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## CrisisWatch:

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

*CrisisWatch* is compiled by Crisis Group's Brussels Research Unit, drawing on multiple sources including the resources of 145 staff members across five continents, who already report on some 60 of the situations listed here. Comments and suggestions can be sent to [crisiswatch@crisisgroup.org](mailto:crisiswatch@crisisgroup.org).

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## December 2007 Watchlist



### Conflict Risk Alerts

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DR Congo



### Conflict Resolution Opportunities

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## Africa

### CENTRAL AFRICA

➡ Burundi President Pierre Nkurunziza formed new “government of consensus” 14 November. Cabinet includes members of opposition FRODEBU and UPRONA, who had boycotted parliament since July, ending months of power-sharing consultations with governing CNDD-FDD. Parliament voted in UPRONA’s Yves Satinguvu as first vice-president 8 November day after predecessor, Martin Nduwimana, resigned to break government-opposition impasse. FNL rebels seized 2 officials 22 November to exchange for imprisoned FNL. 2 soldiers killed in clashes with FNL 24-25 November; government threatened to pursue rebels.

- [“Burundi threatens offensive against FNL rebels”](#), Reuters, 26 Nov. 2007.
- [“Burundi hopes cabinet reshuffle will end deadlock”](#), Reuters, 15 Nov. 2007.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°131, [Burundi: Finalising Peace with the FNL](#), 28 Aug. 2007.

➡ Central African Republic Rebels in north west reportedly killed soldier in attack on main road between Bocaranga and Bang, 26 November.

- [“Central African rebel attack ends period of calm”](#), Reuters, 26 Nov. 2007.

➡ Democratic Republic of Congo Escalation feared as rebels loyal to General Nkunda continued to clash with government troops in North Kivu. Army head General Kayembe and MONUC commander Colonel Gaye said 22 November rebels would be disarmed by force following failed attempts at negotiations. MONUC reported army sending reinforcements to region ahead of threatened major offensive against rebels. Nkunda’s October promise to send 200 troops for disarming not fulfilled. Clashes early in month led to 28,000 displaced around Goma. Government signed pact with Rwanda, 10 November, calling Hutu FDLR “genocidal military organization” to be militarily dismantled (see Rwanda). UNSC welcomed deal 21 November as “important milestone” towards definitive settlement. UNSG Ban Ki-moon recommended extension of MONUC, 20 November, until mid-2008 elections. President Kabila reshuffled cabinet 25 November; reduced ministers from 59 to 45 but left major posts unchanged. Commander under Nkunda, Micho Bizabaso, surrendered with 14 men, 27 November.

- [“Red Cross says east Congo violence worst since civil war peak in 2000”](#), AP, 29 Nov. 2007.
- [“U.N. to help Congo disarm dissidents by force”](#), Reuters, 22 Nov. 2007.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°133, [Congo: Bringing Peace to North Kivu](#), 31 October 2007.

➡ Rwanda Kigali and Kinshasa signed agreement on common approach to end threats to peace and stability in region 12 November. Pact commits DRC to military action against FDLR.

- [“Congo agrees to FDLR disarmament plan”](#), *New Times*, 12 Nov. 2007.

➡ Uganda Ceasefire between government and Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) extended for 3 months, 3 November,

as peace process continued. LRA negotiator Martin Ojul first rebel representative to visit Kampala since start of conflict in 1988. LRA peace team toured northern Uganda to consult with victims and ask forgiveness for wartime atrocities; continued to reject ICC indictment of leaders including Joseph Kony. Numerous reports suggested LRA deputy leader Vincent Otti executed under Kony’s orders. Kony denied accusation 15 November; claimed Otti “under house arrest”. 7 LRA defectors (including commanders) surrendered to UN forces in DRC, returning to Uganda 30 November under amnesty. LRA pledged to continue peace talks 19 November, but 2 stages remain in consultation process: talks unlikely before 2008.

- [“Deputy of Uganda’s rebel LRA executed – deserter”](#), Reuters, 30 Nov. 2007.
- [“LRA may abandon Kony”](#), IWPR, 19 Nov. 2007.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°46, [Northern Uganda Peace Process: The Need to Maintain Momentum](#), 14 Sept. 2007.

### HORN OF AFRICA

➡ Chad Heavy fighting erupted in east between military and 2 rebel groups, UFDD (Union des forces pour la démocratie et le développement) and RFC (Rassemblement des forces pour le changement), end November, as rebels abandoned 25 October peace agreement. Both sides claimed to have inflicted heavy casualties. Chad intelligence chief accused Sudan of arming UFDD rebels 27 November. Largely French EU protection force due to start deployment mid-December; UFDD declared 30 November “state of war” against French or any deployed foreign troops. Anti-French demonstrations held N’Djamena 14 November in protest of Arche de Zoe child “kidnapping” incident; thousands dispersed with tear gas.

- [“New Chad battles as doubts mount over EU peace force”](#), AFP, 29 Nov. 2007.
- [“‘Hundreds dead’ in Chad fighting”](#), BBC, 27 Nov. 2007.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°111, [Chad: Back towards War?](#), 1 June 2006.

➡ Ethiopia Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) rebels accused government of bombing villages in Ogaden region with high civilian casualties. Government denied; claimed killed 100 rebels in last month. UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs John Holmes visited region 27 November, expressed concern at Ogaden developments.

- [“U.N. says ‘deep international concern’ at Ogaden conflict”](#), Reuters, 28 Nov. 2007.
- [“Ethiopia denies reports of Ogaden helicopter attacks”](#), BBC, 20 Nov. 2007.

➡ Ethiopia/Eritrea Sides failed to reach agreement by 30 November Boundary Commission deadline. Slight easing of tension as Ethiopian PM Meles Zenawi said 30 November “very confident” deadline would pass without incident unless “full-scale invasion” by Eritrea; said 27 November defence budget increased by more than \$54 million in case of resumption of hostilities. UNSG Ban Ki-moon 7 November report cited troop build-up by both sides.

- [“Ethiopia, Eritrea tread a thin line”](#), ISN, 28 Nov. 2007.
- [“Eritrea accuses Ethiopia of having ‘declared war’”](#), Reuters, 21 Nov. 2007.

Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°48, [Ethiopia and Eritrea: Stopping the Slide to War](#), 5 November 2007. The international community...



...must prevent Ethiopia and Eritrea resuming their war and potentially destabilising the Horn. The border issue comes to a head at the end of November with the end of the Boundary Commission's mandate. The UNSC and the U.S. must make clear to both sides no destabilising action will be tolerated, and all must fulfil their obligations under international law, disengage and restore the demilitarised TSZ.

- ☞ Somalia Mogadishu violence escalated again: at least 80 reported killed 8-9 November after insurgents dragged bodies of at least 3 Ethiopian soldiers through city streets 8 November. Local rights group put 1-17 November death toll in capital at 314. Ethiopian-backed Somali forces launched offensive after Ethiopian bases attacked 27 November; over 10 killed 30 November. Ethiopian PM Zenawi said 27 November forces unable to withdraw given divisions in Somali government and lack of peacekeepers. Hundreds protested Ethiopian presence 7 November after arrival of reinforcements reported. UNHCR announced 20 November 200,000 fled Mogadishu in previous fortnight: 1 million now displaced countrywide. President Yusuf's nomination for new PM, Nur Hassan Hussein (Nur Adde), sworn in 24 November, announced willingness to talk with insurgents. Opposition dismissed, stressing Ethiopian presence main issue. Insurgents attacked Ugandan AU peacekeepers 17 November after call by prominent Shabaab commander Aden Hashi 'Ayro for such attacks. UNSG Ban Ki-moon ruled out UN peacekeeping force 8 November. UNSC called for planning anyway. UNSRSG met President and PM in Baidoa 30 November. Media crackdown continued: Shabelle Radio shut down 12 November; 2 others next day. Mogadishu Mayor Dheere ordered all independent stations off air 20 November: his 26 November decree increased restrictions on journalists.
- "Ethiopia 'bogged down' in Somalia", BBC, 27 Nov. 2007.
  - "New Somali premier 'wants talks'", BBC, 23 Nov. 2007.
  - "Cast adrift", *Economist*, 15 Nov. 2007.
  - For background, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°45, *Somalia: The Tough Part Is Ahead*, 26 Jan. 2007.

- ☞ Somaliland (Somalia) Dhulbahante elders from Sool, Sanaag and Ayn regions rejected Somaliland administration at clan conference 17-22 November, amid reports Somaliland separatist troops moving deeper into Sool and closer to Puntland capital Garowe. 1 civilian reported killed as troops re-entered Las Anod, Sool's captured capital, 7 November.
- "Tensions grow in north as clan conference concludes", Garowe Online, 21 Nov. 2007.

- ☞ Sudan North-South tension continued after SPLM's October withdrawal from government of national unity. President Omar al-Bashir called for re-opening of training camps for "mujahideen" Popular Defence Forces militia, said not flexible on contested borders of oil-rich Abyei region and "NCP ready for war" 17 November; though 21 November stated commitment to dialogue to preserve national unity. SPLM gave 9 January 2008 deadline for resolution of several provisions in CPA – including Abyei protocol, redeployment of forces, border demarcation, population census, and transparency in oil sector. AU/UN mediated peace talks progressed to consultation phase with meetings in Darfur, Khartoum and Juba to bring boycotting factions into process. 6 SLA factions and 3 other groups signed Charter of Unification 13 November in Juba, and umbrella group URF (United Resistance Front) formed from 5 others, but key groups missing. Sirte talks due to restart in December but AU envoy, Salim Ahmed Salim,

- suggested possible delay to allow rebel unification. JEM rejected presence of 130 Chinese army engineers 24 November and accused Beijing of stoking Darfur crisis by supporting regime. Khartoum refused to agree on make-up of UNAMID force, rejecting Scandinavian unit, amongst others. URF claimed victory over Sudanese army and Janjaweed in 20 November clash; denied by government. 7 people reported killed at Medecins Sans Frontieres hospital in Bor 29 November as tribal pastoral conflict killing over 20 spilled over.
- "Sudan 'blocking' Darfur mission", BBC, 28 Nov. 2007.
  - "Warning of Darfur Arab rebellion", BBC, 26 Nov. 2007.
  - "Darfur rebel factions reunite under one banner", Reuters, 13 Nov. 2007.

Crisis Group Africa Report N°134, *Darfur's New Security Reality*, 26 November 2007. With the Darfur crisis evolving – and deteriorating – rapidly, the international community must revise its approach to a political settlement. While there are fewer deaths now than in 2003-2004, parties have splintered, confrontations have multiplied, and violence is rising. Humanitarian access is decreasing, and international peacekeeping is not yet effective. The international community should reformulate the negotiation process, broaden participation and place core issues such as land tenure and use and the role of local government and administrative structures, on the agenda.

## SOUTHERN AFRICA

- ☞ Comoros Islands Col. Bacar, Anjouan island president, said prepared to re-run disputed June election that saw him re-elected despite Comoros, AU calls to delay election. Move came after AU began naval blockade of island 3 November.
- "Comoros says ships flouting naval blockade", Reuters, 6 Nov. 2007.
- ☞ Zimbabwe MDC faction leader Morgan Tsvangirai held 16 November tête-à-tête with South African President Thabo Mbeki; expressed frustration at unilateral approach by ZANU-PF. Mediation talks resumed 19 November in Pretoria: provisional agreement over interim constitution secured but timing of elections remains key obstacle to full agreement. MDC wants elections postponed from March to June 2008. Mbeki visited Harare 22 November to stress importance of talks to President Mugabe. ZANU-PF party congress scheduled 11-15 December.
- "Progress on Zim election talks, but ...", *Mail & Guardian*, 21 Nov. 2007.
  - "Zim farmer takes case to SADC tribunal", *Mail & Guardian*, 15 Nov. 2007.
  - For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°132, *Zimbabwe: A Regional Solution?*, 18 Sept. 2007.

## WEST AFRICA

- ☞ Cameroon 21 Cameroonian troops killed in oil-rich Bakassi peninsula 13 November. Nigeria's political and military leaders denied involvement; previously unknown group, Liberators of Southern Cameroon People, claimed responsibility and threatened continued attacks until Bakassi locals are allowed self-determination (see Nigeria).
- "Bakassi handover ruled 'illegal'", BBC, 23 Nov. 2007.
  - "Gunmen kill 21 Cameroon troops near Nigeria border", AP, 13 Nov. 2007.

↪ Côte d'Ivoire Independent Electoral Commission code of conduct adopted by major political parties 14 November. French company chosen to conduct technical aspects of politically-sensitive voter identification program; still to be confirmed by presidential decree. Force Nouvelles (FN) elements fired warning shots to disperse demonstrators in FN stronghold Bouake 2 November after attacked with stones during protest over electricity bills. President Gbagbo and PM Soro met Burkina Faso President Compaoré in Ouagadougou 27 November to agree on technical details of voter identification and new June 2008 target date for elections. Gbagbo visited northern FN-controlled towns 28-30 November as symbolic act of reunification.

- ["UN mission welcomes signing of electoral code of conduct"](#), UN News, 16 Nov. 2007.
- ["In Ivory Coast, a fragile peace is framed by promises unfulfilled"](#), *Washington Post*, 16 Nov. 2007.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°127, [Côte d'Ivoire: Can the Ouagadougou Agreement Bring Peace?](#), 27 June 2007.

↪ Guinea Uncertainty over election date continued as PM Lansana Kouyaté said reaching December deadline would be "difficult". Former PM Cellou Dalein Diallo sworn in as leader of opposition Union of Democratic Forces of Guinea (UFDG), 15 November. Planned investigation into alleged abuses by security forces during January protests stalled as lawyers withdrew from commission of inquiry.

- ["Country awaits new date for...pol"](#) IRIN, 1 Nov. 2007.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°121, [Guinea: Change or Chaos](#), 14 Feb. 2007.

Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°49, [Guinea: Change on Hold](#), 8 November 2007. Guinea remains fragile and risks counter-revolution if PM Kouyaté does not work to further democracy, with more international help. His power base is splintering, giving former President Conté an opportunity to regain control. Kouyaté must seriously aim to change political processes. For this he must work with the civil society and political parties and gain support from ECOWAS, donors, and France and the U.S.



↪ Liberia Economic progress with first diamond deal since July lifting of export ban signed with Israel, 20 November. Liberty Party and Congress for Democratic Change called for independent inquiry into legislative corruption; alleged bribes paid to remove former House of Representatives speaker Edwin Snowe. Belgian manager of Buchanan rubber plantation killed 17 November in unrest sparked by government deal with Dutch-owned Liberia Agriculture Company (LAC). UNMIL forces increased local security in response.

- ["Israeli diamond industry pledges to help revive Liberian gem trade"](#), AP, 20 Nov. 2007.
- ["CDC, LP renew call for independent bribery probe"](#) *Analyst*, 18 Nov. 2007.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°107, [Liberia: Resurrecting the Justice System](#), 6 Apr. 2006.

↪ Mali September ceasefire between government and Tuareg splinter faction under Ibrahim Bahanga increasingly fragile as government military build-up in remote north continued. Bahanga met former rebel leader Iyad Ag Ghaly in Algiers, 5 November, in effort to revive peace process: outcome unclear. In 25 November Bouteflika-Touré meeting, Algeria offered to negotiate with Tuareg rebels to secure release of 30 hostages.

- ["Algeria promises to finish soon Mali-Touareg hostages' crisis"](#), El Khabar, 27 Nov 2007.
- ["Tuareg leaders discuss Mali peace"](#), BBC, 5 Nov. 2007.

↪ Niger Instability continued as state of alert in northern Agadez region extended for 3 months 23 November in response to renewed Niger Movement for Justice activity after end to Ramadan truce. Reports suggest attacks on uranium mining towns leading to increasing civilian displacement.

- ["Niger extends state of alert in uranium-rich north"](#), Reuters, 23 Nov. 2007.
- ["Niger raids leaves 'ghost town'"](#), BBC, 19 Nov. 2007.

↪ Nigeria Niger Delta security worsened and local council elections marred by violence. MEND rebels attacked ExxonMobil facility 12 November, Shell pipeline 15 November, and clashed with military 25 November. MEND considered President Yar'Adua's allocation of \$3.4 billion to "security and the Niger Delta" a "declaration of war"; threatened to extend attacks beyond region. Government's long-planned Niger Delta summit yet to materialise. 10 suspected Islamic extremists arrested in 3 northern states 12 November. 5 arraigned 22 November on charges of plotting attacks on government buildings. Low turnout, rigging and violent clashes blighted local council polls in 3 states 10 17 November. Over 25 killed in 3 days of electoral violence in Kano, compelling army deployment. Kwara and Cross River states recorded low turnout and massive rigging by People's Democratic Party. Government denied involvement in 13 November attack on Cameroonian troops in disputed Bakassi peninsula; MEND also denied responsibility (see Cameroon). Political debate reopened 22 November over 2002 International Court of Justice ruling ceding Bakassi region to Cameroon, senate denounced as "illegal". Nigerian Chief of Naval Staff Ganiyu Adekeye declared need to reassess priorities in Delta region in light of Bakassi events 28 November; announced 21 November naval build-up plans near Cameroonian border.

- ["Nigerian military reports clash with militants near Shell gas plant"](#), AP, 25 Nov. 2007.
- ["Delta militants deny Bakassi raid"](#), BBC, 15 Nov. 2007.
- ["Nigerian oil rebels feud before peace talks"](#), *Mail & Guardian*, 2 Nov. 2007.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°126, [Nigeria: Failed Elections, Failing State?](#), 30 May 2007.

↪ Sierra Leone President Ernest Koroma inaugurated 15 November following September election victory, completing first democratic transition since civil war's end 2002. Koroma announced "zero-tolerance" for corruption; leaked internal government report documented widespread graft under previous administration. Former Revolutionary United Front spokesman Michael Omrie Golley, in custody since January 2006 on coup attempt charges, released due to insufficient evidence 1 November.

- ["S Leone 'riddled with corruption'"](#), BBC, 14 Nov. 2007.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°129, [Sierra Leone: The Election Opportunity](#), 12 July 2007.

## Asia/Pacific

### CENTRAL ASIA

↪ Kazakhstan 4 weeklies refused to publish October Rakhat Aliev interview accusing President Nursultan Nazarbaev of

ordering February 2006 murder of opposition leader Altynbek Sarsenbaev. Political analyst Nurlan Alimbekov forcefully admitted to psychiatric clinic 21 November after August detention for insulting government. Leaked audio tapes point to corruption in presidential Nur-Otan party; government denied authenticity. Astana agreed to continue to cooperate with OSCE during elections. OSCE announced Kazakhstan to assume chairmanship 2010, 30 November.

- [“More media silenced as high-stakes feud continues”](#), EurasiaNet, 10 Nov. 2007.
- [“Kazakhstan, OSCE to continue election cooperation”](#), RFE/RL, 8 Nov. 2007.

➤ Kyrgyzstan PM Atambaev resigned 28 November; government said left on ‘good terms’ with President Bakiyev. Campaigning for 16 December parliamentary elections began 26 November. 6 youth activists arrested during peaceful demonstration 10 November. Parties protested against electoral code changes raising number of votes required. OSCE election monitoring mission chief arrived in Bishkek 21 November, with 270-strong mission to follow in coming weeks.

- [“Media body concerned over Kyrgyz murder probe”](#), Reuters, 2 Nov. 2007.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°55, [Kyrgyzstan on the Edge](#), 9 Nov. 2006.

➤ Tajikistan Explosion near presidential palace 14 November killed worker; no responsibility claimed. Electricity supply agreement reached with Turkmenistan, but Uzbekistan denied transport through territory.

- [“Tajik opposition fears crackdown after explosions”](#), Reuters, 21 Nov. 2007.

➤ Turkmenistan President Berdymukhammedov in Brussels 5-7 November to discuss trade and energy. Russia agreed 30% price increase in Turkmen natural gas and up to 50% rise by second half 2008.

- Comment by Ivo Schutte: [“What the EU should expect from Turkmenistan”](#), *EU Observer*, 6 Nov. 2007
- [“EU welcomes new Turkmen leader for talks on energy, human rights”](#), RFE/RL, 5 Nov. 2007.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°60, [Turkmenistan after Niyazov](#), 12 Feb. 2007.

➤ Uzbekistan Central Election Commission approved President Karimov's candidacy for 23 December elections despite constitutional ban on third term. Commission rejected candidacy of 3 human rights activists, approving 3 contenders loyal to Karimov. Rights activists claimed October murder of Kyrgyz journalist Alisher Saipov, prominent government critic Uzbek government, linked to upcoming election.

- [“Uzbek election watchdog clears Karimov for third term”](#), RFE/RL, 19 Nov. 2007
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°67, [Uzbekistan: Stagnation and Uncertainty](#), 22 Aug. 2007.

## NORTH EAST ASIA

➤ North Korea U.S. experts began disabling North Korea's principal nuclear facility Yongbyon 5 November; team leader Sung Kim expects completion of current disablement phase by end year, when Pyongyang must also submit declaration detailing nuclear programs. DPRK PM Kim Jong-il visited Seoul 14-16 November for talks with ROK PM Han Duck-soo; highest-level visit by DPRK official in 15

years. Talks focused on economic cooperation including cross-border rail freight service and possible West Sea shared fishing ground, but defence ministers at end November Pyongyang talks unable to agree on sea zone.

- [“Defense ministers end talks without agreement on NLL”](#), *Chosun Ilbo*, 30 Nov. 2007.
- [“North and South Korea agree on projects”](#), *Financial Times*, 16 Nov. 2007.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°62, [After the North Korea Nuclear Breakthrough: Compliance or Confrontation?](#), 30 Apr. 2007.

➤ Taiwan Strait Taiwan blocked placement of Chinese judge on WTO's highest legal panel but said may reconsider if Taiwan assured fair treatment. U.S. announced \$1bn military equipment upgrade for island 13 November; Chinese requested halt to U.S. sales to island, denied U.S. navy access to Hong Kong port 21 November. Chinese navy held large-scale military exercise off east coast of Taiwan, simulated pincer attack on island end November.

- [“China's show of strength ups military ante”](#), Asia Times Online, 1 Dec. 2007
- [“Proposed missile defense upgrade for Taiwan announced”](#), AFP, 13 Nov. 2007.

## SOUTH ASIA

➤ Afghanistan 6 November attack on parliamentarians visiting relatively peaceful northern Baghlan province killed around 70. Dead included spokesperson of National United Front opposition, 5 other MPs and children welcoming delegation. Reports later said bodyguards responsible for some deaths in post-explosion panic. Unusually, and despite increasing use of tactic, Taliban denied responsibility; other suspects include Hezb-e Islami. Bombing and subsequent probe increased executive-legislature tension; head of lower house led walkout. UN human rights chief in mid-month visit said progress needed on reducing civilian death toll as ISAF faced more high-profile claims of civilian casualties. Dutch ministers announced 30 November intention to extend ISAF contribution to 2010 with roughly 300 fewer troops.

- [“In Afghanistan, hunt for militants can be a slog”](#), *New York Times*, 25 Nov. 2007.
- [“Afghan lawmakers die in suicide blast”](#), *Washington Post*, 7 Nov. 2007.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°138, [Reforming Afghanistan's Police](#), 30 Aug. 2007.

➤ Bangladesh Interim PM Fakhruddin Ahmed declared judiciary independent in 1 December, granting Supreme Court power to nominate judges.

- [“Court to choose Bangladesh judges”](#), BBC, 1 Nov. 2007.

➤ India (non-Kashmir) At least 13 killed in unclaimed series of coordinated attacks in Uttar Pradesh 23 November. 10 policemen killed in mine attack by Maoists in Dantewada, Chhattisgarh 29 November.

- [“Maoist landmine blast kills 10 Indian policemen”](#), Reuters, 29 Nov. 2007.

➤ Kashmir Indian High Commissioner's house in Islamabad broken into 12 November, prompting protest by New Delhi.

Move came after India expressed concern at Pakistan's 3 November imposition of martial law.

- ["India's Pakistan dilemma"](#), BBC, 9 Nov. 2007.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°131, [Discord in Pakistan's Northern Areas](#), 2 April 2007.



Nepal Interim government failed to set new date for constituent assembly elections and deadlock continued over Maoist demands to declare republic before election. Maoist leader Prachanda threatened to return to arms if demands not met. Inquiry by 3 Maoist parliamentarians into October killing of journalist Birendra Sah blamed 2 Maoist officials acting under orders of local command. Cabinet agreed to request UN extend UNMIN mandate by 6 months; UN SRSG Ian Martin pushed for focus on peace deal implementation and monitoring and security sector reform.

- ["Top leaders of major parties resume discussions to forge agreement"](#), Kantipur, 26 Nov. 2007.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°68, [Nepal's Fragile Peace Process](#), 28 Sept. 2007.



Pakistan President Gen. Musharraf imposed martial law 3 November (termed "state of emergency plus"), as court set to rule on 6 October re-election. Chief Justice Iftikhar Chaudhry sacked, other superior judges asked to sign oath of allegiance to Provisional Constitution Order suspending constitution, prompting scores of resignations. Heavy crackdown on dissent followed: thousands of opposition supporters arrested, independent media outlets shut down; government said 3,400 freed 21 November but many still imprisoned. U.S. said would re-examine aid, called on Musharraf to end martial law, but continued to stress country's importance in "war on terror"; said he hadn't "crossed any lines". Legislative elections due by mid-January initially postponed, then rescheduled for 8 January. Musharraf swore in caretaker government 16 November, stepped down as army chief 28 November, handing baton to Gen. Ashfaq Kayani, and said would lift state of emergency 16 December. Former PM Nawaz Sharif returned from exile 25 November to register for January polls but said APDM coalition would boycott if judiciary not re-instated; PPP chair Benazir Bhutto may also boycott, decision due 15 December. Violence in NWFP and Tribal Areas continued; notably Swat valley, where army launched further offensive, and in Pachtunistan, Kurram agency, where communal clashes killed nearly 100. 15 killed in twin attacks on Rawalpindi military HQ 24 November.

- Comment by Robert Templer (Crisis Group), ["Military rule will not quell Pakistan's Islamists"](#), *Financial Times*, 16 Nov. 2007.
- ["Musharraf promises to end emergency rule by December 16"](#), *Guardian*, 30 Nov. 2007.
- ["Pakistan bolstering forces in Northwest"](#), *Washington Post*, 19 Nov. 2007.

Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°70, [Winding Back Martial Law in Pakistan](#), 12 November 2007. General Pervez Musharraf's declaration of martial law on 3 November can only bring more violence and instability to Pakistan. The international community, particularly the U.S., with its influence in Pakistan, must support public demand for the immediate restoration of the constitution, democracy and the end of military rule. It should apply a series of graduated sanctions if it fails to do so.



Sri Lanka Government air strike 2 November killed S.P. Thamilselvan, principal LTTE interlocutor with government

and foreign envoys; Colombo hailed as legitimate strike against terrorist group and promised more targeted attacks on LTTE leadership, but Tamil community angered. LTTE leader V. Prabhakaran's annual Heroes Day speech 27 November denounced government's "war of genocide". 2 bombings in Colombo next day killed 17. Government airstrikes in LTTE areas continued, along with sporadic but at times heavy fighting along Forward Defence Lines in Jaffna, Mannar and Vavuniya. Political instability continued in the south, with government's ability to pass budget by year end still in doubt.

- ["Deadly bomb attacks in Sri Lanka"](#), BBC, 28 Nov. 2007.
- ["Senior Tamil Tiger leader killed"](#), BBC, 2 Nov. 2007.

Crisis Group Asia Report N°141, [Sri Lanka: Sinhala Nationalism and the Elusive Southern Consensus](#), 7 November 2007. Domestic and international actors must understand the importance of Sinhala nationalism to resolving Sri Lanka's almost 25-year conflict. The majority Sinhalese are not unalterably opposed to a fair deal for the minority Tamils but political competition, together with the violence and intransigence of the LTTE, has led to President Rajapaksa's hard-line nationalist approach. A new long-term strategy must address legitimate Sinhalese fears, tackle supremacist nationalism and allow for a southern consensus to develop on devolution of powers.



## SOUTH EAST ASIA



Indonesia Local government in Mimika, Papua, said ceasefire brokered in tribal warfare that has killed 8 since mid-October. Under pressure from Muslim hard-liners, attorney-general's office banned peaceful sect, Al-Qiyadah al-Islamiyah, and police arrested adherents. UN special rapporteur on torture visited 10-25 November.

- ["UN expert hails progress in combating torture, urges further measures"](#), UN News, 23 Nov. 2007.

Crisis Group Asia Report N°142, ["Deradicalisation" and Indonesian Prisons](#), 19 November 2007. Indonesia's gains in persuading convicted terrorists to reject violence could be undermined by the sorry state of its prisons, with their corrupt administration. The government should encourage donors to fund prison reform programs, establish on-the-job training for prison administrators and improve law enforcement and judicial coordination. The police need to define objectives of deradicalisation efforts. Unless prison staff are better trained, jihadi recruitment and teachings dissemination will continue.



Myanmar/Burma UN envoy Gambari visited 2-8 November; criticised by information minister over continuation of international sanctions following earlier visit. UN resident coordinator expelled 2 November for calling on government to listen to dissenting voices. UN human rights envoy allowed first visit since 2003, 11-15 November. Opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi held first talks with other members of NLD opposition in 3 years 9 November; expressed optimism over future of reconciliation dialogue with junta after further discussion with junta representative Aung Kyi. In face of Myanmar's objection, invitation to Gambari to brief ASEAN heads of government in Singapore withdrawn at last minute; Myanmar nevertheless dominated media coverage of summit.

- ["Surprise pressure from Myanmar's neighbors"](#), *New York Times*, 20 Nov. 2007.
- ["Burma hits back under UN pressure"](#), *Financial Times*, 7 Nov. 2007.

➤ Philippines Manila and Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) both said breakthrough in ancestral domain talks but details not yet released and further obstacles to permanent deal likely. MILF said only that agreed ancestral domain would cover larger territory than current ARMM region, and hoped final peace agreement might be signed by ARMM legislative elections due August 2008. 13 November explosion outside house of representatives killed 4, including Congressman from Basilan; police blamed Abu Sayyaf. Failed coup attempt launched 29 November when 27 renegade soldiers walked out of 2003 mutiny trial and occupied Makati hotel; ended 1 day later with dozens arrested and overnight curfew in Manila.

- ["MILF: Peace now before radicals rule"](#), *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 30 Nov. 2007.
- ["MILF sees peace pact by August 2008"](#), *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 26 Nov. 2007.

➤ Thailand New commander-in-chief General Anupong announced troop increase in south (from 18 to 33 battalions), where violence spiked early in month. Army freed several hundred detainees arrested in southern "sweeping operations" and held in "Occupation Training Camps" after courts rejected detentions as arbitrary.

- ["Army frees insurgent suspects"](#), *Bangkok Post*, 17 Nov. 2007.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°140, ["Southern Thailand: The Problem with Paramilitaries"](#), 23 Oct. 2007.

➤ Timor-Leste PM Xanana Gusmão led first government dialogue with "petitioner" group 15-16 November in Ailieu; only 17 of 593 petitioners attended. Violent crime increased from 12 November with martial arts group fights killing 2 in Dili. Electricity problems and impending rice shortage risk triggered further unrest. UNSC delegation arrived 27 November to assess UNMIT operations. UNMIT announced successful completion of weapons-recovery operation, 26 November.

- ["Successful weapons recovery operation concludes in Dili district"](#), UN News, 26 Nov. 2007.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°65, ["Timor-Leste's Parliamentary Elections"](#), 12 June 2007.

## PACIFIC

➤ Fiji 16 arrested, 4 November, for alleged new plot to assassinate military ruler Frank Bainimarama. Accused include former opposition and 2 New Zealand nationals. Police Commissioner Esala Teleni cited Australian, NZ involvement; Canberra, Wellington dismissed accusations.

- ["Bainimarama defends Fiji arrests"](#), BBC, 6 Nov. 2007.



## BALKANS

➤ Albania Parliament approved appointment of new General Prosecutor Ina Rama 22 November after President Topi dismissed Theodori Sollaku for failures in investigations of organised crime. New Justice Minister Enkeled Alibeaj appointed 20 November after Ilir Rusmajli resigned over corruption allegations. OSCE proposed electoral system reform to increase number of parliamentarians and lower

electoral threshold. New Christian Democratic Movement party formed around former leader of Christian Democratic Party Nikolle Lesi 8 November.

- ["Solana says Albania's EU integration is in politicians' hands"](#), SEE Times, 22 Nov. 2007.
- ["Top prosecutor jettisoned as Albania's leader tightens grip"](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 22 Nov. 2007.

➤ Bosnia & Herzegovina Party leaders reached last-minute deal on High Representative Lajcak's proposed institutional voting reforms 29 November. Agreement followed Republika Srpska (RS) PM Dodik's call for abolition of Office of the High Representative (OHR), after OHR rejected demands for changes to proposed reforms. Negotiations over institutional and police reform re-started 23 November. 3-member presidency formally accepted PM Nikola Spriric's resignation 12 November. Campaigning for 9 December RS presidential elections started 24 November. Town planner in Banja Luka killed by car bomb in front of police station 7 November after alleging institutional corruption and police threats. UNSC extended EU force mandate in Bosnia for further year 23 November.

- ["Bosnia leaders agree on reform, avert crisis"](#) Reuters, 30 Nov. 2007.
- ["Bosnian politicians dismiss fears of new war"](#), BIRN, 17 Nov. 2007.
- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Report N°180, ["Ensuring Bosnia's Future: A New International Engagement Strategy"](#), 15 Feb. 2007.

➤ Kosovo Parliamentary, mayoral and municipal elections held 17 November: previous political order upset as opposition Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK) led with 34% of parliamentary vote and senior government coalition partner Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) support halved to 22%. 3 other parties, Alliance for a New Kosovo, Democratic League for Dardania, and Alliance for the Future of Kosovo each received 10-12% of parliamentary vote; PDK's Hashim Thaci likely PM in governing coalition with lead rival LDK. Calm election campaign dominated by social issues, but 45% voter turnout amid wide ethnic Albanian dissatisfaction with political elite and Belgrade's demand Kosovo Serbs boycott elections. UNMIK to decide status of 5 Serb-majority municipalities notionally won by Albanians following Serb boycott. EU-U.S.-Russia troika due to report on troika-led Pristina-Belgrade talks 10 December; no breakthrough at last set of meetings held 20 and 26-28 November; Pristina dismissed Belgrade's various autonomy models, insisting on independence. Thaci looking to coordinate independence steps with U.S. and EU allies. Masked self-proclaimed "Albanian National Army" gunmen made appearances near north-east and south-east boundary with Serbia.

- ["Diplomatic showdown looms as crucial Kosovo talks end in deadlock"](#), AP, 28 Nov. 2007.
- ["EU countries prepare to recognise Kosovo independence"](#), BIRN, 7 Nov. 2007.
- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Report N°185, ["Breaking the Kosovo Stalemate: Europe's Responsibility"](#), 21 Aug. 2007.

➤ Macedonia Police raid on armed gang near Kosovo border killed 8 Albanian gunmen; mortars, anti-tank weapons, mines and surface to air missiles recovered 7 November. Tensions in ruling coalition after Democratic Party of Albanians issued no-confidence motion against

Deputy PM Zivko Jankulovski of New Social Democratic Party. Skopje rejected UN proposal for name change in dispute with Athens 2 November.

- [“Firefight kills eight in Macedonia near Kosovo border”](#), RFE/RL, 8 Nov. 2007.
- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°41, [Macedonia: Wobbling toward Europe](#), 12 Jan. 2006.

➡ Serbia Belgrade initialled Stabilisation and Association Agreement with EU 7 November after ICTY Chief Prosecutor Carla Del Ponte issued positive assessment of Serbia's cooperation with tribunal. UNSC announced 28 November Serge Brammertz, currently leading Hariri assassination probe (see Lebanon), to replace Del Ponte 1 January 2008. Supporters of newly appointed Novi Pazar mufti and incumbent rival clashed outside mosque, injuring 4. Ruling coalition postponed calling presidential elections until after 10 December deadline for Kosovo status negotiations (see Kosovo). President Kostunica's Democratic Party of Serbia advocated “neutrality”.

- [“Four injured in Serbia mosque brawl”](#), Reuters, 16 Nov. 2007.
- [“EU accord eases way for Serbia to join bloc”](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 7 Nov. 2007.
- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Report N°186, [Serbia: Maintaining Peace in the Presevo Valley](#), 16 Oct. 2007.

## CAUCASUS

➡ Armenia National Assembly amended election law 5 November, abolishing nomination of a presidential candidate by party blocs or civil society and increasing campaign spending limits. PM Serzh Sarkisian confirmed as ruling Republican party chairman and presidential candidate 10 November. 11 parties announced support of former president Ter-Petrosian's candidacy 16 October. Young pro-Ter-Petrosian activist assaulted 15 November.

- [“Opposition seeks key changes in Armenian election law”](#), *Armenian Liberty*, 27 Nov. 2007.
- [“Armenia backs OSCE monitoring curbs ahead of presidential vote”](#), EurasiaNet, 1 Nov. 2007.

➡ Azerbaijan Editor of opposition daily “Azadliq” Qanimat Zahidov arrested 10 November; 2-month pre-trial detention began 11 November. Journalist Eynulla Fatullayev sentenced to 8.5 years prison for “terrorist threats”. Newspaper editor Nazim Quliyev convicted 2.5 years on defamation charges 6 November. Police said 2 suspects in alleged October U.S. embassy bomb plot detained 10 November; 7 suspected “Wahhabis” and suspected al-Qaeda emissary arrested 3 November. Political activist Faina Kungurova died of starvation in detention 18 November; authorities allege death result of hunger strike but official autopsy results withheld.

- [“Azerbaijan detains anti-U.S. plot suspects”](#), Reuters, 10 Nov. 2007.
- [“Azerbaijan plot shows radicals' threat has teeth”](#), Reuters, 8 Nov. 2007.

➡ Chechnya (Russia) First Deputy Interior Minister Alambek Yasayev reportedly dismissed 8 November. Shamsail Saraliyev appointed as minister for ethnic policy, information and press 15 November after Movsar Ibragimov

resigned 12 November. Feuding between factions in separatist government-in-exile saw rebel commander and “President” Doku Umarov stripped of power after declaring North Caucasus emirate 28 November Akhmed Zayakev appointed new “PM” 23 November after resigning as “FM” 20 November. 1 Russian serviceman killed, 3 police injured in clash with insurgents in Shatoi region 27 November. Opposition figure Imran Gaziyev shot dead in Baku, Azerbaijan 18 November.

- [“Chechen leadership in exile seeks to salvage legitimacy”](#), RFE/RE, 15 Nov. 2007.
- [“Chechens prepare for key election”](#), BBC, 8 Nov. 2007.

➡ North Caucasus (non-Chechnya) Fresh wave of violence in Dagestan and Ingushetia ahead of 2 December Russia-wide parliamentary elections. In Dagestan, several police operations saw 13 suspected militants killed 12-17 November; 1 officer killed 8 November. Opposition activist Nariman Aliyev and wife found dead in Makhachkala 26 November. Opposition Yabloko party leader in Dagestan Farid Babayev died after fatal shooting 24 November; no official suspects. In Ingushetia, transport police chief killed by gunmen 14 November. Russian engineer killed in gunman attack 12 November. Security forces shot dead 6-year-old in Chemolga village in Sunzha Raion 12 November. Police stopped antigovernment rally in Nazran 24 November; rights activist and 2 journalists reportedly abducted and beaten; 100 arrested. At border checkpoint between North Ossetia and Kabardino-Balkaria, 6 killed in suicide bombing on bus 22 November. In Kabardino-Balkaria, 9 hunters reported killed by gunmen 5 November.

- [“Russia opposition candidate shot”](#), BBC, 22 Nov. 2007.
- [“Bus bomb kills at least 5 in south Russia”](#), Reuters, 22 Nov. 2007.

➡ Georgia President Saakashvili declared state of emergency 7 November in response to large-scale anti-government protests in Tbilisi from 2 November calling for his resignation and early parliamentary elections. Violent police crackdown left over 500 injured, including 3 opposition figures and 24 policemen; independent broadcaster Imedi TV shut down after police raid. U.S., EU and international bodies condemned move. Day later Saakashvili announced early presidential elections for 5 January. State of emergency lifted on 16 November but Imedi broadcast ban remains. President accused Russia of fomenting unrest; several opposition figures accused of conspiracy to overthrow government and pro-Russian espionage; charges pressed against 2. Ahead of the early poll, government announced amnesty for 1000 inmates, food distribution and pension and teacher salary increases. Saakashvili resigned 25 November to begin campaign, in line with electoral law; parliamentary speaker Nino Burjanadze took up interim presidency. 9 opposition parties backed candidacy of Levan Gachechiladze; 22 other candidates also announced intention to contest presidency, including Natelashvili. Authorities took over Standard Bank 27 November in attempt to target assets of opposition candidate Patarkatsishvili.

- [“Georgia lifts state of emergency, new Prime Minister nominated”](#), RFE/RL, 16 Nov. 2007.
- [“Troops enforce Georgia emergency”](#), BBC, 8 Nov. 2007.
- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Report N°183, [Georgia's South Ossetia Conflict: Make Haste Slowly](#), 7 June 2007.



- Nagorno-Karabakh (Azerbaijan) No visible moves over peace talks: meeting between Armenian and Azeri FM's in sidelines of 29-30 November Madrid OSCE ministerial meeting cancelled. Azerbaijani Defence Minister Abiyev told press chance of war "close to 100%" 27 November.
  - "Armenian & Azerbaijani Foreign Ministers will not meet in Madrid", Trend News, 26 Nov. 2007.
  - "Azeri defense chief warns of new Karabakh war", Armenian Liberty, 27 Nov. 2007.

Crisis Group Europe Report N°187, **Nagorno-Karabakh: Risking War**, 14 November 2007. Azerbaijan and Armenia should halt their arms race, restrain rhetoric and renew efforts to find a negotiated settlement for Nagorno-Karabakh. document of basic principles should be agreed before elections in both countries in 2008. The EU and the U.S. should make resolution a key element of relations with the parties. The EU should strengthen the role of its special representative for the South Caucasus, and ENP reviews and funding should be used to promote confidence building.



## EASTERN EUROPE

- Belarus U.S. issued economic sanctions against state-controlled petrochemical company Belnaftakhim 13 November. 1,000 rallied in peaceful "Social March" against reduction of state benefits 4 November. Presidential decree restricting number of family members employed in small businesses prompted 2,000-strong protest 19 November; 2 jailed after promoting planned 10 December rally.
  - "US clamps down financially on big oil and chemical company in Belarus", AP, 13 Nov. 2007.
- Moldova Chisinau threatened to ban cars with Transnistrian license plates from traveling in Moldova from 2009. President Voronin told press draft international plan on Transnistria already "agreed upon".
  - "Moldovan president says Transnistria solution in sight", RFE/RL, 6 Nov. 2007.
  - "Moldova looks for a deal", Economist, 1 Nov. 2007.
- Ukraine First session of new parliament held 23 November. Final coalition agreement between Yulia Tymoshenko Bloc (BYuT) and Our Ukraine-People's Self-Defense (NUNS) bloc submitted 29 November. 1,000 riot police allegedly clashed with ethnic Tatars in Simferopol in attempt to remove illegal market buildings; 4 injured, 30 arrested 6 November.
  - "Pro-western coalition formed in Ukraine", AP, 30 Nov. 2007.
  - "In Ukraine, a fiesta of democracy: vibrant, fun, sometimes absurd", AP, 15 Nov. 2007.

## WESTERN EUROPE/MEDITERRANEAN

- Basque Country (Spain) 1 Spanish police officer killed, 1 injured by ETA suspects in Capbreton, France, 1 December. Over 40 convicted of aiding ETA rounded up by Spanish police 29 November; sentencing to begin December. Government denied media reports of secret October meeting with ETA representatives on Austrian-German border.
  - "Spain denies report of new meeting with ETA", AP, 19 Nov. 2007.
  - "ETA gunmen kill Spanish policeman in France", 1 Dec. 2007.

- Cyprus Greek Cypriot smuggling suspect, arrested in October by Turkish Cypriot police, died in custody. Greek Cypriot coroner said man beaten before death after Turkish Cypriot coroner failed to establish cause of death.
  - "Report: Greek Cypriot 'beaten' before fatal heart attack in Turkish Cypriot custody", AP, 4 Nov. 2007.
- Northern Ireland (UK) Real IRA claimed responsibility for non-fatal shootings of off-duty police officers in Derry and Dungannon 8, 12 November, latter attack same day Sinn Féin representatives joined district police partnership committee. Group threatened further attacks 27 November in video. 2 suspected IRA dissidents arrested 28 November after 8 November shooting of police officer in Londonderry. UDA renounced violence and said disbanding all armed units and sealing of arsenal 11 November. Rival UVF also said would seal weapons. Independent Monitoring Commission reported 7 November IRA dissident groups responsible for 3 killings in March and May 2007; no mention of possible IRA connection to October killing of truck driver.
  - "Republicans blamed for attempt to kill second policeman", Guardian, 13 Nov. 2007.
  - "Experts: IRA dissidents have killed 3 this year, pose main terror threat in Northern Ireland", AP, 7 Nov. 2007.

- Turkey Army announced 1 December had carried out hot pursuit operation on 50-60 PKK group inside Northern Iraq. Announcement followed November decline in Turkish threats of major military incursion into Northern Iraq following high-level contact with, and assurances from, U.S. civilian and military leadership on intelligence sharing and pressure on North Iraqi leadership; PM Erdogan met U.S. President Bush 5 November. Kurdish nationalist Democratic Society Party came under pressure to publicly side with state against PKK; constitutional court agreed to consider state prosecutor request for party closure 23 November. Decision followed prosecutors' launch of proceedings to lift immunity of 3 MPs who travelled to Northern Iraq to accept 4 November PKK release of 8 kidnapped soldiers. Released soldiers charged with neglect of duty and disobedience. Annual EU report on accession process criticised lack of progress on freedom of expression and religion, but positive on democratic solution to year's political tensions.
  - "Turkish army fires on PKK in Iraq", BBC, 1 Dec. 2007.
  - "Turkey charges troops captured by rebels with neglecting their duty", AP, 12 Nov. 2007.
  - For background, see Crisis Group Europe Report N°184, *Turkey and Europe: The Way Ahead*, 17 Aug. 2007.

## Latin America / Caribbean

- Bolivia Fears that violent clashes over new constitution and capital status for Sucre may worsen. Constituent Assembly (CA) reconvened after 3-month suspension 23 November at military base in Sucre; 4 killed, 300 wounded as police fought with protesters. CA approved initial constitution draft 24 November in face of boycott by opposition, who claimed vote violated procedural rules. Congress decreed 28 November CA could convene anywhere, to help speed approval by 14 December deadline, after opposition members denied access to

session by Morales's supporters. Morales's call for dialogue 29 November rejected until concessions made; anti-government strikes in 6 of 9 provinces relatively peaceful, but further action pledged.

- ["Bolivian protesters clash with police, storm jail"](#), Reuters, 26 Nov. 2007.
- ["Thousands march in support of Bolivia's Morales"](#), Reuters, 21 Nov. 2007.
- For background, see Crisis Group Latin America Report N°23, [Bolivia's New Constitution: Avoiding Violent Confrontation](#), 31 Aug. 2007.

➡ Colombia Move by President Uribe to end further mediation with FARC rebels by Venezuela President Hugo Chávez's killed short-term prospects for hostages' release and froze Bogotá-Caracas relations. Uribe criticised latter for breaking protocol by speaking directly to Colombian army commander and having expansionist ambitions. Police released videos 30 November showing several hostages alive, including U.S. contractors and French politician Ingrid Betancourt; France said it would redouble efforts for her release. ELN rebels agreed to restart Havana peace talks on 15 December.

- ["Hostage hopes fade as Colombia sacks negotiator Chávez"](#), *Guardian*, 23 Nov. 2007.
- ["Colombia seizes videotapes of hostages"](#), AP, 30 Nov. 2007.
- For background, see Crisis Group Latin America Briefing N°16, [Colombia: Moving Forward with the ELN?](#), 11 Oct. 2007.

➡ Ecuador Constituent Assembly voted to dissolve Congress 29 November for at least 6 months until referendum on new constitution. More border tensions with Colombia: defence minister accused Quito of firing at Colombian warplanes; Ecuadorian army clashed with FARC rebels in Ecuador 19-24 November. President Correa declared state of emergency in Amazonian province 29 November following protests.

- ["Ecuador congress is dissolved in vote"](#), *New York Times*, 30 Nov. 2007.
- For background, see Crisis Group Latin America Report N°22, [Ecuador: Overcoming Instability?](#), 7 Aug. 2007.

➡ Guatemala Álvaro Colom won second round of presidential elections with 54% of vote 4 November: dedicated first 100 days to fighting insecurity in "red zones".

- ["Task for new Guatemalan president"](#), BBC, 6 Nov. 2007.

➡ Haiti 108 Sri Lankan UN peacekeepers accused of sexual misconduct and exploitation 2 November; sent home. Police reform ongoing (627 recruits graduated in month) but prison sector remains problematic. UN said peacekeeping presence likely for many years. Senate President Joseph Lambert announced elections for one third of Haitian Senate late March/early April 2008; details unconfirmed.

- ["Honduras to send at least 200 soldiers to help with U.N. mission in Haiti"](#), AP, 22 Nov. 2007.
- For background, see Crisis Group Latin America/Caribbean Report N°21, [Consolidating Stability in Haiti](#), 18 July 2007.

➡ Peru 100 police to be sent to coca-growing region of Apurimac and Ene river valley in south-central Peru after rebels killed police chief in Ocobamba 1 November. 4 police killed in clash with suspected remnants of Shining Path rebel group in Huancavelica region 14 November. Government asked for increased funding for security forces to fight terrorism and insurgency in Amazon.

- ["Guerrillas kill four police in Peruvian drug area"](#), Reuters, 15 Nov. 2007.
- ["Peru to deploy extra police to quell drug violence"](#), Reuters, 2 Nov. 2007.

➡ Venezuela Protests throughout month against President Chávez's proposed constitutional changes turned violent at times, several injured in clashes with military 2, 7 November in Caracas. Proposed reforms subject of 2 December referendum; polls show Chávez may lose. Former allies including ex-Defence Minister Raúl Baduel claimed proposed changes akin to coup d'état.

- ["Poll says Chavez loses Venezuela referendum lead"](#), Reuters, 24 Nov. 2007.
- For background, see Crisis Group Latin America Report N°19, [Venezuela: Hugo Chávez's Revolution](#), 22 Feb. 2007.

## Middle East / North Africa

### EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

➡ Israel/occupied Territories Annapolis meeting 27 November concluded with statement parties will strive to negotiate peace treaty by end 2008. 16 Arab nations, including Saudi Arabia and Syria, attended. U.S. to monitor progress: appointed former NATO commander James Jones as liaison 28 November. Dutch diplomat Robert H. Serry named UN Mideast envoy 29 November. Expectations for meeting sharply downgraded in lead-up: Israeli FM Tzipi Livni insisted Palestinians recognise Israel as "Jewish state" – implicitly demanding relinquishment of right of return and outraging Israel's Arab citizens. Hamas leaders denounced Abbas; movement said decisions taken at Annapolis not binding. Israeli army continued raids into West Bank; Palestinian Authority (PA) deployed 300 additional security personnel in Nablus, but said cannot be effective with ongoing Israeli operations. Hamas's West Bank branch sent delegation to meet and pray with Abbas: move followed rise in tensions, as Hamas forces killed 8 Fatah supporters 12 November at rally commemorating Yasser Arafat's death. Abbas called to "bring down" Hamas 15 November. Israeli airstrikes killed 11 in Gaza since 27 November; 2 in north mid-month; 4 in south 31 October. Anti-Annapolis demonstrations in West Bank 27 November forcefully dispersed by PA: 1 dead, many wounded; parallel demonstration in Gaza passed peacefully.

- Comment by Robert Blecher and Mouin Rabbani (Crisis Group), ["In Annapolis, conflict by other means"](#), *Middle East Research and Information Project*, 26 Nov. 2007.
- ["Cinderella at Annapolis"](#), *Economist*, 22 Nov. 2007.
- ["Volatile city tests Palestinian police, and peace hopes"](#), *International Herald Tribune*, 13 Nov. 2007.

Crisis Group Middle East Briefing N°22, [The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: Annapolis and After](#), 20 November 2007. After Annapolis, new approaches will be needed to give subsequent Israeli-Palestinian negotiations a chance to succeed and minimise costs of failure. After years of neglect, the U.S. administration seems energised, and the Israeli and Palestinian leaders share a strong political need for success. Despite the meeting's highly polarised context, the decision to jettison the incremental approach and deal with the endgame gives...



...reason for hope. Post-Annapolis challenges are three-fold: bolstering chances of a deal; improving the situation on the ground and building a more inclusive process.

- Lebanon Presidency vacant as pro-Syrian President Emile Lahoud left office at term end 23 November. Parliamentary vote repeatedly delayed: now due 7 December. Army chief Michel Suleiman emerged as potential consensus candidate 29 November. Governing coalition led by Saad Hariri dropped opposition to necessary constitutional amendment; Christian opposition leader Michel Aoun said would support candidacy if term limited to 2 years, opposition given veto in cabinet and neutral PM installed. Power vacuum followed intensive diplomacy led by France, supported by UNSG Ban Ki-moon. Fighting broke out in Tripoli 27 November between newly-formed group loyal to Hariri, Afwaj Trablos, and pro-Syrian Islamic Unification Movement (IUM); 1 IUM militant killed. Serge Brammertz (now to move to ICTY, see Serbia), chief investigator of commission investigating 2005 assassination of former PM Rafiq Hariri, submitted latest progress report to UNSC; to be replaced by Canadian Daniel Bellemare.
- "Lebanon delays vote again, army chief in focus", Reuters, 29 Nov. 2007.
  - "Gunfight raises Lebanon tension", BBC, 28 Nov. 2007.
  - For background, see Crisis Group Middle East Report N°69, *Hizbollah and the Lebanese Crisis*, 10 October 2007.

- Syria Regional manoeuvres culminated in Damascus agreeing 25 November to attend 27 November Annapolis meeting (see Israel/OTs). Deputy FM Faisal Mekdad was present; said Syria willing to normalise ties with Israel but only after "full Israeli withdrawal from the Arab lands occupied in 1967". Possibility of Israel-Syria talks in Moscow in early 2008 reported. Attendance at meeting followed U.S.-Israeli agreement to broaden agenda to include Golan Heights, and Damascus agreement 9 November to allow U.S. personnel to process Iraqi refugees in Syria for U.S. admission. France engaged extensively throughout month to secure Syrian cooperation in mediation of Lebanon political crisis (see Lebanon). Iraqi Finance Minister Bayan Jabr visited Damascus 22 November; announced U.S.\$15 million grant to assist 1.5 million Iraqi refugees in Syria. Jordan's King Abdullah II made first visit to Damascus in almost 4 years 18 November.
- "A payoff for Syrians: Seats at the table, at least", *New York Times*, 30 Nov. 2007.
  - "Iraq's finance minister in Syria to give it US\$15 million for refugees", AP, 22 Nov. 2007.
  - For background, see Crisis Group Middle East Report N°63, *Restarting Israeli-Syrian Negotiations*, 10 Apr. 2007.

## GULF

- Iran IAEA head Mohamed ElBaradei presented report 15 November stating Tehran proceeding according to workplan on past problems agreed August 2007. "Good progress" noted, including in providing extra documentation about black-market purchases of centrifuges. Tehran welcomed report; yet significant issues remain and further action necessary to allay "confidence deficit" on nuclear intentions. No progress made in London talks 30 November between new nuclear negotiator, Saeed Jalili, and EU's Javier Solana. UNSC P5 plus Germany to meet in Paris 1 December to discuss text of next UN sanctions resolution on Iran.

- Comment by Gareth Evans (Crisis Group), "A doable deal with Iran", *EU Observer*, 30 Nov. 2007.
- "Iran official acquitted of spying", BBC, 27 Nov. 2007.
- "ElBaradei again pushes Iran on nuclear program", *International Herald Tribune*, 22 Nov. 2007.
- For background, see Crisis Group Middle East Report N°51, *Iran: Is There a Way Out of the Nuclear Impasse?*, 23 Feb. 2006.

- Iraq Significant improvements in security but political stalemate continues. Suicide bombings, attacks on U.S. forces and sectarian "cleansing" decreased notably, though sporadic violence continued including bomb attack on Baghdad market 24 November killing 15 and suicide bomb near health ministry in central Baghdad 25 November killing 10. Sunni groups launched operations against al-Qaeda: Islamic Army in Iraq (IAI) attacked positions near Samarra 9 November; similar operation by 1920 Revolution Brigades at al-Buhriz in Diyala province 10 November. Security forces detained 40 linked to Adnan al-Dulaimi, leader of main Sunni parliamentary bloc Accordance Front, after several "rigged" car bombs found near his compound. Government sent draft law reversing some aspects of de-Baathification to parliament 25 November – but met opposition, including from politicians loyal to Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr. Despite 31 December deadline, Kirkuk referendum unlikely to occur leaving Kurds with choice to press for new deadline or settle for alternative process to determine area's status. UNSC mandate of multinational force expires end 2007: U.S. and Iraqi representatives signed "declaration of principles" 26 November on continued military, political and economic ties. Australian PM-elect Kevin Rudd announced withdrawal of 550 combat troops by mid-2008.
- "Baath reconciliation bill draws anger of Shiite bloc", *Washington Post*, 26 Nov. 2007.
  - "Iraq forces better but not ready yet-US general", Reuters, 26 Nov. 2007.
  - "Baghdad's weary start to exhale as security improves", *New York Times*, 19 Nov. 2007.

Crisis Group Middle East Report N°70, *Shiite Politics in Iraq: The Role of the Supreme Council*, 15 November 2007. The U.S. should take advantage of its ties with Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI) to moderate the party's behaviour and sectarian practices rather than use it as an instrument to confront the Sadrist. The U.S. has fully backed ISCI in its rivalry with Muqtada Sadr's Mahdi army, a dangerous policy that will deepen intra-Shiite divisions and ignores the Sadrist's stronger mass base. An ISCI fully transformed into a responsible, non-sectarian political party could make a major contribution to Iraq's rebuilding.

- Saudi Arabia Authorities arrested 208 suspected militants accused of planning attacks, including on oil installation.
  - "Saudi police arrest 208 militants", BBC, 28 Nov. 2007.
- Yemen Clashes between tribesmen and army personnel protecting Ukrainian oil company in Shabwa province killed 16, including 6 civilians, 8 November.
  - "Oil firm clash kills 16 in Yemen", BBC, 9 Nov. 2007.

## NORTH AFRICA

- Algeria Armed forces continued operations against al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, killing high-ranking militant Abu al-Haythem in north eastern Kabylia region 14 November.

Authorities announced arrest of group's Algiers regional chief, Bouderbala Fateh, 19 November. Security services stepped up collaboration with Moroccan counterparts (see Morocco). Local elections held 29 November.

- ["Maghreb al Qaeda defiant after senior figure dies"](#), Reuters, 23 Nov. 2007.
- ["Algerians claim arrest of leading Islamic militant linked to al-Qaida affiliate"](#), AP, 19 Nov. 2007.

- Egypt Ruling National Democratic Party voted 3 November to retain Hosni Mubarak as party leader for further 5 years. In one of several changes to party structure, NDP created 45-strong higher committee to select party candidate for 2011 elections; senior NDP members allegedly backing Mubarak's son Gamal. Leaked draft law on judicial system criticised by independent judges, who claim provisions further reduce judiciary's independence and remove impartiality protections. 2 police officers jailed for 3 years 5 November for torturing detainee in January 2006. Blogger serving 4-year sentence for insulting president and Islam allegedly beaten in prison. Muslim Brotherhood arrests continued, with at least 47 detained after police raids 20, 27 November.
  - ["Egypt ruling party keeps Mubarak"](#), BBC, 3 Nov. 2007.
  - For background, see Crisis Group Middle East/North Africa Report N°61, [Egypt's Sinai Question](#), 30 Jan. 2007.

- Libya Al-Qaeda's second in command, Ayman al-Zawahiri, announced Fighting Islamic Group in Libya joining al-Qaeda;

called for holy war against North African leaders and their allies 3 November.

- ["Zawahri says Libyan group joins al Qaeda"](#), Reuters, 3 Nov. 2007.

- Mauritania Protests against rising food prices spread to several cities 12 November; 1 killed and 17 injured when army dispersed groups after looting and vandalism in Zouerate.
  - ["High food prices spark protests"](#), IRIN, 13 Nov. 2007.

- Morocco King Mohammed VI condemned Spanish King Juan Carlos's visit to Spanish enclaves Ceuta and Melilla; withdrew ambassador from Madrid. Moroccan Senator Yahia detained briefly by Spanish police in Melilla after protesting visit. Security services stepped up collaboration with Algerian counterparts, arresting 3 suspected Al Qaeda in the Maghreb members at Oujda border town 2 November.
  - ["Morocco urges Spain to extend hand to 'overcome crisis' in bilateral relations"](#), AP, 15 Nov. 2007.

- Western Sahara Algerian FM Medelci said Algiers in favour of rapid resumption and intensification of talks on Morocco's autonomy proposal 24 November. Moroccan parliament official stated UN-mediated talks to resume December/January, following UNSC October call.
  - ["Western Sahara talks to resume in December-January: Rabat"](#), AFP, 22 Nov. 2007.

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**President William J. Clinton, 5 March 2007**

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