

CrisisWatch

A monthly bulletin by the ICG on current and potential conflicts around the world



1 June 2004, N°10

Board of Trustees

Martti Ahtisaari
Chairman

Maria Livanos Cattau
Stephen Solarz
Vice-Chairmen

Gareth Evans
President and CEO

S. Daniel Abraham
Morton Abramowitz
Kenneth Adelman
Richard Allen
Saud Nasir Al-Sabah
Louise Arbour
Oscar Arias Sanchez
Ersin Arioglu
Emma Bonino
Zbigniew Brzezinski
Cheryl Carolus
Jorge Castañeda
Victor Chu
Wesley Clark
Ruth Dreifuss
Uffe Ellemann-Jensen
Mark Eyskens
Marika Fahlen
Yoichi Funabashi
Bronislaw Geremek
I. K. Gujral
Carla Hills
Asma Jahangir
Ellen Johnson Sirleaf
Mikhail Khodorkovsky
Wim Kok
Elliott F. Kulick
Joanne Leedom-Ackerman
Todung Mulya Lubis
Barbara McDougall
Mo Mowlam
Ayo Obe
Christine Ockrent
Friedbert Pflüger
Surin Pitsuwan
Itamar Rabinovich
Fidel V. Ramos
Mohamed Sahnoun
Salim A. Salim
Douglas Schoen
William Shawcross
George Soros
Pär Stenbäck
Thorvald Stoltenberg
William O. Taylor
Ed van Thijn
Simone Veil
Shirley Williams
Jausieh Joseph Wu
Grigory Yavlinsky
Uta Zapf

Chairman Emeritus
George J. Mitchell

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 ICG reports and briefing papers that have been published in the last month.

CrisisWatch is compiled by ICG'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 40 of the situations listed here. Comments and suggestions can be sent to crisiswatch@crisisweb.org.

May 2004 Trends



Deteriorated Situations

Chad (p.2) Lebanon (p.11)
Chechnya (Russia) (p.9) Nigeria (p.4)
Colombia (p.10) Pakistan (p.6)
Côte d'Ivoire (p.4) Saudi Arabia (p.11)
Israel/Occupied
Territories (p.10)



Improved Situations

India (non-Kashmir) (p.6)
Georgia (p.9)
Libya (p.12)



Unchanged Situations

Afghanistan (p.5), Albania (p.8), Algeria (p.12), Angola (p.3), Armenia (p.8), Azerbaijan (p.8), Bahrain (p.11), Bangladesh (p.5), Basque region (Spain) (p.9), Bolivia (p.9), Bosnia & Herzegovina (p.8), Burundi (p.2), China (internal) (p.6), Cyprus (p.9), Dominican Republic (p.10), DR Congo (p.2), East Timor (p.7), Ecuador (p.10), Egypt (p.12), Ethiopia/Eritrea (p.2), Guinea (p.4), Haiti (p.10), Indonesia (p.7), Iran (p.11), Iraq (p.11), Jordan (p.11), Kashmir (p.6), Kazakhstan (p.4), Kosovo (p.8), Kyrgyzstan (p.5), Liberia (p.4), Macedonia (p.8), Moldova (p.9), Morocco (p.12), Myanmar/Burma (p.7), Nagorno-Karabakh (Azerbaijan) (p.9), Nepal (p.6), North Korea (p.6), Northern Ireland (UK) (p.9), Peru (p.10), Philippines (p.7), Rwanda (p.2), Serbia & Montenegro (p.8), Sierra Leone (p.4), Somalia (p.3), Sri Lanka (p.6), Sudan (p.3), Syria (p.11), Taiwan Strait (p.7), Tajikistan (p.5), Thailand (p.7), Turkey (p.9), Turkmenistan (p.5), Uganda (p.2), Uzbekistan (p.5), Venezuela (p.10), Western Sahara (p.12), Zimbabwe (p.4)

June 2004 Watchlist



Conflict Risk Alert

Ethiopia/Eritrea
Sudan



Conflict Resolution Opportunity

Sudan

The International Crisis Group

is an independent, non-profit, multinational organisation, with over 100 staff members on five continents, working through field-based analysis and high-level advocacy to prevent and resolve deadly conflict. ICG's approach is grounded in field research. Teams of political analysts are located within or close by countries at risk of outbreak, escalation or recurrence of violent conflict. Based on information and assessments from the field, ICG produces regular analytical reports containing practical recommendations targeted at key international decision-takers, and backed up with high level advocacy. ICG is chaired by former Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari, and its President and Chief Executive is former Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans.



Africa

CENTRAL AFRICA

↳ Burundi Forces de défense de la démocratie (FDD) temporarily withdrew from unity government 2 May prompting collapse fears. UNHCR estimated 40,000 Burundian refugees returned from Tanzania since January, but 20,000 people internally displaced in same period due to fighting between government and rebel Hutu FNL forces in Bujumbura Rural province. Army claims it killed 9 FNL rebels 14 May and further 13 29 May; denied by FNL. UN Security Council approved new UN peacekeeping operation to be established from 1 June numbering 5,650 military personnel and incorporating current African Union mission. Burundi government proposal to extend transition period to 29 October 2005 refused by South African team 28 May as Pretoria electoral talks drag on.

- ["Proposal to extend transitional period rejected, official says"](#), IRIN, 31 May 2004.
- ["UN council OK's new Burundi peacekeeping mission"](#), Reuters AlertNet, 21 May 2004.
- ["Thousands more displaced in latest fighting"](#), IRIN, 17 May 2004.
- For background, see ICG Africa Briefing, [Refugees and Internally Displaced in Burundi: The Urgent Need for a Consensus on Their Repatriation and Reintegration](#), 2 Dec. 2003 (in French: executive summary also in English).

↳ Chad Up to 200,000 Sudanese refugees, some armed, fled from Darfur to Chad in recent weeks, straining local population and stretching food supplies. Arab "Janjaweed" militias continued to pursue cross-border refugees from Sudan. Chad claimed 60 Arab militia killed 5 May after attacking Djanga border village. Army mutineers in N'djamena surrendered 20 May after 3-day standoff: President Idriss Deby claimed mutineers had intended to kill him, angered by plans for army reform. Opposition boycotted government-dominated parliamentary vote allowing possible third term for Deby. Chadian MDJT rebels claimed March capture of Algerian Salafist leader Amari Saifi 14 May.

- ["President granted possible third-term mandate"](#), IRIN, 26 May 2004.
- ["Refugee camps overcrowded as influx from Darfur accelerates"](#), IRIN, 25 May 2004.
- ["Chad says quells mutiny at army barracks"](#), Reuters AlertNet, 19 May 2004.

↳ Democratic Republic of Congo Growing instability North and South Kivu, eastern DR Congo, leading to 20,000 displaced over last month. Fighting broke out Bukavu 27 May between DRC army and faction loyal to ex-RCD Colonel Jules Mutebusi killing 45 including UN observer. UN bolstered security, sending 52 additional peacekeepers and confining RCD troops to barracks. 31 May 1,000 further renegade troops advanced to airport 35 km north of Bukavu before halting after call from DRC vice president and former RCD head Azarias Ruberwa. In separate violence 5 Congolese killed 7 May in raid by 350 Hutu Rwandan rebels on Kingi village. 4 Congolese soldiers killed by same forces 25 May. Rwanda threatened military action unless DRC and stretched UN peacekeeping operation (MONUC) re-establish control. DRC foreign minister accepted no current

Rwandan involvement. Burundi stepped up border security with DRC on Rusizi river to prevent Rwandan Hutu infiltration. In positive development, UN-mediated talks in Ituri led to signing 17 May of commitment to peace and disarmament of 7 militia groups. Ruberwa claimed "end of war in Ituri".

- ["Tension from Bukavu to Goma, fear fuelled by confused reports"](#), MONUC, 31 May 2004.
- ["Rwandan Hutus spread terror in Congo"](#), Reuters AlertNet, 20 May 2004.
- ["Ituri militia leaders commit themselves to peace, transition"](#), IRIN, 17 May 2004.
- For background to the conflict in Ituri, see ICG Africa Report N°64, [Congo Crisis: Military Intervention in Ituri](#), 13 June 2003.

↳ Rwanda Rwandan government threatened sending army back to DR Congo after 2 years' absence if Kinshasa and MONUC prove unable to control Hutu Interamwe rebels. UN Security Council condemned 14 May Rwandan incursions into DR Congo; denied by Rwanda. Leading Hutu militia leader Yussuf Munyakazi arrested in DR Congo and transferred to Rwandan war crimes tribunal's (ICTR) detention centre in Tanzania to await trial on 1994 genocide charges, taking total number indicted by ICTR to 68. Government expressed concern at judge resignations, hinting at "external pressures".

- ["Rwanda alarmed by resignation of top tribunal officials"](#), *Hirondelle*, 18 May 2004.
- ["Security Council condemns incursions into Rwanda and DR of Congo"](#), UN News Service, 14 May 2004.
- ["Rwanda genocide suspect arrested"](#), BBC, 7 May 2004.
- For background to 2003 elections, see ICG Africa Report N°53, [Rwanda at the End of the Transition: A Necessary Political Liberalisation](#), 13 Nov. 2002. For background to ICTR, see ICG Africa Report N°69, [The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda: Time for Pragmatism](#), 26 Sept. 2003.

↳ Uganda Ugandan government gunship raids against Sudan-based rebels have not stopped LRA terror in north Uganda. Pagak and Lukudi refugee camps attacked, killing over 70 and further displacing 10,000. Army responded with raid, claiming 10 rebels killed. Christian Aid report criticised Ugandan army's prosecution of war suggesting corruption and half-heartedness; strongly denied by Ugandan government. Donor countries rejected Uganda's 2004/5 budget citing scale and opacity of defence spending.

- ["Uganda army kills 10 northern rebels after massacre"](#), Reuters AlertNet, 27 May 2004.
- ["Donors reject proposed budget on grounds of defence spending"](#), IRIN, 14 May 2004.
- For background, see ICG Africa Report N°77, [Northern Uganda: Understanding and Solving the Conflict](#), 14 Apr. 2004 and ICG Issues Report N°3, [HIV/AIDS as a Security Issue in Africa: Lessons from Uganda](#), 16 Apr. 2004.

HORN OF AFRICA

↳ Ethiopia/Eritrea Eritrea blamed Ethiopia and Sudan for bombing 25 May in Barentu, Eritrea, killing 5 civilians. In response to vigorous Eritrean-government criticism Major-General Robert Gordon, head of UN peacekeeping mission (UNMEE), expressed "genuine concern" 12 May for viability of UN mission given lack of progress on demarcation of 620-mile border, negotiation on status of disputed town of Badme and "deterioration" of local relationships. Eritrean President Afwerki dismissed need for UN special envoy, claiming Eritrean position

binding and non-negotiable. Tensions remain high along temporary security zone, with Eritrean and U.S. claims of incursion by Ethiopian militia forces.

- "Eritrea points finger over blast", BBC, 27 May 2004.
- "Eritrea: 'You have no right to ask'", Amnesty International, 19 May 2004.
- "Eritrea's statements could endanger peacekeepers", Reuters AlertNet, 14 May 2004.
- For background, see ICG Africa Report N°68, *Ethiopia and Eritrea: War or Peace?*, 24 Sept. 2003.

- Somalia Reconciliation conference sponsored by IGAD (regional association of 7 East African states) of 40 Somali groups and representatives of neighbouring countries started Nairobi 21 May after earlier attendance and financial worries. Interim leader Hassan initially refused to attend, planning rival talks in Jowhar, north of Mogadishu. Progress stalled since 29 January. IGAD ministers set July as target for end of talks threatening "punitive measures" against foot-draggers. Fighting between rival Mogadishu militias killed 100; ended 31 May.
- "Ceasefire ends Mogadishu clashes", BBC, 29 May 2004.
 - "Standing on the sidelines as Somalia bleeds", *International Herald Tribune*, 28 May 2004.
 - "IGAD ministers meet in attempt to kick-start Somali peace process", IRIN, 21 May 2004.
 - Comment by John Prendergast and Matt Bryden (ICG), "The chance for peace in Somalia", *East African Standard*, 5 May 2004.
 - For background, see ICG Africa Reports N°66, *Somaliland: Democratisation and Its Discontents*, 28 Jul. 2003; and N°59, *Negotiating a Blueprint for Peace in Somalia*, 6 Mar. 2003.



ICG Africa Report N°80, *Biting the Somali Bullet*, 4 May 2004. If the broken country of Somalia is to be fixed, its peace process must be fixed first. The Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) talks on Somalia have reached a critical stage, as foreign ministers meet this week on next steps. Stalemated since January 2004, the negotiations, led by Kenya, desperately need to be reinvigorated from within IGAD and internationally. The peace process has fundamental flaws, including lack of political commitment, deep and persistent rivalries among regional states, and violations of the arms embargo, which must be corrected for talks to succeed. Unless the U.S. and EU work with IGAD to heal regional divisions and reform the process, it will die, tensions in Somalia will intensify, and the country will continue to be a failed state, dangerous to neighbours and beyond.

- Sudan On positive note, parties announced "major breakthrough" in discussions in Naivasha, Kenya in peace talks between southern SPLA rebels and government to end 21-year civil war. Sides signed key protocols on power-sharing and resolving disputes in 3 regions, paving way for comprehensive peace agreement in coming weeks or months. But situation in Darfur, western Sudan, continued to slide towards humanitarian disaster despite mobilisation of international concern. Over 1 million now displaced in Darfur. Sudanese government professed eagerness to find lasting solution 12 May, but blocked Darfur aid until 21 May as U.S. and international pressure increased. Access for aid workers continues to be impeded. Pledge to disarm Janjaweed militia unfulfilled as violence continued. 45 killed in village south of Nyala by militia 24 May. Onset of rainy

season threatens to complicate aid effort with as many as 350,000 lives at risk. Current UN Security Council president finally moved to issue weak statement 26 May condemning government-supported militia attacks, demanding disarmament and accountability but falling short of suggesting international peace-enforcement. Sudan elected to UN Human Rights Commission prompting U.S. walk-out, but latter nevertheless took Sudan off list of states sponsoring terrorism.

- "Sudan peace deal signed", *The Washington Post*, 26 May 2004.
- "UN urges government to disarm militias", IRIN, 26 May 2004.
- "Dozens killed in Sudan attack", BBC, 24 May 2004.
- "US takes Sudan off terror list, keeps sanctions", Reuters AlertNet, 18 May 2004.
- Comment by Anthony Lake and John Prendergast (ICG), "Stopping Sudan's slow-motion genocide", *The Boston Globe*, 20 May 2004.
- Comment by William Shawcross and Emma Bonino (ICG), "Darfur's agony is world's shame", *Financial Times*, 19 May 2004.
- Comment by Gareth Evans (ICG), "Sudan's Darfur: An international responsibility to protect", *International Herald Tribune*, 14 May 2004.



ICG Africa Report N°80, *Sudan: Now or Never in Darfur*, 23 May 2004. The international community must act urgently -- and be prepared to use force if necessary -- to save hundreds of thousands of civilians whose lives are at risk because of Sudan's brutal counter insurgency in its western region of Darfur. There must be immediate, focused action, especially from the UN Security Council, to stop the killing and widespread atrocities, prevent mass starvation, reverse ethnic cleansing, and encourage a peace process. Experts warn that some 350,000 people could perish in the next nine months, mainly from famine, disease and malnutrition. More will die if the government-supported Janjaweed militias are not stopped. There is just enough time to save the hundreds of thousands of lives directly under threat, but only if the world acts very urgently. Without immediate action, "Darfur 2004" will join "Rwanda 1994" as shorthand for international shame.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

- Angola President Dos Santos visited Washington D.C., insisting "there is no war" in Angola's tiny but oil-rich Cabinda province, but sources on ground claim ongoing tension between as many as 30,000 Angolan troops and separatist FLEC-FAC forces. Opposition UNITA party walked out of talks on 2005 election 12 May, blaming government stalling. In positive move 20 May, Angola promised 45-day suspension of expulsion of illegal Congolese (DRC) diamond miners which had destabilised DR Congo/Angola relationship.
- "Luanda announces 45-day suspension of expulsions", IRIN, 20 May 2004.
 - "President denies ongoing unrest in Cabinda", IRIN, 17 May 2004.
 - "Forced repatriation leaves thousands destitute and facing human rights' abuses", Amnesty International, 14 May 2004.
 - For background, see ICG Africa Report N°61, *Angola's Choice: Reform or Regress*, 7 Apr. 2003.

- ↳ Zimbabwe Ruling Zanu-PF tightened grip on parliament 18 May with disputed victory in Lupane, Matabeleland, nearing two thirds required for constitutional change. Opposition MDC claimed voter intimidation. Parliamentary brawl between opposition MP Roy Bennett and justice minister led to government-orchestrated demonstrations in Harare, culminating in attack on MDC headquarters 20 May, unchecked by police. Press intimidation continued with brief imprisonment of *Standard* editor Bornwell Chakaodza. Concerns grew that Zimbabwe's failure to allow UN food assessment hides shortfalls intended for use as tool of political manipulation; fears Zanu-PF will bring forward March 2005 elections to October 2004 to capitalise.

 - "Zimbabwe MP defiant after brawl", BBC, 21 May 2004.
 - "Mugabe's gambit ends in stalemate", *The Observer*, 16 May 2004.
 - "Food must not be a political weapon", Amnesty International, 14 May 2004.
 - For background, see ICG Africa Report N°78, *Zimbabwe: In Search of a New Strategy*, 19 Apr. 2004.

WEST AFRICA

- ↳ Côte d'Ivoire President Gbagbo fired 3 opposition Forces Nouvelles (FN) ministers and replaced them with allies, breaking Marcoussis peace accords and leading rebel leader Guillaume Soro to withdraw recognition 24 May. Prime Minister Diarra decided to stay on, but refused to chair cabinet meetings until problem resolved. UN pledged support as 6,240 UN peacekeepers began to arrive, but Soro, alleging existence of Gbagbo-backed militants in Guinea, did not rule out return to war. UN Security Council condemned government 14 May, alleging use of torture, non-respect of human rights and complicity in "indiscriminate killing" of 120 protesters 25-26 March. Security Council called for wide UN enquiry covering events from September 2002, leading to pro-government protests against UN presence and threats to French interests. 30,000 Gbagbo supporters demonstrated against UN 31 May.

 - "30,000 demonstrate against Prime Minister and UN", IRIN, 31 May 2004.
 - "Ivory Coast rebels no longer recognise president", Reuters AlertNet, 24 May 2004.
 - "Gbagbo left isolated after outburst", IRIN, 22 May 2004.
 - "UN chides Ivoirians over killings", BBC, 14 May 2004.
 - For background, see ICG Africa Report N°72, *Côte d'Ivoire: The War is Not Yet Over*, 28 Nov. 2003.
- ↳ Guinea UNHCR chief Ruud Lubbers said would end UN support for Sierra Leonean refugees in Guinea, expecting repatriation process to be complete by 30 June. Guinean government reiterated calls 5 May for Charles Taylor to stand trial. Politically-motivated legal proceedings continue against opposition leader Sidya Toure. Mano River Union leaders meeting in Conakry 21 May issued statement supportive of Ivoirian President Gbagbo.

 - "New call for Taylor to face trial", BBC, 5 May 2004.
 - "UN to end aid for Guinea refugees", BBC, 3 May 2004.
 - For background, see ICG Africa Report N°74, *Guinea: Uncertainties at the End of an Era*, 19 Dec. 2003.

- ↳ Liberia Volatility continued, including killing of U.S. Military Assessment employee 25 May. Doubts persist over willingness of militias to disarm. UN Mission to Liberia (UNMIL) discovered "high value" arms cache near Sierra Leone border 1 May. Monrovia riot by 500 ex-combatants quelled 18 May by UN peacekeepers. UNMIL claimed 35,000 combatants have now been disarmed. UN launched recruitment process for new police force. Meanwhile UN-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone ruled against former Liberian President Charles Taylor's appeal not to be tried for war-crimes.

 - "Taylor loses war crimes appeal", BBC, 31 May 2004.
 - "Police identify four suspects linked to US civilian killing", IRIN, 26 May 2004.
 - "The promises of peace for 21,000 child soldiers", Amnesty International, 17 May 2004.
 - "Riots meet UN disarmament plan in Liberia", CNN, 17 May 2004.
 - For background, see ICG Africa Report N°75, *Rebuilding Liberia: Prospects and Perils*, 30 Jan. 2004.

- ↳ Nigeria Significant deterioration in security situation with massacre of 600 Hausa and Fulani Muslims by local Tarok Christians in Plateau town of Yelwa 2 May. Massacre sparked further violence in Plateau, Kano and Kebbi states of central and northern Nigeria leading to displacement of 57,000. President Obasanjo declared parliament-backed state of emergency in Plateau in attempt to end "near mutual genocide" 18 May; sacked state governor and legislature prompting memories of military rule. Emergency rule not yet effective in preventing further violence in Plateau villages. Government-appointed governor General Chris Alli gave militia groups until 7 June to surrender illegal weapons. Opposition marches calling Obasanjo's government "civilian dictatorship" disrupted by police 3 and 16 May.

 - "Cash payments offered for militia guns in troubled Plateau", IRIN, 24 May 2004.
 - "Nigerian state split on emergency", BBC, 20 May 2004.
 - "Soyinka promises more protests after arrest", *The Guardian*, 17 May 2004.
 - "Police shootings compound violence in Kano", Human Rights Watch, 17 May 2004.

- ↳ Sierra Leone Sierra Leone voted in local elections for first time in 32 years 24 May, but turnout did not top 40%. Both sides suggested voter intimidation and malpractice, prompting 68 separate appeals. Former Liberian President Charles Taylor lost legal attempt 31 May to avoid UN-backed war-crimes trial.

 - "First local polls in 32 years marred by low turnout", IRIN, 24 May 2004.
 - For background, see ICG Africa Report N°67, *Sierra Leone: The State of Security and Governance*, 2 Sept. 2003.

Asia / Pacific

CENTRAL ASIA

- ↳ Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev, in office since 1991, said will run for new 7-year term in 2006.

 - "Kazakhgate fires up Kazakhstan's elections campaign", Eurasianet.org, 20 May 2004.

- "Kazakhstan: In keeping with Central Asian tradition, Nazarbaev to seek additional term", RFE/RL, 17 May 2004.
- For background, see ICG Asia Report N°72, *Is Radical Islam Inevitable in Central Asia? Priorities for Engagement*, 22 Dec. 2003.

↳ Kyrgyzstan Misir Ashirkulov, long-time friend of President Akayev, dismissed by latter as head of Security Council after joining Union for Honest Elections, new opposition group. Move may be prelude to run for presidency in elections set for October 2005. Akayev has promised not to run again. Chynybek Aliev, head of government anti-corruption department, gunned down by unknown assailants in Bishkek 5 May, adding to string of high profile assassinations over last 2 months.

- "Kyrgyzstan: 'For fair elections' -- is a new political force emerging?", RFE/RL, 26 May 2004.
- "Kyrgyzstan: A losing battle", Transitions Online, 11 May 2004.
- For background, see ICG Asia Reports N°66, *Youth in Central Asia: Losing the New Generation*, 31 Oct. 2003; and N°37, *Kyrgyzstan's Political Crisis: An Exit Strategy*, 20 Aug. 2002.

↳ Tajikistan Director of UN drug agency said withdrawal of Russian troops from Tajik-Afghan border - set to take place over coming year - likely to hinder interdiction efforts. Speculation that Russians already pulling back. Still no agreement on permanent Russian base.

- "UN diplomat airs concerns at Russian border withdrawal", RFE/RL, 28 May 2004.
- For background, see ICG Asia Reports N°66, *Youth in Central Asia: Losing the New Generation*, 31 Oct. 2003; and N°51, *Tajikistan: A Roadmap for Development*, 24 Apr. 2003.



ICG Asia Briefing, *Tajikistan's Politics: Confrontation or Consolidation?* 19 May 2004. Tajikistan's hard-won peace and stability are at risk. It has been seven years since the civil war ended but underlying hostility remains. The political system is fragile, corruption is rife, and warlordism still too strong. The coming months are an important test. As parliamentary elections approach in early 2005, President Emomali Rahmonov seems intent on consolidating his power at the expense not only of the warlords but also of opposition groups, including the legal Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan (IRPT). Discontent finds expression in radical fringe Islamist groups. Tackling serious economic problems requires a robust strategy that brings technocrats into government but the growing strength of the small clique around the president makes any battle against corruption and criminality increasingly difficult. The leadership needs to reappraise policies and include all elements of society in the political process.

↳ Turkmenistan President Saparmurat Niazov rescinded decree criminalising unregistered religious activity, but move unlikely to diminish widespread and systematic persecution of religious minorities.

- "Unregistered religious activity still illegal", Forum 18, 24 May 2004.
- For background, see ICG Asia Reports N°66, *Youth in Central Asia: Losing the New Generation*, 31 Oct. 2003; and N°44, *Cracks in the Marble: Turkmenistan's Failing Dictatorship*, 17 Jan. 2003.

↳ Uzbekistan Government increasing pressure on opposition activists and international NGOs. Following last month's closure of Open Society Institute's Tashkent office, authorities warned 3 other NGOs to stop supporting unregistered opposition movements. Members of 2 such groups, Erk Democratic Party and Berlik movement, reportedly arrested in recent days.

- "Uzbekistan: Tashkent warns foreign NGOs against supporting political organisations", IRIN, 24 May 2004.
- "Concerns over Uzbek crackdown", IWPR, 21 May 2004.
- For background, see ICG Asia Reports N°72, *Is Radical Islam Inevitable in Central Asia? Priorities for Engagement*, 22 Dec. 2003; and ICG Asia Report N°76, *The Failure of Reform in Uzbekistan: Ways Forward for the International Community*, 11 Mar. 2004.

SOUTH ASIA

↳ Afghanistan Fears of spring offensive by Taliban and other insurgent groups confirmed as attacks increased in south and east. Over 30 killed, including 2 UK election workers. UN voter registration continues to be delayed by violence. 1 Norwegian, 6 U.S. soldiers killed in separate attacks in Kabul, Helmand, Zabul and Uruzgan provinces. President Karzai negotiated with leaders of former Northern Alliance over key cabinet posts, in attempt to gain support prior to elections. Main phase of UN-backed disarmament, demobilisation, reintegration program started 17 May. To date 4,000 pieces of heavy weaponry registered. Government plans to disarm 40% of estimated 100,000 militiamen by end of June ahead of landmark September elections. But March 2004 agreement between UN and Afghan defence ministry to decommission specific militia units and downsize others meeting resistance from militia leaders in Kabul and provinces. U.S. launched 24 May review of detention centres following abuse allegations.

- "Taliban step up attacks in Afghanistan", *International Herald Tribune*, 31 May 2004.
- "Afghan leader enacts elections law, strikes deal", Reuters AlertNet, 27 May 2004.
- "Warlords pose threat in Afghanistan", *The Guardian* (AP), 26 May 2004.
- "Can the U.S. ensure security for afghan elections?", RFE/RL, 17 May 2004.
- Comment by Samina Ahmed (ICG), "Warlords, Drugs, Democracy", *The World Today* (RIIA), 1 May 2004.
- For background, see ICG Asia Briefing, *Afghanistan: Elections and Security*, 30 Mar. 2004.

↳ Bangladesh Senior member of opposition Awami League (AL) party shot dead 7 May. Widespread protests and violence followed in Dhaka and Tongi, killing 2. Concerns raised by emergence of Islamist militant vigilante groups in north Bangladesh. AL blamed Islamist militants for bomb blast in northeast Muslim shrine that killed 3, injured 70, including British envoy Anwar Chowdhury.

- "Bangladesh arrests head of anti-poverty group", *International Herald Tribune*, 25 May 2004.
- "British envoy hurt in blast at shrine in Bangladesh", *The Guardian*, 22 May 2004.
- "Islamist private army rises in Bangladesh", South Asia Monitor, 19 May 2004.
- "Bangladesh MP's death fuels political unrest", South Asia Monitor, 8 May 2004.

India (non-Kashmir) Surprise victory by Sonia Gandhi's Indian National Congress over governing coalition led by PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Transfer of power completed without major incidents. Gandhi declined PM post, handing to former finance minister Manmohan Singh. Gandhi elected leader of ruling United Progressive Alliance (UPA) of 11 parties; has support from another 10. Singh, India's first non-Hindu PM (Sikh), sworn in 22 May. Coalition's "Common Minimum Programme" agenda, designed to balance growth with rural development, received mixed reception. Initial row over portfolios involving DMK party, powerful southern ally of Congress, largely resolved.

- "Coming down to earth", *The Economist*, 28 May 2004.
- "Consensus' for Indian coalition", BBC, 26 May 2004.
- "After Sonia, Singh steps in", *The Economist*, 24 May 2004.
- "India's new leader: Singh talks of peace and a war on poverty", *International Herald Tribune*, 24 May 2004.

Kashmir Separatist violence continued. Mine blast killed 33 Indian soldiers and relatives in Indian-administered Kashmir 23 May; claimed by Hizbul Mujahideen, who lost senior commander in clash in outskirts of Srinagar 11 May. Kashmir's main separatist alliance, All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC), called strike in Srinagar to mark anniversaries of killings of key Muslim cleric and separatist leader. Top APHC leader Moulvi Umar Farooq targeted by militants in grenade attack. Farooq was part of January delegation for talks with former Indian PM; new talks due in July. New India PM Manmohan Singh vowed to act against militants and cooperate with Pakistan over disputed region.

- "New Indian govt to start Kashmir talks in July", *The Daily Times*, 30 May 2004.
- "India's PM-elect focuses on Kashmir", *The Age*, 21 May 2004.
- "India in Kashmir militant pledge", BBC, 24 May 2004.
- For background, see ICG 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.

Nepal Political chaos, Maoist violence, strikes, demonstrations continued. PM Surya Bahadur Thapa resigned 7 May amid mounting calls for restoration of democracy. 5 main opposition parties met King Gyanendra; failed to agree on replacement PM, vowed to continue 'agitation' campaign. Maoist attacks worsened throughout east and west leaving over 60 rebels and security forces dead. 30 May Kathmandu bus bomb killed 1, injured 21. Maoists reportedly abducted school children and teachers, called for mass school closures.

- "Parties split on Nepal PM choice", BBC, 31 May 2004.
- "Anti-regression demonstrations continue", *The Kathmandu Post*, 24 May 2004.
- "Development and human rights are intertwined", Human Rights Watch letter to donors to Nepal, 4 May 2004.
- "Amnesty International calls for end to attacks on civilians", Amnesty International, 14 May 2004.
- For background see, ICG Asia Briefing, *Nepal: Dangerous Plans for Village Militias*, 17 Feb. 2004.

Pakistan Sectarian violence resurfaced in Karachi: separate blasts in Shiite mosques killed at least 30, 7 and 31 May; pro-Taliban Sunni cleric, Mufti Nizamuddin Shamzai, shot dead 30 May; ensuing riots killed 3; 5 killed in by-election clashes mainly between armed militants belonging to Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) - key partner in ruling coalition - and

opposition Islamic Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA); blast 26 May killed 1, injured 30, 2 days after police arrested 6 members of Harkat-ul Mujahideen al-Alami, group linked to al-Qaeda. Elsewhere, rockets fired at education minister Zobaida Jalal's residence in Quetta. Pakistan readmitted to Commonwealth despite lack of democratic reform - decision justified on grounds of democratic progress, President Musharraf's peace steps with India. Talks on nuclear confidence-building measures postponed by new Indian government. Pakistan successfully test-fired ballistic missile 29 May capable of carrying nuclear warheads. President Musharraf and new Indian government quick to confirm commitment to peaceful resolution of outstanding issues. Musharraf vowed further action against al-Qaeda in South Waziristan province.

- "Violence at Karachi Shia funerals", BBC, 1 Jun. 2004.
- "Pakistan's Musharraf talks peace with Sonia Gandhi", Reuters, 25 May 2004.
- "Pakistan cheers Commonwealth success", BBC, 22 May 2004.
- Comment by Samina Ahmed (ICG), "Non-proliferation shortcuts don't pay", *The Observer*, 12 May 2004.
- For background, see ICG Asia Report N°77, *Devolution in Pakistan: Reform or Regression?* 22 Mar. 2004.

Sri Lanka After months of political turmoil peace process remains stalled. Norwegian envoy Erik Solheim met with government, Tamil Tigers (LTTE) and President Kumaratunga, but no date set to restart talks. New government wants to discuss final settlement to end war, while LTTE want their Interim Self-Governing Authority Proposal, submitted in October 2003, to be implemented before talks begin. People's Liberation Front (JVP) opposes devolution of power to LTTE, controls over third of minority government's seats. Sporadic violence continued in northeast killing at least 15. Tamil leader Karuna still on run after splitting from main rebel group in March.

- "Norway peace envoy to leave Sri Lanka empty-handed", Reuters AlertNet, 28 May 2004.
- "Aid donors add pressure to renew Sri Lanka peace bid", Reuters AlertNet, 25 May 2004.
- "New snags hold up Sri Lanka peace talks", South Asia Monitor, 23 May 2004.

NORTH EAST ASIA

China (internal) 3 Hong Kong radio hosts resigned in as many weeks, claiming pro-Beijing forces intimidating and threatening democracy activists.

- "HK dismisses freedom of speech threat", BBC, 24 May 2004.
- "China will be the big loser in crackdown on HK", *Straits Times*, 6 May 2004.

North Korea Generals from North and South Korea had first ever meeting 26 May, agreed to meet again 3 June. Six-party working groups started 12 May, ended with agreement for further discussions. Main stumbling block remains: U.S. seeking complete, verifiable, irreversible dismantlement (CVID), while North Korea insisting on 'freeze'. International Atomic Energy Agency reportedly found evidence Libyan uranium came from North Korea; denied by Pyongyang. Japan summit 22 May focused on repatriation of abducted Japanese nationals.

- "Two Koreas vow to maintain military talks", Reuters, 26 May 2004.

- "Pyongyang raises only a small alarm", *International Herald Tribune*, 24 May 2004.
- "North Korea crisis talks end on "wholesome" note", Reuters AlertNet, 14 May 2004.
- For background, see ICG Asia Report N°61, *North Korea: A Phased Negotiation Strategy*, 1 Aug. 2003.

- Taiwan Strait Newly re-elected President Chen Shui-bian sworn in for second term 20 May. In widely-anticipated inauguration speech, took conciliatory tone but angered Beijing by refusing to acknowledge "one China" principle. Beijing had raised rhetoric in lead-up to inauguration, saying Chen's pro-independence stance risks war. Recount completed of ballots from 29 March election, which Chen won by less than 30,000 votes. Results not expected for weeks, but in any case unlikely to affect election outcome.
- "Beijing not calmed by Chen's tone", CNN, 24 May 2004.
 - "Taiwan vote recount ends", BBC, 18 May 2004.
 - "China delivers double-edged notice to Taiwan", *The Washington Post*, 17 May 2004.
 - For background, see ICG Asia Report N°75, *Taiwan Strait IV: How an Ultimate Political Settlement Might Look*, 26 Feb. 2004.

SOUTH EAST ASIA

- Indonesia Martial law lifted in Aceh, replaced with 'civil emergency'; no reduction of 40,000 troops. Military claimed it has killed 2,000 Free Aceh Movement (GAM) members and captured 3,000 since 19 May last year when offensive began. GAM released well known Indonesian cameraman 18 May, and around 150 other civilians, some of whom believed to be hostages; others had reportedly gone to GAM for protection. Ambon still tense after violence claimed 39 last month; bomb explosion 17 May, hours after separatist flags raised in Muslim area of city; explosions 23 and 25 May killed 1 injured 17. ICG's Sidney Jones to be effectively expelled 10 June with work permit not renewed, following complaints from director of State Intelligence Agency General A.M. Hendropriyono about critical ICG reports; considerable media attention generated.
- "Megawati backs ouster of terror analyst", *International Herald Tribune*, 1 June 2004.
 - "Ambon Tense After New Bombings", Laksamana Net, 24 May 2004.
 - "No peace of mind in Indonesia", *The Guardian*, 21 May 2004.
 - For background, see ICG Asia Report N°74, *Indonesia Backgrounder: Jihad in Central Sulawesi*, 3 Feb. 2004 and N°71 *Indonesia Backgrounder: A Guide to the 2004 Elections*, 18 Dec. 2003.



ICG Asia Briefing, *Indonesia: Violence Erupts Again in Ambon*, 17 May 2004. The Indonesian government should give urgent priority to identifying and prosecuting snipers responsible for dozens of deaths recently in Ambon, the site of bitter communal violence between 1999 and 2001, lest new killings disturb fragile Muslim-Christian peace as national elections approach. The shootings took place after members of the pro-independence Front for Moluccan Sovereignty (FKM) held a ceremony at the house of the group's exiled founder on 25 April 2004. Local police failure to prepare adequately for the commemorations was a factor, but the key questions are who were the snipers, and why did they open fire? ICG discounts the government's quick presumption that cont...

...cont they belonged to FKM or radical Muslim groups. The longer the snipers remain unidentified, the greater the chance of new violence in a sensitive place and a sensitive time for Indonesia's democracy.

- East Timor Dili took over responsibility for defence and internal policing 19 May. UN declared 12-month "consolidation phase" during which peacekeepers can be used in extraordinary circumstances. Security Council cut UN peacekeepers from 3000 to 700; gave 6-month mandate. Nervousness about ability of indigenous forces to handle job alone, especially in border areas where militia activity reported in recent months.
- "East Timor takes over own policing and defence", *Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 May 2004.
 - "UN council cuts peacekeepers in East Timor to 700", Reuters AlertNet, 19 May 2004.
 - For background, see "Two years on. What future for an independent East Timor?", Oxfam Community Aid Abroad Report, 20 May 2004.
- Myanmar/Burma Myanmar's first step on "road map to democracy" inaugurated 17 May. Against widespread expectations, National Convention started without release of National League for Democracy (NLD) leader Aung San Suu Kyi or deputy chairman Tin Oo, who remain under house arrest. NLD members invited but party boycotted event. Karen National Union (KNU) also refused; criticised other ethnic organisations for participating in Convention. 17 armed groups with ceasefire agreements in place with Rangoon sent delegates. Myanmar's ruling State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) continued to attract international criticism. U.S. extended sanctions for another year. Amnesty International 18 May report accused Burma's military of severe rights' abuses against Muslim minority, including eviction from ancestral land, forced labour.
- "Burma military restricts authors of constitution", *The Washington Times*, 21 May 2004.
 - "A constitutional charade", *The Economist*, 20 May 2004.
 - "The Rohingya minority: fundamental rights denied", Amnesty International, 18 May 2004.
 - For background, see ICG Asia Report N°78, *Myanmar: Sanctions, Engagement or Another Way Forward?*, 26 Apr. 2004.
- Philippines Unofficial election results put Fernando Poe Jr. behind incumbent President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, whose political allies gained control of House of Representatives and Senate. Final results delayed until mid-June. 10 May elections marred by violence and fraud accusations. Over 100 killed in 3-month run-up to poll. Senior Abbu Sayyaf leader, Usman Lidjal, arrested 21 May. 3 militants killed, 7 captured in raid to free hostages 26 May. 4 other hostages freed 24 May after ransom paid.
- "Philippines hopes for next president by June 30", Reuters, 1 Jun. 2004.
 - "Philippine troops kill 3 rebels behind kidnapping", Reuters AlertNet, 26 May 2004.
 - "Arroyo gains clout in push for economic change", *International Herald Tribune*, 25 May 2004.
 - "Manila must counter the return of Abu Sayyaf", *International Herald Tribune*, 21 May 2004.
- Thailand Blasts 16 May hit 3 Buddhist temples in Narathiwat province in restive south; policeman shot dead 7 May. Thai government agreed to talk to Muslim separatist umbrella group,

Bersatu, blamed for violence in south. Group's leader, Wan Abdul Kadir Che Man, denied movement was behind 28 April attacks, in which police and soldiers killed 108 militants, or January raid on army camp in Narathiwat, in which almost 400 guns stolen. Thai Buddhist beheaded reportedly in retaliation for arrests of Malays in connection to southern violence.

- "Thailand to talk with Muslim rebels in neutral land", Reuters AlertNet, 25 May 2004.
- "Islamic separatists challenge Bangkok", *The Washington Times*, 16 May 2004.

Europe

BALKANS

Albania PM Fatos Nano met Greek counterpart, who expressed support for Albanian efforts towards Euro-Atlantic structures. Albania hopes Stabilization and Association Agreement with EU will be signed in early 2005; clear timetable for NATO membership to be set up at June Istanbul summit.

- "The western Balkans: waiting at NATO's door", RFE/RL, 27 May 2004.
- For background, see ICG Europe Report N°153, *Pan-Albanianism: How Big a Threat to Balkan Stability?* 25 Feb. 2004.

Bosnia & Herzegovina Head of Bosnian Serb special police dismissed over bungled attempt to arrest war crimes suspect Milan Lukic. Reports emerged that Lukic, targeted in raid, was providing The Hague with information on Radovan Karadzic, who remains at large.

- "Bosnia: Serb police target Karadzic informer", IWPR, 4 May 2004.
- For background, see ICG Balkans Reports N°150, *Building Bridges in Mostar*, 20 Nov. 2004 and N°146, *Bosnia's Nationalist Governments: Paddy Ashdown and the Paradoxes of State Building*, 22 Jul. 2003.

Kosovo Head of UN Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), Harri Holkeri, resigned 25 May on grounds of ill health leaving power vacuum and growing uncertainty. Arrest of former KLA commander Sami Lushtaku for March riots provoked unrest then mass celebrations in Drenica region upon his release. Provisional Institutions of Self-Government (PISG) and trade unions demanded UNMIK resume privatisation process, suspended last year. Nature of Serbian autonomy within decentralised Kosovo continued to raise questions; PISG leaders dismissed Serbian plan for 5 autonomous Serb regions. PDK proposed Macedonia's Ohrid Agreement as decentralisation model, but other Kosovo Albanian parties denounced proposal. World Bank report acknowledged Kosovo's unresolved status preventing economic growth.

- "UN prays for big hitter to replace Holkeri", IWPR Balkan Crisis Report N°500, 27 May 2004.
- "Thick skin required", *The Economist*, 20 May 2004.
- "Radicals test the ground in Drenica", IWPR Balkan Crisis Report N°498, 20 May 2004.
- "Protecting the human rights of women and girls trafficked for forced prostitution in Kosovo", Amnesty International Report, 6 May 2004.

- For background to the March violence, see ICG Europe Report N°155, *Collapse in Kosovo*, 22 Apr. 2004.

Macedonia Former PM Branko Cervenkovski sworn in as new president 12 May, named former interior minister Hari Kostov as PM. Authorities demanded extradition from Croatia of former interior minister Ljube Boskovski, who fled after being charged in connection with March 2002 murder of 7 migrants in alleged attempt to show support for "war on terror". Former customs director Dragan Daravelski arrested in Belgrade 28 May.

- "Macedonia: Nationalists face internal revolution", IWPR Balkan Crisis Report N°498, 20 May 2004.
- "Executing the innocent?", Transitions Online, 17 May 2004.
- For background, see ICG Europe Report N°149, *Macedonia: No Time for Complacency*, 23 Oct. 2003.

Serbia & Montenegro Campaigning in full swing prior to 13 June presidential election; frontrunner Tomislav Nikolic of ultra-right wing Serbian Radical Party (SRS). 2 main challengers -- Boris Tadic and Dragan Marsicanin. Nikolic calling for resignation of PM Vojislav Kostunica and new parliamentary elections. Serbian parliament unlikely to meet 3 June World Bank deadline for budget readjustments, putting at risk renegotiated World Bank loan and assistance from EU, EBRD and IMF. Foreign Minister Draskovic survived no-confidence vote in parliament. His party, Serbian Renewal Movement, repeated threat to withdraw from government unless amendments to Criminal Procedures Act adopted. South Serbia's ethnic Albanians formed 'Consensus Council' 10 May aimed at uniting supporters of secession and pragmatists who accept integration into Serbia. Seen as pre-cursor to Albanian National Council and could alarm Serbs. Hague Tribunal sent complaint to UN Security Council over lack of cooperation from Belgrade. Dusko Jovanovic, editor of Montenegrin conservative daily *Dan*, shot dead 27 May.

- "Radicals profit from Serbia's dirty residential battle", IWPR Balkan Crisis Report N°499, 22 May 2004.
- "South Serbia Albanians seek consensus on region's future", IWPR Balkan Crisis Report N°497, 14 May 2004.
- "Hague complains to UN over Belgrade resistance", Reuters AlertNet, 4 May 2004.
- For background, see ICG Europe Report N°154, *Serbia's U-Turn*, 26 Mar. 2004.

CAUCASUS

Armenia Following weeks of protests against President Robert Kocharian - and 13 April police crackdown on demonstrators - opposition's momentum appears to have stalled. Movement's leaders announced 2-week postponement of demonstrations 21 May to reassess strategy.

- "Armenian opposition postpones push for president's resignation", RFE/RL, 24 May 2004.
- "Armenia: Investigate abuses in political crackdown", Human Rights Watch, 4 May 2004.

Azerbaijan Preliminary hearings underway in trial of 7 prisoners arrested for alleged role in inciting October post-election violence. Prisoners said court biased and boycotted hearings. Opposition Musavat party activist Seyidali Mamedov arrested 2 May - also on charges related to October riots.

- "Elite feud intensifies", IWPR, 27 May 2004.



ICG Europe Report N°156, [Azerbaijan: Turning Over a New Leaf?](#), 13 May 2004. New President Ilham Aliyev needs to embrace the democratic process and dismantle autocratic rule. Failure to do so would lead to instability in a country that already has an unsettled conflict (Nagorno-Karabakh) with a neighbour. That instability could spill into the rest of the region and tempt strong neighbours to fill a power vacuum. Strategic interests related to oil muted expressions of concern about last October's fraud-filled election, which saw Ilham take over from his dying, autocratic father. However, if the regime and the international community maintain a disregard for democracy, it will likely exacerbate the long-term problems. Democratic change will not be simple or quick; the young president's best chance is to nurture a new generation of technocratic professionals while steadily dismantling the corrupt patronage network that strangles politics and keeps the economy overly dependent on oil.

- Georgia Crisis with Ajara resolved peacefully 6 May with resignation and departure for Moscow of Aslan Abashidze, region's authoritarian leader. After weeks of mounting tension between Abashidze and Georgian president Mikheil Saakashvili, crisis came to head 2 May as 3 bridges linking Ajara to rest of country blown up on Abashidze's orders; local support for Abashidze fell away; Russia played constructive role. Saakashvili set 20 June date for new elections in Ajara, vowed to preserve region's autonomy. Attention now shifting to Georgia's other breakaway republics, South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Officials there concerned Saakashvili will move to bring both regions under Tbilisi's control. Latter quoted as saying unification would take 2 years for Abkhazia, significantly less for South Ossetia. Tensions briefly rose as Georgian troops deployed to village of Tkviavi, 10km from Ossetian capital Tskhinvali, but troops quickly withdrawn.

 - ["Georgia: Saakashvili offers to open reunification talks with Abkhazia, South Ossetia"](#), RFE/RL, 26 May 2004.
 - ["Georgia scores tactical victory in Adjara...raising the question: who will be next?"](#), RFE/RL, 11 May 2004.
 - ["Georgia takes control in Ajara"](#), BBC, 8 May 2004.
 - For background, see ICG Europe Report N°151, [Georgia: What Now?](#), 3 Dec. 2003.
- Nagorno-Karabakh (Azerbaijan) Tenth anniversary of ceasefire between Azerbaijani and Armenian forces passed 12 May, with solution as distant as ever.

 - Comment by Damien Helly and Nicholas Whyte (ICG), ["Bringing peace to EU's 'new neighbours'"](#), *European Voice*, 19 May 2004.
 - ["Karabakh: Ceasefire's troubled anniversary"](#), IWPR, 12 May 2004.
 - See also ICG Europe Report N°156, [Azerbaijan: Turning Over a New Leaf?](#), 13 May 2004.

EASTERN EUROPE

- Chechnya (Russia) Pro-Kremlin Chechen president Akhmad Kadyrov assassinated 9 May in bomb attack at Grozny stadium. Radical field commander Shamil Basayev claimed responsibility, though conspiracy theories rife. New elections set for 29 August. PM Sergei Abramov acting as head of state - not expected to run in elections. Kadyrov's 27-year-old son and chief of security forces, Ramzan, named deputy PM, but said will not

contest constitutional age limit prohibiting presidential candidates under 30.

- ["Chechens worried about future leader"](#), IWPR, 19 May 2004.
- ["Akhmad Kadyrov"](#), *The Economist*, 19 May 2004.
- ["Chechnya without Kadyrov"](#), IWPR, 11 May 2004.

- Moldova No progress made in second round of negotiations over separatist Transdnistria region 25-26 May. Next round scheduled for 21-22 June.

 - For background, see ICG Europe Report N°147, [Moldova: No Quick Fix](#), 12 Aug. 2003.

WESTERN EUROPE/MEDITERRANEAN

- Basque region (Spain) Banned Basque separatist party Batasuna reportedly in talks with mainstream Basque politicians on possible ceasefire by ETA separatists.

 - ["Basque politicians in ETA talks – report"](#), Reuters, 24 May 2004.
- Cyprus U.S. said now recognised northern Cyprus PM Mehmet Ali Talat - not Rauf Denkash - as leader of Turkish Cypriots. Talat had supported UN Secretary General Annan's peace plan for divided island.

 - ["US sees Talat as Turkish-Cyprus head"](#), *The Washington Times*, 26 May 2004.
- Northern Ireland (UK) Feud between loyalist groups reportedly ended 30 May. Loyalist Volunteer Force (LVF) leading member was murdered 18 May, days after bullets sprayed Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) home in east Belfast. PMs Tony Blair and Bertie Ahern said governments had established basis for road map to restore devolved power by October. Democratic Unionist party (DUP) leader Ian Paisley vowed not to participate in power-sharing government with Sinn Fein without complete IRA disarmament. Sinn Fein's national chairman Mitchell McLaughlin called for IRA to decommission in run-up to 10 June European elections.

 - ["Efforts to end loyalist feud"](#), BBC, 26 May 2004.
 - ["Triumphant Paisley vows to defeat Ulster roadmap"](#), *The Guardian*, 10 May 2004.
 - For background, see ICG Europe Briefing, [Monitoring the Northern Ireland Ceasefires: Lessons from the Balkans](#), 23 Jan. 2004.

- Turkey Violence resurfaced in southeast. At least 12 rebels, 8 security personnel killed in clashes or landmine blasts. Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), now known as Kongra-Gel (Kurdistan People's Congress), declared end to unilateral ceasefire after recent violence. British PM Tony Blair visited Ankara 17 May, discussed security, reforms and EU membership.

 - ["Kurds move to end Turkish truce"](#), BBC, 29 May 2004.

Latin America /Caribbean

- Bolivia Future of President Mesa remains inextricably linked to controversial plans to export Bolivian gas: referendum on issue set for 18 July. Situation in capital La Paz extremely volatile with almost daily marches, demonstrations.

- ["Bolivia sets out gas referendum"](#), BBC, 20 May 2004.
- For background see ["Indigenous movements and democracy in the Andean countries"](#), *The Economist*, 19 Feb. 2004.

↪ Colombia Wave of attacks in north killed 21, wounded over 100 as leftist FARC rebels marked 40th anniversary. Senior FARC commander Ricardo Palmira sentenced to 35 years in prison for kidnapping, rebellion. Suspected paramilitaries killed 11 alleged collaborators with leftist rebels. Leaders of AUC paramilitary group agreed to remain in rural area with OAS observers while negotiations continue with government.

- ["Colombian troops on alert as rebel birthday looms"](#), Reuters AlertNet, 25 May 2004.
- ["Bandits or politicians?"](#), *The Economist*, 20 May 2004.
- For background, see ICG Latin America Report N°6, [Colombia: President Uribe's Democratic Security Policy](#), 13 Nov. 2003 and Briefing, [Hostages for Prisoners: A Way to Peace in Colombia?](#), 8 Mar. 2004.

↪ Dominican Republic Former president Leonel Fernandez scored resounding victory over incumbent, Hipolito Mejia, in 16 May election, receiving 57% of votes. Election seen as largely fair, but voting marred by polling station shoot-out between supporters of Fernandez and Mejia, which left 3 dead. Fernandez must now move to reverse country's economic slide, made more difficult by devastating floods leaving hundreds dead and at least 13,000 homeless.

- ["Villages at risk from more floods"](#), BBC, 31 May 2004.
- ["Horns blaring, Dominicans celebrate Fernandez win"](#), Reuters AlertNet, 17 May 2004.
- ["Three killed in Dominican Republic election violence"](#), CNN, 17 May 2004.

↪ Ecuador Andean (Peru, Colombia, Ecuador) free trade talks with U.S. began 18 May amid anti-globalisation protests. Opposition and indigenous Pachakutik movement called for President Gutierrez's resignation.

- For background, see ["Indigenous movements and democracy in the Andean countries"](#), *The Economist*, 19 Feb. 2004.

↪ Haiti UN peacekeeping mission set to take over from U.S.-led multinational force 1 June. Headed by Brazil, with contributions from Chile, Argentina, and 10 other countries, force to include over 8,000 troops and military police. Deployment intended to help disarm population, reform police, and establish rule of law, but mission complicated by widespread crime and gang-related violence, along with devastating flooding that has left hundreds dead. Police broke up large 18 May rally by supporters of ousted president Jean-Bertrand Aristide, who claim persecution by interim government. Aristide arrived South Africa 31 May from Jamaica; said will stay until able to return to Haiti.

- ["Villages at risk from more floods"](#), BBC, 31 May 2004.
- ["Brazil to send 1,200 troops to Haiti"](#), CNN, 20 May 2004.
- ["Police break up pro-Aristide rally in Haiti"](#), Reuters AlertNet, 18 May 2004.


↪ Peru Unrest in southern town of Ilave subsided after deal with government. Security forces to be reduced, community grievances addressed. Interior Minister Rospigliosi forced to resign after failure to end 3 weeks of violence, including lynching of mayor. Coca growers continued to demonstrate, clash with police in Tingo Maria. Anti-government strike in

Cusco 27 May killed 2 when bus hit road block set up by demonstrators. Protests continued in Lima prompting President Toledo to miss EU-Latin America leaders summit. President Toledo's approval rating reportedly down to 6%. Peru pressed Japan for response to extradition request for former President Fujimori.

- ["Protests prompt Toledo to skip EU-Latam summit"](#), Reuters AlertNet, 27 May 2004.
- ["Peru peasants agree to end strikes, protests"](#), Reuters AlertNet, 26 May, 2004
- ["Peru coca farmers stage angry protest"](#), CNN, 20 May 2004.

↪ Venezuela Opposition claims sufficient signatures revalidated to secure 2.43 million required for recall referendum of President Hugo Chavez; awaiting National Electoral Commission (CNE) determination 4 June: significant unrest likely whichever way decision goes. Chavez supporters claim fraud and failure of revalidation. Over 100 suspected Colombian paramilitaries accused by government of assassination plot arrested, along with ex-Venezuelan military officers. Confusion surrounds affair. Plot denounced by opposition, seen by latter as government attempt to divert attention from referendum issue.

- ["Venezuela: Both sides claim win"](#), CNN (AP), 31 May 2004.
- ["Leftwing dictator or saviour of the poor: Chávez faces new challenge to his rule"](#), *The Guardian*, 25 May 2004.



ICG Latin America Briefing, [Venezuela: Headed Toward Civil War?](#), 10 May 2004. Venezuela's democratic institutions are threatened with collapse, and the country faces possible civil war. There is, however, a chance to resolve peacefully the deep political crisis facing the world's fifth-largest oil exporter. Given the country's extreme polarisation, democrats on both sides ought to pursue the recall referendum option as the one constitutional avenue for measuring public antipathy during the life of the government. If both the government and the opposition work within the framework of the constitution and the international community plays an even more active role, Venezuela may yet escape the worst. If the Chavez administration interferes with the compromise procedure for validating signatures on the recall petition at the end of May or otherwise deadlocks the process, there is potential for civil strife and substantial loss of human life.

Middle East /North Africa

EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

↪ Israel/Occupied Territories Israeli army, citing need to flush out militants and destroy tunnels used to transport arms, launched massive incursion into Gaza Strip, leaving over 40 dead and 2,000 homeless. Raid prompted strong international criticism and UN Security Council resolution condemning Israel. Israeli PM Ariel Sharon presented amended Gaza pullout plan to cabinet 30 May for approval, but after heated debate, adjourned meeting without decision. New plan calls for phased military withdrawal and evacuation of 21 Jewish settlements in Gaza. Likud party had rejected earlier draft in 2 May referendum. Palestinian PM Ahmed Qurei gave cautious endorsement to plan, saying withdrawal was opportunity for movement towards wider peace agreement. Egyptian

intelligence chief Omar Suleiman said 24 May Cairo prepared to play security role in Gaza. Sharon given new political life with reports that Israeli attorney general will not indict him on corruption charges. Senior Hamas leader killed in Israeli airstrike 30 May.

- "Decision delayed on Sharon's withdrawal plan", CNN, 30 May 2004.
- "Sharon won't be indicted, reports say", *International Herald Tribune*, 26 May 2004.
- "Gaza raids 'left 2,000 homeless'", BBC, 25 May 2004.
- "The storm before the calm?", *The Economist*, 24 May 2004.
- For background, see ICG Middle East Report N°25, *Identity Crisis: Israel and Its Arab Citizens*, 4 Mar. 2004 and N°22 *Palestinian Refugees and the Politics of Peacemaking*, 5 Feb. 2004.

↳ Jordan On visit to Washington, King Abdullah secured assurances from President Bush that U.S. would not prejudice outcome of final negotiations between Israel and Palestinians. In April, Bush had said Israel could not be expected to give up all settlements or accept return of Palestinian refugees, sparking outrage in Arab world and causing Abdullah to abruptly cancel earlier trip.

- "Bush to Abdullah: US won't prejudice Mideast deal", Reuters AlertNet, 7 May 2004.
- For background, see ICG Middle East Briefing, *The Challenge of Political Reform: Jordanian Democratisation and Regional Instability*, 8 Oct. 2003.

↳ Lebanon Soldiers in Beirut killed 5 and injured dozens during protests against high fuel prices and poor state of economy. Unrest worst in decade. Series of clashes along Israeli border 5-7 May, as Hizbollah guerrillas fired shells into northern Israel following Israeli overflights of Lebanese territory. Violence left 1 Israeli soldier dead and 5 wounded. Negotiations on second round of German-mediated prisoner exchange reportedly nearing breakthrough.

- "Five dead in Lebanon protests", BBC, 27 May 2004.
- "Hizbollah kills Israeli soldier in border area", Reuters Alertnet, 7 May 2004.
- For background, see ICG Middle East Briefing, *Hizbollah: Rebel Without a Cause?*, 30 Jul. 2003.

↳ Syria In long-anticipated and largely symbolic move, U.S. imposed economic sanctions on Syria 11 May. Meanwhile, EU agreed wording of landmark trade accord with Damascus; includes clause with WMD benchmarks. Authorities said group of 4 Syrian radical Islamists responsible for 27 April bombing in diplomatic district of Damascus.

- "Syria blames Islamists for bomb", BBC, 15 May 2004.
- "Bush imposes economic sanctions on Syria", Reuters AlertNet, 12 May 2004.
- For background, see ICG 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 20 protesters injured in clashes with police during demonstrations against U.S. policies in Iraq. King said shared protesters' anger, sacked interior minister.

- "Bahrain interior minister sacked", BBC, 22 May 2004.

↳ Iran Tehran submitted second "complete" dossier to International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) 21 May, stating, as with first submission October 2003, that dossier was full account of its past and present nuclear programs. But report to be submitted by IAEA president Mohammed ElBaradei says numerous questions remain - progress unlikely before IAEA's 14 June board meeting. Tehran saw large demonstrations protesting U.S. actions in Iraq, especially in Shiite holy cities of Najaf and Karbala.

- "The trail to Tehran", *The Guardian*, 26 May 2004.
- "UN nuke report on Iran seen full of open questions", Reuters AlertNet, 25 May 2004.
- For background, see ICG Middle East Report N°18, *Dealing with Iran's Nuclear Program*, 27 Oct. 2003 and ICG Middle East Briefing, *Iran: Discontent and Disarray*, 15 Oct. 2003.

↳ Iraq U.S. and Britain tabled draft UN Security Council resolution calling for transfer of full sovereignty to Iraq on 30 June and authorising U.S.-led force to remain for initial 1-year period. Some countries, including France and Germany, concerned by absence of date for Coalition's withdrawal and lack of detail on status and powers of U.S.-led forces vis-a-vis Iraqi government. Similar concerns raised by members of Interim Governing Council (IGC). Resolution unlikely to be finalised before report of UN special envoy Lakhdar Brahimi, expected early June. Process of selecting new interim government proceeding; IGC candidates Ayad Allawi and Ghazi al-Yawer designated PM and president, respectively. Situation on ground remains grim, with violence continuing in several areas. Izzadine Saleem, head of IGC, killed in Baghdad suicide attack 17 May. Fighting continued between Coalition forces and followers of radical Shiite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr, leaving dozens of insurgents dead and damaging Imam Ali Mosque, Shiites' holiest shrine. Sporadic fighting followed 27 May ceasefire. U.S. and Iraqi troops raided offices of IGC member Ahmed Chalabi 20 May, suggesting he passed secrets to Iran. Raid marked sea-change in Washington's support for Chalabi, who had been Pentagon's favourite to lead country. Support for Coalition continued to fall with publication of new photos depicting abuse in Abu Ghraib prison. 544 Coalition soldiers, including 487 Americans, and thousands of Iraqis killed by hostile fire since declared end of combat operations on 1 May 2003.

- "Allawi takes on the job from hell", *The Economist*, 31 May 2004.
- "Allies offer the UN draft plan on Iraq", *International Herald Tribune*, 25 May 2004.
- "Time for an exit", *Al-Ahram Weekly*, 20 May 2004.
- "Iraq council leader is slain", *International Herald Tribune*, 18 May 2004.
- For background, see ICG Middle East Report N°27, *Iraq's Transition: On a Knife Edge*, 27 Apr. 2004; and ICG Middle East Report N°26, *Iraq's Kurds: Toward an Historic Compromise?*, 8 Apr. 2004.

↳ Saudi Arabia 4 suspected al-Qaeda militants attacked 2 oil industry compounds in eastern city of Khobar 29 May, killing 22. 3 of 4 gunmen allowed to escape after threatening to kill hostages. Attack was second in month on kingdom's oil interests, sparking instability fears - and higher prices - in world oil markets.

- "Saudi: Gunmen allowed to escape", CNN, 31 May 2004.
- "Urgent turn", *Al-Ahram Weekly*, 6 May 2004.



NORTH AFRICA

Algeria Chadian MDJT rebels claimed to hold Algerian-born Amari Saifi, leader of radical Salafist Islamic GSPC organisation. Saifi's al-Qaeda affiliated organisation opposes Algeria's secular government; was responsible for 2003 kidnapping of 32 European tourists. GSPC killed 2 Algerian soldiers 18 May and wounded 13 others in roadside explosion at Setif, eastern Algeria.

- "Algerian terrorist caught", CNN, 18 May 2004.
- "New front in terror war: sub-Saharan Africa", *International Herald Tribune*, 11 May 2004.
- For background, see ICG Middle East/North Africa Briefing, *Islamism in North Africa I: The Legacies of History*, 20 Apr. 2004 and Report N°15, *Algeria: Unrest and Impasse in Kabylia*, 10 June 2003.

Egypt President Mubarak held talks with Palestinian PM on proposed Israeli withdrawal from Gaza, strongly criticising recent Israeli army incursions into Rafah near Egyptian border. Egyptian security chief suggested Egypt could play security role in evacuated Gaza. Domestically, 54 members of Muslim Brotherhood arrested 18 May on treason charges. Chances of early repeal of Egypt's 1981 Emergency Law faded after state-backed National Council for Human Rights failed to give support.

- "Mubarak urges unconditional ME talks", *The Washington Times*, 27 May 2004
- "Picking up the pieces", *Al-Ahram Weekly*, 20 May 2004.
- For background, see ICG Middle East and North Africa Briefings, *Islamism in North Africa: Legacies of History* and *Egypt's Opportunity*, 20 Apr. 2004 and *The Challenge of Political Reform: Egypt after the Iraq War*, 30 Sept. 2003.

Libya U.S. undersecretary of state for arms control John Bolton termed Muammar Qaddafi's decision to ban military trade with Iran, North Korea and Syria an "important step forward". IAEA reported evidence Libya received 2 tons of uranium from North Korea in 2001; denied by North Korea. IAEA said questions remained on Libya's nuclear program. U.S. State Department kept Libya on list of non-cooperative states on terrorism, but hinted arms embargo could be eased.

- "Western agents let nuclear equipment slip past to Libya", *The Guardian*, 29 May 2004.
- "Libya to limit trade in weapons", BBC, 13 May 2004.
- "Why Qaddafi turned his back on terror", *International Herald Tribune*, 5 May 2004.

Morocco Police arrested 3 terror suspects after Casablanca shoot-out, adding to 2,000 arrested on terrorist charges since 2003 Casablanca bombings. King Mohammed VI marked their anniversary 16 May by forming Ulema religious council to "shield" Moroccan Islam from extremism. Further Spanish arrests 10 May took number of Moroccans arrested in connection with Madrid bombings to 15.

- "Madrid and Rabat sign terror deal", BBC, 20 May 2004.
- "2,000 held over Morocco bombs", BBC, 12 May 2004.
- For background, see ICG Middle East/North Africa Briefing, *Islamism in North Africa I: The Legacies of History*, 20 Apr. 2004.

Western Sahara No movement towards acceptance of Baker peace plan rejected by Morocco. Kofi Annan threatened possible UN pull-out if problem not resolved.

- "13 years and \$600 million later, peace nowhere in sight", IRIN, 28 May 2004.

"ICG tells power what it thinks and advocates with both passion and effectiveness. It is a continuous source of ideas and insights for governments, parliaments, international institutions, the media and fellow NGOs. In short, ICG is an organization that matters..."

Secretary of State Colin L. Powell, 10 October 2003



Advocacy Offices

Brussels

icgbrussels@crisisweb.org +32 2 502 9038

Washington

icg washington@crisisweb.org +1 202 785 1601

New York

icgny@crisisweb.org +1 212 813 0820

Field Offices

ICG has regional or local field offices in Amman (icgamman@crisisweb.org), Belgrade (icgserbia@crisisweb.org), Bogota (icgbogota@crisisweb.org), Cairo (icgcairo@crisisweb.org), Dakar (icgdakar@crisisweb.org), Dushanbe (icgdushanbe@crisisweb.org), Islamabad (icgislamabad@crisisweb.org), Jakarta (icgjakarta@crisisweb.org), Kabul (icg kabul@crisisweb.org), Nairobi (icgnairobi@crisisweb.org), Osh (icgosh@crisisweb.org), Pretoria (icgpretoria@crisisweb.org), Pristina (icgpristina@crisisweb.org), Quito (icgquito@crisisweb.org), Sarajevo (icgsarajevo@crisisweb.org), Skopje (icgskopje@crisisweb.org) and Tbilisi (icgtbilisi@crisisweb.org); and a field presence (with analysts operating from regional offices) in Albania, Algeria, Angola, Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Guinea, Iran, Iraq, Israel/Occupied Territories, Kashmir, Kazakhstan, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Moldova, Morocco, Myanmar/Burma, Nepal, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Uzbekistan, Yemen and Zimbabwe.