

# CrisisWatch

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



1 January 2004, N°5

## 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 90 staff members across five continents, who already report on some 40 of the situations listed here. Comments and suggestions as to how the bulletin might be improved (addressed to [crisiswatch@crisisweb.org](mailto:crisiswatch@crisisweb.org)) would be much appreciated.

## December 2003 Trends



### Deteriorated Situations

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### Improved Situations

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## January 2004 Watchlist



### Conflict Risk Alert

Côte d'Ivoire  
Georgia  
Haiti  
Sudan



### Conflict Resolution Opportunity

## The International Crisis Group

is an independent, non-profit, multinational organisation, with over 90 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.

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## Africa

### CENTRAL AFRICA

- Burundi Outlook most promising for many years as leaders of largest Hutu rebel group, FDD, worked with government to implement November peace agreement, although remaining Hutu rebel group, FNL, continued fighting. Disarmament and reintegration of FDD fighters commenced, but progressing slowly. Return of estimated 800,000 refugees in Tanzania and 300,000 internally displaced people could lead to renewed conflict if not handled properly. Vatican's ambassador to Burundi shot dead 30 December in ambush blamed on FNL. Human Rights Watch criticised immunity for fighters from prosecution for war crimes provided in peace agreement.
  - ["Burundi: War crimes may go unpunished"](#), Human Rights Watch report, 22 Dec. 2003.
  - ["Peace process reaches crucial phase with launch of DDR process"](#), IRIN, 19 Dec. 2003.
  - ["UN sees hope for democratic Burundi"](#), *The Washington Times* (UPI), 15 Dec. 2003.
  - ["Burundi rebel leader heads to capital to join government"](#), Reuters AlertNet, 6 Dec. 2003.
  - For background, see ICG Africa Report N°70, [Refugees and Displaced Persons in Burundi – Defusing the Land Time-Bomb](#), 7 Oct. 2003.



ICG Africa Briefing, [Refugees and Internally Displaced in Burundi: The Urgent Need for a Consensus on Their Repatriation and Reintegration](#), 2 December 2003 (in French: executive summary also in English). Burundi's new peace deal is likely to bring very large numbers of refugees back home within three months, but there are no preparations for their repatriation and reintegration. This omission endangers the peace process overall. It is crucial that the ceasefire accord reached in November not be implemented at the expense of refugees and the internally displaced.

- Central African Republic President Bozize sacked Prime Minister Goumba and government 11 December, and appointed new government with Goumba as vice-president. Changes made after demonstrations in capital against human rights violations by security forces and Bozize's former fighters. Bozize also sacked number of soldiers for lack of discipline.
  - ["Bozize urged to discipline his former fighters"](#), IRIN, 19 Dec. 2003.
  - ["New premier forms government, Goumba appointed VP"](#), IRIN, 15 Dec. 2003.
  - ["Bozize dismisses Goumba's government"](#), IRIN, 11 Dec. 2003.
- Democratic Republic of Congo New national army formed from existing government soldiers and 2 main rebel groups, RCD and MLC, in accordance with peace agreement. New troops to be deployed in eastern DRC. Donors pledged \$3.9 billion for period 2004-2006.
  - ["World Bank donors pledge \\$3.9 bln to Congo"](#), Reuters AlertNet, 19 Dec. 2003.
  - ["Rebels join new army in DR Congo"](#), BBC, 8 Dec. 2003.



- ["Congo's political cleanup"](#), *The Washington Times*, 4 Dec. 2003.
- ["An oasis of hope in eastern Congo"](#), *The Economist*, 4 Dec. 2003.
- For background to the conflict in Ituri, see ICG Africa Report N°64, [Congo Crisis: Military Intervention in Ituri](#), 13 June 2003.

- Republic of Congo Rival rebel militia factions exchanged gun and rocket fire in capital Brazzaville 13 and 18 December. Police announced 3 month crackdown on "trouble makers" in capital.
  - ["Police to crackdown on 'trouble makers'"](#), IRIN, 23 Dec. 2003.
  - ["Feuding militias clash in Congo Republic"](#), Reuters AlertNet, 18 Dec. 2003.
- Rwanda Three Rwandan media executives convicted of genocide and crimes against humanity by International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda for inciting slaughter of Tutsis in 1994. Two jailed for life, other for 27 years.
  - ["3 in media convicted of genocide in Rwanda"](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 3 Dec. 2003.
  - For background to recent 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 Signs that government may launch offensive against LRA soon. Government to amend amnesty law to exclude leaders of Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rebels. Law currently provides immunity and resettlement for all rebels who surrender.
  - ["Searching for hope in Uganda"](#), BBC, 28 Dec. 2003.
  - ["New amnesty law to exclude top LRA leaders"](#), IRIN, 16 Dec. 2003.
  - ["Children suffer during Ugandan war"](#), *The Washington Times*, 11 Dec. 2003.

### HORN OF AFRICA

- Ethiopia/Eritrea Border tension eased. Armed forces leaders of both countries pledged to maintain military stability between their countries – agreed in principle to set up joint military commissions to prevent incidents on disputed border from escalating. Former Canadian Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy appointed UN special envoy to help resolve stalled peace process. But at least 50 killed in Ethiopia in clashes over land near Sudan border, with government accusing Eritrea of backing rebels who incited violence.
  - ["UN special envoy appointed to help stalled process"](#), IRIN, 29 Dec. 2003.
  - ["Ethiopia says over 50 killed in Gambella unrest"](#), Reuters AlertNet, 24 Dec. 2003.
  - ["Ethiopia/Eritrea agree new scheme to calm border"](#), Reuters AlertNet, 18 Dec. 2003.
  - For background see, ICG Africa Report N°68, [Ethiopia and Eritrea: War or Peace?](#), 24 Sept. 2003.
- Somalia More than 60 killed and thousands displaced in fighting between rival clan militias in central Somalia mid December. UN Security Council to set up unit to investigate breaches of arms embargo. Increased tension between self declared autonomous republic Somaliland and self declared autonomous region Puntland over territory claimed by both.

- "Tension rising in north", IRIN, 30 Dec. 2003
- "Over 60 killed as fighting resumes in central region", IRIN, 17 Dec. 2003.
- "UN probes illegal arms in Somalia", BBC, 17 Dec. 2003.
- For background, see ICG Africa Report N°66, *Somaliand: Democratisation and Its Discontents*, 28 Jul. 2003 and ICG Africa Report N°59, *Negotiating a Blueprint for Peace in Somalia*, 6 Mar. 2003.


  Sudan Civil war approaching end, but western Sudan conflict continued to worsen. Positive development in continuing negotiations to end 20 year civil war, with government and rebels reaching agreement 20 December on sharing of oil wealth. Remaining issues include administration of 3 disputed central regions and representation in transitional government. But other conflict continues in western Darfur region, with alarming deterioration in human rights and humanitarian situation and international community yet to take action.

- "The escalating crisis in Darfur", IRIN, 31 Dec. 2003.
- "Sudan govt, rebels to share oil revenue", *The Guardian* (AP), 21 Dec. 2003.
- "The Other War in Sudan: A Call for High Level Observer in Western Sudan Peace Process", ICG media release, 10 Dec. 2003.



ICG Africa Report N°65, *Sudan: Towards an Incomplete Peace*, 11 December 2003. The Sudanese government and the insurgent Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLA) are closer to peace than at any time in the past 20 years. However, considerable hurdles remain before any final deal is signed, and a separate, intensifying war in the west already threatens to undermine it. The international community's engagement should intensify in support of the final deal, in preparation for helping with implementation if successful, and in ensuring coordination between the main peace process and the conflict in the west.


## SOUTHERN AFRICA

 Angola President dos Santos re-elected as head of ruling MPLA party – allowing him to run again in national elections to be held after 2004. Six Angolan workers for CARE killed by landmine 12 December.

- "Dos Santos at the helm", IRIN, 17 Dec. 2003.
- For background, see ICG Africa Report N°61, *Angola's Choice: Reform or Regress*, 7 Apr. 2003.

 Comoros Islands South Africa's President Mbeki helped broker agreement 20 December between government and semi-autonomous islands to share power and revenue. Elections to be held around April 2004. Hundreds had protested 10 December against continuing government ban on opposition leader holding public meetings.



- "Comoros political parties sign agreement", SABC News, 21 Dec. 2003.
- "Comoros protesters demand freedom for party leader", Reuters AlertNet, 10 Dec. 2003.
- "Trouble in paradise", IRIN, 8 Dec. 2003.

 Zimbabwe Further deterioration. Withdrew from Commonwealth after leaders extended suspension of


Zimbabwe for additional 18 months 7 December. IMF moved to expel Zimbabwe 3 December, official inflation now 619.5%. Police shut down independent Daily News day after court allowed it to resume publication. Government backed militias committing widespread rapes and other human rights abuses. South Africa's President Mbeki met with President Mugabe 18 December to urge negotiations with opposition MDC, but no evidence of progress.

- "Zimbabwe militia's horror tales", *International Herald Tribune*, 29 Dec. 2003.
- "South Africa leader lobbies Mugabe", *International Herald Tribune*, 19 Dec. 2003.
- "Mugabe's men defy death threat judge over media freedom", *The Scotsman*, 19 Dec. 2003.
- "Zimbabwe and the Commonwealth", *The Economist*, 11 December 2003.
- For background see ICG Africa Briefing, *Decision Time in Zimbabwe*, 8 Jul. 2003.

## WEST AFRICA

  Côte d'Ivoire Security continued to deteriorate, despite some positive moves. Commercial capital Abidjan tense. Rebel leaders said 22 December they would rejoin coalition government. Government and rebels commenced pulling heavy armaments from frontline. Rebels divided – one group of fighters declared allegiance to new rebel leader, Ibrahim Coulibaly, 19 December. At least 18 killed in attack by unknown assailants on state television station 12 December, repelled by police. Pro-government protesters attempted to storm base of French peacekeepers 1 December.


- "Ivory Coast foes say weapons pullback going well", Reuters AlertNet, 30 Dec. 2003.
- "Ivory Coast rebels say they will return to government", Reuters AlertNet, 22 Dec. 2003.
- "Ivory Coast rebels declare new leader", Reuters AlertNet, 19 Dec. 2003.
- "Ivory Coast police put down attack", *The Guardian* (AP), 13 Dec. 2003.
- For background see ICG Africa report N° 72, *Côte d'Ivoire: The War is not yet over*, 28 Nov. 2003.

 Guinea President Lansana Conté re-elected in 21 December elections with 95.6% of vote. Government claimed 82.8% turnout – opposition says less than 15% voted. Opposition parties boycotted elections and claimed they were rigged.

- "Government claims landside for Conte", IRIN, 26 Dec. 2003.
- "Guinea, a mineral-rich regional buttress", Reuters AlertNet, 21 Dec. 2003.



ICG Africa Report N°74, *Guinea: Uncertainties at the End of an Era*, 19 December 2003. Guinea, once considered a bastion of stability in West Africa, risks drifting into the violence and even civil war that has victimised so much of the region over the past decade. Lansana Conté will be re-elected in a neither free nor fair election on 21 December but Guinea and the international community need to prepare now for the time when the seriously ill president leaves office.

 Liberia Disarmament process in difficulties. At least 9 ex-government militia killed in confrontation with UN

peacekeepers in Monrovia 10 December – militia demanding cash to surrender arms. UN responded by suspending disarmament from 17 December to 20 January 2003, to upgrade camp for former combatants. Peacekeepers deployed to rebel-held town 27 December for first time. UN and US to co-host international donors conference in February 2004. Only 5,900 peacekeeping troops had arrived mid-December out of 15,000 authorised.

- [“UN peacekeepers secure Liberian town”](#), *The Guardian* (AP), 28 Dec. 2003.
- [“More international troops and equipment needed in Liberia – UN report”](#), UN News Centre, 18 Dec. 2003.
- [“UN suspends disarmament in Liberia”](#), *The Guardian* (AP), 15 Dec. 2003.
- [“Street battles kill nine in Liberia”](#), *The Guardian*, 10 Dec. 2003.
- For background, see ICG Africa Report N°71, [Liberia: Security Challenges](#), 3 Nov. 2003

➤ Mauritania Opposition leader Mohamed Haidalla convicted of treason charges, but given 5 year suspended sentence and fine, and released from jail.

- [“Mauritania opposition leader freed”](#), Reuters, 28 Dec. 2003.

➤ Nigeria Handed over 32 border villages to Cameroon 16 December, in accordance with International Court of Justice ruling. Oil-rich Bakassi peninsular still to be returned to Cameroon. Continued fighting between ethnic militias in oil rich Warri region - Human Rights Watch claimed conflict essentially over oil money.


- [“Nigeria hands Cameroon villages”](#), BBC, 19 Dec. 2003.
- [“Delta violence a fight over oil money”](#), Human Rights Watch report, 17 Dec. 2003.
- [“Tension mounts in Warri over fresh militia attack”](#), IRIN, 9 Dec. 2003.
- [“Freedom of expression under attack”](#), Human Rights Watch report, 2 Dec. 2003.

➤ Sierra Leone Government troops on alert to prevent Liberian militias moving weapons into Sierra Leone to escape disarmament process in Liberia. Interpol issued warrant for arrest of ex-President Taylor at request of Special Court for Sierra Leone. Unlikely to be accepted by Nigeria, where Taylor remains in asylum.

- [“Sierra Leone army on alert over Liberian weapons”](#), Reuters AlertNet, 16 Dec. 2003.
- [“Interpol warrant for Taylor illegal, says defence lawyer”](#), IRIN, 5 Dec. 2003.
- [“Healing Sierra Leone's scars”](#), BBC, 17 Dec. 2003.
- For background, see ICG Africa Report N°67, [Sierra Leone: The State of Security and Governance](#), 2 Sept. 2003.



## CENTRAL ASIA

 ICG Asia Report N°72, [Is Radical Islam Inevitable in Central Asia? Priorities for Engagement](#), 22 December 2003. Western governments need to stand up more strongly for political and economic reform in Central Asia if they are to undermine Islamist extremism there. Public diplomacy and promotion of ...

(cont) religious tolerance are important, but if the region is not to become next breeding ground for radicalism, the U.S. and others must show they are serious about democracy and human rights, not merely interested in cooperation from authoritarian governments in the war against terrorism. Based on public opinion surveys and interviews in Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, this report examines the attitudes of Central Asian Muslims to the West and offers a range of policy options for engaging with Islam and reducing support for radical alternatives to present regimes.

➤ Kazakhstan Parliament approved controversial draft media law, criticised by journalists as increasing state's ability to control press.

- [“Consternation at media law”](#), IWPR, 4 Dec. 2003.
- Comment by David Lewis (ICG), [“Lessons in how to steal elections”](#), *Transitions Online*, 1 Dec. 2003.
- For background, see ICG Asia Report N°66, [Youth in Central Asia: Losing the New Generation](#), 31 Oct. 2003.

➤ Kyrgyzstan Amendment placing restrictions on foreign media coverage of elections passed by parliament, drawing strong criticism, particularly from Russian press. In south, Uzbek police illegally crossed border 10 December in attempt to arrest Kyrgyz citizen. Raid thwarted by citizen's neighbours. Uzbek raids into Kyrgyzstan reported frequently; targets usually Muslims suspected of extremism.

- [“Secret Uzbek raid ends in farce”](#), IWPR, 13 Dec. 2003.
- [“Election law amendment sparks debate among press”](#), RFE/RL, 12 Dec. 2003.
- Comment by David Lewis (ICG), [“Lessons in how to steal elections”](#), *Transitions Online*, 1 Dec. 2003.
- For background, see ICG Asia Report N°66, [Youth in Central Asia: Losing the New Generation](#), 31 Oct. 2003; and ICG Asia Report N°37, [Kyrgyzstan's Political Crisis: An Exit Strategy](#), 20 Aug. 2002.

➤ Tajikistan Mamadrusi Iskandarov, head of Democratic Party of Tajikistan (DPT), dismissed as head of Tajikgas (a government post). Government blamed him for energy problems, but Iskandarov claimed decision political. Move part of continued pressure on opposition party members; DPT had been critical of June referendum on constitutional changes. Further controversy over decision by state publishing house not to print Ruz-i-Nav newspaper. Speculation that regime marking limits for opposition activity ahead of elections in early 2005.

- [“Tajik editor hopes publication ban ‘just a mistake’”](#), Eurasianet.org, 9 Dec. 2003.
- [“Tajik opposition fears firing might destabilize political situation”](#), Eurasianet.org, 5 Dec. 2003.
- 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 Authorities cracking down on NGOs. Harassment of staff reportedly increasing, and new law gives state effective control over all NGO activities. President Niazov runs region's most repressive regime, limiting population's access to information, restricting travel abroad, and stifling dissent.

- [“Turkmenbashi targets NGOs”](#), IWPR, 15 Dec. 2003.
- For background, see ICG Asia Report N°66, [Youth in Central Asia: Losing the New Generation](#), 31 Oct. 2003 and ICG Asia Report N°44, [Cracks in the Marble: Turkmenistan's Failing Dictatorship](#), 17 Jan. 2003.

Uzbekistan Human rights situation remains bleak. In latest move to muzzle dissent, government forced cancellation of conference on death penalty. President Islam Karimov appointed hardline governor of Samarkand region, Shavkat Mirziyoev, as new PM, replacing Utkir Sultanov. Move seen as serious setback for political and economic reform.

- "Government blocks conference on death penalty", Human Rights Watch press release, 6 Dec. 2003.
- For background, see ICG Asia Report N°66, *Youth in Central Asia: Losing the New Generation*, 31 Oct. 2003 and ICG Asia Report N°46, *Uzbekistan's Reform Program: Illusion or Reality?*, 18 Feb. 2003.

## SOUTH ASIA

Afghanistan Constitutional Loya Jirga assembled 13 December in Kabul amid security fears. Intense debate followed on presidential/parliamentary power balance and regional-ethnic representation – final vote on draft constitution repeatedly delayed, now not until 1 January at earliest. President Karzai, largely supported by Pashtuns, insisting delegates approve draft giving extensive powers to presidency, but opposed by Northern Alliance representatives. Suicide bombing in Kabul 29 December killed 5 Afghan intelligence officers; Taliban claimed responsibility and threatened further attacks. Afghan UN worker killed, several injured in Farah province 4 December; 15 children killed in two separate U.S. airstrikes; Kandahar shopping area blast 6 December injured 18. NGOs reducing work and personnel as foreign workers continue to be targeted: 2 Indian, 2 Turkish, and 1 Afghan worker on Kandahar-Kabul road kidnapped. Safety issues delaying voter registration and education efforts. Disarmament and reintegration pilot scheme achieved first disarming of defence minister's militia and control over some heavy weapons near Kabul, as well as first regional disarming of 1000 former combatants in Kunduz and Gardez.

- "Karzai refuses deal on 18<sup>th</sup> day of talks of Afghan talks", *The New York Times*, 31 Dec. 2003.
- "Insecurity threatens Afghan vote", *Christian Science Monitor*, 31 Dec. 2003.
- "Afghanistan's long journey", *The Economist*, 17 Dec. 2003.
- "Six children killed in U.S. raid on Afghan compound", *The Washington Post*, 10 Dec. 2003.
- For background, see ICG Asia Report N°65, *Disarmament and Reintegration in Afghanistan*, 30 Sept. 2003, and ICG Asia Report N°64, *Peacebuilding in Afghanistan*, 29 Sept. 2003.

 ICG Asia Briefing, Afghanistan: *The Constitutional Loya Jirga*, 12 December 2003. Afghanistan's proposed new constitution is significantly flawed. The draft differs radically from the one the Constitutional Review Commission submitted to President Karzai in late September and would be unlikely to ensure inclusive, democratic governance and protect human rights – issues central to its public acceptance and national stability. No meaningful power-sharing is envisaged, either within the national government or between central and provincial governments. If adopted by the Constitutional Loya Jirga without important changes, it would allow religious and central government power holders to accumulate more authority at the cost of democratic forces.

India (non-Kashmir) Continuing violence in northeast spread into neighbouring Bhutan where military claimed to have

wiped out 30 anti-Indian insurgent camps. 150 deaths of mainly ULFA and NDFB Bodoland separatists reported. ULFA separatists blamed for previous month's violence in Assam: ULFA founder captured in Bhutan, but military chief vowed to fight on. Kuki and Karbi tribal clashes 3 December claimed another 5 lives. Bodoland Territorial Council created allowing Bodo self-rule in parts of state. On 6 December, eleventh anniversary of Ayodhya mosque razing, Hindu-Muslim clashes in Hyderabad left 6 dead. PM Vajpayee's BJP party made significant electoral gains, unseating Congress-led governments in 3 of 4 states: Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chattisgarh.

- "Bhutan troops overrun Indian rebels' camps", Reuters AlertNet, 21 Dec. 2003.
- "Violence dominates Assam during the year", Outlook India, 14 Dec. 2003.
- "Six dead in Hindu-Muslim clashes in south India", Reuters AlertNet, 7 Dec. 2003.


Kashmir In major policy shift, Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf offered to drop longstanding demand for plebiscite, conditional on progress in talks with India on Kashmir. Foreign Minister Mahmood Ali Kasuri and Information Minister Sheikh Rasheed noted Pakistan continues to support plebiscite but would consider other options. Ceasefire along Line of Control (LOC) holding as normalisation steps continue. Both sides agreed to resume overflights, air and rail links from 1 January. India accelerating work on security fence along LOC, criticised by Musharraf. Ceasefire not supported by Kashmiri separatist groups, though violence reportedly has decreased: death toll since 26 November truce over 150. Indian PM Vajpayee confirmed attendance at January South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) summit in Islamabad; not yet known whether bilateral negotiations on Kashmir will take place.

- "Pakistan would forgo Kashmir referendum", *The Washington Times*, 19 Dec. 2003.
- "Kashmiri guerrilla leader rules out truce in Kashmir", Reuters AlertNet, 15 Dec. 2003.



ICG Asia Reports N°s 68, 69 70. *Kashmir: The View From Islamabad; The View From New Delhi; Learning from the Past*, 4 December 2003. Despite the ceasefire in Kashmir at the end of November 2003, there is serious potential for another violent crisis. All sides will have to reconsider current approaches if peace is to be achieved. ICG has published simultaneously three reports which, taken together, set out the public and private positions of the Indian and Pakistani governments, political leaders and media and examine the history of the crisis and past efforts to resolve it. Including an earlier report on views from within the Kashmir Valley, the series analyses the positions and looks at the constraints in terms of ending the conflict, as they are perceived on all sides. A subsequent final report will offer extensive recommendations on how to move forward with a process of reconciliation between India and Pakistan and within Kashmir.

Nepal Violence continues unabated. Conflict spread into Terai lowland belt, where Maoist group Madhisey Liberation Front imposed 24-hour strike. U.S. Assistant Sec. State Christina Rocca met with government officials, raised issue of human rights abuses. Army, meanwhile, admitted instances of excessive force, promising to punish offenders. Government announced disarmament and reintegration plans for Maoist



rebels, including amnesty, cash rewards for arms and munitions, and shelter and training if rebels surrender before 12 February; government has in past tried similar projects to diminish rebel ranks. Dozens injured in protests calling for all-party government and removal of royalist PM.

- [“Four soldiers among six killed in Nepal violence”](#), Reuters AlertNet, 26 Dec. 2003
- [“Nepal drops charges against student protesters”](#), Reuters AlertNet, 24 Dec. 2003.
- [“Nepal offers amnesty to rebels who surrender”](#), Reuters AlertNet, 18 Dec. 2003.
- [“Nepalese army admits ‘excesses’”](#), BBC, 17 Dec. 2003.
- For background, see ICG Asia Briefing, [Nepal: Back to the Gun](#), 22 Oct. 2003.

↓ Pakistan Two suicide bombers attacked motorcade of President Pervez Musharraf 25 December in second unsuccessful assassination attempt in under 2 weeks. Pakistani intelligence blamed al Qaeda; security under scrutiny. U.S. security personnel targeted in 7 December rocket attack in Northwest Frontier Province. Commonwealth countries said Pakistan to remain suspended until it undertakes democratic and judicial reforms. Deal between Islamist coalition MMA and Musharraf on Legal Framework Order (LFO), incorporated into constitution as seventeenth amendment, formalises Musharraf’s special powers to sack PM and dissolve parliament.

- [“New law extends Musharraf’s powers”](#), CNN, 30 Dec. 2003.
- [“As Musharraf sidelines enemies, his own future is at risk”](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 29 Dec. 2003.
- [“Pakistan needs reforms to re-enter Commonwealth”](#), Reuters AlertNet, 6 Dec. 2003.
- For background, see ICG Asia Report N°49, [Pakistan: The Mullahs and the Military](#), 20 Mar. 2003.

↓ Sri Lanka Political crisis between PM Wickremesinghe and President Kumaratunga continues to disrupt peace process; self-imposed 15 December deadline passed with no resolution to standoff. Wickremesinghe refused to continue peace negotiations with LTTE (Tamil Tigers) without control of security functions, currently in hands of Kumaratunga following latter’s 4 November dismissal of defence, interior, and information ministers and appropriation of their portfolios. Situation unlikely to change before parliament reconvenes in new year. Snap election a possibility.

- [“Stalemate continues in Sri Lanka”](#), *The Hindu*, 15 Dec. 2003.
- [“S.Lanka leaders vow to talk on as deadline passes”](#), Reuters AlertNet, 15 Dec. 2003.

## NORTH EAST ASIA

↓ China (internal) Government issued wanted list of separatist Muslim individuals and groups, accusing them of using terror in pursuit of independent state in Xinjiang. Pakistan said Hasan Mahsum, leader of East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) and one of China’s most wanted, killed in October raid on militant hideout near Afghan border.

- [“Top Chinese militant killed in Pakistan – official”](#), Reuters AlertNet, 24 Dec. 2003.
- [“China’s Uighurs lose out to development”](#), BBC, 19 Dec. 2003.
- [“China issues wanted list of Muslim separatists”](#), Reuters AlertNet, 15 Dec. 2003.

↪ North Korea Negotiations for mid-December six-way talks stalled, but Pyongyang said willing to take part in new talks in early 2004. N. Korea and U.S. failed to agree on talk objectives. Pyongyang insisting complete, irreversible, verifiable dismantling of nuclear weapons not possible without economic aid and security assurances. Economic and energy incentives not included in U.S. proposal. N. Korea accused Washington of delaying tactics. President Bush rejected North Korean 9 December offer to ‘freeze’ nuclear program; Pyongyang rejected U.S. 15 December counter-proposal.

- [“N Korea confirms nuclear talks”](#), BBC, 27 Dec. 2003.
- [“Food Aid to N. Korea to Be Cut in January”](#), *The Washington Post* (AP), 20 Dec. 2003.
- [“U.S. Won’t Offer Incentives at N. Korea Talks”](#), *The Washington Post*, 19 Dec. 2003.
- For background, see ICG Asia Report N°61, [North Korea: A Phased Negotiation Strategy](#), 1 Aug. 2003.

↪ Taiwan Strait President Chen Shui-ban announced government will hold referendum in March 2004, alongside presidential election, asking China to remove missiles aimed at Taiwan; move dismissed as further political stunt by critics. Parliament voted against government attempt to amend clauses in new referendum bill that restrict conditions in which referendums can be held. President Bush, seeking to calm rising cross-Strait tensions, said U.S. did not support unilateral moves by either side to change status quo. Comments seen as significant rebuke to Taiwan.

- [“Taiwan legislators rebuff bill change, placating China”](#), *International Herald Tribune* (Reuters), 20 Dec. 2003.
- [“Mr Wen goes to Washington”](#), *The Economist*, 12 Dec. 2003.
- [“Taiwan reaffirms plan to hold referendum”](#), *The Washington Post*, 10 Dec. 2003.
- [“President Bush and Premier Wen Jiabao remarks to the press”](#), White House transcript, 9 Dec. 2003.
- For background, see ICG Asia Report N°53 - 55, [Taiwan Strait I: What’s Left of ‘One China’?](#), 6 June 2003; [Taiwan Strait II: The Risk of War](#), 6 June 2003; [Taiwan Strait III: The Chance of Peace](#), 6 June 2003.

## SOUTH EAST ASIA

↪ Indonesia Senior Islamic clerics ruled suicide bombings forbidden in Indonesia by Islam 16 December. Four of 6 suspected Indonesian Islamic militants, arrested in Pakistan and deported in December, detained under Indonesia’s anti-terror laws - included Rusman “Gun Gun” Gunawan, brother of Hambali. More alleged rebels killed in Aceh but no independent verification of military statistics on numbers killed or detained since martial law declared in May 2003. Bomb blast at open air concert in Aceh New Year’s eve killed at least 9 concertgoers – perpetrator unknown. An Indonesian journalist held hostage by Aceh rebels since July 2003 killed in shootout between rebels and army 29 December. Red Cross and some U.N. agencies allowed back to Aceh but international NGOs effectively remained barred. Unrest in Papua following appointment of new police chief indicted by the UN’s East Timor Serious Crimes Unit for human rights abuses in East Timor. Sporadic violence continued in Poso.

- [“Explosion kills nine in Indonesia’s Aceh province”](#), *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1 Jan. 2004.
- [“Aceh under martial law: inside the secret war”](#), Human Rights Watch report, 18 Dec. 2003.

- "Suicide bombing 'OK in war zone' - Indonesian cleric", Reuters AlertNet, 17 Dec. 2003.
- For background, see ICG Asia Report N°67, *The Perils of Private Security in Indonesia: Guards and Militia on Bali and Lombok*, 7 Nov. 2003.



ICG Asia Report N°71, *Indonesia Backgrounder: A Guide to the 2004 Elections*, 18 December 2003. Next year's elections in Indonesia are unlikely to spur badly-needed reforms. Public disillusionment with the performance of democratic politics since 1999 and nostalgia for Soeharto-era authoritarian rule are spreading rapidly. Very little progress has been made in tackling corruption or delivering a better standard of living to ordinary Indonesians. Victory by one of the country's two major secular-nationalist parties, or perhaps a coalition of both, is widely expected – but neither looks likely to address seriously the core problems facing the country: blatant corruption, stalled democratic reform, economic stagnation, communal violence, and the more recent threat of terrorism.

- Myanmar (Burma) 'Informal ceasefire' agreed between military government and ethnic minority rebels, Karen National Union (KNU), 8 December. 12 nation talks held 15 December in Bangkok to explain government road map to democracy. Myanmar's ruling council announced intention to hold constitutional conference with all opposition parties in 2004. UN welcomed move but, along with U.S., EU and Japan, continues to view road map as non-participatory, non-transparent and lacking timeline – all demand release of Aung San Suu Kyi and substantive talks with opposition. Suu Kyi refuses liberty until National League for Democracy (NLD) colleagues arrested in connection with 30 May violence released; 14 of 35 remain incarcerated. Nine linked to NLD sentenced to death for treason 3 December.
  - "Myanmar rebels committed to peace talks", *The Guardian* (AP), 23 Dec. 2003.
  - "Myanmar: Amnesty International calls for actions not words", Amnesty International press release, 22 Dec. 2003.
  - "Myanmar promises constitution conference in 2004", Reuters, 16 Dec. 2003.
  - For background, see ICG Asia Report N°52, *Myanmar Backgrounder: Ethnic Minority Politics*, 7 May 2003.

- Philippines Election campaigning gathered momentum. Fernando Poe, film actor and close friend of deposed President Estrada, ahead of President Arroyo in opinion polls, but opposition divided. Commander of Abu Sanyaf rebel group, Galib Andang, captured 7 December. Government capture operation provoked gun battles with aligned Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) rebels, killing at least 14. Ceasefire with MILF re-established 17 December and formal peace negotiations expected to resume soon after Malaysia sends team of 25 observers to Mindanao. Five killed in clashes between insurgent New People's Army (NPA) and government troops 7-8 December; immediately followed by unilateral declaration of Christmas ceasefire (10 December – 6 January) by government.
  - "Philippines Arroyo gets celebrity election boost", Reuters, 29 Dec. 2003.
  - "Manila, rebels restore truce after three-day battle", ReliefWeb, 17 Dec. 2003.
  - "Philippines politics hooked on the movies", BBC, 11 Dec. 2003.

- "Philippines declares holiday ceasefire with rebels", Reuters AlertNet, 8 Dec. 2003.

## PACIFIC

- Papua New Guinea Arrangements finalised 11 December at bilateral summit for Australia to deploy around 300 police, judges and administrators to address growing lawlessness, as condition of U.S.\$220 million Australian aid program. Draft constitution, proposed by Bougainville leaders to resolve final status of semi-autonomous province, being considered by Bipartisan National Committee. Third stage of weapons destruction by Bougainville rebels in progress under auspices of UN-chaired Peace Process Consultative Committee; UN political office to be replaced by smaller observer mission mandated until June 2004 to oversee constitutional process and weapons disposal.
  - "Australia agrees PNG police deal", BBC, 11 Dec. 2003.
  - "Papua New Guinea: UN proposes reduced role in calmer Bougainville", UN News Centre, 15 Dec. 2003.
- Solomon Islands Security situation stabilised. Weather Coast region of Guadalcanal officially declared safe; over 200 refugees who had fled fighting earlier in the year returned in December. Australian-led multinational intervention force completed troop withdrawal from Weather Coast November 2003. Rapid reaction force remains on high alert in Townsville, Australia, deployable within 24 hours. Australian PM Howard visited 22 December for discussions with Solomon Islands government and civilian Regional Assistance Mission.
  - "Solomon's PM under investigation", *The Australian*, 22 Dec. 2003.
  - "Solomon Islands refugees return to villages", ABC, 6 Dec. 2003.

## Europe

### BALKANS

- Bosnia and Herzegovina Integration of armies and customs services continued. Bosnian Serb commander Momir Nikolic imprisoned for 27 years by Hague tribunal for role in Srebrenica massacre and Serb General Stanislav Galic to 20 for crimes against humanity and war crimes. European Commission feasibility study gave Bosnia good chance of beginning negotiations for EU Stabilisation and Association Agreement in 2004. One noted shortcoming was lack of cooperation with Hague tribunal. International funding secured for new domestic war crimes court to begin work early 2004.
  - "Bosnia to try its war criminals, but is new court up to the job?", *Christian Science Monitor*, 23 December 2003.
  - "Glad tidings: some hopeful news from the Balkans", *The Economist* (subscription), 18 Dec. 2003.
  - "Bosnian Serb gets 27 years for Srebrenica massacre", Reuters AlertNet, 2 Dec. 2003.
  - For background, see ICG Balkans Report N°146, *Bosnia's Nationalist Governments: Paddy Ashdown and the Paradoxes of State Building*, 22 Jul. 2003.



➤ Kosovo Document presented to UN Security Council by head of UN Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) Harri Holkeri 10 December spelling out standards to be met in democracy, rule of law, market economy and refugee returns before discussion of final status. UN lamented slow progress in minority returns and integration. Twelve Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC) officers suspended for 6 months by UN while investigation conducted into suspected involvement in March bombing. Kosovo's parliament voted to nullify all laws passed in the province during Milosevic's rule; move immediately condemned by Kosovo Serb leaders and overturned by UNMIK.


- "Kosovo: UN Official Cites Poor Record On Minorities", RFE/RL, 17 Dec. 2003.
- "New Standards for Kosovo", Transitions Online Balkans Reconstruction Report, 15 Dec. 2003.
- "Kosovo officers under investigation", IWPR Balkan Crisis Report No. 472, 11 Dec. 2003.
- For background, see ICG Balkans Report N°148, *Two to Tango: An Agenda for the New Kosovo SRSG*, 3 Sept. 2003.

➤ Macedonia Decade-long foreign military presence in Macedonia ended 15 December as EU operation Concordia was officially replaced by a police support mission, Proxima. Six-week voluntary disarmament program also finished 15 December, yielding about 8,000 illegal weapons. Estimates of number of illegal weapons in the country range from 100–170,000, but compared with similar initiatives in the region, the campaign was a success.

- "Macedonia weapons amnesty a success, but many stick to their guns", RFE/RL, 17 Dec. 2003.
- For background, see ICG Europe Report N°149, *Macedonia: No Time for Complacency*, 23 Oct. 2003.

➤ Serbia Parliamentary elections 28 December ushered in period of political instability. Nationalist Serbian Radical Party (SRS) led by indicted war criminal Vojislav Seselj won largest number of seats (82 of 240) in parliamentary elections; Milosevic's SPS won 21 seats. DSS led by Vojislav Kostunica won 53 seats, Democratic Party 37 and G17+ won 34. Neither Radicals nor SPS likely to be in new government, but can block reforms. The new government, of whatever composition, likely to be short-lived. Recent ICTY indictments fuelled domestic debate about cooperation with Hague tribunal. SRS vowed not to extradite any more ICTY indictees to The Hague. Highly politicised trial of 44 suspects in March assassination of Premier Zoran Djindjic commenced in Belgrade 22 December, with chaotic scenes as defence lawyers walked out.

- "Serbia waits for a government", BBC, 30 Dec. 2003.
- "Something nasty in the Balkans", *The Economist*, 30 Dec. 2003.
- "Nationalism After Nationalism", Transitions Online Balkan Reconstruction Report, 19 Dec. 2003.
- "Serbia: Trial of Djindjic assassins under scrutiny", IWPR Balkans Crisis report No. 473, 18 Dec. 2003.
- For background, see ICG Balkans Report N°145, *Serbian Reform Stalls Again*, 17 Jul. 2003.

 ICG Europe Report N°152, *Southern Serbia's Fragile Peace*, 09 December 2003. Recent violence in the Albanian-majority Presevo Valley in southern Serbia suggests the delicate peace there could still unravel. The Presevo Valley is generally thought of as one of the few conflict resolution success ...

(cont) stories in the former Yugoslavia, but recurring incidents make clear that peace is far from secure. The violence has little popular support, but there is a sense among local Albanians that peace has not delivered what it promised. Albanians there are deeply unhappy at high unemployment and lack of economic prospects. Serbia's stalled reforms prevent much-needed political and economic change, and efforts to increase Albanian participation in state institutions have had mixed success. Unresolved issues in Kosovo make local politics more nationalistic. Serious tensions linger, requiring the attention of local authorities, Belgrade, Pristina, and the international community.


## CAUCASUS

➤ Azerbaijan Over 100 opposition activists remain jailed for taking part in protests against fraudulent 15 October election. Group of prisoners and their relatives began hunger strike 1 December, demanding release of those still held. Rauf Arifoglu, editor of leading opposition daily, among detainees; OSCE calling for his release. Heidar Aliyev, leader of Azerbaijan for past decade and father of current President Ilham Aliyev, died of heart failure, aged 80.

- "Heydar Aliyev, Azerbaijan's hard-nosed 'savior', dies", *The Washington Post*, 13 Dec. 2003.
- "Press freedom curtailed since Ilham Aliev's election as president", Reporters Without Borders press release, 10 Dec. 2003.
- "OSCE media freedom representative asks for release of Azeri journalist from prison", OSCE press release, 4 Dec. 2003.

➤ Georgia Tbilisi gripped by fears of counter-coup, possibly by military forces loyal to exiled former State Security Minister Igor Giorgadze. Several bomb blasts and other violent incidents reported throughout month. Concern that country could disintegrate or descend into civil war – or both – as result of power games between rival political factions ahead of 4 January presidential elections and secessionist aspirations of Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Ajara regions. Russia offering tacit support to breakaway regions; hosted leaders for talks in Moscow, sparking outrage from Tbilisi and rebuke from U.S. Sec. State Colin Powell. Aslan Abashidze, authoritarian leader of Ajara, said will call off planned boycott of January election.

- "Adjar leader drops opposition to presidential ballot", RFE/RL, 29 Dec. 2003.
- "Uphill task for next Georgian president", IWPR, 23 Dec. 2003.
- "Powell sends Russia warning about Georgia", *The Washington Post*, 2 Dec. 2003.

 ICG Europe Report N°151, *Georgia: What Now?*, 3 December 2003. Georgia's political crisis is far from over and could still lead to violence and the country's disintegration. Following the forced resignation of President Eduard Shevardnadze on 23 November, Georgia faces a risky transition period. The 4 January 2004 presidential ballot is one important step, but the real test of political stability will be the parliamentary elections, likely to be held sometime in spring 2004. International support for free and fair elections must be exceptionally robust if the current political crisis is to be resolved democratically. Georgia needs a strong and genuinely popular government to deal with its difficult economic...



(cont) and social situation and to re-establish its territorial integrity, which is under further threat in the Ajara region following the bloodless November revolution.

- Nagorno-Karabakh Presidents Robert Kocharian of Armenia and Ilham Aliyev of Azerbaijan met for first time 11 December, on sidelines of UN summit in Geneva: said fuller dialogue on dispute to begin. Talks in Scotland between Armenian and Azerbaijani delegations said to have been constructive.
  - ["Karabakh talks lead to peace vow"](#), BBC, 20 Dec. 2003.
  - ["Leaders talk of peace in Karabakh"](#), BBC, 11 Dec. 2003.

## EASTERN EUROPE

- Moldova Peace efforts in disarray following Chisinau's last-minute rejection, in November, of controversial Russian proposal for ending dispute with breakaway Transnistrian region. OSCE annual meeting, in Maastricht, ended in stalemate 2 December, with Russia failing to garner support for its plan, and other OSCE members unable to commit Russia to deadline for withdrawing its troops from Transnistria. Officials in Tiraspol, Transnistrian capital, declared suspension of Russian military evacuation in retaliation for Moldovan government's failure to accept Russian proposal.
  - ["Moldova: EU offers plan for European integration"](#), RFE/RL, 8 Dec. 2003.
  - ["Powell seeks international peace force for Moldova"](#), Reuters AlertNet, 2 Dec. 2003.
  - For background, see ICG Europe Report N°147, [Moldova: No Quick Fix](#), 12 August 2003.
- Russia (Chechnya) Suicide bombing of train in southern Stavropol region, near Chechnya, killed 45 on 5 December. Chechen rebel leadership denied involvement. Second suicide bombing 4 days later left 6 dead outside landmark Moscow hotel across from Kremlin; reports said Chechen woman responsible. In Dagestan region, near Chechen and Georgian frontiers, dozens of militants attacked Russian border troops 15 December, killing 9, then took hostages and fled into mountains. Russian troops freed hostages, but clashes continue. Akhmar Zavgaev won lone Chechen Duma seat in Russian parliamentary election 7 December. Unofficial reports indicate extremely low turnout among Chechen voters.
  - ["Russia 'liquidates Chechen force'"](#), BBC, 30 Dec 2003.
  - ["A bomber kills 5 in Moscow's heart"](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 10 Dec. 2003.

## WESTERN EUROPE/MEDITERRANEAN

- Corsica Crackdown on links between organised crime and nationalist violence announced in September by Interior Minister Sarkozy now underway. Leading Corsican nationalist, Charles Pieri, taken in for police questioning 14 December, placed under formal investigation 17 December for terrorism and misuse of public funds. Corsican separatist group, FLNC, announced unilateral ceasefire in surprise move 14 November after surge of violence since failed July 2003 autonomy referendum.
  - ["French judge orders probe on Corsican nationalist"](#), Reuters AlertNet, 17 Dec. 2003.

- Cyprus 15 December parliamentary elections in Turkish Cyprus, widely viewed as referendum on UN reunification plan, resulted in stalemate. President Rauf Denktaş's nationalist coalition, who oppose UN plan endorsed by Greece, Turkey and Greek Cypriot government, won same number of seats as opposition parties favouring reunification and EU accession; fresh elections to be held in 2 months if parties unable to form coalition government. Denktaş appointed leader of pro-European party, Mehmet Ali Talat, as PM of Turkish Cyprus 29 December. U.S. and EU keen to broker reunification before Greek Cypriot part of island joins EU in May 2004.
  - ["Turkish Cypriots name pro EU PM"](#), BBC, 29 Dec. 2003.
  - ["Close election casts doubt on plan to unite Cyprus"](#), *The Washington Post*, 15 Dec. 2003.

- Northern Ireland No progress in political stalemate as DUP maintained refusal to work with Sinn Fein. Three Assembly members defected from David Trimble's moderate UUP to ally with Ian Paisley's DUP. IRA and loyalist ceasefires held. Review of the Good Friday Agreement due to start in January. Blair and Ahern met Sinn Fein 17 December to push for further commitments on peace process.
  - ["Election puts N. Ireland peace process on hold"](#), *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 12 Dec. 2003.
  - ["Unionists calculate new arithmetic"](#), BBC, 20 Dec. 2003.

- Spain (Basque region) Christmas bombing campaign by Basque separatist group ETA foiled – 2 suspected ETA members arrested 24 December, having planted 3 bombs and in possession of another. ETA seriously weakened by 9 December arrests of military and logistical chiefs; weapons and false identity documents also seized in operation. Basque plan to become 'free-associated state' (sovereign state associated with Spain) to be debated by regional parliament and if approved, put to referendum in 2005. Central government declared moves unconstitutional, filed appeal 13 November with Constitutional Court and passed law 28 November criminalising calling of referendum without permission of central government.
  - ["Spanish police find fourth bomb after plot foiled"](#), Reuters AlertNet, 26 Dec. 2003.
  - ["Long Basque Rebellion Losing Strength"](#), *The Washington Post*, 11 Dec. 2003.
  - ["French police arrest Eta's 'military leader'"](#), *The Guardian*, 9 Dec. 2003.

- Turkey Investigations into November bombings that claimed 62 lives indicated al Qaeda financing. Around 30 arrested including individual suspected of making four bombs used in attacks.
  - ["Turkish Suspect: al-Qaida Behind Attacks"](#), *The Guardian* (AP), 20 Dec. 2003.
  - ["Codename Abu Nidal"](#), *The New York Times*, 8 Dec. 2003.

## Latin America /Caribbean

### LATIN AMERICA

- Colombia Leftist rebel group ELN rejected conditional offer by government to open peace talks. ELN released remaining 5 foreign hostages kidnapped September. One of alleged

- leaders of FARC rebel group captured by police. FARC and ELN rebels attacked paramilitary village 30 December, killing 40.
- ["40 killed in rebel assault on Colombian village"](#), *The Washington Post* (AP), 31 Dec. 2003.
  - ["Colombia rebel group rejects peace offer"](#), *The Guardian* (AP), 29 Dec. 2003.
  - ["Colombia rebels free 5 foreign hostages"](#), *The Guardian* (AP), 23 Dec. 2003.
  - ["Colombia police say they catch suspected rebel commander"](#), Reuters, 16 December 2003.
  - For background, see ICG Latin America Reports N°5, [Colombia: Negotiating with the Paramilitaries](#), 16 Sept. 2003, and N°6, [Colombia: President Uribe's Democratic Security Policy](#), 13 November 2003.

- ↪ Ecuador Striking teachers clashed with police in protests on 10 December – police used tear gas to quell 5000 strong protest. Indigenous groups, including umbrella organization CONAIE, planning large January protests aimed at ousting President. Gutierrez.
- ["Year old government on rocks"](#), *The Miami Herald*, 16 Dec. 2003.
  - ["Ecuador teachers clash with police"](#), *The Guardian* (AP), 11 Dec. 2003.

- ↪ Guatemala Former mayor of Guatemala City, Oscar Berger, elected president 28 December in peaceful run-off election – in contrast to violence and intimidation of November first round election. Less than half registered voters cast votes.
- ["Guatemala victor calls for unity"](#), BBC, 30 Dec. 2003.
  - ["Conservative ex-mayor wins Guatemalan presidential election"](#), *The San Francisco Chronicle*, 28 Dec. 2003.

- ↪ ↘ Haiti Demonstrators protested against Aristide government throughout December, in lead up to 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of independence on 1 January. Pro-Aristide gang attacked student protesters 5 December, injuring 20. Eight reported killed in protests 22 December, President Aristide's supporters blamed. At least 41 killed during protests since mid September. Aristide's offer to end confrontation rejected by opposition. Some Haitian police, sent to protect demonstrators, reportedly joined protests.
- ["Haiti's bicentennial symbolized by unrest"](#), Reuters AlertNet, 31 Dec. 2003.
  - ["Haiti med students, doctors demonstrate"](#), *The Guardian* (AP), 25 Dec. 2003.
  - ["Haiti's sad anniversary"](#), *The Economist*, 18 Dec. 2003.

- ↪ Peru Prime Minister Beatriz Moreno resigned 15 December at request of President Toledo, claiming she was victim of smear campaign. Toledo reshuffled cabinet, appointed Carlos Ferrero as PM. One of new ministers resigned within days after accused of corruption. Toledo claims mafia backed by ex-President Fujimori attempting to destabilise government by making unfounded allegations in media.
- ["After scandal, Peru gets new minister – again"](#), Reuters, 19 Dec. 2003.
  - ["Peru's first woman prime minister resigns"](#), *The Scotsman*, 16 Dec. 2003.
  - ["Peruvian President fires Premier, then shuffles cabinet"](#), *The Washington Post* (AP), 15 Dec. 2003.
  - ["Toledo says mafia trying to destabilize Peru"](#), Reuters AlertNet, 10 Dec. 2003.

- ↪ Venezuela Opposition claims 3.6m signed November petition calling for referendum to recall President Chavez – well above 2.4m signatures required. Government claimed many signatures fraudulent. Electoral Commission has 30 days from 5 January to determine validity of signatures. Chavez likely to continue to oppose referendum. Chavez met with Cuba's Fidel Castro in Venezuela 22 December. Border clashes between Venezuelan troops and Colombian paramilitaries raise tensions between the countries – Venezuela tightens security on border
- ["Venezuela steps up border defence"](#), BBC, 30 Dec. 2003.
  - ["Castro, Chavez meet in secretive Venezuelan talks"](#), Reuters, 22 Dec. 2003.
  - ["Government blasts Venezuela recall drive"](#), *The Guardian*, 21 Dec. 2003.
  - ["A vote on Hugo Chavez comes closer"](#), *The Economist*, 4 Dec. 2003.

## Middle East /North Africa

### EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

- ↪ Israel/Occupied Territories Israeli PM Ariel Sharon said in major speech that country will sever links with Palestinians if no progress made toward peace in coming months, suggesting political shift. Bush Administration responded with warning against taking unilateral steps which harm Roadmap. Palestinian leaders failed to agree to full ceasefire with Israel in Cairo talks; failure seen as setback for Palestinian PM Ahmed Qurei. UN General Assembly asked International Court of Justice in The Hague for opinion on controversial security fence through West Bank; Court to hold hearings in February. "Geneva Initiative", offering full blueprint for peace settlement, launched 1 December with widespread support from world leaders. Suicide bombing in Tel Aviv 25 December first in over 2 months; attack killed 4, shortly after Israeli helicopter strike in Gaza killed 6, including militant leader.
- ["White House warns Sharon not to abandon the road map"](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 20 Dec. 2003.
  - ["U.S. Leaders Support New Israel-Palestine Peace Initiatives"](#), Geneva Initiative, 8 Dec. 2003.
  - ["Striking accord"](#), *The Economist*, 5 Dec. 2003.
  - For background, see ICG Middle East Reports N°2-4, [Middle East Endgame I: Getting to a Comprehensive Arab-Israeli Peace Settlement](#), 16 July 2002; [Middle East Endgame II: How a Comprehensive Israeli-Palestinian Peace Settlement Would Look](#), 16 July 2002; and [Middle East Endgame III: Israel, Syria, Lebanon – How Comprehensive Peace Settlements Would Look](#), 16 July 2002.

- ↪ Jordan Three Iraqi nationals charged with plotting to attack U.S. and Israeli targets in Jordan.
- ["Jordan charges three Iraqis with attack plans"](#), *The Guardian* (AP), 19 Dec. 2003.
  - For background, see ICG Middle East Briefing, [The Challenge of Political Reform: Jordanian Democratization and Regional Instability](#), 8 Oct. 2003.

- ↪ Lebanon Israeli troops shot and killed 2 Lebanese men carrying hunting rifles along border with Israel 9 December.

Lebanese security forces arrested 2 citizens suspected of planning to bomb U.S. embassy in Beirut.

- ["Bomber" seized at Beirut embassy](#), BBC, 10 Dec. 2003.
- ["Israeli forces kill two gunmen on Lebanon border"](#), Reuters AlertNet, 9 Dec. 2003.
- Daniel Byman, ["Should Hezbollah be next?"](#), *Foreign Affairs* (for purchase), Nov./Dec. 2003.
- For background, see ICG Middle East Briefing, [Hizbollah: Rebel Without a Cause?](#), 30 July 2003.

- Syria Syrian President Bashar al-Assad urged U.S. to help restart talks over Golan Heights, captured by Israel in 1967 war. Israel reacted sceptically to peace overtures and in late December announced plan to double number of settlers in Golan Heights. Elsewhere, Syrian authorities arrested 6 men believed to be al Qaeda couriers and confiscated US\$23.5 million.
  - ["Israel snubs Syria with Golan plan"](#), *The Guardian*, 1 Jan 2004.
  - ["Syria seizes six Arab couriers, \\$23 million"](#), *The Washington Post*, 20 Dec. 2003.
  - ["Israel gives cautious welcome to Syrian peace moves"](#), Reuters AlertNet, 2 Dec. 2003.
  - For background, see ICG Middle East Briefing, [Hizbollah: Rebel Without a Cause?](#), 30 July 2003.

## GULF

- Iran Earthquake devastated ancient city of Bam, killing at least 28,000 and perhaps many more. Early international response included U.S. government planes landing in Iran for first time in over 2 decades, carry relief. Tehran signed additional protocol of Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty allowing IAEA to conduct more intrusive inspections of nuclear sites. Evidence discovered in investigation of nuclear program points to Pakistan as source of advanced technology. Negotiations reportedly ongoing with U.S. over handover – or return to home countries – of detained al Qaeda suspects. U.S. meanwhile deciding whether to expel anti-Iranian Mujahideen-e Khalq Organization (MKO) from Iraq; Iraqi Governing Council decreed MKO must leave by end of December, though to where unclear. Controversial registration of candidates for February parliamentary elections ongoing; candidates must be vetted by conservative Guardians Council.
  - ["Inside a group caught between 3 powers"](#), *Christian Science Monitor*, 31 Dec. 2003.
  - ["Now wait for the political tremors"](#), *The Economist*, 30 Dec. 2003.
  - ["Nuclear program in Iran tied to Pakistan"](#), *The Washington Post*, 21 Dec. 2003.
  - ["Iran to let UN inspect nuclear sites"](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 18 Dec. 2003.
  - 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. troops captured hiding Saddam Hussein 13 December, setting off both clashes and celebrations in Iraqi streets. Impact of capture on anti-Coalition insurgency still uncertain; at present, attacks continue unabated, with 22 Coalition soldiers killed by hostile fire since capture. Day after capture, car bomb exploded in town of Khaldiya, killing 17 policemen. Attacks in Karbala 27 December killed 12, including 4 Bulgarian soldiers, 2 Thai engineers. U.S. followed up capture with large-scale arrests, claiming better intelligence, including from documents found with Hussein, helping piece

together structure of resistance. U.S. says no decision made on whether new Iraqi war crimes court will try Hussein. Anger at U.S. move to exclude countries who did not send troops from bidding on reconstruction contracts; France, Germany, and Russia nonetheless agreed to major write-off of Iraqi debt, as did Britain, Japan, and others. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan called 15 January meeting with Governing Council and U.S. to seek clarity about role they thought UN might play; said in 10 December report that security situation made quick return unlikely. 261 Coalition soldiers, including 214 Americans, killed by hostile fire since 1 May, declared end of combat operations

- ["UN's return to Iraq is stalled by friction"](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 30 Dec. 2003.
- ["Iraq after Saddam's capture"](#), *The Economist*, 18 Dec. 2003.
- ["Suicide bombers strike Iraqi police"](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 16 Dec. 2003.
- For background, see ICG Middle East Report N°19, [Iraq's Constitutional Challenge](#), 13 Nov. 2003, and ICG Middle East Briefing, [Iraq's Shiites Under Occupation](#), 9 Sept. 2003.



ICG Middle East Report N°20, [Iraq: Building a New Security Structure](#), 23 December 2003. The Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) needs to rethink its strategy for a new Iraqi security structure. Facing an insurgency and many political pressures, the temptation to respond to today's requirements with expedient moves is strong. But eventually the CPA will depart, leaving Iraq to deal with the consequences. It must lay the foundations for an Iraqi military that will be an instrument of stability, symbol of national unity and bulwark against sectarian conflict. Forming a new army optimally would anchor Iraqi unity while helping to symbolise the restoration of full sovereignty. As currently initiated, the process is unlikely to do that. The decision to dismantle the former regular army was the first misstep, and its ripple effects can be felt to this day. This report critically assesses the CPA's approach and recommends a number of key steps that it should take.

- Saudi Arabia U.S. issued terror alerts and reduced diplomatic staff, saying it continued to receive indications of planned attacks against Western targets.
  - ["Saudi Arabia, America's ally and enemy"](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 23 Dec. 2003.
  - ["New warning about threat of terrorism is issued in Saudi Arabia"](#), *The Washington Post*, 18 December 2003.
- Yemen Security forces reportedly foiled plot to blow up UK embassy in capital, Sanaa. Government walking fine line between cooperating with U.S. in war on terror and appeasing populace strongly opposed to U.S. policies in region.
  - ["Yemen's new anti-terror strategy"](#), BBC, 16 Dec. 2003.
  - ["Yemen foils embassy terror plot"](#), BBC, 13 Dec. 2003.
  - 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 Court froze activities of main political party after split in party earlier in 2003. U.S. Sec. State Colin Powell, during two-day visit to region, praised Algeria for cooperation in war on terror but urged that April 2004 elections be free and fair. Powell comments bring into question status of Islamic Salvation Front party, currently banned.



- "Algerian court freezes main political party", BBC, 30 Dec. 2003.
- "Truth and Justice on Hold: The New State Commission on Disappearances", Human Rights Watch report, 9 Dec. 2003.
- "US presses Algeria on free elections, human rights", Reuters AlertNet, 4 Dec. 2003.
- For background, see ICG Middle East/North Africa Report N°15, *Algeria: Unrest and Impasse in Kabylia*, 10 June 2003.

➤ Egypt Foreign Minister Ahmed Maher assaulted by group of Palestinians while praying at Al Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem. Attack apparently triggered by anger at Maher's earlier meeting with Israeli PM Ariel Sharon on Roadmap. Egyptian government vowed to continue recent mediation efforts between Israel and Palestinians; Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak also pushing to improve relations between Syria and U.S.

- "Seven arrests after Egyptian official attacked", CNN, 23 Dec. 2003.
- "Egyptians begin asking: after Mubarak, what?", *The Washington Post*, 17 Dec. 2003.
- For background, see ICG Middle East Briefing, *The Challenge of Political Reform: Egypt After the Iraq War*, 30 Sept. 2003.

➤ Libya In surprise announcement, Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi said country would end pursuit of WMD and allow unconditional inspections. Declaration followed months of

secret negotiations with U.S. and Britain and visits by American and British inspectors to Libyan sites. Nuclear program reportedly more developed than previously thought; includes advanced uranium enrichment capabilities. Move paves way for possible lifting of U.S. sanctions, in place for almost two decades.

- "Qaddafi comes clean", *The Economist*, 29 Dec. 2003.
- "Weapons inspectors begin visiting sites in Libya", *The Washington Post*, 28 Dec. 2003.

➤ Morocco On visit to Rabat, U.S. Sec. State Powell praised Morocco for anti-terror cooperation but voiced concerns over policies adopted at expense of human rights.

- "Powell praises Morocco's anti-terror cooperation", Reuters AlertNet, 3 Dec. 2003.

➤ Western Sahara Alvaro de Soto, UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Western Sahara, and UNHCR officials visited Algeria and Morocco for talks on new confidence building measures aimed at helping Western Sahara's refugees living in desert camps in Algeria. This followed successful meeting in Geneva earlier in month with Front POLISARIO officials.

- "UN officials head to Algeria and Morocco for talks on Western Sahara refugees", UN News Centre, 16 Dec. 2003.

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