

CrisisWatch

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



1 May 2004, N°9

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CrisisWatch:

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

April 2004 Trends



Deteriorated Situations

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Improved Situations

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May 2004 Watchlist



Conflict Risk Alert

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Conflict Resolution Opportunity

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 Under heavy pressure from army, Hutu FNL rebel group offered 22 April to cease attacks on government forces and enter into negotiations, hoping for international community support. But government later clashed with FNL, with at least 10 killed. Clashes earlier in month between FNL and government troops killed at least 21 and caused some 27,000 to flee fighting near capital, Bujumbura. Significant number of parliamentary deputies defected from largest political party Frodebu to party of former Hutu rebel group FDD. Refugees returning in increasing numbers. UN Secretary General Kofi Annan began planning for UN peacekeeping mission, but Security Council yet to formally approve. Rwandan troops briefly entered Burundi 22 April to chase DRC-based Hutu rebels.

- "Burundi clash kills 10 in setback for poll hopes", *San Diego Union Tribune*, 28 Apr. 2004.
- "Rwanda troops enter Burundi to chase rebels", Reuters AlertNet, 24 Apr. 2004.
- "Burundi ex-rebels take on govt", News24.com, 20 Apr. 2004.
- "Special report on repatriation of Burundian refugees", IRIN, 15 Apr. 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).



Democratic Republic of Congo Rwandan troops reportedly crossed into DRC 21 April in breach of peace agreement, and forced patrol of UN peacekeepers to return to base. UN peacekeeping mission (MONUC) began deploying in troubled Kivus region, with full deployment expected by end of May. Kivus still subject to widespread ethnic violence. At least 61 killed in clashes late April in South Kivu between Rwandan Hutu rebels and DRC troops. President Kabila asked International Criminal Court prosecutor, Luis Moreno Ocampo, to investigate possible war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide: investigation could commence later this year.

- "Congolese officials: dozens killed in fighting", CNN, 26 Apr. 2004.
- "UN: Rwanda troops in Congo stop peacekeepers", CNN, 25 Apr. 2004.
- "Congo asks for war crimes probe", CNN, 19 Apr. 2004.
- "Congo still searching for postwar order", *The Guardian*, 15 Apr. 2004.
- "Deployment of UN Kivu Brigade under way", IRIN, 15 Apr. 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 troops carried out incursions into Burundi and, reportedly, DR Congo in pursuit of Hutu rebels in breach of peace agreement with DRC; government later asked UN to protect its border with DRC. 7 April marked 10th anniversary of commencement of Rwanda genocide, during which estimated 800,000 Tutsis and Hutu moderates slaughtered over 100 days by Hutu extremists. Dignitaries from around world

commemorated anniversary with Rwandan citizens in ceremony in capital, Kigali.

- "Rwanda troops enter Burundi to chase rebels", Reuters AlertNet, 24 Apr. 2004.
- Comment by Gareth Evans and Stephen Ellis (ICG) "The Rwandan Genocide: Memory Is Not Enough", *Le Monde*, 23 Apr. 2004 (in French, English translation available [here](#)).
- "Silence as Rwanda recalls genocide", CNN, 7 Apr. 2004.
- "Rwanda: the enduring legacy of the genocide and war", Amnesty International report, 6 Apr. 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 President Museveni offered ceasefire to Lords Resistance Army (LRA) rebels 15 April if they agreed to peace talks - but said military strikes against LRA would continue until such agreement. Museveni retired from army 6 April, 18 years after his National Resistance Army seized power.

- "Official rejects ICG report on northern crisis", IRIN, 21 Apr. 2004.
- "Museveni offers to negotiate with LRA rebels", IRIN, 16 Apr. 2004.
- Comment by Jim Terrie (ICG), "Juvenile slaughter machine", *The Observer*, 13 Apr. 2004.
- Comment by Nick Grono and Jim Terrie (ICG), "Trying times in Uganda", *The Diplomat*, 5 Apr. 2004.



ICG Africa Report N°77, *Northern Uganda: Understanding and Solving the Conflict*, 14 April 2004. To bring security and democracy to northern Uganda, the government needs a new strategy.

The situation demands a comprehensive approach, in which greater political action and intensified humanitarian relief complement military measures against the murky and murderous Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). The UN calls the eighteen-year civil war, which has displaced 1.5 million people, one of the world's worst humanitarian disasters. Debate about whether to aim for a military or negotiated solution disguises the fact that elements of both are required. Negotiation with the LRA would be hard because it has no obvious political objective, but the army alone cannot resolve the conflict. Uganda's government needs to take the first step and then work hard at demonstrating it wants genuine dialogue. The international community, which has been central to the conflict, must also be central to any resolution.



ICG Issues Report N°3, *HIV/AIDS as a Security Issue in Africa: Lessons from Uganda*, 16 April 2004. The HIV/AIDS pandemic and Africa's wars are mutually re-enforcing disasters that seriously

undermine efforts to advance development and democracy on the continent. The international community has failed to study sufficiently how AIDS and conflict feed off each other and to make the AIDS crisis an integral component of peace operations. One in four African countries presently suffers the effects of armed conflict, and some 2.5 million Africans are likely to die of AIDS this year. Although the prevalence *cont*

cont HIV/AIDS is two to five times higher among soldiers than civilians, armed forces often are not incorporated into either national or international AIDS programs. Uganda, which has done well with prevention, care and treatment and integrated its army into the national AIDS program, offers a brighter if not perfect model. More AIDS awareness is needed in UN peacekeeping operations.

HORN OF AFRICA

↳ Ethiopia/Eritrea No progress in dispute over demarcation of border, with Eritrea continuing to refuse to meet UN special envoy Lloyd Axworthy.

- "Freedom, a call away?", *The Washington Post*, 20 Apr. 2004.
- "Amid winds of a new war, Eritreans face a dilemma", *The Boston Globe*, 11 Apr. 2004.
- "Humanitarian envoy ends regional visit", IRIN, 6 Apr. 2004.
- "Interview with Yemane Gebremeskel, Director of the President's Office", IRIN, 1 Apr. 2004.
- For background see, ICG Africa Report N°68, *Ethiopia and Eritrea: War or Peace?*, 24 Sept. 2003.

↳ Somalia Fitful peace talks now set to resume 6 May after numerous delays and refusals by some faction leaders to attend.

- "Peace talks set to resume on 6 May", IRIN, 26 Apr. 2004.
- For background, see ICG Africa Reports N°66, *Somaliand: Democratisation and Its Discontents*, 28 Jul. 2003; and N°59, *Negotiating a Blueprint for Peace in Somalia*, 6 Mar. 2003.

↳ Sudan Reflecting rising international concern about humanitarian crisis in western Sudan, President Bush and UN Secretary General Annan called on government to end attacks on civilians in Darfur, with Annan claiming attacks were ethnic cleansing. This claim echoed by USAID Administrator Andrew Natsios. UN Commission on Human Rights passed resolution weakly criticising Sudan. UN team in Darfur late April on fact-finding mission. Government and main western rebel groups agreed 45-day humanitarian ceasefire 8 April, met in Chad 20 April for peace talks; no progress in talks so far. UN says more than 1 million civilians now displaced in Darfur, and leaked UN report claimed Arab militias conducting "reign of terror" against black civilians. Chadian troops deployed on Sudan border late April to protect refugees and Chadian citizens from militias. Meanwhile, peace talks with southern rebels re civil war resumed in Kenya 28 April, in attempt to resolve outstanding issues of power-sharing and application of Sharia law in capital, Khartoum. Parties extended existing ceasefire 1 month from 30 April.

- "Stalling in Sudan . . ." and ". . . And in Geneva", *Washington Post* editorials, 26 Apr. 2004.
- "Sudan peace talks resume", CNN, 28 Apr. 2004.
- "On the road to nowhere", *Newsweek*, 3 May 2004.
- "Sudan's ethnic strife spurs Bush, Annan to voice worry", *San Francisco Chronicle*, 8 Apr. 2004.
- For background, see ICG Africa Report N°76, *Darfur Rising: Sudan's New Crisis*, 25 Mar. 2004.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

↳ Angola Security forces raping and killing illegal Congolese diamond miners and families, with tens of thousands expelled, according to UN Office for the Coordination of

Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). Expelled miners later attacked Angolan refugees in DR Congo. In positive move towards greater transparency, government agreed to share some oil revenue information with IMF.

- "Greater transparency in oil revenues welcomed", IRIN, 28 Apr. 2004.
- "Angola: Congolese migrants face brutal body searches", Human Rights Watch statement, 23 Apr. 2004.
- "Expelled mine workers attack Angolan refugees", IRIN, 23 Apr. 2004.
- "UN: Crisis looms as Angola expels Congo miners", CNN, 22 Apr. 2004.
- For background, see ICG Africa Report N°61, *Angola's Choice: Reform or Regress*, 7 Apr. 2003.

↳ Zimbabwe President Mugabe celebrated 24th anniversary of independence from Britain by vowing land reform would continue, and pledging never to rejoin Commonwealth. Finance Minister Chris Kuruneru arrested 24 April on charges of corruption and illegal dealings in foreign currency.

- "Mugabe minister accused of illegal dealings", *The Guardian*, 26 Apr. 2004.
- "Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe vows to continue land reform policy", *San Francisco Chronicle*, 19 Apr. 2004.
- For background, see ICG Africa Briefing, *Decision Time in Zimbabwe*, 8 Jul. 2003.



ICG Africa Report N°78, *Zimbabwe: In Search of a New Strategy*, 19 April 2004. Getting Zimbabwe's

March 2005 elections right may be the country's last chance to avoid becoming a failed state. The international community must act now to ensure that the parliamentary elections are free and fair, in line with the Southern African Development Community's own norms and standards. Zimbabwe's crisis has deepened over the first quarter of 2004. The ruling ZANU-PF has further isolated itself internationally and demonstrated its reliance on repression and force to maintain control. The economy is contracting at a record rate. To date, the international response to Zimbabwe's tragedy has been inadequate and ineffectual. If the electoral process is badly compromised, and state violence continues to be deployed against the opposition, Zimbabwe will reach the point of no return.

WEST AFRICA

↳ Côte d'Ivoire UN to investigate claims that hundreds killed during and after March opposition protests. Opposition leaders agreed to resume dialogue with President Gbagbo 17 April on stalled peace talks provided preconditions met - but little progress likely in short term, with both sides holding large rallies in Abidjan 24-25 April, and rebel leader Guillaume Soro talking of northern secession. UN commenced deployment of peacekeepers by "rehatting" 1,400 already deployed West African troops as UN peacekeepers; 6,200 to be deployed by July.

- "Ivory Coast rebels mull secession", BBC, 27 Apr. 2004.
- "No sign of break to political impasse", IRIN, 26 Apr. 2004.
- Article by Stephen Ellis and Nick Grono (ICG), "Now it's happening in the Ivory Coast", *International Herald Tribune*, 9 Apr. 2004.
- "UN takes over Ivory Coast peacekeeping", CNN, 6 Apr. 2004.

- For background see ICG Africa Report N°72, *Côte d'Ivoire: The War is Not Yet Over*, 28 Nov. 2003.

Guinea Security minister claimed 22 April plot to kill President Conte foiled; opposition leader and members arrested in connection with alleged plot - opposition said claim "based on lies". Earlier, 2 opposition leaders barred from travelling overseas amid crackdown on opposition. Food price rises causing concern among population. NGO, International Federation for Human Rights, released report criticising "caricature of democracy" in Guinea, claiming basic rights not respected. Prime Minister Francois Fall resigned 30 April over differences with Conte.

- "Guinea PM quits after 3 months", News24.com, 30 Apr. 2004.
- "Charges over Guinea 'coup plot'", BBC, 28 Apr. 2004.
- "Guinea leaders barred from travel", BBC, 12 Apr. 2004.
- "Rights group slams 'caricature of democracy'", 14 Apr. 2004.
- For background, see ICG Africa Report N°74, *Guinea: Uncertainties at the End of an Era*, 19 Dec. 2003.

Liberia UN resumed disarmament and reintegration process 15 April after 2-month information campaign. Process progressing well, with UN stating some 19,000 former combatants reported for demobilisation, although only 11,000 weapons handed in - leading to concerns that some former fighters may be stockpiling weapons. UN hopes to disarm 40,000 fighters.

- "Half of Liberian fighters disarm", BBC, 30 Apr. 2004.
- "Fewer than half those disarmed hand in weapons", IRIN, 21 Apr. 2004.
- For background, see ICG Africa Report N°75, *Rebuilding Liberia: Prospects and Perils*, 30 Jan. 2004.

Nigeria Increasing unrest in Niger Delta and worsening sectarian violence in centre and north. Seven oil workers and guards, including 2 U.S. workers, killed in ambush in Delta 23 April by Ijaw militants. Five Ijaw assailants killed 17 April trying to storm oil facility. Government responded by launching military offensive against militants. Protesters forced another oil facility to close briefly 14 April. More than 100 believed killed in sectarian violence between Muslims and Christians in remote central villages 27 April, with thousands forced to flee. In north, Muslims razed several Christian churches and police station early April.

- "100 dead in Nigeria fighting", CNN, 30 Apr. 2004.
- "Troops hunting oil workers' killers meeting militia resistance", IRIN, 29 Apr. 2004.
- "Nigeria's other export", *The Economist*, 22 Apr. 2004.
- "Police: clash in Nigeria's oil delta", CNN, 21 Apr. 2004.
- "Tension in Kaduna as irate Muslims burn churches, police station", IRIN, 6 Apr. 2004.

Sierra Leone 2 electoral officials charged with embezzlement of public funds in lead-up to local government elections on 22 May.

- "Electoral officials charged with corruption", IRIN, 7 Apr. 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 vetoed controversial draft media law after Constitutional Council said bill violated Kazakh constitution. Critics said law's strict media licensing rules would have limited freedom of speech.

- "Kazakh president blocks media law", BBC, 23 Apr. 2004.
- "Kazakhstan: Opposition stifled in advance of elections", Human Rights Watch press release, 6 Apr. 2004.
- For background, see ICG Asia Report N°72, *Is Radical Islam Inevitable in Central Asia? Priorities for Engagement*, 22 Dec. 2003.

Kyrgyzstan Justice ministry quashed rumours that jailed opposition leader Feliks Kulov to be released 1 June. Rumour started by Kulov aide.

- "Kyrgyzstan: Kulov's supporters attempting to keep his name in international spotlight", RFE/RL, 14 Apr. 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 In anticipation of February 2005 general elections, 3 opposition parties formed coalition to challenge presidential party's grip on parliament. Alliance members said goal to ensure transparent elections. New opposition Taraqiyot party appealed to Supreme Court after justice ministry rejected registration attempt. Leader and several members of previously unknown Islamist group, Bayat, arrested in Isfara, in northern Tajikistan - accused of murdering Baptist minister and attacking pro-government imams. Commander of Russian border guards said Tajik troops to take control of frontier with Afghanistan by May 2005.

- "Tajik parties join forces to promote free elections", RFE/RL, 30 Apr. 2004.
- "Tajikistan: New party fights for life", IWPR, 7 Apr. 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.

Turkmenistan President Saparmurat Niazov fired ministers of finance and economy, along with top national bank executives, in political crackdown ostensibly aimed at combating corruption. UN Commission on Human Rights approved strongly-worded resolution condemning Turkmenistan's human rights record. Country remains among world's most totalitarian states.

- "Turkmen president's political crackdown continues", RFE/RL, 23 Apr. 2004.
- "Turkmenistan: Good as gold", IWPR, 20 Apr. 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 officials said outbreak of violence in Tashkent and Bukhara 28 March-1 April, which left 47 dead, including 10 policemen, work of international terrorists linked to al Qaeda, but targeting of police suggests perpetrators homegrown. Authorities earlier blamed radicals affiliated with

banned Islamist group Hizb ut-Tahrir. Open Society Institute, prominent international NGO headed by George Soros, forced to close operations in Uzbekistan after re-registration attempt rejected by justice ministry. European Bank for Reconstruction and Development scaled back lending after review of Uzbek progress on reform benchmarks showed poor results and continued human rights abuses.

- ["Uzbekistan: Largest private donor being forced to close"](#), IRIN, 19 Apr. 2004.
- ["Uzbekistan: EBRD freeze on aid praised by NGOs"](#), RFE/RL, 19 Apr. 2004.
- ["US reviews Uzbek military ties"](#), BBC, 13 Apr. 2004.
- For background, see ICG Asia Report N°76, [The Failure of Reform in Uzbekistan: Ways Forward for the International Community](#), 11 Mar. 2004.

SOUTH ASIA

➤ Afghanistan Factional battles resumed in north; Taliban insurgency continued in south and east. Northern forces of General Abdul Rashid Dostum on 7 April occupied Maimana, capital of Faryab province, after a provincial commander realigned himself with President Karzai and Defence Minister Fahim. Both commander and Faryab governor fled province. President Karzai deployed 750 Afghan National Army troops to area. Dostum's troops withdrew from Maimana but remained in province. Fighting broke out 12 April near Mazar-i Sharif between Dostum's forces and those of regional rival, Atta Mohammad. Mohammad's troops gained full control of area, killing 1 of Dostum's soldiers, wounding 2, and looting several residences belonging to Dostum and his Junbish party. In south and east separate attacks on officials, aid workers, American and Afghan soldiers killed 19, including U.S. soldier in 22 April Paktia ambush. NATO-led peacekeepers in Kabul arrested 2 senior members of former PM Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's party and number of al-Qaeda followers. Karzai called on former Taliban to participate in parliamentary and presidential elections.

- ["Afghanistan: Karzai calls on Taliban to participate in elections"](#), RFE/RL, 26 Apr. 2004.
- ["Threatened, Afghan warlords fight central authority"](#), Reuters AlertNet, 15 Apr. 2004.
- ["Fresh clash near Mazar-e-Sharif"](#), IWPR, Afghan Recovery Report No.115, 13 Apr. 2004.
- For background, see ICG Asia Briefing, [Elections and Security in Afghanistan](#), 30 Mar. 2004.

➤ Bangladesh Opposition Awami League backed down from pledge to unseat government by 30 April. Police arrested thousands of protesters amidst violent clashes in capital; PM Khaleda Zia halfway through 5-year term. Her Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) claimed to have details of 'Awami conspiracy to destabilise the country'. Unrest by citizens seen as backlash against widespread corruption and extortion.

- ["Bangladesh opposition loses battle to oust govt"](#), *The Daily Times*, 29 Apr. 2004.
- ["Opposition deadline highlights Bangladesh's culture of corruption"](#), Asia Pacific News (AFP), 29 Apr. 2004.
- ["Police hold 5,000 in Bangladesh"](#), BBC, 23 Apr. 2004.
- ["Bangladesh police attack opposition activists"](#), Reuters AlertNet, 21 Apr. 2004.
- For background, see ["State of disgrace"](#), *Time Asia*, 5 Apr. 2004.

➤ India (non-Kashmir) Polling for parliamentary elections began 20 April; due for completion 10 May, counting beginning 13 May. PM Vajpayee's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and allies campaigned on platform of peace and prosperity. Apparent strong gains by Sonia Gandhi's opposition Congress Party. Over 30 killed in election related violence, lower than in previous elections. Maoist rebels blamed for 8 April mine blasts that killed 26 police in eastern state of Jharkhand. Rebels fighting Indian rule in northeast rejected offer by PM Vajpayee to hold talks to resolve decades-old insurgency. United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) accused New Delhi of plundering region's mineral resources, neglecting its economy and said only referendum on independence of tribal and ethnic groups could end hostilities.

- ["The greatest show on earth"](#), *The Economist*, 15 Apr. 2004.
- ["India mine blasts kill 26 police"](#), CNN, 8 Apr. 2004.
- ["Rebels in India's northeast reject PM's peace offer"](#), Reuters AlertNet, 7 Apr. 2004.

➤ Kashmir Indian elections held in Jammu and Kashmir marred by violence. Grenade attack on rally of ruling People's Democratic Party 8 April killed 11. At least 5 more killed in separate attacks in Srinagar. Kashmiri separatist politicians and rebels rejected election, called for poll boycott. Office of main opposition Congress Party attacked.

- ["Poll boycott call frightens off voters in Kashmir"](#), Reuters AlertNet, 26 Apr. 2004.
- ["More election violence in Kashmir"](#), BBC, 23 Apr. 2004.
- ["Heavenly Kashmir is still mired in hell as a dirty war gets dirtier"](#), *The Guardian*, 4 Apr. 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 Triangular conflict between king, political parties and Maoists continued. King Gyanendra attempted talks with political parties in bid to end stand-off: rejected by 5 main parties but Gyanendra met former PM Sher Bahadur Deuba, whom he sacked in 2002 for incompetence. Demonstrations started 1 April to press Gyanendra to fire royalist PM and form all-party government. Political parties vowed to continue protesting until king appoints their nominee as prime minister or revives parliament. Ban on all political gatherings in Kathmandu 8 April led to crackdown on protestors and thousands of arrests (including former PM Deuba). Despite ban, demonstrations continued daily. Maoist rebels called for joint movement with constitutional parties 21 April. Previously political parties have ruled out alliance with Maoists unless they renounce violence. Maoists stormed 2 police posts in separate attacks 5 and 8 April, killing 11 police officers.

- ["Street demonstrations continue unabated"](#), Kantipur Online, 30 Apr. 2004.
- ["Nepal's main parties reject king's offer of talks"](#), Reuters AlertNet, 23 Apr. 2004.
- ["HRW Letter to Prime Minister of Nepal"](#), Human Rights Watch, 21 Apr. 2004.
- ["Thousands defy ban to protest against Nepali king"](#), Reuters AlertNet, 10 Apr. 2004.
- For background, see ICG Asia Briefing, [Nepal: Dangerous Plans for Village Militias](#), 17 Feb. 2004.

➤ Pakistan Tribal leaders accused of sheltering al-Qaeda members in Pakistan's South Waziristan province given

amnesty. Next day Islamabad released 50 tribesmen who were among 163 militants arrested in March. Foreign militants given 1-week extension on 30 April deadline to 'register'. Controversial bill creating national security council (NSC) and affording military permanent role in Pakistan's governance passed 14 April. Opposition walked out in protest. President Musharraf insisted NSC will be consultative body only.

- ["Pakistan extends deadline for al-Qaida"](#), *The Guardian*, 1 May 2004.
- ["Is the India-Pakistan thaw for real?"](#), *Daily Times*, 27 Apr. 2004.
- ["Third time lucky?"](#), *The Economist* (subscription), 22 Apr. 2004.
- ["Five militants pardoned for peaceful life: Aliens asked to surrender by 30th"](#), *Dawn*, 24 Apr. 2004.
- For background, see ICG Asia Report N°77, ["Devolution in Pakistan: Reform or Regression?"](#), 22 Mar. 2004.

➤ Sri Lanka President Kumaratunga's United Peoples Freedom Alliance (UPFA) emerged 8 seats short of absolute majority in 2 April parliamentary elections. Veteran politician Mahinda Rajapakse appointed PM. Ministries of defence (incl. responsibility for peace process), constitutional affairs and education retained by Kumaratunga. Early stand-off between government and new coalition partner, leftist People's Liberation Front (JVP), resolved. JVP hold 39 of 105 seats won by UPFA in 2 April polls. Government reportedly going ahead with proposals to replace presidential system of government with parliamentary one, and change electoral system - despite losing key post of speaker of parliament by single vote. Norway to resume mediator role; delegation scheduled to meet Kumaratunga 2 May, and leader of LTTE political wing, Sinniah Paramu Tamilselvan, 3 May. Violent clashes between breakaway rebel commander Karuna's forces and main LTTE killed at least 9; Karuna since disappeared. Further fighting 26 April killed 7. Over 1,000 child soldiers reportedly released or demobilised in April. Argument between Sinhalese and Tamils became full-scale riot 28 April in Central region.

- ["Sri Lanka's tea region under curfew after ethnic riot"](#), Reuters AlertNet, 29 Apr. 2004.
- ["Norway minister to go to S. Lanka for peace bid"](#), Reuters AlertNet, 27 Apr. 2004.
- ["Sri Lanka vote on speaker is defeat for government"](#), *International Herald Tribune* (AP), 23 Apr. 2004.
- ["Peace, reforms may hinge on new S. Lanka parliament"](#), Reuters AlertNet, 20 Apr. 2004.

NORTH EAST ASIA

➤ China (internal) In blow for Hong Kong pro-democracy activists and "one country, two systems" principle, Beijing committee proclaimed central government has sole authority to amend HK political structure, and ruled out full elections for Hong Kong in 2007-08.

- ["Beijing blocks Hong Kong election"](#), BBC, 26 Apr. 2004.
- ["One country, one system"](#), *The Economist*, 7 Apr. 2004.

➤ North Korea Low-level 6-party talks to begin in Beijing 12 May to prepare for further talks in June. U.S. vice president Cheney called on Beijing to recognise that evidence from Pakistani scientist A.Q. Khan confirms Pyongyang already has nuclear weapons: China had cast doubt on U.S. and

South Korean claims that North Korea was developing uranium weapon. Kim Jong-il travelled to Beijing 19 April for talks with Hu Jintao: China reportedly urged Jong-il to soften stance towards U.S. to break impasse over ending Pyongyang's nuclear ambitions. Massive rail explosion, apparently accidental, shook Pyongyang into asking for international aid.

- ["Date set for fresh N Korea talks"](#), BBC, 29 Apr. 2004.
- ["N. Korea says to push ahead with nuclear deterrent"](#), Reuters AlertNet, 24 Apr. 2004.
- Comment by Nicholas Kristof, ["The real danger that Bush prefers to ignore"](#), *International Herald Tribune* (NYT), 22 Apr. 2004.
- ["Koreans showed nuclear devices, Pakistani says"](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 14 Apr. 2004.
- For background, see ICG Asia Report N°61, ["North Korea: A Phased Negotiation Strategy"](#), 1 Aug. 2003.

➤ Taiwan Strait President Chen Shui-bian, re-elected by wafer-thin margin in 29 March election, said would push ahead with plans for new constitution in 2006, angering China, which sees plan as step toward independence. U.S. cautioned Chen against aggressive pro-independence stance. Recount of election results demanded by opposition Kuomintang party likely to take place mid-May.

- ["U.S. cautions Taiwan on independence"](#), *The Washington Post*, 22 Apr. 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

➤ East Timor Continuing concern over possible militia incursions from West Timor. Next UN resolution on security situation due 10 May.

- ["Militia 'stockpiling weapons'"](#), *The Australian*, 1 May 2004.

➤ Indonesia Fighting in Ambon, capital of Maluku, erupted 25 April after supporters of separatist Front for Moluccan Sovereignty (FKM) clashed with pro-government youths. Fighting quickly took on communal overtones, and by 28 April more than 36 killed, many by snipers. Hundreds of buildings burned down, including UNDP office, Protestant university, and Muslim high school. FKM, largely Christian group, supports establishment of Republic of the South Moluccas (RMS), but has little support among Christians in Maluku more generally. Christian and Muslim leaders criticised police for not preventing violence but both suggested provocateurs were involved. Two men opened fire in church in Poso, Central Sulawesi during Easter service, wounding 7. Former military chief Gen. Wiranto, currently indicted for crimes against humanity in East Timor, won Golkar Party nomination for president over party leader Akbar Tanjung 20 April. Front runner in 5 July presidential election remains Democrat Party's Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, also retired general. Clashes in Aceh between rebels and government troops continued. Islamic cleric Abu Bakar Baasyir released 30 April but rearrested on terrorism charges including conspiracy, plotting attacks, and ties to Jemaah Islamiah: violent clashes between his supporters and police followed arrest.

- ["Scores hurt after Ba'asyir's rearrest"](#), *The Jakarta Post*, 1 May 2004.
- ["Indonesia's Ambon tense after arson attacks, toll 36"](#), Reuters AlertNet, 28 Apr. 2004.

- ["Indonesia's day of the generals"](#), *The Australian*, 24 Apr. 2004.
- ["Ready for the big one"](#), *The Economist*, 22 Apr. 2004.
- For background, see ICG Asia Reports 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.

➤ Myanmar/Burma Early indications pointed towards Aung San Suu Kyi's imminent release before constitutional convention due to start 17 May - 2 top National League for Democracy (NLD) members released 13 April, NLD headquarters unlocked by military junta 17 April. But she and NLD deputy chairman Tin Oo remain under house arrest. Yangon pulled out of 'Bangkok Process' international talks on prospects for reform scheduled for April 29-30: talks postponed.

- ["Myanmar opposition says cautious 'yes' to talks"](#), Reuters, 29 Apr. 2004.
- ["Thailand delays Myanmar talks on junta's request"](#), Reuters AlertNet, 22 Apr. 2004.
- ["Bad news from Myanmar casts pall over hopes for democracy"](#), Channel News Asia (AFP), 25 Apr. 2004.
- ["U.N. condemns Myanmar abuses"](#), CNN, 22 Apr. 2004.



ICG Asia Report N°78, [Myanmar: Sanctions, Engagement or Another Way Forward?](#), 26 April 2004. Both sides of the international debate on Myanmar need to rethink their policies and objectives. Sanctions have not forced the military to end the grip on power it has maintained since 1962; nor are more sanctions likely to in the future, as there is no chance of them being applied universally. The often limp policies of "engagement" adopted by Myanmar's neighbours have been no more effective. A new approach is required, bridging the gap between the opposing policies. The international community should maintain pressure by setting benchmarks for the progressive lifting of sanctions and new economic support; and it should also offer, unconditionally, a number of new forms of support, including humanitarian aid, designed to create a positive environment for change. But nothing at all should happen unless and until Aung San Suu Kyi is first released from custody and a serious dialogue begins with her National League for Democracy (NLD), both within and beyond the framework of the National Convention due to reconvene on 17 May.

➤ Philippines Campaigning continued ahead of 10 May presidential elections. President Arroyo and Fernando Poe Jr. equal in polls. Third-ranked former education secretary Raul Roco pulled out for health reasons. Government and communist National Democratic Front (NDF) met for third round of formal talks 26-29 April. Three female suspected members of communist New People's Army (NPA) released 21 April as part of confidence building plan to free 32 political prisoners by 4 May. Three NPA killed 25 April in clash with troops in southern Mindanao island, while 6 Abu Sayyaf members, including senior leader Hamsiraji Sali, killed in clash with Philippine troops on southern Basilan island 8 April. Ten Abu Sayyaf suspects remained at large after southern jailbreak. Talks with Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) expected to resume in Kuala Lumpur in May.

- ["Whoever wins, the people will still pay"](#), *The Age*, 24 Apr. 2004.

- ["Key Abu Sayyaf killed in clash"](#), CNN, 9 Apr. 2004.
- ["Philippines, rebels agree release of prisoners"](#), Reuters AlertNet, 3 Apr. 2004.
- ["Vote-winning"](#), *The Economist*, 1 Apr. 2004.



Thailand In one of bloodiest days in modern Thai history 107 rebels killed, 17 arrested and 5 security officials killed as militants, mostly armed with machetes, battled policemen and soldiers in Pattani, Yala and Songkhla southern provinces 28 April: PM Thaksin Shinawatra blamed drug-crazed "bandits" and supportive local politicians, dismissing claims that religious or separatist ideology lay at root of violence. In earlier 22 April attacks 1 soldier and village chief killed and 50 public buildings, including 15 schools, set ablaze across Narathiwat and Yala provinces; 10 youths arrested. Troops deployed to south to protect rail workers after 4 separate incidents killed 2. Thai court issued arrest warrants for 4 policemen linked to disappearance of Somchai Neelapaijit, prominent Muslim lawyer for suspected Jemaah Islamiyah militants.

- ["Thai troops flood Islamic trouble zone"](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 30 Apr. 2004.
- ["Southern carnage: kingdom shaken"](#), *The Nation*, 29 Apr. 2004.
- ["Thailand faces long, hard fight in restive south"](#), Reuters AlertNet, 29 Apr. 2004.
- ["Thaksin's quandary"](#), *The Economist*, 29 Apr. 2004.

Europe



BALKANS



Albania President of Albania paid first ever official visit by Albanian head of state to Kosovo, meeting with UN Special Representative for Kosovo, Harri Holkeri, 22 April.

- ["Albanian President pays first official visit to UN administered Kosovo"](#), UN News Centre, 22 Apr. 2004.
- For background, see ICG Europe Report N°153, [Pan-Albanianism: How Big a Threat to Balkan Stability?](#) 25 Feb. 2004.



Bosnia & Herzegovina Bosnian leaders called on war crimes suspects to voluntarily surrender to The Hague tribunal. Failed attempt to capture indicted war criminals Milan and Sredoje Lukic 18 April killed 1; 2 members of Special Police Force suspended. High Rep. Ashdown had previously suspended funding to ruling Serb Democratic Party (SDS) for failing to cooperate with tribunal.

- ["Failed raid angers many"](#), Transitions Online (subscription), 26 Apr. 2004.
- ["Bosnia & Herzegovina: The dysfunctional state"](#), IWPR Balkan Crisis Report N°493, 22 Apr. 2004.
- For background, see ICG Balkans Reports N°150, [Building Bridges in Mostar](#), 20 Nov. 2003 and N°146, [Bosnia's Nationalist Governments: Paddy Ashdown and the Paradoxes of State Building](#), 22 Jul. 2003.



Kosovo NATO reviewing peacekeeping mission after 17-18 March violence. Blame ascribed variously to UNMIK, KFOR, Kosovo media, politicians and international policies.

International prosecutor in Kosovo found no evidence Serbs responsible for deaths of 3 Albanian children who drowned in Ibar River, which led to wave of Albanian violence against Serbs 17 March. UN Secretary General Kofi Annan met 27 April with Kosovo President Rugova, who pressed for immediate independence. General boycott of all Kosovo institutions by Serb politicians continued, in part to protest ineffective response by the international community to March events. Jordanian UN police officer opened fire on convoy carrying international prison officers in Mitrovica 17 April. In ensuing gunfight Jordanian and 3 U.S. officers killed, 11 injured.

- ["Western policy in Kosovo attacked"](#), *The Guardian*, 23 Apr. 2004.
- ["Kosovo shooting marks 'sad day for UN peacekeeping'"](#), RFE/RL, 19 Apr. 2004.
- ["UN slams Kosovo leaders' weak response to attacks"](#), Reuters AlertNet, 13 Apr. 2004.



ICG Europe Report N°155, [Collapse in Kosovo](#), 22 April 2004. On 17 March 2004, the unstable foundations of four and a half years of gradual progress in Kosovo gave way to levels of violence not seen since 1999. Kosovo Albanian society was revealed to be deeply troubled and vulnerable to extremism. The provisional institutions of self-government (PISG), media and civil society afforded the anti-Serb and anti-UN rioters licence for mayhem. Tensions have been fuelled by frustration and fear over the international community's intentions for Kosovo, UNMIK's inability to kick-start the economy, its suspension of privatisation, and by newly resurgent nationalists in Belgrade. The international community's institutions in Kosovo need new ways of operating and, in the case of UNMIK, a new structure and mandate. Without new policies on final status and socio-economic development, Kosovo may become ungovernable. The regional consequences of a destabilised Kosovo are incalculable.

- ☞ Macedonia PM Branko Crvenkovski won second round of presidential elections. Inconclusive first round led to final 28 April vote between Crvenkovski of Social Democratic Union (SDSM) and Sasko Kedev of conservative opposition Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (VMRO-DPMNE). Crvenkovski won with 63%, and turnout passed required 50%. Kedev demanded re-vote alleging election fraud. European election observers said vote met international democratic standards, despite some "serious" irregularities. Stabilization and Association Agreement between EU and Macedonia came into effect 1 April.
 - ["Macedonia election 'mostly clean'"](#), BBC, 29 Apr. 2004.
 - ["Macedonia: arrested development"](#), IWPR Balkan Crisis Report N°493, 22 Apr. 2004.
 - For background, see ICG Europe Report N°149, [Macedonia: No Time for Complacency](#), 23 Oct. 2003.

- ☞ Serbia Government increasingly unstable and reliant on Seselj's Serbian Radical Party (SRS) and Milosevic's Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS). Presidential elections scheduled for 13 June, this time without 50% voter turnout requirement which had invalidated 2 previous elections. Parliament adopted government's plan for resolution of Kosovo by creation of 5 ethnic Serbian cantons. Serbia reached tentative agreement with IMF and World Bank contingent on parliament reducing budget deficit by a third by June deadline. IMF support and

certain World Bank and EU programmes on hold until approved. Attacks on ethnic minorities in northern province of Vojvodina jumped sharply. Reportedly more ethnically-motivated attacks since March than in entire period following Milosevic's ouster.

- ["Serbia & Montenegro: An unhappy marriage"](#), IWPR Balkan Crisis Report N°494, 22 Apr. 2004.
- ["Three serious contenders for presidency"](#), Transitions Online (subscription), 19 Apr. 2004.
- For background, see ICG Europe Report N°154, [Serbia's U-Turn](#), 26 Mar. 2004.

CAUCASUS

- ☞ Armenia Dozens injured and over 100 arrested 13 April as police used water canons, batons, and stun grenades to disperse demonstrators calling for resignation of President Robert Kocharian. Demonstrations steadily gathered momentum in recent weeks: over 10,000 people turned out 9 April, first anniversary of Kocharian's inauguration. Opposition led jointly by Stepan Demirchian, chief of Justice Bloc and runner up to Kocharian in disputed 2003 election, Artashes Geghamian, leader of National Accord Party, and former PM Aram Sargsian. Group began boycotting parliamentary sessions in February, and had set 12 April deadline for parliament to pass law allowing no-confidence referendum on president - as stipulated by constitutional court following 2003 election. Protests continued throughout month as government cracked down on opposition. Public particularly angered by widespread reports that police stood by as unknown assailants beat group of journalists during 5 April demonstration.
 - ["Armenian battle of the weak"](#), IWPR, 28 Apr. 2004.
 - ["Armenian president cracks down"](#), IWPR, 15 Apr. 2004.

- ☞ Azerbaijan No movement on detention of dozens of opposition activists arrested following October 2003 elections.
 - ["Azerbaijani oppositionists' term of pre-trial detention expires"](#), RFE/RL, 21 Apr. 2004.

- ☞ Georgia Civil conflict potentially imminent as standoff between President Mikheil Saakashvili and authoritarian leader of Ajara region Aslan Abashidze worsened. Saakashvili said Tbilisi not afraid to use force to "liberate" Ajarans from Abashidze's "criminal" rule, as Georgian military began exercises 30 April at Black Sea port of Poti, 30km from Ajara. Abashidze ordered mobilisation of forces in response to growing tensions, and Ajaran police used truncheons to suppress anti-Abashidze protest 30 April in Batumi. Central Election Commission (CEC) annulled 28 March parliamentary election results from 2 districts of Ajara after declaring them fraudulent and abandoning plans to repeat vote. Results leave Abashidze's Revival Party severely weakened, with only 6 seats in 150-seat parliament.
 - ["Georgia begins war games near rebel region"](#), Reuters AlertNet, 30 Apr. 2004.
 - Comment by Giorgi Gogia (ICG), ["Georgia's looming conflict can be avoided"](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 29 Apr. 2004.
 - ["Georgia's refugee recount"](#), IWPR, 28 Apr. 2004.
 - ["Georgia urges troops in Ajaria to stay loyal"](#), RFE/RL, 20 Apr. 2004.
 - For background, see ICG Europe Report N°151, [Georgia: What Now?](#), 3 Dec. 2003.

- ↪ Nagorno-Karabakh (Azerbaijan) Some movement in peace process as Armenian president Kocharian and Azerbaijani president Aliyev met in Warsaw 28 April; foreign ministers expected to meet in May; and U.S. named Steven Mann, formerly state department special envoy to Caspian, as new co-chair of OSCE Minsk Group, replacing Rudolf Perina.
- "Azerbaijani, Armenian presidents meet", RFE/RL, 28 Apr. 2004.

EASTERN EUROPE

- ↪ Chechnya (Russia) Separatist president Aslan Maskhadov lost third major ally in 2 months as Shaa Turlaev, head of Maskhadov's personal guard, reportedly surrendered to Russian officials. Assassination attempt on president of neighbouring republic of Ingushetiya failed 6 April; Chechen warlord Shamil Basayev claimed responsibility. UN Commission on Human Rights voted against EU-sponsored resolution condemning Russian abuses in Chechnya.
- "UN rights body absolves Russia over Chechnya", Reuters AlertNet, 15 Apr. 2004.
 - "Moscow's Chechen head says will intercede for rebels", Reuters AlertNet, 7 Apr. 2004.
- ↪ Moldova Negotiations between central government, officials from separatist Transdnistria region, and OSCE, Ukrainian, and Russian mediators resumed 26-28 April in Tiraspol after 5-month hiatus. Next round scheduled to take place in Chisinau 25-26 May.
- "Basic differences persist in resumed Transdnistrier negotiations", RFE/RL, 29 Apr. 2004.
 - For background, see ICG Europe Report N°147, *Moldova: No Quick Fix*, 12 Aug. 2003.

WESTERN EUROPE/MEDITERRANEAN

- ↪ Cyprus Internationally recognised Greek Cypriot south joined EU 1 May. Cyprus remains divided and militarised following Greek Cypriot rejection (75.8%) of UN Secretary General Annan's plan for reunification. Turkish Cypriots voted (64.9%) in favour despite opposition of President Rauf Denktaş. His Greek-Cypriot counterpart Tassos Papadopoulos' successful nationalist stance against plan led to international consternation. EU agreed to allow agricultural produce in north to be sent across 'green line' to Greek Cypriot south – and rest of EU - without restrictions or tariffs. EU Enlargement Commissioner Guenter Verheugen pledged economic support for Turkish north.
- "An ominous European debut", *The Economist*, 29 Apr. 2004.
 - "EU to ease north Cyprus trade ban", BBC, 28 Apr. 2004.
 - "Cyprus: Failure of referendum means headache for the EU", RFE/RL, 26 Apr. 2004.
 - Comment by Martti Ahtisaari and Gareth Evans (ICG), "Three advantages of the Annan peace plan", *International Herald Tribune*, 19 Apr. 2004.
- ↪ Northern Ireland (UK) Financial sanctions to be imposed on Sinn Fein and Progressive Unionist Party after Independent Monitoring Commission (IMC) linked them to paramilitary activity by IRA and Ulster Volunteer Force. Political talks involving all Northern Ireland parties and British and Irish prime ministers postponed. Sinn Fein's Gerry

Adams met Tony Blair and rejected IMC conclusions and called on British government to re-focus on peace process.

- "Loyalist threat to peaceline talks", BBC, 30 Apr. 2004.
- "Blair must refocus on Northern Ireland – Adams", *The Scotsman*, 23 Apr. 2004.
- "Criminal responsibility", *The Guardian*, 22 Apr. 2004.
- For background, see ICG Europe Briefing, *Monitoring the Northern Ireland Ceasefires: Lessons from the Balkans*, 23 Jan. 2004.

- ↪ Spain Eighteen charged - 14 Moroccans, 2 Indians, Syrian and Spaniard - in connection to 11 March attacks that killed 191. Spanish agent and 7 suspected terrorists killed in 3 April suicide blast.
- "2 Spain bombing suspects killed in blast", *The Guardian* (AP), 21 Apr. 2004.
 - "Moroccan charged in Madrid bombings", *International Herald Tribune*, 13 Apr. 2004.

Latin America /Caribbean

LATIN AMERICA

- ↪ Bolivia Government plans to export natural gas causing significant unrest. President Carlos Mesa reshuffled cabinet 13 April to strengthen support base. Some 20,000 protesters demanded his resignation in demonstrations in capital La Paz 22 April, just 6 months after last president toppled. Trade unions threatened continued protests. Referendum to be held in May on direct election of currently appointed governors in effort to respond to demands for greater decentralisation, and 18 July on plans to export gas.
- "Bolivians call for ouster of new President", *New York Times* (AFP), 22 Apr. 2004.
 - "Fresh anger over Bolivia gas plan", BBC, 16 Apr. 2004.
 - "Bolivian leader revamps Cabinet to stave off protests", Reuters AlertNet, 14 Apr. 2004.
 - For background, see "A political awakening", *The Economist*, 19 Feb. 2004.
- ↪ Colombia President Uribe proposed amended legislation for demobilisation of right-wing paramilitaries; to require jail time for worst offenders. Former leader of AUC paramilitary group, Carlos Castaño, missing after gun battle with rival paramilitaries killed number of bodyguards; later reported dead. Former general threatening to expose links between army and leftist FARC rebel group. Congress considering whether to amend constitution to allow Uribe to run for second term.
- "Missing Colombian warlord 'dead'", BBC, 1 May 2004.
 - "Colombian leader fights for survival", *The Age* (NYT), 27 Apr. 2004.
 - "Colombia: A laboratory of war", Amnesty International report, 20 Apr. 2004.
 - "Truth, justice and forgiveness?", *The Economist*, 15 Apr. 2004.
 - For background, see ICG Latin America Briefing, *Hostages for Prisoners: A Way to Peace in Colombia?*, 8 Mar. 2004.
- ↪ Dominican Republic Presidential elections 16 May. Polling shows gap between President Hipolito Mejia and



former president Leonel Fernandez closing, but Fernandez still ahead by double-digit numbers.

- ["Dominican President outlines reelection platform"](#), CNN, 29 Apr. 2004.

↙ Ecuador President Lucio Gutierrez increasingly politically isolated, and facing calls to step down. Indigenous parties planning massive protest march 1 May.

- ["Ecuador leader alone in rough political arena"](#), Reuters, 17 Apr. 2004.
- ["Ecuador party marks its distance from president"](#), *Forbes*, 7 Apr. 2004.
- For background, see ["A political awakening"](#), *The Economist*, 19 Feb. 2004.

↙ Haiti Slowly regaining degree of stability, but many armed rebels still roaming countryside. UN Security Council approved new stabilisation mission of 6,700 troops and 1,600 police and experts to replace current U.S.-led force of 3,600 on 1 June. Rebel commander Louis-Jodel Chamblain, former paramilitary FRAPH leader sentenced to life imprisonment in absentia, surrendered to police 22 April amid concern whether deal made to pardon him. Lack of disarmament of rebels and Aristide military drawing business sector concern.

- ["UN approves new Haiti peace force"](#), BBC, 30 Apr. 2004.
- ["U.S. Ambassador outlines Washington's stance towards Haiti, urges elite to help poor"](#), *San Francisco Chronicle*, 28 Apr. 2004.
- ["After the fall"](#), *The Economist*, 22 Apr. 2004.
- ["Haiti after Aristide: the danger of a revived army"](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 17 Apr. 2004.

↙ Peru Claimed leader of rebel group Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) announced armed struggle would commence if government did not provide adequate response. Congress approved murder charge against ex-president Fujimori for decade-old killing. Indigenous protesters beat allegedly corrupt local mayor of Ilave to death after he refused to step down.

- ["Protesters kill mayor in Peruvian town"](#), *The Guardian*, 27 Apr. 2004.
- ["Die hard Shining Path rebel issues ultimatum"](#), Reuters AlertNet, 18 Apr. 2004.
- ["Anti-corruption campaign in Peru gets bogged down"](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 6 Apr. 2004.
- For background, see ["A political awakening"](#), *The Economist*, 19 Feb. 2004.

↙ Venezuela Opposition, under protest, agreed to revalidate 1 million disputed signatures for recall referendum on President Chavez 27-31 May with international monitoring. National Electoral Council (CNE) to announce 4 June if referendum to proceed. Risk of violent protests whichever way decision goes. Currently 1.9m votes validated, with 2.4m needed to trigger referendum - which would be held 8 August. Parliament passed law to increase number of Supreme Court judges from 20 to 32, with new judges to be appointed by Chavez, weeks before court considers opposition appeal against rejected referendum signatures.

- ["Storm over Venezuela court reform"](#), BBC, 30 Apr. 2004.
- ["Foes tell Chavez he risks revolt if vote blocked"](#), Reuters AlertNet, 28 Apr. 2004.

- ["Venezuela's Chavez would clinch recall victory - poll"](#), Reuters, 23 Apr. 2004.
- ["Possible date for Venezuela vote"](#), BBC, 21 Apr. 2004.



Middle East /North Africa

EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

↙ ↘ Israel/occupied Territories Israeli helicopter attack killed Hamas leader Dr Abdel Aziz Rantisi, who replaced Sheikh Ahmed Yassin after latter assassinated 22 March. Israeli PM Ariel Sharon threatened - and then backed down - that Yasser Arafat could also be targeted. New Hamas leader unnamed, but likely Mahmoud Zahar, Rantisi's deputy. In U.S. policy shift, President George W. Bush publicly backed Sharon plan for unilateral withdrawal from Gaza Strip, prompting criticism from EU and outrage from Palestinians and Arab states. Members of Sharon's Likud party to vote on plan 2 May, but PM equivocal on whether he might still take plan to Knesset if party votes against it.

- Comment by Martin Indyk, ["The day that Bush took Gaza"](#), *The Washington Post*, 25 Apr. 2004.
- Comment by Sherine Bahaa, ["Whither Hamas?"](#), *Al-Ahram Weekly*, 22 Apr. 2004.
- Comment by Gareth Evans and Robert Malley (ICG), ["Bush can't order Mideast peace a la carte"](#), *The Globe and Mail*, 21 Apr. 2004.
- ["Sharon pushes ahead, regardless"](#), *The Economist*, 19 Apr. 2004.
- ["Anger at killing of Hamas leader"](#), CNN, 18 Apr. 2004.
- For background, see ICG Middle East Report N°21, ["Dealing With Hamas"](#), 26 Jan. 2004.

↙ Jordan Authorities said major terror plot foiled. Police seized chemicals and intercepted 3 trucks packed with explosives, destined, according to 2 suspects captured in 20 April raid, for government buildings and U.S. embassy. Suspects reportedly linked with suspected terrorist leader Abu Musab Zarqawi. King Abdullah cancelled meeting with U.S. President George W. Bush after latter endorsed Israeli PM Ariel Sharon's plan to withdraw from Gaza Strip.

- ["U.S. seeks to mend fences with Abdullah"](#), Reuters AlertNet, 20 Apr. 2004.
- ["Jordan says major al Qaeda plot disrupted"](#), CNN, 26 Apr. 2004.
- For background, see ICG Middle East Briefing, ["The Challenge of Political Reform: Jordanian Democratisation and Regional Instability"](#), 8 Oct. 2003.

↙ Lebanon Israeli army chief said 26 April second stage of German-mediated prisoner exchange between Israel and Hizbollah progressing and could lead to information on fate of Ron Arad, Israeli airman missing since 1986.

- ["Israeli army chief: Second prisoner swap effort progressing"](#), *The Daily Star*, 27 Apr. 2004.
- For background, see ICG Middle East Briefing, ["Hizbollah: Rebel Without a Cause?"](#), 30 July 2003.

↙ Syria Mysterious bombing and subsequent gun battle in Damascus killed 2 suspected militants and 2 others,

including policeman. Authorities have not released identities of presumed attackers, and motivation for bombing remains unclear. U.S. again warned Damascus to stem flow of foreign fighters into Iraq after Marines stepped up interdiction efforts along Syrian border. Amnesty International said Syria still holding hundreds of Kurds arrested in last month's rioting.

- "Syria keeps silent on bombing suspects", *International Herald Tribune*, 29 Apr. 2004.
- "US warns Syria over Iraq", BBC, 19 Apr. 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

➡ Iran Despite renewed pledge 6 April to stop building and assembling centrifuges for uranium enrichment, international community increasingly suspicious that Tehran less than forthcoming with inspections and secretly building bomb.

- "France chastises Iran on nuclear inspections", *International Herald Tribune*, 23 Apr. 2004.
- "Iran vows to rein in nuke program", CNN, 6 Apr. 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 Deadliest month for U.S. troops since war began (138 killed, compared with 82 in November 2003, 2nd deadliest month) as heavy fighting raged across several parts of Iraq. Associated Press reported at least 1,361 Iraqis killed in April. Hundreds of Iraqis killed in Fallujah following U.S. invasion of city. End to siege appeared likely 30 April as Marines began withdrawing; replaced by Iraqi force led by former Saddam general Jassim Mohammed Saleh. U.S. forces also encircled holy city of Najaf, where radical Shiite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr holed up with heavily armed followers - reports suggest mosques being used to stockpile weapons. Battles around Najaf and Kufa killed dozens of insurgents. Rocket attacks and bombings on markets, buses, and other civilian targets have outraged Iraqis, but anger increasingly directed at Coalition for failure to provide security - exacerbated by new photos of U.S. forces humiliating Iraqi prisoners. Insurgents made headlines around world with hostage-taking spree: nationals of several countries remain in captivity. U.S. reportedly agreed to proposal by UN special envoy Lakhdar Brahimi to create non-political caretaker government - replacing Interim Governing Council - to oversee transition period between 30 June sovereignty handover and holding of elections in January 2005. 483 Coalition soldiers, including 429 Americans, and thousands of Iraqis killed by hostile fire since declared end of combat operations on 1 May 2003.

- "Plan to end Fallujah siege moves forward", *International Herald Tribune* (AP), 30 Apr. 2004.
- "Still a cauldron, not a quagmire", *The Economist*, 29 Apr. 2004.
- Comment by Gareth Evans and Robert Malley (ICG), ["What Iraq needs from a handover"](#), *Financial Times*, 28 Apr. 2004.
- "Crime after crime", *Al-Ahram Weekly*, 22 Apr. 2004.
- For background, see ICG Middle East Report N°20, [Iraq: Building a New Security Structure](#), 23 Dec. 2003.



ICG Middle East Report N°27, [Iraq's Transition: On a Knife Edge](#), 27 April 2004. Fundamental change is needed soon if the widening gap separating the occupation's governing institutions from the Iraqi people is to be narrowed and a spreading insurgency overcome. 30 June is a key turning point, though it will not bring the full transfer of sovereignty many Iraqis expect. What they should get then is more power -- and the space to create a more inclusive, cohesive polity -- but still necessarily incomplete sovereign power until elections are held. The redistribution of power between the U.S., UN and new Iraqi institutions should be more substantial even than the Brahimi proposal and have a strong UN Special Representative serving as final arbiter of disputes during the transition. There have been many false starts and failed plans over the past year. This may be the last chance to get it right.



ICG Middle East Report N°26, [Iraq's Kurds: Toward an Historic Compromise?](#), 8 April 2004. Fiery rhetoric over the Kurdish question in Iraq suggests acrimony, conflict and possibly secession. But outside the battle of words fought in the glare of the media spotlight, Kurdish leaders have indicated that an historic compromise over Kurdish autonomy and the status of Kirkuk is possible within a unitary Iraq. Given their current political strength in the country, Kurdish leaders now need to moderate their public rhetoric and inform their people of what they see as the maximum realistic solution to the Kurds' historic predicament and Kirkuk's status. The occupying powers, and the international community more generally, should pay heed to the Kurds' fair demands. Failure to meet the Kurdish desire for freedom within a unitary Iraq could well pave the way for more radical separatist elements to gain the upper hand in the Kurdish community, risking a grave regional confrontation.

➡ Saudi Arabia Series of clashes between militants and police shook kingdom. Bombing of security forces building in Riyadh 21 April killed 5, including 2 senior police officers, and injured 148 - extremist group al-Haramin Brigades claimed responsibility. Days later police killed 5 militants in Jeddah, 4 of whom reportedly among Saudis' most wanted terror suspects.

- "Saudi police to get danger money", BBC, 26 Apr. 2004.
- "Saudis look for clues at bomb site", *International Herald Tribune*, 23 Apr. 2004.

➡ Yemen Government continued efforts to improve security situation; announced new arrest related to 2000 bombing of USS Cole.

- For background, see ICG Middle East Report N°8, [Yemen: Coping with Terrorism and Violence in a Fragile State](#), 8 Jan. 2003.

NORTH AFRICA

➡ Algeria Government declared 8 April presidential election "turning point for democratisation" after President Abdelaziz Bouteflika reelected with 85% of vote. In qualified step forward, Algerian military, which has in past sponsored presidential candidates, affected neutral posture. Although voting mostly free, disqualification of certain candidates and surprising scale of president's victory raised questions as to its fairness.

- Comment by Robert Malley and Hugh Roberts (ICG), "[Algeria's next move](#)", *International Herald Tribune*, 17 Apr. 2004.
- "[Freer and more peaceful](#)", *The Economist*, 15 Apr. 2004.
- Comment by Steven A. Cook, "[Algeria's elections: No democratic turning point](#)", Arab Reform Bulletin, Apr. 2004.
- For background, see ICG Middle East/North Africa Report N°15, *Algeria: Unrest and Impasse in Kabylia*, 10 June 2003.



ICG Middle East and North Africa Briefings, *Islamism in North Africa: Legacies of History* and *Egypt's Opportunity*, 20 April 2004. Western policy makers need to rethink their concept of Islamic activism in North Africa. Portraying the situation in terms of "radical vs moderate" Islam helps no one understand the critically important diversity of Islamic activism and make appropriate policy choices. A new series of four briefings, the first two of which are published here, explain the triangle of Islamism (Islam in political mode), terrorism and reform that is at the heart of political debate in North Africa today. Islamism in North Africa I: The Legacies of History is a general background. It examines the main varieties of Islamic activism in North Africa and points out that each has very different political implications. Islamism in North Africa II: Egypt's Opportunity looks at changes in Egyptian Islamic activism in recent years, which have opened up possibilities for progressive political development, but have gone unexploited due to the conservatism of the Egyptian government's policies. Subsequent briefings will address Algeria and Morocco.

- ↳ Egypt President Mubarak discussed Israeli PM Sharon's proposed Gaza pullout plan with George W. Bush at Bush's

Crawford, Texas ranch. Mubarak concerned pullout will scuttle Roadmap, leave Cairo in charge of Gaza security. Egypt reportedly considering abolishing controversial Emergency Law - in place since 1981 - limiting civil and political rights.

- "[Something's gotta give](#)", *Al-Ahram Weekly*, 29 Apr. 2004.
- "[Danger zone](#)", *Al-Ahram Weekly*, 22 Apr. 2004.
- See ICG Middle East and North Africa Briefing, *Islamism in North Africa: Egypt's Opportunity*, 20 Apr. 2004 above.

- ↳ Libya U.S. lifted most sanctions against Libya following Tripoli's continued cooperation on WMD. Muammar Qaddafi made triumphant return to Europe, visiting Brussels 27-28 April.
 - "[Libyan leader embraces West](#)", BBC, 27 Apr. 2004.
 - "[Libya: Time to make human rights a reality](#)", Amnesty International, 27 Apr. 2004.
 - "[US eases Libyan sanctions](#)", BBC, 23 Apr. 2004.
- ↳ Morocco New Spanish PM Zapatero visited Morocco, pledging increased cooperation against terrorism. 14 Moroccan terror suspects remain in Spanish custody.
 - "[King: Morocco has anti-terror plan](#)", CNN, 30 Apr. 2004.
 - "[Spain visit boosts Moroccan ties](#)", BBC, 24 Apr. 2004.
- ↳ Western Sahara UN Security Council extended mandate of UN mission for referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) until 31 October 2004, instead of 28 February 2005 as recommended by Secretary General Annan, and passed resolution urging sides to accept peace plan. Annan said UN mandate may not be renewed if stalemate between Morocco and POLISARIO front continues.
 - "[UN pushes for W Sahara settlement](#)", BBC, 29 Apr. 2004.
 - "[13 years and \\$600 million later, peace nowhere in sight](#)", IRIN, 28 Apr. 2004.



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