that began in July; death toll now 17. Tensions rose over massive displacement caused by "mud volcano" triggered by gas exploration in East Java, 10,000 homeless since May.

- "Muslim mob stabs Christian in Poso as tensions rise", *Jakarta Post*, 1 Oct. 2006.
- "Violence flares after execution of Poso 3", *Jakarta Post*, 23 Sept. 2006.

Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°53, *Papua: Answers to Frequently Asked Questions*, 5 September 2006. Correcting false assumptions about Papua and the Papuan independence movement can lead to better policies Indonesian and international policies. It is not true that non-Papuan Indonesians are in control. Nor is it true that troops are pouring into the territory, although there have been recent increases. Allegations of genocide by security forces are not well-founded, but serious human rights abuses have taken place. Improving military accountability and transferring security to locally-recruited police could help. The most useful assistance the international community can provide is development aid to strengthen local institutions and deliver basic services.



Myanmar/Burma UN Security Council held first-ever discussion of situation in Myanmar. U.S. said planning resolution in early October to condemn jailing of political opponents in the country as 6 pro-democracy activists detained in 1 week. Reports of reshuffle within junta leadership indicated that General Than Shwe reportedly handed over control of armed forces to top deputy, but significance unclear. Junta detained 6 pro-democracy activists in last week of September. Karen National Union delegation due to hold peace talks with junta.

- "Myanmar junta holds two more '88 uprising leaders", *Washington Post*, 30 Sept. 2006.
- "US to press for Security Council resolution against junta", Irrawaddy Online, 30 Sept. 2006.

Philippines Short-term progress in peace talks with Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) unlikely after informal talks fell apart 7 September and Manila failed to offer new initiative. Borders of "Bangsamoro" autonomous territory in Mindanao remained point of contention: MILF seeks UN-supervised autonomy referendum open only to Moro minority, but local officials condemned plan. Deadly clashes continued on southern island of Jolo between military - backed by U.S. technical support - and Abu Sayyaf terrorist group, while U.S. Ambassador Kenney visited Jolo in bid for peace.

- "US troops in charm offensive on Philippine rebel isle", AlertNet, 25 Sept. 2006.
- "Peace talks could hinge on MILF stand on veto", *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 25 Sept. 2006.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°110, *Philippines Terrorism: The Role of Militant Islamic Converts*, 19 Dec. 2005.

Thailand PM Thaksin deposed 19 September in bloodless coup. Army generals led by General Sonthi Boonyaratkalin revoked 1997 constitution and severely limited freedoms of assembly and speech. Military 'Council for Democratic Reform' (CDR) appointed retired general Surayud Chulanont as interim prime minister 1 October and promised to hold elections within a year, but reserved control over security affairs and right to sack PM. CDR will appoint 250-member interim legislature and 2,000-strong "people's assembly" which in turn will select 100-200 team to draft new constitution. U.S. called coup "U-turn" for democracy and suspended \$24 million in military aid. Coup may turn out to be marginally positive for southern conflict: Thaksin's rivalry with military had been key obstacle to effective management and Gen. Sonthi more receptive to recommendations of National Reconciliation Commission. Violence continued in south with 6 bombs detonated in economic hub of Hat Yai 16 September, killing 4.

- Comment by Francesca Lawe-Davies (Crisis Group), "A silver lining in Thailand's coup?", ABC News International, 28 Sept 2006.
- "Thai coup uproots a thin democracy", *Christian Science Monitor*, 21 Sept. 2006.
- "Toxic Thaksin", *Foreign Affairs*, 27 Sept 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 UN force of 550 took over policing duties as clashes between gangs continued to break out in Dili. UN envoy Hasegawa ended 4-year tenure with bleak speech warning of "very fragile and volatile" situation and highlighting concerns over unrest in IDP camps near the capital. Australian foreign minister Downer, in visit to Dili, warned current UN deployment insufficient.

- "Violence flares again in East Timor", *The Australian*, 24 Sept. 2006.
- "Departing UN envoy warns Timor-Leste of the danger of 'black hole' of conflict", UN News, 22 Sept. 2006.

PACIFIC

Fiji Friction between government and military returned when army chief Bainimarama accused leaders of taking country back "100 years", following attempt to give indigenous Fijians coastal ownership rights.

- "Cannibal comment sparks Fiji standoff", *The Age*, 25 Sept. 2006.

Solomon Islands PM Sogavare ordered expulsion of Australian High Commissioner citing "heavy-handed" interference" by Canberra in domestic affairs, claimed Australian-led security force had failed and country risks further ethnic clashes. Australian FM Downer responded by threatening to withdraw visa privileges for Solomon politicians.

- "Australia issues Solomons threat", BBC, 13 Sept. 2006.

Europe

BALKANS

Albania Ruling Democratic Party and opposition Socialist Party failed to agree date for winter local elections; President

Moisiu warned he would set date if no agreement. European parliament endorsed Stabilisation and Association Agreement.

- ["Albanian parties again fail to agree on date for local elections"](#), Southeast European Times, 17 Sept. 2006.
- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Report N°153, [Pan-Albanianism: How Big a Threat to Balkan Stability?](#), 25 Feb. 2004.

➤ Bosnia & Herzegovina Tensions rose ahead of 1 October parliamentary elections. Republika Srpska (RS) PM Dodik said Bosnian Serbs do not see their future in BiH and threatened independence referendum, but said leadership still committed to 2-entity BiH. RS signed accord with Serbia on special relations 26 September despite Bosniak and Croat protest that pact contravenes Dayton Agreement. Government agreed parliament rather than High Rep Office should vet ministerial appointments; decision pending parliament approval. Hague Tribunal sentenced former RS Parliament President Momcilo Krajsnik to 27 years for ethnic cleansing, but acquitted of genocide.

- ["Divided Bosnians vote how to live without help"](#), Reuters, 1 Oct. 2006.
- ["Serbs invoke Bosnia breakup in bid to keep Kosovo"](#), Reuters, 19 Sept. 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 Contact Group affirmed aim of negotiated settlement by end 2006 after meeting 20 September. Group instructed UN envoy Ahtisaari to prepare settlement proposal, and requested further Pristina-Belgrade talks despite deputy UN envoy Rohan's 15 September assessment that stalemate reached. Protests held in several Albanian-majority municipalities against proposals to create or expand Serb-majority municipalities. Kosovo Assembly attacked negotiation team for secrecy and concessions, while Assembly president Berisha warned of revolt if independence delayed. LDK party leadership campaign marred by car bombs in Gjilan and Ferizaj in apparent intra-party power struggle. Grenade attack injured 4 elderly Serb returnees in western town Klinia.

- ["Bombings inflame tensions in Kosovo"](#), AP, 21 Sept. 2006.
- ["Kosovars warned on rhetoric"](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 20 Sept 2006.
- For most recent report, see Crisis Group Europe Report N°174, [An Army for Kosovo?](#), 28 July 2006.

➤ Macedonia Ethnic Albanian Democratic Union of Integration (DUI) deputies attended special parliamentary session on 15th anniversary of independence referendum, despite boycott of legislature in protest over exclusion from new government. PM Gruevski later held 2-day meeting with opposition leaders: DUI leader Ahmeti refused to attend, but his ally, Party of Democratic Prosperity (PDP) leader Vejseli, participated.

- ["Albanian protests fail to budge Macedonian government"](#), IWPR, 14 Sept. 2006.
- ["Solana cautious about specifying date for starting EU talks with Macedonia"](#), Southeast European Times, 14 Sept. 2006.
- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°41, [Macedonia: Wobbling toward Europe](#), 12 Jan. 2006.

➤ Montenegro PM Djukanovic's Democrat Socialist Party, together with Social Democrat coalition partner, won 10 September parliamentary elections: together won 41 of 81 seats. Opposition Socialist People's Party group lost seats,

suggesting voters alienated by their reluctance to abandon independence issue. EU praised electoral conduct and opened Stabilisation and Association talks. U.S. Sec. Defence Rumsfeld discussed NATO Partnership for Peace membership and possible Montenegrin participation in international security missions during Podgorica visit. 12 ethnic Albanians arrested for suspected plot to launch "terrorist attacks" on polling day.

- ["Sailing apart"](#), *The Economist*, 13 Sept. 2006.
- ["Djukanovic victory seals Montenegrin independence"](#), IWPR, 12 Sept. 2006.
- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°42, [Montenegro's Referendum](#), 30 May 2006.

➤ Serbia Parliament unanimously rubber-stamped new constitution, which declares Kosovo integral part of Serbia, with no discussion or public debate 30 September; set ratification referendum for 28-29 October. PM Kostunica and President Tadic discussed desirability of early elections. G17+ leader and Finance Minister Mladan Dinkic announced party leaving government as *CrisisWatch* went to press. Tensions rose in Bosniak-majority Novi Pazar town after municipal assembly candidate for victorious List for Sandzak (LZS) shot dead outside polling station during 10 September local election. LZS coalition leader Ugljanin accused bodyguards of Sandzak Democratic Party leader Ljajic; 2 arrested. Tadic signed status of forces agreement with U.S. administration 7 September.

- ["Kostunica sets Serbia on course for early polls"](#), Reuters, 30 Sept. 2006.
- ["Politician's murder raises tensions in Sandzak"](#), IWPR, 14 Sept. 2006.
- For most recent report, see Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°43, [Southern Serbia: In Kosovo's Shadow](#), 27 June 2006.

CAUCASUS

➤ Armenia OSCE said "deeply concerned" over number of recent incidents of violence and intimidation against journalists, including attack on editor of *Iravunk* newspaper by unknown assailants 6 September. Taxation service anti-fraud chief Shahen Hovasapian killed in bomb attack 6 September.

- ["OSCE concerned for journalists in Armenia"](#), RFE/RL, 12 Sept. 2006.

➤ Azerbaijan OSCE representative on media freedom Haraszti expressed concern to President Aliyev over recent prosecutions of journalists by public officials. Freedom to demonstrate also curtailed as around 60 residents of Abseron district arrested, reportedly to pre-empt protests during presidential visit, while Baku officials refused opposition Musavat Party rally request.

- ["Whither Azerbaijan's oil profits?"](#), Eurasia Insight, 20 Sept. 2006.
- For most recent report, see Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°40, [Azerbaijan's 2005 Elections: Lost Opportunity](#), 21 Nov. 2005.

➤ Chechnya (Russia) Rebel leader Umarov issued statement armed campaign would continue, withdrawing offer of peace talks; Russian parliament extended rebel amnesty until mid-January. Gunfight between Chechen and Ingush police on border killed 5 Chechen and 2 Ingush officers; officials said tragic mistake, but Ingush authorities also criticised Chechen police for launching cross-border raids without notification.

- ["Amnesty for Chechen rebels to be extended"](#), RFE/RL, 22 Sept. 2006.

- [“Fight with Kremlin will go on-Chechen rebel chief”](#), AlertNet, 12 Sept. 2006.

➤ North Caucasus (non-Chechnya) Clash between Chechen and Ingush police on border reportedly killed 7 (See Chechnya, above). In Stavropol Krai, adjacent to North Caucasus republics, prominent imam Abubakir Kudzhiev shot dead 25 September. In North Ossetia, Nikolai Khlyntsov appointed new prime minister 6 September. 4 soldiers killed by landmine in republic while rebels also claimed to have shot down army helicopter, killing 11.

- [“Chechen-Ingush battle shocks North Caucasus”](#), IWPR, 20 Sept. 2006.
- [“Russian rebels say they shot down army helicopter”](#), AlertNet, 13 Sept. 2006.

➤ Georgia Tensions with Russia mounted after 4 Russian military officers detained by Georgian authorities for espionage 27 September. Russia suspended ongoing troop pullout from 2 Georgian bases 30 September, recalled ambassador and most diplomatic staff, halted issuance of visas, and asked UN Security Council to censure Tbilisi. President Saakashvili accused Russia in UN General Assembly speech of annexing Georgian conflict zones and perpetuating conflicts in. NATO invited Georgia to begin “Intensified Dialogue” on membership; move criticised by Russia. In South Ossetia, 3 Ossetians and 1 Georgian killed in exchange of fire 8 September. De facto South Ossetian president Kokoity announced independence referendum and presidential elections to be held 12 November; Joint Control Commission meeting cancelled. In Abkhazia, 1 civilian reportedly killed in clash between police and gunmen. 13 opposition activists charged for alleged coup plot; opposition said arrests political. Local elections due 5 October.

- [“Moscow suspends Georgia troop pullout”](#), RFE/RL, 30 Sept. 2006.
- [“Georgian opposition: coup arrests are campaign tactic”](#), Eurasia Insight, 13 Sept. 2006.

Crisis Group Europe Report N°176, [Abkhazia Today](#), 15 September 2006.



The Georgian-Abkhaz conflict will continue to fester unless both sides take a new approach to build mutual respect. Fourteen years after the first exchanges of fire in August 1992, Georgians and Abkhaz are drifting further apart, and some 200,000 of the pre-war ethnic Georgian majority expelled during the fighting are still displaced. Georgia, arguing that the sanctity of international borders and state sovereignty guarantees it the right to control Abkhazia, blames Russia for the lack of progress. The Abkhaz claim a right to statehood based on national self-determination.

➤ Nagorno-Karabakh (Azerbaijan) UN General Assembly resolution stressed need for environmental operation to suppress fires in “occupied regions of Azerbaijan”, requesting OSCE share findings of planned investigation; fires affecting areas close to line of contact have been source of contention between 2 sides. Minsk Group co-chairmen met foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan in Paris and London 12-13 September.

- [“New efforts to find Karabakh missing”](#), IWPR, 28 Sept 2006.
- [“Assembly calls for UN to aid with Karabakh fires”](#), RFE/RL, 8 Sept. 2006.
- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Report N°167, [Nagorno-Karabakh: A Plan for Peace](#), 11 Oct. 2005.

EASTERN EUROPE

➤ Belarus Thousands rallied in Minsk, demanding release of opposition presidential candidate Alexander Kozulin, election observers and opposition activists jailed after protesting rigged March election. Minsk court rejected appeal to Kazulin’s 5½-year prison sentence. EU to consider extension of visa ban to officials involved in trial; EU member states rejected sanctions to expel Belarus from preferential trade system within 6 months if government does not guarantee freedom of speech and assembly. Special rapporteur Severin recommended UN probe into rights abuses in report to UN Human Rights Council.

- [“EU to extend Belarus visa ban list”](#), EU Observer, 21 Sept. 2006.
- [“U.N. investigator condemns human rights abuses in Belarus”](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 19 Sept. 2006.

➤ Moldova De facto authorities in Transnistria held referendum on independence and eventual unification with Russia 17 September: 97.1% allegedly voted in favour amid 79% turnout. Moldova rejected move as “political farce”; EU, U.S. and OSCE did not recognise vote. Russia called referendum “democratic and open” expression of popular will.

- [“Breakaway vote boosts Russia’s hand over ‘frozen conflicts’”](#), *The Guardian*, 19 Sept. 2006.
- [“Trans-Dniester votes to join Russia”](#), AP, 18 Sept. 2006.
- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Report N°175, [Moldova’s Uncertain Future](#), 17 August 2006.

➤ Ukraine PM Yanukovich held talks with EU and NATO in Brussels. He warned potentially destabilising reforms would not be rushed and public opinion required “pause” in NATO integration, but welcomed stronger EU ties and eventual accession: his NATO comments later criticised by President Yushchenko and Defence Minister Hrytsenko as groundless and incorrect.

- [“Ukraine chief resists EU push for reforms”](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 21 Sept. 2006.
- [“Ukraine PM rebuked for Nato stand”](#), BBC, 15 Sept. 2006.

WESTERN EUROPE/MEDITERRANEAN

➤ Basque Country (Spain) Government expressed concern over low-level “street violence” including series of minor firebombing incidents in San Sebastian, but insisted peace process on track. Separatist Batasuna Party said government stalling start of talks. Demonstrations for “self-determination” held in several towns 30 September.

- [“Hooded gunmen, torched buses may show ETA impatience”](#), Reuters, 25 Sept. 2006.

➤ Cyprus EU Finnish Presidency launched drive to end economic isolation of North and ensure opening of Turkey’s ports to South to avert autumn breakdown in EU-Turkey accession process. In North, new government coalition formed between Republican Turkish Party and Freedom and Reform Party (FRP) after PM Soyer withdrew from coalition 10 September, accusing FM Serdar Denktash’s Democrat Party of obstruction: Soyer remained PM; FRP leader Turgay Avci appointed new FM. Denktash had been critical of concessions to South and EU; adjustment appeared to ensure government in line with Ankara regarding EU. In South, Defence Minister Klokaris resigned citing poor health; denied resignation related to his efforts to end allegedly powerful officer clique in army.

- [“Turkish Cypriot prime minister resigns, dissolving government”](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 11 Sept. 2006.
- [“Turkish crash looms for Europe”](#), BBC, 6 Sept. 2006.
- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Report N°171, *The Cyprus Stalemate: What Next?*, 8 Mar. 2006.

↳ Northern Ireland (UK) British and Irish PMs Blair and Ahern met to discuss preparations for intensive October inter-party talks, as London warned parties failure to meet 24 November devolution deadline would have “dire consequences”. UK Sec. State Hain announced funding for transition of Ulster Defence Association from paramilitary and criminal activity. Londonderry SDLP councillor’s home petrol-bombed for 15th time. Long-awaited trial of Sean Hoey, accused of 1998 Omagh bombing, began 25 September.

- [“St Andrews talks may prove vital”](#), BBC, 23 Sept. 2006.
- [“Last orders on devolution deal”](#), *The Guardian*, 21 Sept. 2006.

↳ Turkey PKK announced unilateral ceasefire 30 September, following call from imprisoned leader Abdullah Ocalan; PM Erdogan said PKK must surrender weapons unconditionally. Violence in southeast and east continued, including bomb attack in Diyarbakir, which killed 10, mostly children. In southwest, police arrested 4, seized explosives near Marmaris resort. U.S. special coordinator for fight against PKK, Joseph Ralston, promised effective measures against group after meeting new Turkish counterpart Edip Baser. Long-awaited case against novelist Elif Safak for “insulting Turkishness” dismissed, but government under further pressure to repeal Article 301 under which numerous writers tried. EU Commission delayed report on Turkey to November.

- [“Turkey’s restriction, Europe’s problem”](#), openDemocracy, 29 Sept. 2006.
- [“New targets, old conflicts”](#), *Time*, 3 Sept. 2006.

Latin America / Caribbean

↳ Bolivia Potential for significant unrest as President Morales’ reforms hit stumbling blocks and rifts emerged in Constituent Assembly. Santa Cruz and regional allies walked out of Assembly 1 September after Morales’ MAS party imposed simple majority instead of two-thirds vote as threshold for making changes. Further evidence of regional divide 22 September: farmers and trade unionists in Santa Cruz, angered by opposition to land reform program, blocked roads. VP Garcia raised stakes in speech to country’s peasants that included veritable call to arms in defense of “revolutionary government”. Full nationalisation of hydrocarbons industry continued to stall: minister in charge resigned after crisis in relations with Brazil prompted by granting state-owned YPF control over 2 refineries owned by Brazilian gas giant Petrobras; new minister expected to take more conciliatory tone.

- [“Bolivia leaders find their promises are hard to keep”](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 26 Sept. 2006.
- [“Power grab”](#), *The Economist*, 7 Sept. 2006.
- [“Brazil tries to ease Bolivian gas dispute”](#), *Financial Times*, 21 Sept. 2006.
- For background, see Crisis Group Latin America Report N°18, *Bolivia’s Rocky Road to Reforms*, 3 July 2006.

↳ Colombia In new bid to pressure government into hostage exchange, FARC rebels released video of 12 politicians taken

hostage in 2002. In policy shift, President Uribe said willing to accept “meeting zone” for hostage swap with FARC. Government continued to pressure remaining AUC former paramilitaries who have not entered temporary detention to comply with Justice and Peace Law, threatening ex-leader Vicente Castaño with extradition to U.S. on drugs trafficking if caught. On eve of October talks between government and ELN rebels in Havana, ELN commander Antonio García declared in favour of amnesty to imprisoned rebels as step towards full-fledged peace negotiations.

- [“Colombian rebels release video of kidnapped regional lawmakers”](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 24 Sept. 2006.
- [“Amnistía para guerrilleros presos propuso jefe militar del ELN, Antonio García”](#), *El Tiempo*, 20 Sept. 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.

↳ Haiti MINUSTAH peacekeeping force partially redeployed to consolidate control over trouble spots near Port-au-Prince 11 September, including Cité Soleil slum. PM Alexis asked U.S. to end weapons embargo in order to rearm police force.

- [“Haiti wants 15-year-old US arms embargo lifted”](#), Reuters, 16 Sept. 2006.
- [“U.N. troops move into Haiti’s gang strongholds”](#), AlertNet, 11 Sept. 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 President Garcia made controversial decree granting legal assistance to hundreds of military officials due to face trial for alleged human rights abuses during Peru’s 1980s and 1990s conflict against Shining Path guerrillas. Former intelligence chief Vladimiro Montesinos given 20-year prison term for arms sales to Colombian FARC in 1999.

- [“Peru gives state defense to accused rights abusers”](#), AlertNet, 22 Sept. 2006.

↳ Venezuela President Chávez lambasted President Bush in speech to UN General Assembly. Relations further deteriorated as Chávez accused Washington of funding opposition candidate Rosales and Venezuelan FM briefly detained at JFK airport. Iranian President Ahmadinejad visited Caracas; signed series of bilateral agreements. Chavez continued to pursue support for Security Council bid at Non-aligned Movement summit in Cuba. Chile requested replacement of Venezuelan ambassador after he criticised Christian Democratic Party for opposing Security Council bid.

- [“Chávez’s anti-US campaign”](#), *Christian Science Monitor*, 29 Sept. 2006.

Middle East / North Africa

EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

↳ Israel/Occupied Territories Palestinian Authority (PA) President Mahmoud Abbas said 29 September there was “no progress” in forming national unity government. Tensions between Hamas and Fatah increased over 15 September assassination of General Jad Tayeh, senior intelligence officer, and 4 bodyguards. Hamas-led Interior Ministry deployed Executive Force to prevent demonstrations by PA security

forces against government 1 October; 2 killed in ensuing clashes. Abbas and Hamas leader Haniyeh had reached 8-point agreement 11 September, implicitly endorsing Quartet conditions (recognise Israel, renounce violence and accept past agreements) and establishing basis on which new Palestinian government would be formed. But Abbas' explicit statement in UN speech 21 September that new government would recognise Israel caused Hamas to backtrack. Israeli military court overturned previous ruling to release on bail Hamas MPs and cabinet ministers currently in detention; separately, Deputy PM Nasir Shair released 27 September.

- Comment by Robert Malley (Crisis Group) and Aaron David Miller, "The U.S. must look to its own Mideast interests", *International Herald Tribune*, 26 Sept. 2006.
- Comment by Robert Malley (Crisis Group), "A new Middle East", *New York Review of Books*, 21 Sept. 2006.
- Comment by Gareth Evans (Crisis Group), "Israel and the quartet must seize the moment", *Financial Times*, 19 Sept. 2006.
- "Death and disintegration all round", *The Economist*, 7 Sept. 2006.

2006 Middle East Initiative, [Towards a Comprehensive Settlement of the Arab-Israeli Conflict](#), 22 September 2006. Crisis Group has launched a new global advocacy initiative designed to generate new political momentum for a comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Crisis Group's aim is to help fill the present policy vacuum, stem the slide toward greater instability, and provide a viable alternative to moderates in the region on both the Israeli and Arab sides.



Lebanon Hizbollah held "victory" rally 22 September. Leader Hassan Nasrallah declared group still possessed over 20,000 rockets; would not immediately disarm but does "not want to keep the weapons forever". Nasrallah said would release 2 Israeli soldiers, captured in 12 July raid that sparked conflict, if Lebanese militant Samir Qantar plus another, held by Israel for 27 years, also freed. Israeli troop withdrawal from south reportedly completed 1 October. Lebanese troops deployed to Israeli border for first time in 4 decades as required by UNSC resolution 1701. German government approved deployment of 2,400 navy personnel to patrol coast. Turkey and Qatar agreed to send troops to enhanced UNIFIL. UN and Lebanese army experts continued to remove unexploded Israeli ordnance from South Lebanon; investigation opened over use of cluster bombs. Official Israeli army inquiry concluded 25 July bombing of UN observation post and killing of 4 observers result of "tragic error": UN stated Israel obstructed UN investigation. Head of UN enquiry into February 2005 killing of former PM Hariri reported progress but called for continued international support in briefing to UN Security Council 29 September. Intelligence officer and former investigator into Hariri killing wounded in 5 September attack.

- "Israel withdraws last troops from Lebanon", *Washington Post*, 1 Oct. 2006.
- "Little pressure on Hezbollah to disarm", AP, 28 Sept. 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 reportedly told 3 Israeli Arab politicians Damascus ready to establish peace with Israel based on Arab League's 2002 plan: Israeli retreat to 1967 borders, multilateral solution for refugees, recognition of and diplomatic ties with

Israel. Israeli PM Olmert rejected peace overture, accusing Damascus of harbouring Palestinian terrorists. Assad maintained rejection of UN peacekeepers along Syria/Lebanon border but asked for EU advice and assistance: EU technical assistance for Lebanese side already agreed. Syrian security guards foiled attack on U.S. embassy in Damascus 12 September, intercepting 4 militants after their car bomb failed to explode; 3 killed in gunfight. UN report into February 2005 assassination of former Lebanese PM Hariri deemed Syria's cooperation with investigation "generally satisfactory".

- "Israel's Olmert rejects Syrian overture to peace talks", *International Herald Tribune*, 28 Sept. 2006.
- "Delusion in Damascus", *Washington Post*, 24 Sept. 2006.
- "Syria seeks EU help on arms control", *Financial Times*, 14 Sept. 2006.
- For background, see Crisis Group Middle East Report N°39, *Syria After Lebanon, Lebanon After Syria*, 12 Apr. 2005.

GULF

Iran EU's unanimous stance in nuclear negotiations broken by French President Chirac's suggestion that suspension of uranium enrichment be up for negotiation rather than prerequisite for talks. EU foreign policy chief Solana and Tehran's nuclear negotiator Larijani met 27 September: reported progress but no agreement. U.S. President Bush continued to push for sanctions following Iran's failure to meet 31 August IAEA deadline to halt enrichment. U.S. Senate passed legislation 30 September for sanctions on any entity contributing to Iran's weapons programs, extending existing economic sanctions on Iran, but also allowing for presidential waiver authority on sanctions.

- "US Senate sends Iran sanctions bill to the president", *International Herald Tribune*, 30 Sept. 2006.
- "No nuclear deal at EU-Iran talks", BBC, 28 Sept. 2006.
- "Chirac's shift may end Iran unity", BBC, 18 Sept. 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 Spike in sectarian violence as holy month Ramadan began. 200 bodies showing signs of torture found near Bagdad while 9 severed heads found north of city. UN expert suggested torture currently worse in Iraq than under Saddam Hussein. U.S. troops enforced 24-hour curfew in Bagdad 30 September after "green zone" security alert. Violence led some observers to conclude PM Maliki's government lacks political will and capacity to take steps against Shiite groups, including Muqtada al-Sadr's Mahdi army. UK forces claimed killing of senior al-Qaeda fugitive, Omar al-Farouq, in Basra. Politicians reached agreement to debate legislation allowing creation of autonomous federal regions but postponed implementation for 18 months; one Shiite party supports measure as step toward emulating Kurdish autonomy in north, while Sunnis and most other Shiites opposed due to fear of being cut off from oil revenues or facing Iraq's break-up.

- "White House in crisis over 'Iraq lies' claims", *The Guardian*, 1 Oct. 2006.
- "Slaughter in Baghdad", *The Economist*, 21 Sept. 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 Incumbent President Saleh re-elected for another 7-year term with 77% of 20 September vote. Main opponent, former oil minister Shamlan, received 21.8%. Opposition claimed election rigged but international monitors said vote "open and genuine". 42 killed in stampede at Saleh rally but no serious political violence reported. Security forces foiled 2 simultaneous suicide attacks on oil and gas facilities 15 September; 4 bombers killed before they reached targets.
 - "Leave your guns at home, and vote", *The Economist*, 21 Sept. 2006.

NORTH AFRICA

- Algeria Government extended expired amnesty for rebels. Salafi Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC) vowed to continue struggle and said joining al-Qaeda, but police dismissed group as lacking capacity for major attacks. GSPC claimed responsibility for 2 September ambush which killed 4 police. Banned Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) leader Rabah Kebir returned to Algiers after 10-year exile 17 September; pledged commitment to national reconciliation process.
 - "Algeria leader vows to crush remaining rebels", Reuters, 27 Sept. 2006.
 - "Algeria police unimpressed by rebels' al-Qaeda link", *Mail & Guardian*, 20 Sept. 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 Official clampdown on Muslim Brothers continued: over 90 detained in north including 70 in Alexandria. 3 suspected members of Tawhid wa 'l-Jihad group sentenced to death over involvement in October 2004 Red Sea resort bombings; 3 denied charges. Government announced restart of civilian nuclear power program to meet energy needs after 20-year freeze; U.S. supportive of move. Information minister banned editions of *Le Figaro*, *Frankfurter AZ* and *Guardian Weekly* for publishing articles allegedly insulting Islam.

- "Egypt arrests more than 90 on suspected Islamist links", *Mail & Guardian*, 7 Sept. 2006.
- For background, see Crisis Group Middle East/North Africa Report N°46, *Reforming Egypt: In Search of a Strategy*, 4 Oct. 2005.

- Mauritania EU announced observer team will monitor November parliamentary elections, calling poll important step on road to democracy.

- "Le chef de la junte mauritanienne se présente en 'arbitre' du processus démocratique", *Le Monde*, 27 Sept. 2006.
- For background, see Crisis Group Middle East/North Africa Report N°53, *Political Transition in Mauritania: Results and Prospects*, 24 Apr. 2006.

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