

1 June 2005, N°22

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 more than 100 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.

May 2005 Trends



Deteriorated Situations

Afghanistan (p.5)	Pakistan (p.6)
Angola (p.3)	Papua New Guinea (p.7)
Bolivia (p.9)	Somalia (p.2)
Indonesia (p.6)	Turkey (p.9)
Iraq (p.11)	Uzbekistan (p.4)
Myanmar/Burma (p.7)	Zimbabwe (p.3)
North Korea (p.6)	



Improved Situations

Central African Republic (p.2)
Côte d'Ivoire (p.3)
Georgia (p.8)
Kyrgyzstan (p.4)
Philippines (p.7)
Taiwan Strait (p.6)



Unchanged Situations

Albania (p.7), Algeria (p.12), Armenia (p.8), Azerbaijan (p.8), Bahrain (p.11), Bangladesh (p.5), Basque Country (Spain) (p.9), Bosnia & Herzegovina (p.7), Burundi (p.2), Chad (p.2), Chechnya (Russia) (p.9), China (internal) (p.6), Colombia (p.9), Cyprus (p.9), DR Congo (p.2), Ecuador (p.10), Egypt (p.12), Ethiopia/Eritrea (p.2), Guinea (p.3), Guinea-Bissau (p.3), Haiti (p.10), India (non-Kashmir) (p.5), Iran (p.11), Israel/Occupied Territories (p.10), Kashmir (p.5), Kazakhstan (p.4), Kosovo (p.7), Lebanon (p.10), Liberia (p.3), Macedonia (p.8), Mauritania (p.12), Moldova (p.9), Nagorno-Karabakh (Azerbaijan) (p.8), Nepal (p.5), Nigeria (p.4), Northern Ireland (UK) (p.9), Rwanda (p.2), Saudi Arabia (p.11), Serbia & Montenegro (p.8), Sierra Leone (p.4), Somaliland (Somalia) (p.3), Sri Lanka (p.6), Sudan (p.3), Syria (p.11), Tajikistan (p.4), Thailand (p.7), Togo (p.4), Turkmenistan (p.4), Uganda (p.2), Ukraine (p.9), Venezuela (p.10), Western Sahara (p.12), Yemen (p.11)

June 2005 Watchlist



Conflict Risk Alert

DR Congo	Somalia
Guinea	Uzbekistan
Guinea-Bissau	



Conflict Resolution Opportunity

None

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Africa

CENTRAL AFRICA

➡ Burundi President Ndayizeye and leader of Forces nationales de liberation (FNL) rebel group, Agathon Rwasa, agreed ceasefire 15 May after Tanzania talks but intermittent fighting near Bujumbura caused collapse 10 days later amidst mutual recriminations. One source claimed 17 unarmed FNL rebels executed by army. Insecurity comes ahead of 3 June local elections. Burundi to reject asylum applications of 7-8,000 Rwandans fleeing "gacaca" courts; Ndayizeye threatened to expel UNHCR and ICRC, alleging support for Rwandans.

- "Fighting erupts in Burundi ahead of polls", Independent Online, 28 May 2005.
- "Ndayizeye threatens to expel ICRC, refugee agency", IRIN, 26 May 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°20, *Elections in Burundi: The Peace Wager*, 9 Dec. 2004.

➡ Central African Republic President François Bozizé re-elected in run-off vote; outcome accepted by challenger Martin Ziguele. Results announced 24 May awarded Bozizé 64.4% of vote and gave his Convergence Nationale Kwa na Kwa 42 of 105 National Assembly seats. Spokesman for UNSG Kofi Annan welcomed "return to constitutional governance".

- "Annan commends participation in Central African Republic's electoral process", UN News Service, 24 May 2005.

➡ Chad Frustration boiled over in Darfur refugee camps eastern Chad - sheltering approximately 200,000 - leading UNHCR to pull out from 4 camps; 2 refugees and 2 Chadian police killed in Goz Amer camp 11 May.

- "Four dead, at least three injured in refugee camp clashes", IRIN, 12 May 2005.

➡ Democratic Republic of Congo New Congolese constitution adopted 13 May; fears of unrest should 30 June elections be postponed. Violence continued across country: UN peacekeeper killed in ambush in Ituri province; 18 killed and 50 kidnapped in militia attack on string of villages near Bukavu ascribed to Rwandan Hutu "Rasta" and FDLR groups; 2 killed in Kasai Oriental province. 30 civilians arrested for alleged plot to secede Katanga province from country.

- "After failures, UN peacekeepers get tough", *International Herald Tribune* (NYT), 24 May 2005.
- Comment by Jason Stearns (Crisis Group), "No man's army", *Wall Street Journal Europe*, 20 May 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°91, *The Congo's Transition Is Failing: Crisis in the Kivus*, 30 Mar. 2005.

Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°25, *The Congo: Solving the FDLR Problem Once and for All*, 12 May 2005. The FDLR (Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda) in DR Congo is a menace to regional peace and must be disarmed. With some 8,000 to 10,000 troops in Congo, the FDLR is too weak to threaten the government in their home country, Rwanda, but remains a major threat to civilians and a key source of regional instability. Rwanda and DR Congo have not exhausted all peaceful means for FDLR demobilisation. *cont'd...*



...cont'd Kigali should hold technical discussions with its military commanders and be prepared to offer them concrete incentives for their return and resettlement. Kinshasa should pressure the FDLR to drop any political aspirations. If, however, such peaceful avenues for disarming the FDLR are exhausted, the only solution left will be a military one.

➡ Rwanda Up to 1,000 Rwandans who fled to Burundi to escape "gacaca" trials now believed returned; 6-7,000 remain. Rwanda rejected calls to engage in technical discussions with FDLR Rwandan Hutu rebels based in DR Congo. UNHCR warned of food shortages amongst Rwanda's 60,000 refugee population.

- "Trial and error", *The New Times*, 25 May 2005.
- "Rwanda rejects calls to help repatriate Hutu rebels", Voice of America, 12 May 2005.

➡ Uganda Ongoing conflict between army and Lord's Resistance Army (LRA); LRA killed 10 IDPs in attack on Koch-Goma camp, near Gulu, 5 May; army said LRA chief of operations killed 18 May; further LRA attack killed 8 civilians 27 May. UNHCR announced some 5,000 have fled to Uganda from south Sudan - further zone of LRA operations - since January. Meanwhile, rising criticism by donor nations over slow pace of reform; UK has already withdrawn some aid; Museveni accused critical donors of "meddling". Opposition urged greater conditionality.

- "West loses patience with Uganda", IWPR, 24 May 2005.
- For background see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°23, *Shock Therapy for Northern Uganda's Peace Process*, 11 Apr. 2005.

HORN OF AFRICA

➡ Ethiopia/Eritrea As Eritrea faced growing food insecurity and Ethiopia held flawed elections, political rhetoric over border dispute continued. Eritrea's President Afwerki said Ethiopian government "views war as only resort" and blamed U.S. for Ethiopia's non-compliance with 2003 boundary ruling. Opposition gains in Ethiopian elections may reduce Addis Ababa's room for manoeuvre and harden government line.

- "Eritrea says Ethiopia 'beating battle drums'", *Sudan Tribune*, 24 May 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°68, *Ethiopia and Eritrea: War or Peace?*, 24 Sept. 2003.

➡ Somalia Political divisions continued to deepen, threatening fragile peace: transitional government (TFG) planned relocation to Baidoa and Jowhar 31 May saying Mogadishu too dangerous, while speaker Hassan Sheriff Aden moved to capital Mogadishu with 130 MPs. 15 died in clashes in Baidoa 30 May, casting doubt on TFG plans. Mogadishu-based warlords proceeded with plans to demilitarise capital with civil society support. President Yusuf dismissed initiative; PM Ghedi called for urgent deployment of AU peacekeepers to disarm 60,000 militia. AU sought UN approval for IGAD deployment and said would only deploy when situation more secure. Various Mogadishu leaders - including security minister Mohammed Qanyare Affrah - called on Somalis to prepare for war against foreign troops. Both sides reportedly amassing weapons.

- "Somalia cabinet to relocate on May 31", *East African Standard*, 20 May 2005.
- "New blow to Somalia peace hopes", BBC, 13 May 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°88, *Somalia: Continuation of War by Other Means?*, 21 Dec. 2004.

➡ Somaliland (Somalia) AU Deputy Chairman Patrick Mazimhaka led fact-finding mission to self-declared republic. U.S. marines reportedly came ashore in Somaliland looking for terrorist suspects; U.S. forces in Djibouti denied claims.

- [“Somaliland leader sees progress in recognition issue”](#), Afrol, 19 May 2005.

➡ Sudan On Darfur, 26 May AU/UN Pledging Conference in Addis Ababa saw \$292m (including \$134m from Canada) committed to expansion of AU mission (AMIS) to 7,700 by September; NATO agreed to provide logistical support, but discounted possible military presence. UNSG Kofi Annan subsequently travelled to Khartoum, Darfur and Rumbek urging stronger civilian-protection mandate for AMIS, and expressing concern over funding for implementation of north-south peace. AU-sponsored peace talks Darfur rebels to resume 10 June; insecurity ongoing but delivery of humanitarian aid improving. Sporadic violence elsewhere: 75 killed and 4,000 displaced in clan violence southern Lakes state; 30 died in resettlement riots in Soba Eradi IDP camp south of Khartoum; 5,000 displaced by Ugandan Lord's Resistance Army raids. Eastern Front rebels threatened uprising eastern Sudan and kidnapped 3 ruling party politicians near Eritrean border 24 May. Conference organised between government and eastern parties resulted in \$88m aid promise to Red Sea state over 3 years. 2 international aid workers arrested - both subsequently released - in attempt to silence NGO criticism of human rights abuse. Government confirmed Sudan's rejection of ICC referrals and stated plan for Sudanese court.

- [“Sudan holds second aid worker”](#), *The Guardian*, 1 June 2005.
- [“UN chief calls for more authority for African peacekeepers”](#), *The Sudan Tribune* (AP), 29 May 2005.
- [“Darfur needs bolder international intervention”](#), Crisis Group media release, 22 May 2005.
- [“Policemen, IDPs killed in clashes over forced relocation”](#), IRIN, 19 May 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°24, [A New Sudan Action Plan](#), 26 April 2005.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

➡ Angola Clashes reported between government forces and separatists in oil-rich Cabinda province; FLEC separatists claimed 20 Angolan troops killed Buco Zau and Necuto regions; denied by provincial authorities. FLEC said Angolan forces massing Congo-Brazzaville and DR Congo in preparation for June offensive. Angolan reconstruction to cost \$30b over next decade according to World Bank.

- [“Renewed clashes between govt and Cabindan separatists”](#), IRIN, 26 May 2005.

➡ Zimbabwe Continued economic decline amid famine fears and 45% currency devaluation; ongoing political upheaval with government retribution against opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) supporters in wake of 31 March elections. Government announced plans to demolish shacks home to 1 million urban poor; 22,000 arrested (most later released) Mashonaland province, Mashvingo and Harare black market clamp-down. Campaign against street-vendors sparked clashes. MDC claimed government seeking pretext for declaring state of emergency.

- [“Zimbabwe army sent to quell urban uprising”](#), *The Sunday Independent*, 29 May 2005.

- [“Archbishop prays for Mugabe's death”](#), IWPR, 24 May 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°86 [Zimbabwe: Another Election Chance](#), 30 Nov. 2004.

WEST AFRICA

➡ Côte d'Ivoire Peace process progressed with agreement on disarmament to begin end June following month of false starts in negotiations; World Bank to provide half funding; 4 pro-government militias symbolically began disarmament 25 May. 4 main opposition parties, including those of former President Henri Bedié and former PM Alassane Ouattara, agreed common “platform for democracy and peace” 18 May to democratically remove current President Gbagbo in planned 30 October presidential elections.

- [“Pro-government militia hand over token weapons as disarmament starts”](#), IRIN, 25 May 2005.
- [“Country on a precipice”](#), Human Rights Watch report, 3 May 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°90, [Côte d'Ivoire: The Worst May Be Yet to Come](#), 24 Mar. 2005.

➡ Guinea Proposed June municipal and communal elections postponed to end 2005 to allow revision of electoral list. Economic crisis - fuel prices increased by 50% - and political uncertainty continued. 60 prisoners, including several involved in 1996 coup attempt against President Conté broke out of Conakry jail 15 May; most subsequently recaptured. No progress on Yenga dispute with Sierra Leone.

- [“Gunfire linked to jailbreak, not mutiny – Governor”](#), IRIN, 16 May 2005.
- [“Guinean soldiers capture Sierra Leone military officer”](#), *The Independent*, 11 May 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°74, [Guinea: Uncertainties at the End of an Era](#), 19 Dec. 2003.

➡ Guinea-Bissau Tension continued to build ahead of 19 June presidential election; EU pledged 100 election observers. Visit by regional leaders 21-22 May failed to stem confrontation fears, while arms smuggling to support civilian militias confirmed by PM Carlos Gomes. Former president Kumba Yalla declared himself still head of state, hundreds rallied in support 22 May; armed police deployed. Yalla, other former president Joao Bernardo Viera, and opposition leader Francisco Fadul cleared to stand for election by Supreme Court. Yalla pressed claim by briefly occupying presidential palace 25 May.

- [“Kumba Yala stages token occupation of presidential palace”](#), IRIN, 25 May 2005.
- [“Visit by West African leaders fails to defuse tension”](#), IRIN, 23 May 2005.
- [“Ousted Guinea-Bissau ruler 'retakes power'”](#), CNN, 15 May 2005.

➡ Liberia Registration of 1.2m voters completed ahead of 11 October elections; IDP enrolment lower than hoped. Incomplete rehabilitation program for ex-combatants sparked Ganta riots 11 May. New national army recruitment, managed by U.S. DynCorp company, expected to begin June. Outgoing head of UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), Jacques Klein, said mandate should have been stronger to achieve UN objectives.

- [“Liberia registers one million voters ahead of October polls”](#), ReliefWeb (AFP), 23 May 2005.

- "Government ready to form new army", IRIN, 19 May 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°87, *Liberia and Sierra Leone: Rebuilding Failed States*, 8 Dec. 2004.



Nigeria Cameroon's President Biya and Nigeria's President Obasanjo agreed final pull-out from oil-rich Bakassi peninsula, awarded to Cameroon in 2002 ICJ ruling; timeline not finalised. Violence erupted in Sokoto town, northwest Nigeria, after Sunni Muslims attempted to prevent Shias from entering mosque. Human Rights Watch blamed politicians for religious manipulation leading to 900 deaths in interfaith violence in central Nigeria, February-May 2004; criticised government response as inadequate. 80 arrested for holding illegal Biafran secessionist meeting.

- "Revenge in the name of religion", Human Rights Watch report, 25 May 2005.
- "Nigeria to withdraw from Cameroon's Bakassi", Afrol, 11 May 2005.



Sierra Leone Pressure from Special Court for Sierra Leone led U.S. House and Senate to call for extradition to court of former Liberian dictator Charles Taylor from Nigeria; Nigerian President Obasanjo said Taylor would be sent to Liberia if that government, to be elected in October 2005, so requested.

- "Security Council urged to support Sierra Leone court", UN News, 24 May 2005.
- "Britain, France to resolve Yenga dispute", *The Concord Times*, 18 May 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°87, *Liberia and Sierra Leone: Rebuilding Failed States*, 8 Dec. 2004.



Togo Faure Gnassingbé inaugurated president 4 May, claiming 60% of vote in 24 April election; opposition claimed irregularities. Confidential EU report suggested up to 900,000 phantom voters; regional organisation ECOWAS accepted result while AU lifted sanctions. Nigerian President Obasanjo unable to craft government of national unity at Abuja meeting 19 May; 4 of 6 parties which backed opposition presidential candidate subsequently agreed to coalition talks with government 27 May, signalling split with Union of Forces of Change party led by exiled Gilchrist Olympio. Relative calm returned to Lomé by month-end, but opposition claimed nearly 300 killed in poll violence: Togolese government set up investigative task-force under former PM Joseph Koffigoh. UNHCR said at least 33,000 refugees had fled to neighbouring Benin and Ghana.

- "Killings, kidnappings and rape continue a month after disputed poll, refugees say", IRIN, 24 May 2005.
- "No deal done in Togo crisis talks", BBC, 20 May 2005.



Asia / Pacific

CENTRAL ASIA



Kazakhstan Meeting of opposition coalition in Shymkent broken up by pro-government youths; opposition blamed authorities. Government ordered closure of independent weekly, "Respublika". Demonstrators increasingly took to streets in Astana, possibly inspired by Kyrgyz revolution.

- "More civil disobedience in Kazakh capital", IWPR, 20 May 2005.
- "Kazakh opposition meeting attacked", IWPR, 7 May 2005.



Kyrgyzstan Potential presidential contender Feliks Kulov announced will join team of Acting President Kurmanbek Bakiyev for 10 July elections, easing fears vote could spark further unrest. Kulov likely to be appointed Bakiyev's PM. Violence in Uzbekistan led to influx of hundreds of refugees: some 500 currently in temporary camp just inside border, facing uncertain future as authorities divided over how to handle situation in face of Uzbek government pressure for return. Concern further violence in Uzbekistan could lead to larger refugee flows and regional instability. Group of approximately 300 "people's volunteers" attacked Supreme Court building 1 June, evicting group who had occupied building for 40 days in protest at alleged election fraud.

- "Kyrgyz pledge on Uzbek refugees", BBC, 27 May 2005.
- "Kyrgyzstan: Say no to return of Uzbek refugees", HRW release, 27 May 2005.
- "Kyrgyz heavyweights team up", IWPR, 17 May 2005.

Crisis Group Asia Report N°97, *Kyrgyzstan: After the Revolution*, 4 May 2005.



The ousting of President Askar Akaev in March, ending his increasingly authoritarian fourteen-year rule, was a major step, but as Kyrgyzstan heads toward July presidential elections, the risk of instability remains high. New leaders need to undertake serious reform to redress imbalances created by Akaev's centralisation of power and weak state institutions. They must also confront a looming economic crisis, a wave of land seizures, criminal groups, and the north-south split. The first priority is re-establishing nationwide control and holding free elections. There is a limited amount the international community can do. The Kyrgyz have created their chance to move forward. It is up to their leaders to make sure ordinary people see real change, not merely different names at the top.



Tajikistan Opposition parties protested alleged fraud in February elections, suspending participation in Public Council advisory body. Pressure on civil society continued, with denial of registration to independent media and increasing scrutiny of activities of foreign embassies, international organisations and NGOs. Court in northern city of Khujand sentenced accused members of Islamic radical group "Bay'at".

- "Tajikistan tightens grip on media", IWPR, 20 May 2005.
- "Tajik opposition leaves presidential body", RFE/RL, 4 May 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°33, *Tajikistan's Politics: Confrontation or Consolidation?*, 19 May 2004.



Turkmenistan Major government shakeup led to removal of several high-ranking officials, including Deputy PM for fuel and energy Yolly Gurbanmuradov, seen as potential rival to President Niyazov. Begench Beknazarov, relative of imprisoned Turkmen opposition figure Boris Shikhmuradov, arrested in Ashgabat in connection with November 2002 assassination attempt on Niyazov.

- "Turkmenistan weekly news brief", Open Society Institute Turkmenistan Project, 20-26 May 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°85, *Repression and Regression in Turkmenistan: A New International Strategy*, 4 Nov. 2004.



Uzbekistan Hundreds of mostly unarmed civilians, including women and children, killed by government troops 13/14 May. President Islam Karimov claimed forces

acted to end revolt by Islamist extremists; rejected calls for international inquiry. Protests surrounding trial of 23 Andijon entrepreneurs on extremism charges escalated as armed group stormed prison and freed hundreds of inmates 12 May. With local administration building in anti-government protestors' hands by following morning, thousands of unarmed civilians converged on central square. Uzbek forces responded with indiscriminate use of force. Hundreds of fugitives from violence crossed into Kyrgyz territory. Popular uprising briefly engulfed Qorasuv town on Uzbek-Kyrgyz border; uprising suppressed and leaders arrested. Renewed government pressure on human rights activists and journalists. Risk of further protests high, as frustration rising steadily over government's ruinous economic policies.

- ["Uneasy calm in Karasuu"](#), IWPR, 27 May 2005.
- ["Pressure grows for Uzbek inquiry"](#), BBC, 21 May 2005.
- ["Andijan remembers the dead"](#), IWPR, 20 May 2005.

Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°38, [Uzbekistan: The Andijon Uprising](#), 25 May 2005. Western governments and international bodies must press harder for fundamental change in Tashkent to avoid further mass violence, and even state failure. The 13-14 May popular uprising and its brutal suppression should come as no surprise. Public anger and extreme frustration have been mounting for months, if not years, and the regime's reliance on brutality is well-known. For too long, however, the international community has ignored President Karimov's abuses and clear signs the country was headed for serious trouble.

SOUTH ASIA



Afghanistan Anti-U.S. violence, ostensibly over *Newsweek* report of Guantanamo Bay Koran desecration, erupted 9 May in eastern province of Nangarhar. Directed at UN, NGOs, Pakistani consulate and local government offices, demonstrations spread to 10 provinces suggesting far from spontaneous; up to 19 killed, mainly by police fire. Over 5000 candidates nominated for 18 September parliamentary and provincial council elections, but low participation rates by women. President Karzai's Washington visit overshadowed by *Newsweek* report and further allegations of Bagram base prisoner abuse. Suicide bomber killed at least 20 on 1 June at funeral of senior anti-Taliban cleric Mawlawi Abdullah Fayaz, shot dead in southern province of Kandahar 29 May. Several other incidents highlighted lack of security throughout country: gunmen abducted Italian CARE worker 16 May; 3 female Afghan aid workers killed in northeastern Baghlan province 3 May; suicide attack on Kabul internet café 7 May left 1 UN worker and 2 Afghans dead; suspected Taliban militants killed 11 Afghans working on U.S.-funded anti-drugs project in Helmand province. Clashes between U.S. forces and Taliban in Paktika province escalated with 3 simultaneous attacks by Taliban 31 May, at least 9 insurgents killed. U.S. soldier previously killed by Taliban bomb Zabul province 21 May.

- ["Bomb kills at least 17 at a mosque in Afghanistan"](#), *New York Times* (AP), 1 June 2005.
- ["Patterns of abuse"](#), *International Herald Tribune* (NYT), 24 May 2005.
- ["Foreign elements' blamed for riots"](#), IWPR, 20 May 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°35, [Afghanistan: Getting Disarmament Back on Track](#), 23 Feb. 2005.



Bangladesh Opposition Awami League (AL) supporters clashed with police following 17 May assassination of AL legal affairs secretary Khorshed Alam. Protest strike caused complete Dhaka shut-down 18 May.

- ["Opposition strike shuts down Bangladesh capital"](#), Reuters, 18 May 2005.
- ["U.S. urges political tolerance in Bangladesh"](#), AlertNet, 12 May 2005.



India (non-Kashmir) Andhra Pradesh unrest continued; mixed developments in northeast while fighting broke out in Manipur state between rival separatist groups Zomi Revolutionary Army and United National Liberation Front 14 May. National Democratic Front of Bodoland signed ceasefire deal with federal government 25 May. Talks between government and National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN (I-M)) ended without progress. Two bombs detonated in New Delhi cinema halls showing film considered offensive by some Sikhs 23 May, killing 1. At least 7 killed in southern Andhra Pradesh state 13 May: police shot dead 6 Telugu Desam Party opposition party supporters during violent clashes - sparking riot in which policeman stoned to death. Suspected Maoist insurgents killed 7 police, 1 civilian in Maharashtra state 30 May. Talks held with Pakistan 26-27 May to discuss Siachen Glacier and Sir Creek border disputes ended without progress.

- ["India in truce with Bodo rebels"](#), BBC, 25 May 2005.
- ["India on high alert after cinema hall bombings"](#), AlertNet, 23 May 2005.
- ["Rebel clash in India's north-east"](#), BBC, 14 May 2005.



Kashmir Upsurge of violence since resumption of bus route between India and Pakistan across Line Of Control. Militant attacks in Srinagar 11-12 May killed 4, injured 84, including many school children. Separatist leaders from Indian-held Kashmir agreed to Pakistan's invitation to discuss future of region 2 June, though hardline faction of All Parties Hurriyat Conference refused to attend; 17 killed in clashes ahead of visit. Rise in militancy dampened hopes New Delhi would reduce troop numbers.

- ["Kashmiri leaders set for historic Pakistan trip"](#), AlertNet, 31 May 2005.
- ["India: 17 die in Kashmir violence ahead of separatists' visit to Pakistan"](#), ReliefWeb, 31 May 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Reports N°s 68, 69, and 70 [Kashmir: The View From Islamabad](#); [The View From New Delhi](#); and [Learning from the Past](#), 4 Dec. 2003; and N°79 [India/Pakistan Relations and Kashmir: Steps toward Peace](#), 24 June 2004.



Nepal Despite no reduction of royal powers since 30 April nominal lifting of state of emergency, aid flow resumed. India announced decision to restart limited military assistance 10 May; UK also to resume non-lethal military assistance; no announcement on resumption of U.S. military aid but non-lethal supplies delivered. No discernable moves towards political reconciliation between king and parties. Main political parties formed united front 8 May to launch movement for restoration of democracy; largely peaceful joint protests held 22 and 27 May. Media censorship continued as did certain travel restrictions. Dozens more student activists arrested. Information on crisis outside Kathmandu, including several major military clashes, remained limited and unreliable.

- ["Thousands march in Nepal protest"](#), BBC, 27 May 2005.
- ["Nepal losing its way"](#), Asia Times Online, 27 May 2005.

- Comment by John Norris (Crisis Group), [“The Nepal problem”](#), *Asian Wall Street Journal*, 23 May 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°94, [Nepal: Dealing with a Human Rights Crisis](#), 24 Mar. 2005, and Asia Briefing N°36, [Nepal: Responding to the Royal Coup](#), 24 Feb. 2005.



Pakistan Wave of sectarian violence killed at least 30: suicide bomber in Islamabad Shia shrine 27 May killed 19; second blast in Karachi mosque 30 May claimed 5, followed by riot in which 6 burned to death inside fast-food restaurant. Government continued attempts to silence civilian critics: “Mini-marathon” rally against arbitrary curbs on women by religious extremists held by Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) and Joint Action Committee for People’s Rights attacked by police 14 May; founding member of HRCP and Crisis Group board member Asma Jahangir among 40 temporarily detained; second rally unimpeded 21 May. Nawab Bugti accused government of failing to implement troop withdrawal, as insurgent attacks continued in Balochistan. Talks held with India 26-27 May to discuss Siachen Glacier and Sir Creek border disputes ended without progress.

- [“Karachi riot kills 6 after suicide attack”](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 1 June 2005.
- [“Crisis Group condemns attack on Asma Jahangir”](#), Crisis Group, 20 May 2005.
- [“Balochistan future looks bleak: Bugti”](#), *Pak Tribune*, 15 May 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°95, [The State of Sectarianism in Pakistan](#), 18 April 2005.



Sri Lanka Agreement on joint mechanism for aid distribution remained elusive despite President Kumaratunga’s pledge to prioritise deal. LTTE blamed Kumaratunga for delays. Government coalition partner, leftist People’s Liberation Front, maintained threat to pull out of government if joint mechanism goes ahead. LTTE reportedly killed senior army intelligence officer 31 May while factional violence continued.

- [“Lankan president vows aid deal with Tigers”](#), *The News*, 30 May 2005.
- [“End killings and abductions of Tamil civilians”](#), Human Rights Watch, 24 May 2005.
- [“Sri Lankan rebel discovered dead”](#), BBC, 13 May 2005.

NORTH EAST ASIA



China (internal) Authorities cracked down against family and associates of prominent advocate for Uighur community rights in Xinjiang province.

- [“China: Uighur activist’s family threatened”](#), AlertNet, 13 May 2005.



North Korea Tensions continued to rise between Pyongyang and Washington. U.S. decision to deploy 15 stealth bombers to South Korea provoked North charge of U.S. warmongering. Fears April closure of Yongbyon nuclear reactor precursor to fuel rod extraction confirmed by 11 May official statement. Both South and China reportedly warned Pyongyang against nuclear test. In positive move U.S. officials had “working-level contacts” with North Korean counterparts 13 May, urging Pyongyang to rejoin 6-party nuclear talks; later in month operations to retrieve remains of missing U.S. servicemen suspended due to restrictions placed on teams. Bilateral talks between North and South ended without

breakthrough on nuclear issue though North agreed to resume cabinet-level talks in Seoul 21-24 June.

- [“Epithets increase tension over Korea”](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 31 May 2005.
- [“North Korea: Salami or Hedgehog?”](#), Chosun Ilbo, 13 May 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Report N°96, [North Korea: Can the Iron Fist Accept the Invisible Hand?](#) 25 Apr. 2005.



Taiwan Strait Cross-strait relations improved as China announced decision to lift travel ban - currently only limited business travel allowed. Decision came after visits by nationalist leader Lien Chan in April and head of opposition People First Party James Soong 13 May. Joint communiqué between Soong and Chinese President Hu Jintao said Taiwan must accept “One-China” principle before talks resume; rejected by President Chen Shui-bien but Chen still prepared to search for common ground. Month-long National Assembly on constitutional amendments, uncontroversial between parties, started 30 May; Chen’s Democratic Progressive Party won 42.5% of votes for assembly in very low turnout poll: better than expected result for Chen.

- [“China to allow visits to Taiwan”](#), CNN, 20 May 2005.
- [“Taiwan reads the election’s tea leaves”](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 17 May 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Reports N°s 53-55, [Taiwan Strait I: What’s Left of ‘One China’?](#), [Taiwan Strait II, The Risk of War](#), and [Taiwan Strait III, The Chance of Peace](#), 6 June 2003; and N°75, [Taiwan Strait IV: How an Ultimate Political Settlement Might Look](#), 26 Feb. 2004.

SOUTH EAST ASIA



Indonesia Bomb blasts 28 May in Tentena, majority Christian town near Poso, Central Sulawesi, site of serious Christian-Muslim fighting 1999-2001, killed at least 20. Indonesian negotiators and Free Aceh Movement (GAM) started fourth round of Helsinki peace talks 26 May: discussed GAM demand for locally-based political parties and document on security issues. Next round of talks set for July. Despite talks and 19 May end of civil emergency, Indonesian military stepped up operations in Aceh. On Moluccan island of Ceram, gunmen attacked paramilitary (Brimob) police unit 16 May, killing 6 and raising fears of return to sectarian violence. 14 arrested, 2 of whom were police, others believed members of Laskar Mujahidin militant group responsible for attacks in Maluku, February 2005. Apparently unrelated border dispute between 2 villages in Southeast Maluku 27 May killed 3, injured 51. U.S. embassy and consulates closed 26 to 31 May after detailed floor plans found on jihadist web site. Security stepped up at Australian, British, and Japanese embassies.

- [“Indonesia: Aceh mediator to draw up draft for peace deal at Helsinki talks”](#), ReliefWeb, 31 May 2005.
- [“Militants are blamed for Indonesia bombs”](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 31 May 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°92, [Recycling Militants in Indonesia: Darul Islam and the Australian Embassy Bombing](#), 22 Feb. 2005.

Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°37, [Decentralisation and Conflict in Indonesia: The Mamasa Case](#), 3 May 2005. The Indonesian government must act quickly to head off new trouble *cont’d...*



...cont'd in Mamasa district, a remote area of West Sulawesi, where violence erupted on 24 April. Though casualties were comparatively low, the risk of escalation is great. The dispute goes back to the splitting of an old district into two new ones in 2002, but it is widely misunderstood in Indonesia as religious. Radicals from nearby Poso, an incubator for terrorism, may be trying to exploit the situation. The central government must stop them and also urgently address the underlying disputes in and around Mamasa. Earlier conflicts in Ambon and Poso have shown preventing communal conflict is essential if terrorism is to be contained in Indonesia.

✚ Myanmar/Burma In most serious attack on capital Yangon in recent history 3 coordinated blasts 7 May killed at least 19 and injured 162. Ruling junta blamed ethnic groups and self-proclaimed pro-democracy government in exile. Karen and Shan ethnic groups denied any involvement. Two Shan guerilla groups announced merger to fight military regime.

- "Thai army tells ethnic group to return to Myanmar", AlertNet, 30 May 2005.
- "Burma: Army and proxies attack Shan civilians", Human Rights Watch, 26 May 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°34, *Myanmar: Update on HIV/AIDS Policy*, 16 Dec. 2004.

✚ Papua New Guinea Australian police, part of program to address growing lawlessness, withdrawn after Supreme Court decided visitors' legal immunity unconstitutional. 60 reported killed in tribal fight in Western Highlands 27 May.

- "Papua vows to fight crime, corruption", AlertNet, 27 May 2005.
- "Deaths reported after tribal fight in Papua New Guinea", ABC, 27 May 2005.

✚ Philippines Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), with government representatives attending, met Mindanao 29 May in open consultation ahead of June peace talks with government in Kuala Lumpur. Communist National Democratic Front rejected ceasefire as government precondition for resumption of suspended peace talks 31 May.

- "Rebels close to peace deal with Manila", *Financial Times*, 31 May 2005.
- "Peace deal in Philippine south may not end trouble", AlertNet, 22 May 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°80, *Southern Philippines Backgrounder: Terrorism and the Peace Process*, 13 July 2004.

✚ Thailand Southern violence continued along with debate on future policy for region. Major reshuffle of southern security: regional army and police commanders changed; intelligence reorganised. Committee of security ministers drafting new security legislation to replace martial law in south in move recommended by government-appointed National Reconciliation Commission. New law likely to award similar powers to military, and widen police powers, but overall direction to come from PM rather than regional military chief. Roadside bombs killed 3 soldiers Narathiwat province 13 May. Dozens of other bombing, arson and shooting attacks throughout month killed at least 1 other soldier and 13 civilians.

- "Southern Thailand's homegrown ills", *International Herald Tribune*, 27 May 2005.
- "Softly-softly in Thailand", Asia Times Online, 21 May 2005.

- "Bombs hit Thai Muslim south as govt plans new law", AlertNet, 12 May 2005.

Crisis Group Asia Report N°98, *Southern Thailand: Insurgency, Not Jihad*, 18 May 2005. Thai government attempts to crush the rebellion in the predominantly Muslim south are not working, and a rethink is needed. Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra's reliance on force, without addressing underlying political issues, is making the conflict harder to resolve. Government heavy-handedness, its refusal to hold top commanders accountable or press for serious investigations into human rights abuses are pushing more and more Muslims toward sympathy, if not active support, for perpetrators of the bombings and assassinations. Recent violence is driven by local grievances, with no evidence of external involvement, but if the situation is left to fester, it could attract jihadists from outside. The government must address injustices and open genuine dialogue with southern leaders soon or violence will only continue to escalate.



Europe

BALKANS

✚ Albania OSCE agreed to send over 400 observers to monitor 3 July parliamentary elections. Poll conducted by NDI suggested opposition Democrats have 6-point lead over governing Socialists with 30% of electorate undecided.

- "OSCE observers to monitor Albania's July elections", *Southeast European Times*, 24 May 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Report N°153, *Pan-Albanianism: How Big a Threat to Balkan Stability?*, 25 Feb. 2004.

✚ Bosnia & Herzegovina EU said Bosnia not ready for Stabilisation and Association Agreement talks - first step towards EU membership. Negative response due to failure to implement police and media reforms. Internal talks to create nationwide multi-ethnic police force collapsed 10 May when Bosnian Serb officials rejected changes.

- "Bosnian Serbs quash EU plan for united police", IWPR, 25 May 2005.

✚ Kosovo UN Security Council meeting 27 May gave green light to proceed with mid-year review of progress on standards, to be initiated "this summer" under duly appointed special envoy. Improvements noted in outreach to minority communities and recent smooth transition of government though concerns raised over progress on government decentralisation and municipal pilot projects, inter-party rancour and violent incidents. Kosovo Assembly held first debate on decentralisation and pilot projects 19-20 May - government agreed to review plan after all parties expressed concerns. Thaci's PDK party held out against participation in Political Forum for final status questions proposed by UN Special Rep. Soren Jessen-Petersen; submitted new dossier to UNMIK with evidence of governing LDK party private intelligence structure; police raided office of presumed LDK intelligence service 10 May. Kosovo's President Rugova and PM Kosumi refused to meet Serbian counterparts.

- "UN: Kosovo chief cites progress, recommends review", RFE/RL, 28 May 2005.

- "Setting high standards", Transitions Online, 23 May 2005.
- "Diplomatic process unfolds", IWPR, 18 May 2005.
- For background see Crisis Group Europe Report N°161, *Kosovo: Toward Final Status*, 24 Jan. 2005.

Crisis Group Europe Report N°163, *Kosovo after Haradinaj*, 26 May 2005.  Kosovo could return to instability, with risks for the whole of the western Balkans, unless the international community drives the protectorate's highly fractious politics into more constructive channels. Kosovo Albanian society has shown welcome maturity in recent months, but this has not always been matched by its political representatives. The UN Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) is now mainly working on its own escape strategy; instead, it must begin applying a more determined and focused policy of carrots and sticks to help tame Kosovo Albanians' politics and prepare the province for final status. UNMIK should address party intelligence structures, ensure proper functioning of the Assembly, encourage cooperation between the parties, and provide greater technical assistance to the opposition, not only to expose and offer an alternative to crony politics, but also to offer a democratic safety valve for pent-up social energy.

- ➡ Macedonia NATO reported on Macedonia's annual progress 27 May; highlighted need for further reform.
 - "Macedonia prepares for EU candidate status", Southeast European Times, 31 May 2005.
 - For background, see Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°37 *Macedonia: Not out of the Woods Yet*, 25 Feb. 2005.

- ➡ Serbia & Montenegro Serbian government argued no Kosovo standards met and continued to pressure Kosovo Serbs to boycott participation in Provisional Institutions of Self Government. No more transfers to Hague tribunal after 3 months of consistent cooperation. President Boris Tadic and PM Vojislav offered repeatedly to meet Kosovo Albanian counterparts - both refused. Belgrade and Podgorica continued with radically opposing visions of state union's future. Serbia received extension until end of year on its 3 year IMF agreement. Influential Serbian Orthodox Church sent strong isolationist signals throughout month.
 - "Serbia rejects Kosovo independence amid UN review", AlertNet, 27 May 2005.
 - "Serbia hones negotiating position", IWPR, 18 May 2005.
 - For background, see Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°32, *Serbia's Changing Political Landscape*, 22 July 2004.

Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°39, *Serbia: Spinning its Wheels*, 23 May 2005.  Although Serbia has made some recent progress in its approach to war crimes and Kosovo, continued international pressure will be needed to prevent the government from backsliding under the influence of extreme nationalist forces. Faced with concerted EU and U.S. pressure, Belgrade has finally started cooperating with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia in The Hague and been sending welcome signals it is more willing to discuss Kosovo's status. Nevertheless, in other important areas, Belgrade's policies have been regressive, and overall, the government of Premier Vojislav Kostunica still appears intent on rehabilitating significant portions of the Milosevic legacy. Until it faces up to the real meaning of that legacy, the stability of the Western Balkans will be uncertain.

CAUCASUS

- ➡ Armenia Parliament approved draft constitutional amendments 11 May aimed at partial rebalancing of government branches. Armenia likely to miss Council of Europe June deadline for referendum on changes. Electoral code altered, increasing proportional element and reducing president's influence over electoral commission. Government accused human rights ombudsman Larisa Alaverdian of interference in judicial process; Alaverdian said government attempting to restrict her remit.

- "Ombudsman clashes with President", IWPR, 18 May 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Report N°158, *Armenia: Internal Instability Ahead*, 18 Oct. 2004.

- ➡ Azerbaijan President Aliyev issued 11 May executive order against administrative interference in November parliamentary poll. Ruling Yeni Azerbaijan party and opposition agreed code of conduct for election. Atmosphere of intimidation continued however: 30 arrested prior to opposition rally 21 May and 149 detained following break-up of rally by police. BTC (Baku-Ceyhan-Tbilisi) oil pipeline opened, cementing Azerbaijan's geopolitical importance. Azerbaijan expressed concern over Russia's uncertain plans to transfer troops from Georgia to Armenia.

- "The pipeline that will change the world", *The Independent*, 25 May 2005.
- "Azerbaijan's political temperature rises as parliamentary election campaign looms", Eurasianet.org, 23 May 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Report N°156, *Azerbaijan: Turning Over a New Leaf?*, 13 May 2004.

- ➡ Georgia Signature of major agreement 30 May leading to full withdrawal of Russian forces from Georgia by end of 2008; heavy armour pullout to begin 2005. Russia sought guarantees on non-deployment of third-country troops following withdrawal; joint anti-terrorist centre planned for Batumi. U.S. President Bush visited Tbilisi 9-10 May, while President Saakashvili boycotted Moscow celebrations of end of World War II. Sec. State Condoleezza Rice said U.S.-trained troops would not be used to help end secessionist disputes. In South Ossetia, 2 OSCE monitors were detained by Tskhinvali authorities; 1 Georgian and 4 Ossetians killed in gunfight in South Ossetian conflict zone.

- "Russian troops to leave Georgia", *The Washington Post*, 31 May 2005.
- "Five killed in Georgian breakaway region", Alertnet, 29 May 2005.
- Comment by Sabine Freizer (Crisis Group), "It's dangerous to tease a bear", *International Herald Tribune*, 10 May 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°38, *Georgia-South Ossetia: Refugee Return the Path to Peace*, 19 April 2005.

- ➡ Nagorno-Karabakh (Azerbaijan) Armenian President Kocharian and Azerbaijani President Aliyev gave green light for continuation of Prague Process in Warsaw meeting 16 May on sidelines of Council of Europe summit. Azerbaijani foreign minister claimed Armenia had already agreed pull-out from 7 border areas; Yerevan rejected assertion, stating its forces would only withdraw from occupied territories around N-K in return for international security guarantees for local Armenian population, and latter's participation in determination of N-K's future political status.

- "News of progress on Karabakh talks gets cautious reception in Armenia and Azerbaijan", Eurasianet.org, 20 May 2005.
- "Armenia denies agreeing to leave seven occupied districts", RFE/RL, 19 May 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Reports N°158, *Armenia: Internal Instability Ahead*, 18 Oct. 2004, and N°156, *Azerbaijan: Turning Over a New Leaf?*, 13 May 2004.

EASTERN EUROPE

➡ Chechnya (Russia) Russian forces reportedly killed Alash Daudov, third on most wanted list, and former rebel vice president, Vakha Arsanov. Mass protests held in Grozny after acquittal of Russian officers accused of murdering 6 civilians; verdict also criticised in Russia. Pro-Moscow Chechen President Alu Alkhanov revealed plans to hold local parliamentary elections in November. Chechen warlord Doku Umarov reiterated pledge to spread war outside of Chechen territory.

- "Is Basaev planning to torpedo the Russian-Chechen power-sharing treaty?", RFE/RL, 26 May 2005.
- "Chechnya planning local elections for November", ReliefWeb, 19 May 2005.

➡ Moldova Representatives from Moldova and breakaway Transdniestria region met in Ukraine 16-17 May to discuss proposal put forward by Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko to resume negotiations, embracing earlier Moldovan call to include EU, U.S. and Romania. Though Transdniestria has not yet clearly indicated support for proposal, EU promptly declared its willingness to cooperate.

- "Moldova: Chisinau, Tiraspol welcome Ukrainian plan, but settlement remains far off", RFE/RL, 18 May 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Report N°157, *Moldova: Regional Tensions over Transdniestria*, 17 June 2004.

➡ Ukraine President Yushchenko's first 100 days in office marked by developing tension with PM Tymoshenko. President issued decree criticising government's fuel policy 19 May, including attempts to freeze fuel prices and ban exports in face of oil shortages Tymoshenko blames on Russia. President promised any future entry to NATO or EU would be subject to national referendum.

- "Frictions emerge between president, new government", RFE/RL, 20 May 2005.
- "Yushchenko pledges EU, NATO vote", BBC, 13 May 2005.

WESTERN EUROPE/MEDITERRANEAN

➡ Basque Country (Spain) Madrid parliament voted to open peace talks with ETA if organisation disarmed; opposition Popular Party angrily denounced vote. ETA responded to overture with 25 May Madrid car bomb, injuring 50, following string of smaller explosions. Arrest of Batasuna party leader Arnaldo Otegi ordered on allegations of ETA membership.

- "Spain is split over talks with Basque rebels", *International Herald Tribune*, 30 May 2005.
- "Peace talk", *The Economist*, 19 May 2005.

➡ Cyprus Head of UN Dept. of Political Affairs visited 30 May following talks with Greek Cypriot diplomats in New York on possible revival of peace deal based on April 2004 Annan plan.

- "Leaps of doubt", *The Economist*, 12 May 2005.

➡ Northern Ireland (UK) Elections for Westminster parliament 5 May confirmed shift away from moderate SDLP and UUP parties to Sinn Féin and DUP; UUP leader David Trimble lost seat though SDLP leader Mark Durkan held on. DUP leader Ian Paisley said result signalled end of Good Friday Agreement. Independent Monitoring Commission's 5th report published 24 May claimed IRA still recruiting.

- "IRA is 'still recruiting members'", BBC, 24 May 2005.
- "Bury Good Friday agreement, urges Paisley", *The Guardian*, 19 May 2005.

➡ Turkey Upswing in confrontations between army and Kurdish PKK militants in southeast; at least 14 rebels and 13 soldiers killed. Army launched major security operation in Tunceli region involving as many as 10,000 troops pursuing 350 rebels. Army warned explosives smuggled from Iraq could be used to fabricate bombs; bomb exploded Kusadasi resort 1 May killing policeman; 2 suicide bombers killed in Siirt 16 May. European Court of Human Rights ruled original trial of PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan neither independent nor impartial; Ankara indicated his guilt not in doubt and would face re-trial.

- "Turkey beefs up forces for Kurdish rebels", *The Washington Post*, 20 May 2005.
- "Turkey forced to retry Kurdish guerrilla leader", *The Guardian*, 13 May 2005.
- Crisis Group Middle East Report N°35, *Iraq: Allaying Turkey's Fears Over Kurdish Ambitions*, 26 Jan. 2005.



Latin America / Caribbean

➡ Bolivia Energy bill continued to generate tension. Thousands marched through La Paz opposing bill throughout month - police forcibly restrained crowd. President Carlos Mesa opposed law, deeming 50% tax rate on foreign energy firms as unworkable, but allowed it to go to Congress. Protests escalated amid demands natural gas be nationalised and constitution rewritten. Opposition MAS party and El Alto residents organised large marches and massive road blocks. Army high command announced intention to preserve national unity - stemming fears of imminent coup attempt.

- "Coup rumors, peasant protests put Bolivia on edge", CNN, 26 May 2005.
- "Growing protests in Bolivia", *The Economist*, 19 May 2005.
- "Protests fail to stop Bolivia law", BBC, 18 May 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Latin America Report N°12, *Coca, Drugs and Social Protest in Bolivia and Peru*, 3 Mar. 2005.

➡ Colombia Trend of intensifying FARC operations and heightening economic and social discontent persisted, driving President Uribe approval ratings down from 74 to 59 per cent since December. Debate continued on paramilitary demobilisation law. Peace talks with paramilitaries continued despite attempts to arrest senior leader accused of assassinating legislator in April. FARC ambushes in Chocó and Putumayo departments killed 13 police. Government reported 16 FARC members killed in Caquetá, further 27 in departments of Antioquia, Meta and Arauca. FARC attack on local officials in town of Puerto Rico Caquetá province killed 11, 25 May.

- "Colombia makes record rebel arms haul", ISN, 31 May 2005.

- "Surge of attacks by leftist rebels ends year of quiet in Colombia", *International Herald Tribune*, 27 May. 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Latin America Report N°11, *War and Drugs in Colombia*, 27 Jan. 2005.



Ecuador Political turmoil continued in wake of April ousting of President Lucio Gutierrez. Former president Abdala Bucaram again granted political asylum in Panama; ex-President Gustavo Noboa placed under house arrest 9 May due to reinstatement of past charges following change in government. Executive adopted "non-aggressive stance" toward Congress; unclear whether any wide-reaching reforms will be achieved or consensus on restoring judicial branch. Calls for constituent assembly continued while government pushed option of popular consultation instead.

- "Ecuador's Congress expels 4 members", CNN, 12 May 2005.
- "House arrest for Ecuador's Noboa", BBC, 9 May 2005.



Haiti UNSG Kofi Annan called for additional 750 troops/250 police and year extension for UN mission to support upcoming elections (municipal vote 9 October, legislative and presidential elections 13 November and 18 December). MINUSTAH given 4-week extension from 1 June. Prime Minister Latortue issued strong statement 20 May on need for national reconciliation, day after 5,000 protesters in Port-au-Prince called for Aristide's return. Haiti's Supreme Court overturned convictions of military leaders found guilty in 2000 of murder of Aristide supporters - decision criticised as "partisan". Dominican Republic expelled as many as 2,500 Haitian immigrants after 4 Haitians arrested for murder.

- "UN agrees stop-gap Haiti mission", BBC, 1 June 2005.
- "Haiti ex-PM charged over killings", BBC, 25 May 2005
- For background, see Crisis Group Latin America Briefing N°7, *Haiti's Transition: Hanging in the Balance*, 8 Feb. 2005.

Crisis Group Latin America/Caribbean Report N°13, *Spoiling Security in Haiti*, 31 May 2005. One year after the UN Security Council sent a stabilisation mission to Haiti to help the transitional government, the country is in deep crisis. Spoilers are engaged in destabilising the country, thousands of weapons remain in their hands, and Prime Minister Gerard Latortue's administration lacks a comprehensive strategy to deal with them. The UN Mission should take over executive authority for law enforcement while the Haitian National Police is subjected to urgent reform. The government should begin at once a systematic program of demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration of former rebels and members of the old army, as well as efforts to neutralise urban gangs and curb rampant crime. Haiti is unlikely to make any progress until the security situation is stabilised.



Venezuela Relations with U.S. continued to sour: Defence Minister Jorge Garcia Carneiro signed arms agreement with Russia 17 May despite U.S. opposition; government claimed interest in nuclear energy and possible talks with Iran to study atomic projects 22 May; President Hugo Chavez threatened to cut diplomatic ties over U.S. failure to extradite Cuban militant Luis Posada Carriles - terror suspect held in U.S.

- "Opposition to U.S. makes Chávez a hero to many", *New York Times*, 1 June 2005.
- "Chavez: Venezuela interested in nuclear technology", CNN, 22 May 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Latin America Briefing N°5, *Venezuela: Headed Toward Civil War?*, 10 May 2004.



Middle East / North Africa

EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN



Israel/Occupied Territories First summit talks between U.S. and Palestinian leaders since 2000 held 26 May; U.S. President Bush met Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas, committed \$50m in direct aid for housing and infrastructure projects in Gaza and reiterated commitment to roadmap and creation of Palestinian state. Israeli cabinet approved release of 400 Palestinian prisoners. February ceasefire increasingly fragile: Israeli soldier and member of Islamic Jihad killed in clash near West Bank town of Tulkarm 2 May; violence escalated after Palestinian militant killed in Rafah 17 May, Hamas mortar attack on Israeli settlements in Gaza followed, triggering first Israeli air strike since January; 2 Palestinians killed in West Bank 29 May. In change of tone 1,000 of 1,600 families in Gaza indicated willingness to move to Israel on condition relocated together. Israeli PM Ariel Sharon confirmed Gaza pullout to take place mid-August.

- Comment by Hussein Agha and Robert Malley (Crisis Group), *"The lost Palestinians"*, *The New York Review of Books*, 9 June 2005.
- "Bush praises Abbas' new start", BBC, 26 May 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Middle East Briefing N°16, *After Arafat? Challenges and Prospects*, 23 Dec. 2004.

Crisis Group Middle East Briefing N°17, *Mr Abbas Goes to Washington: Can He Still Succeed?*, 24 May 2005. As Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas prepares to visit Washington on 26 May 2005, his people are watching for signals from the White House to help them decide whether he deserves their continued support. His position is increasingly difficult: although Abbas enjoys institutional and popular legitimacy for his agenda, that support will fade if his international partners fail to deliver on their commitments. He must be able to demonstrate real progress, by bringing improvements in daily life, putting the Palestinian house in order, and getting Israel to deliver. Making demands upon Abbas is legitimate given Israel's justified security concerns, but these should be matched by actions that empower him.



Lebanon First of 4-round parliamentary elections held 29 May in Beirut under international supervision. Opposition figures, including Druze leader Walid Jumblatt and Saad al-Hariri, son of slain former PM, won landslide victory but turnout lower than 30%. Michel Aoun, former army commander and prime minister returned 7 May to Lebanon after 14-year exile. Opposition split 25 May led Aoun to announce his Free Patriotic Movement would run independently. Hizbollah looking to increase political power through election: 13 candidates already won uncontested seats. Latest in series of bombs in Christian areas killed 1, injured 7 in town of Jounieh 6 May.

- "Hariri's son seen heading to victory in Lebanon", *International Herald Tribune* (AP, Reuters), 30 May 2005.
- "Hizbullah looks set to increase its power in upcoming elections", *The Daily Star*, 24 May 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Middle East Report N°39, *Syria After Lebanon, Lebanon After Syria*, 12 Apr. 2005.

➤ Syria Security forces made series of arrests in crackdown against activists with supposed ties to Muslim Brotherhood. Eight members of only active political forum, Jamal Atassi or Al-Atassi Forum for National Dialogue also arrested. Crackdown comes prior to planned 6-9 June conference of ruling Baath party where reforms to be announced. U.S.-Syrian relations reached new low: Syria announced halt of military and intelligence co-operation with U.S. in reaction to U.S. extension of economic sanctions and allegations Syria not doing enough to stop Iraqi insurgency.

- ["Released Syrian activists speak out about their detention"](#), *The Daily Star*, 1 June 2005.
- ["Syria has halted all links with US military, CIA"](#), Middle East Online, 24 May 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Middle East Reports N°s 23 and 24, [Syria Under Bashar \(I\): Foreign Policy Challenges](#); [Syria Under Bashar \(II\): Domestic Policy Challenges](#), 11 Feb. 2004.

GULF

➤ Bahrain Signs of tension and sectarian frustration continued. Principal Shiite political opposition society Al-Wifaq announced intent to boycott 2006 parliamentary elections. Four main opposition societies organised rally for constitutional reform 6 May. Crowd of several thousand mostly Shiites demanded 25 May government hold accountable state officials responsible for past acts of torture.

- ["Bahrainis rally for reforms"](#), Aljazeera.net, 7 May 2005.

Crisis Group Middle East Report N°40, [Bahrain's Sectarian Challenge](#), 6 May 2005. If steps are not urgently taken to address the grievances of Bahrain's Shiites, the country could face escalating violence. Despite a reform package in its 4th year, the government has done little to tackle sectarian discrimination and tensions; indeed, it has exacerbated them by increasingly resorting to authoritarian means to maintain order. Shiite leaders' control over more confrontational elements within its community is weakening. The government must end discriminatory practices and follow through on promised reforms. The opposition should exercise restraint and work with state elements that are willing to accomplish change. The international community, the U.S. in particular, should praise Bahrain's reformist rhetoric a little less, and urge the government to uphold its pledges a little more.



➤ Iran Ministerial meeting between Iran and EU-3 (UK, France, Germany) 25 May, agreed to continue negotiations after Iran threatened to restart uranium enrichment program and EU threatened referral to UN Security Council; EU-3 to present implementation proposals for Paris agreement (on suspending uranium enrichment until long-term agreement in force) by August. Guardian Council approved law to develop nuclear technology, including uranium enrichment, 28 May. Council only approved 6 of 1,010 candidates to run in 17 June presidential election. Two reformists later reinstated, including sole Islamic Iran Participation Front candidate Mostafa Moin, following intervention by Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and reformers' threat to boycott election. Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi travelled to Iraq 17 May in highest-level visit from Iran since ousting of Saddam Hussein. In joint statement, Iraq acknowledged role in provoking Iran-Iraq war.

- ["Iran council approves nuclear plan"](#), Al Jazeera, 29 May 2005.
- ["Iran agrees to continue freeze on nuclear work"](#), *International Herald Tribune* (NYT), 26 May 2005.
- ["Ban on Iran reformists reversed"](#), CNN, 24 May 2005.
- ["Iran flexes its 'soft power' in Iraq"](#), *Christian Science Monitor*, 20 May 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Middle East Briefing N°15, [Iran: Where Next on the Nuclear Standoff?](#), 24 Nov. 2004.

➤ Iraq Wave of violence killed more than 570 since 1 May. At least 20 killed in 2 separate suicide bomb attacks in predominantly Shia town of Hilla 30 May. Defence minister announced 26 May more than 40,000 Iraqi soldiers to be deployed in Baghdad in largest operation against insurgents. Joint U.S.-Iraqi operation detained 285 people in effort to halt violence; U.S. operation near Syrian border killed 125 insurgents. Sunni clerics, possibly targeted to spark sectarian violence, closed mosques in protest. Final 6 cabinet ministers appointed 8 May, though post for human rights minister remains vacant. U.S. Sec. State Condoleezza Rice visited Iraq 21 May followed by Iran's Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi 23 May. Joint Iran-Iraq statement issued identifying Iraq as aggressor in Iran-Iraq war likely to further inflame Sunni Arab resentments. 1280 Coalition soldiers, including 1171 Americans, and thousands of Iraqis killed by hostile fire since declared end of combat operations 1 May 2003.

- ["Iraq official: Militant leader al-Zarqawi wounded"](#), CNN, 26 May 2005.
- ["Sunnis close Mosques to protest killings"](#), *Washington Post*, 21 May 2005.
- ["Al-Zarqawi leaders in Syria plan more suicide bombings"](#), *International Herald Tribune* (AP), 19 May 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Middle East Report N°38, [Iran in Iraq: How Much Influence?](#), 21 Mar. 2005.

➤ Saudi Arabia Continued clashes between police and militants. Riyadh gunfight 10 May after police discovered explosives in car, led to arrest of suspected militant. Protests took place in reaction to *Newsweek* report on U.S. desecration of Koran, later retracted. Government rejected estimates 2,500-3,000 Saudis in Iraq. Concern as King Fahd admitted to hospital 27 May

- ["Saudi forces hold militant after shootout – source"](#), AlertNet, 12 May 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Middle East Report N°31, [Saudi Arabia Backgrounder: Who are the Islamists?](#), 21 Sept. 2004.

➤ Yemen Violence continued between government forces and members of outlawed Believing Youth group, accused of attempting to overthrow regime: 21 rebels arrested for grenade attack on state forces and planning to assassinate political and military officials. President Ali Abdullah Saleh announced group leader agreed to renounce campaign in return for amnesty. Mass demonstrations in capital due to reports of American desecration of Koran in Guantanamo.

- [Saleh says Yemen's rebels waging coup](#), *The Daily Star*, 16 May 2005
- [Yemen govt, rebel leader make peace](#), *Khaleej Times*, 15 May 2005

NORTH AFRICA



Algeria Recent spike in violence continuing. Salafi Group for Preaching and Combat killed 11 troops in bomb attack near Khenchela, eastern Algeria 15 May; 2 further attacks at month-end claimed lives of 1 soldier and 2 security guards. Eleven militants arrested in Bouïra province security operation; 3 troops and 2 militants killed.

- "North Africa summit cancelled over Algeria-Morocco row", Middle East Online, 24 May 2005.
- 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 Government claimed 83% support for constitutional changes to allow multi-candidate presidential elections in 25 May referendum and 54% turnout; opposition claimed turnout figure dubious and warned restrictions on candidate eligibility render changes meaningless. Run-up to poll marked by violent harassment of both secular Kifaya ("Enough") movement and Muslim Brotherhood; at least 800 members of Muslim Brotherhood arrested, including secretary-general Mahmud Ezzat. In establishment revolt, judges voted not to supervise September presidential elections without full independence and judges-only electoral committee; government-appointed Supreme Council of Judges criticised move. U.S. President Bush, meeting with Egyptian PM, welcomed President Mubarak's "historic initiative", calling for free and fair elections.

- "Egypt claims 83% yes vote for change", *The Guardian*, 27 May 2005.
- "Egyptian judges join growing push for reform", *International Herald Tribune* (NYT), 23 May 2005.
- "Egypt's Akef denies overthrow plans", *The Washington Post*, 15 May 2005.
- For background, see Crisis Group Middle East/North Africa Briefings N°s 12 and 13, *Islamism in North Africa: Legacies of History* and *Egypt's Opportunity*, 20 April 2004.



Mauritania Government continued to detain 37, claiming links of at least 9 to Algeria-based and al Qaeda-linked Salafi Group for Preaching and Combat. Claim met with scepticism. Visit of Israeli Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom 3 May accompanied by violent protests.

- "Mauritania's detained terror suspects await charges, journalist released", Voice of America, 23 May 2005.

Crisis Group Middle East/North Africa Report N°41, *Islamism in North Africa IV: The Islamist Challenge in Mauritania: Threat or Scapegoat?*, 11 May 2005. With failed military coups, the rise of a new rebel movement and recent arrests of Islamist leaders, Mauritania seems increasingly unstable. President Ould Taya is taking advantage of the U.S.-led war on terror to legitimise the regime's denial of democratic rights, but, despite the heavy-handed approach, the number of Islamist sympathisers is rising. Although its level of organisation is low, Islamism is making gains among young people and the urban poor. The government could reduce tensions and restore state legitimacy by gradually opening the political field to constitutional parties of Islamist origin in a manner that would safeguard rather than destabilise the state. The international community should realise that the terrorist threat barely even exists in Mauritania and that the wrong policies could help to create one.



Western Sahara Exiled Sahrawi government claimed protests in Rabat and Western Sahara turning into "intifada"; Moroccan officials said 33 would be charged with criminal conspiracy. Planned Arab Maghreb Union meeting in Tripoli cancelled following diplomatic dispute between Algeria and Morocco over Western Sahara; no progress towards diplomatic resolution of issue.

- "Polisario asks world to intervene after what it calls repression by Morocco", IRIN, 31 May 2005.

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