

1 May 2009, N°69

CrisisWatch:

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

CrisisWatch is compiled by Crisis Group's Brussels Research Unit, drawing on multiple sources including the resources of our some 130 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.

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May 2009 Watchlist



Conflict Risk Alerts

Sri Lanka



Conflict Resolution Opportunities

Niger

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CENTRAL AFRICA

➡ **Burundi** Agreement reached between govt, FNL leadership in Pretoria 8 Apr on the integration of 3,500 FNL troops into security forces and absorption of 5,000 into demobilisation program. Further 12,500 to receive only low payouts, raising security fears. Army, police integration began 22 Apr under AU supervision. FNL accredited as political party 21 Apr. Insecurity continued: 6 killed in grenade attack on home outside Bujumbura by unknown assailants. Ernest Manirumva, VP of national anti-corruption watchdog OLUCOME, murdered, documents stolen in 9 Apr raid; responsibility unclear.

- [“Dangerous demobilisation gaps”](#), IRIN, 29 Apr. 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°53, [Burundi: Restarting Political Dialogue](#), 19 Aug. 2008.

➡ **Central African Republic** Reports of govt-rebel clashes over month fuelled fears for unravelling of Dec national dialogue. Army 13 Apr launched assault on FDPC rebel elements in Boukoayanga to liberate govt detainees, reportedly capturing 10 FDPC fighters, with further confrontation in Kabo 19 April. Reports emerged army in Feb killed 21 civilians in N'dele region over alleged links to northern rebels. Fighting over cattle poaching broke out in Bangui, 11-12 Apr, leaving 22 dead, scores injured. UNSC 7 Apr endorsed call from UNSG Ban for creation of new UN peacebuilding office for CAR to address ongoing insecurity, DDR of rebel groups.

- [“UN official calls for full deployment of force in Chad, Central Africa”](#), UN News, 24 Apr. 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°55, [Central African Republic: Untangling the Political Dialogue](#), 9 Dec. 2008.

➡ **Chad** N'Djamena and Khartoum resumed mutual accusations of hosting and supporting rebel proxies, signalling rise in tensions. Reports of continued deterioration in restive east, including attack by unidentified gunmen on refugee camp in Farchana 16 Apr. Rebel coalition UFR claimed 15 soldiers killed in clashes with army near Birak 18-19 Apr; army denied. Govt announced creation of mission to negotiate with rebels. UN reported roughly half of 5,200 authorised MINURCAT troops deployed, called on states to increase contributions.

- Comment by Daniela Krosiak (Crisis Group), [“Le Tchad, une poudrière prête à exploser”](#), France 24, 20 Apr. 2009.
- [“Sudan dismisses Chad's accusation of harboring rebel groups”](#), *Sudan Tribune*, 13 Apr. 2009.

Crisis Group Africa Report N°149, [Chad: Powder Keg in the East](#), 15 Apr. 2009. The conflict in eastern Chad is a powder keg that can further destabilise the country if the government and the international community fail to tackle it.



➡ **Democratic Republic of Congo** Resurgent FDLR launched string of attacks in east concentrated in N Kivu's Lubero region; at least 24 killed, hundreds of homes burned. UN, army 7 Apr announced expansion of anti-FDLR operations to S Kivu. 5 killed, 222 prisoners freed in 9 Apr jail break in

Uvira, S Kivu, by unidentified armed group. 18 eastern rebel and Mai Mai groups 18 Apr signed deal agreeing to lay down arms, but warned of resumption of attacks if threatened. Strains in eastern rebel integration effort, amid desertions from CNDP and Pareco and tensions between integrated rebel and army elements. Insecurity increased in Ituri, with contending rebel groups FPRI and FPCJ leading attacks near Bunia on 31 March, 2 and 20 Apr. MONUC chief Alan Doss urged states to deliver pledged reinforcements. Election of President Kabila ally Evariste Boshab as National Assembly speaker prompted objections of cronyism from opposition MLC. Speculation former speaker Kamerhe moving to develop power base ahead of 2011 presidential elections.

- [“Rwandan rebels kill seven in DR Congo arson attack”](#), AFP, 19 Apr. 2009.
- For background, see [Crisis Group Conflict Risk Alert: DR Congo](#), 27 Jan. 2009 and Africa Report N°140, [Four Priorities for Sustainable Peace in Ituri](#), 13 May 2008.

➡ **Rwanda** Court rejected appeal by Laurent Nkunda, still detained in Gisenyi, to drop charges of massacres in eastern DRC. 4 accused of involvement in 1994 genocide won appeal in UK court against extradition on grounds of risk of unfair trial in Rwanda. UN Human Rights Cttee panel 3 Apr expressed concern over evidence of summary executions and poor conditions in jails.

- [“Rwanda rejects suit for release of Congo rebel”](#), Reuters, 20 Apr. 2009.

➡ **Uganda** Govt late March ruled out fresh talks with LRA unless leader Kony signs final peace deal; LRA hit back rejecting signature, accused govt of seeking to prolong conflict. Reports of continued Ugandan presence in north east DRC despite govt claims of complete withdrawal in March; 2 soldiers reportedly killed in LRA attack on Ugandan army based in Bas-Uele, DRC, mid-month.

- [“Who is re-supplying the LRA?”](#), BBC, 4 Apr. 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°146, [Northern Uganda: The Road to Peace, with or without Kony](#), 10 Dec. 2008.

HORN OF AFRICA

➡ **Ethiopia** Some 300 rallied in capital 16 Apr calling for release of opposition UDJ chair Birtukan Medeksa after Dec re-arrest, in first such protest since disputed 2005 polls. Authorities 24 Apr arrested 35 members of “illegal” Ginbot 7 group, led by former CUD opposition figure Berhanu Nega, and charged with planning coup.

- [“Ethiopia arrests 35 suspects in alleged coup plot”](#), VOA, 26 Apr. 2009.

➡ **Eritrea** Following 7 Apr debate UNSC stated Asmara had failed to withdraw troops from contested area in Djibouti in line with Jan deadline. Human Rights Watch report highlighted scale of ongoing abuses by govt, including forced labour, arbitrary detention, torture.

- [“Eritrea not pulling out of disputed border: UN”](#), AFP, 7 Apr. 2009.

➡ **Kenya** Strains within coalition govt continued to worsen. Early month crisis talks collapsed 4 Apr, with PM Odinga's team accusing President Kibaki of unwillingness to engage on policy and concerns over marginalisation of PM's ODM party. Kibaki late Apr installed ally VP Kalonzo Musyoka as chair of

parliamentary business committee, prompting outcry from ODM and call for fresh elections; Kibaki accused ODM of “fomenting a coup”. Parliamentary speaker 28 Apr named himself interim chair to ease stand-off. 2 ministers of Kibaki’s PNU party resigned over month, citing lack of consultation over reforms. Domestic tensions rose over Lake Victoria’s disputed Misingo Islands though diplomatic relations with Kampala largely calm; protesters in Kibera in Nairobi uprooted railway line to Uganda 15 Apr; MPs called on govt to declare Uganda a “hostile state”. 29 villages in Karatina, Central Province, executed by members of outlawed Mungiki sect 20 Apr, in revenge for killing of 15 members by vigilante group. Sect leader Maina Njenga arrested for ordering executions 28 Apr.

- “Kenyan town strikes back against its tormenters”, *New York Times*, 21 Apr. 2009.
- “Kenya coalition talks fail to heal rifts”, *Financial Times*, 5 Apr. 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°137, *Kenya in Crisis*, 21 Feb. 2008.

➡ **Somalia** Influential Islamic cleric Sheikh Aweys returned 23 Apr after 2 year exile. Considerable uncertainty over political implications; in fiery speech to supporters in Mogadishu 24 Apr ruled out talks with govt until “bacteria” of AMISOM troops leave. Sharia law unanimously endorsed by parliament mid-month. Govt 24 Apr announced country’s first national budget since 1991. Security improving in Mogadishu, marked by return of 60,000 refugees since Jan, but targeted attacks continue: 8 killed by mortars near parliament late month; 2 senior Islamic Courts Union members, 1 MP assassinated by suspected al-Shabaab militants working to hit list of govt supporters. Nearly 30 killed in clashes between pro- and anti-govt Islamist factions in Beledweyne 20-21 Apr. Increase in piracy early month, indicating spread of attacks southeast; 6 killed, several arrested in high-profile release operations by French, U.S. and Russian forces. Somaliland authorities sentenced 9 pirates arrested off Somaliland coast to 15-20 years; several await trial in Kenya. At 23 Apr international donors conference states pledged \$213m in support to national security force and AMISOM.

- Comment by Daniela Krosiak and Andrew Stroehlein (Crisis Group), “The Key to Security at Sea Is Stability on Land”, *Independent*, 17 Apr. 2009.
- “President raises hopes for Somalia”, *Financial Times*, 27 Apr. 2009.
- “No talks unless peacekeepers quit Somalia: opposition”, Reuters, 24 Apr. 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°147, *Somalia: To Move Beyond the Failed State*, 23 Dec. 2008.

➡ **Sudan** President Bashir continued diplomatic drive to garner support in wake of March ICC indictment with visit to Ethiopia 21-22 Apr. Sudanese delegation met with UK and French FMs in Paris late month but with no progress on indictment stand-off. U.S. envoy Gration and U.S. Senator Kerry travelled to Sudan 2 Apr and 15 Apr, reportedly securing agreement for return of small number of aid organisations after March expulsions and signalling easing in U.S.-Khartoum relations. In Darfur, humanitarian situation stable but risks of deterioration high. AU delegation led by Thabo Mbeki arrived in region 3 Apr. 21 members of Darfur’s JEM rebels sentenced to death by Khartoum court for treason. In surprise move, electoral commission announced national and regional elections (incl.

for South Sudan) for Feb 2010, requiring 7-month extension of Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) deadline. Signs of north/south tension, with SPLM publicly accusing NCP of dragging feet on CPA, mishandling ICC; NCP-hosted conference in Kenana, White Nile State, 1-3 Apr ended with condemnation of administrative, security deterioration in south. 177 confirmed dead, likely many more, in heavily armed raids by rival Lou Nuer and Merle ethnic groups in the south’s Jonglei state in late March and 20-21 Apr, marking severe increase in scale of cattle raiding violence. UNSC renewed UNMIS mandate to Apr 2010.

- “Sudan, France & UK conclude talks without agreement”, *Sudan Tribune*, 23 Apr. 2009.
- “Southern Sudan: Fear of fragmentation”, *Economist*, 8 Apr. 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°145, *Sudan’s Southern Kordofan Problem: The Next Darfur?*, 21 Oct. 2008.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

➡ **Lesotho** PM Pakalitha Mosisili emerged unhurt from assassination attempt by 16 armed men on PM’s residence in capital Maseru 22 Apr; 4 killed in ensuing gun battle. Authorities said 1 arrested in Lesotho, 7 in South Africa in attack described as possible coup attempt by mercenaries from neighbouring states.

- “4 killed, one held in Lesotho plot”, *SA Times*, 23 Apr. 2009.

➡ **Madagascar** 2 killed, scores wounded in fresh clashes in Antananarivo between supporters of ousted president Ravalomanana and police 20, 24 Apr, amid near daily rallies against transitional govt. Public protests banned 20 Apr. Following 2-3 Apr national conference, head of new High Transitional Authority Andry Rajoelina announced legislative and presidential elections for March and Oct 2010, constitutional review with referendum Sept 2009. Ravalomanana maintained claim to presidency from exile in Switzerland, pledged to return under SADC supervision, ruled out power-sharing, 16 Apr appointed parallel “legal” PM who later announced partial cabinet; “PM” arrested in capital 29 Apr and warrant issued for Ravalomanana for embezzlement. International censure of new regime continued: SADC suspended Madagascar membership, while both UNSC and France issued calls for return to constitutional order. International Contact Group formed to broker dialogue between parties after initial meeting convened by AU-UN 9 Apr in Senegal ended in stalemate.

- “Madagascar protests spark clashes”, BBC, 23 Apr. 2009.
- “Madagascar ex-leader rejects sharing power”, Reuters, 23 Apr. 2009.

➡ **Zimbabwe** Some reform progress but amid signs of severe strains within unity govt. Talks between party leaders over month failed to deliver progress on major stumbling blocks, including unilateral appointments by President Mugabe, ongoing farm seizures by ZANU-PF cadres; tensions fuelled 9 Apr by Mugabe’s impromptu move to shift telecommunications portfolio from MDC to ZANU-PF control. Govt early month announced broad-based, 100-day reform action plan, later replaced Zim dollar with foreign currency pending increase in industrial output; constitution-drafting committee announced 12 Apr but amid dissatisfaction from civil society leaders over inadequate consultation. Govt struggling to meet pledge to

pay public sector salaries. Govt late month reported regional states pledged \$400m in credit lines; western govts still cautious, including on calls for broad “humanitarian-plus” support. Fragility of security situation underscored by reports of renewed violence by security chiefs seeking to increase pressure for amnesties.

- “[Zim leaders in talks as unity govt hangs in the balance](#)”, *Mail & Guardian*, 16 Apr. 2009.
- “[Old foes enjoy ‘Team Zimbabwe’ trip](#)”, BBC, 6 Apr. 2009.

Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°59, [Zimbabwe: Engaging the Inclusive Government](#), 20 Apr. 2009. After years of violence, repression and a catastrophic economy, there is optimism Zimbabwe is turning a corner, but the international community must do more to make the process irreversible.



WEST AFRICA

➡ **Cameroon** Leader of northern rebel group MLPC arrested in Nigeria 22 Apr, transferred to Cameroon, for plotting to overthrow President Biya. Former ambassador to U.S. and communications minister detained for embezzlement as Biya continued high-profile anti-corruption campaign. Govt 6 Apr announced plans to resolve border issues relating to Bakassi Peninsula, transferred from Nigerian control Aug 2008.

- “[Country’s former ambassador to the U.S. detained](#)”, Post Newsline, 20 Apr. 2009.

➡ **Côte d’Ivoire** Signs of divisions within ex-rebel Forces Nouvelles (FN). FN officials 14 Apr called on ex-FN leader PM Soro to withdraw from power-sharing govt, citing reform failures and stalled elections; dismissed by PM’s office. FN commander in north briefly kidnapped by FN troops 12 Apr. Youth movement MJCC-CI held hunger strikes, announced rallies for Apr in protest at election delays. UN panel monitoring CDI arms embargo 8 Apr highlighted dominance of heavily armed militias in north and risk of conflict.

- “[Ivorian ex-rebels urge PM to quit](#)”, BBC, 14 Apr. 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°139, [Côte d’Ivoire: Ensuring Credible Elections](#), 22 Apr. 2008.

➡ **Guinea** Fears for stability increased with further strong-arm tactics by ruling CNDD junta and signs “interim” leader Captain Dadis Camara preparing to hang on to power. Camara in angry 15 Apr speech threatened to leave military to stand in next elections, called on politicians to respect CNDD authority. Over 20 soldiers arrested 23 Apr for alleged coup plot; troops earlier deployed across capital and shots fired at Conakry military camp. National audit commission VP arrested as CNDD continued popular anti-corruption drive. Rights groups expressed concerns over arbitrary detentions, attacks on civilians since installation of new junta Dec 2008.

- “[Guinea arrests over ‘coup plot’](#)”, BBC, 24 Apr. 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°58, [Guinea: The Transition Has Only Just Begun](#), 5 March 2009.

➡ **Guinea-Bissau** Former interim leader Mallam Bacai Sanha confirmed candidacy for ruling PAIGC in 28 June presidential elections; 3 ex-leaders, including Kumba Yala (PRS), Aristides Gomes (PRID) and Henrique Rosa also confirmed intention to stand. Military attacks on critics brought call from 20 opposition

parties on govt to resign over failure to curb army excesses; prominent lawyer Pedro Infanda and former PM Francisco Jose Fadul reportedly tortured late March; 3 arrested for involvement in early March assassinations of army but amid concerns over credibility of G-B investigations.

- “[Guinea-Bissau ex-leader ‘attacked by gunmen in uniform’](#)”, *Mail & Guardian*, 1 Apr. 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°57, [Guinea-Bissau: Building a Real Stability Pact](#), 29 Jan. 2009.

➡ **Liberia** Some political manoeuvring ahead of 2011 elections: 2 opposition parties 2 Apr merged with ruling Unity Party (UP); 9 opposition MPs crossed floor to UP mid-month. Raised speculation President Johnson-Sirleaf preparing not to seek re-election.

- “[New political alignment in Liberia](#)”, VOA, 2 Apr. 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°148, [Liberia: Uneven Progress in Security Sector Reform](#), 13 Jan. 2009.

➡ **Mali** UN envoy Fowler and aide Guay, captured by al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) in Niger in Dec, released 22 Apr along with 2 tourists in Mali; govt stated release negotiated without ransom, called for stepped-up efforts to free 2 still detained. AQIM 26 Apr issued threat to kill remaining British hostage unless UK govt releases terrorist suspect Sheikh Abu Qatada within 20 days.

- “[Mali calls for desert security after hostages freed](#)”, Reuters, 23 Apr. 2009.

➡ **Niger** Talks between govt and main Tuareg rebel group MNJ under Libyan auspices ended 6 Apr with joint peace declaration, raising speculation of imminent peace deal to address northern rebellion. UN envoy Fowler and aide Guay, captured outside Niamey in Jan by al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, released mid-month in Mali. Political tensions rose as opposition PNDP claimed to have unveiled plan by supporters of President Tandja to suspend constitution to facilitate extension of govt’s term, due to expire late 2009. Former PM Hama Amadou, jailed for embezzlement June 2008, released on bail on grounds of ill-health, reporting torture during imprisonment; trial date yet to be announced.

- “[Niger rebels, government ‘committed to peace’: Libya](#)”, AFP, 7 Apr. 2009.

➡ **Nigeria** President Yar’Adua 2 Apr hinted at “new rules of engagement” in Niger Delta, including possible amnesty plan and increased military presence. Militant groups received coolly; dominant group MEND stressed disarmament would follow full peace plan and international mediation. Govt troops, militants clashed in Nembe area, Bayelsa State, mid-month, with conflicting casualty claims. MEND released 1 of 2 UK hostages held since Sept 2008; but several seized by ransom-seeking gangs elsewhere in the country, including Canadian woman in Kaduna and retired Gen Peter Ademokhai in Edo State. U.S. on high alert after threats to attack U.S. mission in Lagos. Attack by Muslim youths on Easter procession in Gwada and Minna towns Niger State left scores dead as religious tensions again spilled over. Yar’Adua established inquiry into involvement of senior Nigerian officials in \$150m bribes allegedly paid by U.S. company Halliburton subsidiary, but bar association and other civil society organisations doubt govt’s intentions. Re-run governorship polls in Ekiti State 25 Apr marred by fraud and violence.

- [“Nigerian militants dismiss amnesty offer”](#), *Mail & Guardian*, 3 Apr. 2009.
- [“Nigeria Muslims’ Easter attacks”](#), BBC, 14 Apr. 2009.

Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°60,
[Nigeria: Seizing the Moment in the Niger Delta](#), 30 Apr. 2009. The Niger Delta risks sliding deeper into conflict and criminality and spreading instability across the Gulf of Guinea, unless Nigeria’s President Umaru Yar’Adua responds constructively to recommendations of a key committee.



➡ **Sierra Leone** Leaders of SLPP and APC parties 7 Apr agreed to end political violence and assist investigations into March clashes. Freetown now calm. Special Court for SL sentenced 3 former RUF commanders to 25-52 years for crimes during civil war, including forced marriage, mass rape by subordinates. Court received \$6.5m additional donor support after raising concerns shortfalls would necessitate release of ex-Liberian President Taylor.

- [“SLPP, APC ceasefire”](#), *Concord Times*, 8 Apr. 2009.

➡ **Togo** Brother of President, Kpatcha Gnassingbe arrested 15 Apr over alleged coup plot reportedly linked to succession battle ahead of 2010 elections. Followed gun battle at Kpatcha’s home 12 Apr that saw 3 killed. Another brother, Essolizam Gnassingbe and 9 soldiers detained. Togolese Army reaffirmed loyalty to President in 20 Apr statement.

- [“Togo army backs president after foiled coup plot”](#), Reuters, 21 Apr. 2009.



Asia/Pacific

CENTRAL ASIA

➡ **Kazakhstan** During 6 Apr visit of Iranian President Ahmadinejad, President Nazarbaev proposed and offered to host nuclear fuel bank. Kazakhstan 21 Apr announced refusal to take part in May NATO exercise in Georgia, in support for Russia. 28 Apr International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea summit failed to produce agreement between Central Asian states on water resources management.

- [“Central Asian leaders fail to overcome differences at water summit”](#), RFE/RL, 28 Apr. 2009.

➡ **Kyrgyzstan** Russia 30 Apr provided \$300m loan to Kyrgyzstan; 20 Apr announced will increase number of military aircraft at its Kant airbase. U.S. late-Apr reported progress in negotiations with govt to extend U.S. use of Manas airbase. Ak-Jol MP shot dead in Bishkek 14 Apr; suspect arrested 21 Apr. Opposition parties 20 Apr announced candidate for July presidential election: Almazbek Atambaev, former PM under President Bakiyev, Social Democratic Party leader. Interior Ministry Chief of staff seriously injured by acid attack 23 Apr. Police 26 Apr detained 80 following anti-ethnic Kurd rally in Petrovka.

- [“Kyrgyz opposition unveils presidential hopeful”](#), RFE/RL, 20 Apr. 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°79, [Kyrgyzstan: A Deceptive Calm](#), 14 Aug. 2008.

➡ **Tajikistan** President Rahkmon 16 Apr warned parliament of threat of “political disorder”, promised elections for 2010. Audit mid-month revealed disappearance of \$1bn from National Bank. National Bank 22 Apr announced IMF approval of \$120m loan. During 2-day visit to Dushanbe, U.S. Asst Sec State Boucher 21 Apr announced imminent agreement for U.S. base in Tajikistan, allowing transport of non-military cargo to Afghanistan.

- [“Tajik audit reveals huge national bank shortfalls”](#), RFE/RL, 15 Apr. 2009.
- For latest report see, Crisis Group Asia Report N°162, [Tajikistan: On the Road to Failure](#), 12 Feb. 2009.

➡ **Turkmenistan** 9 Apr explosion on Turkmen-Russia gas pipeline set off tensions between countries; Russia blamed Turkmen infrastructure, Turkmenistan alleged Russia engineered explosion, ordered investigation into cause. Followed 3 Apr Turkmen announcement of intention to diversify energy exports away from Russian pipeline network. President Berdymukhammedov 22 Apr met with Russian Deputy PM for Energy Sechin to discuss energy relations, at Turkmenistan’s 1st international energy conference next day announced wants closer ties with Europe, in perceived affront to Russia. Govt 16 Apr signed energy agreement with Germany; European Parliament 22 Apr approved EU-Turkmenistan trade agreement.

- [“The bell tolls for Gazprom’s dominance of Caspian energy market”](#), EurasiaNet, 24 Apr. 2009.

➡ **Uzbekistan** Uzbek troops conducted exercises near Tajik border 8 Apr; Tajik defence ministry said not informed, in spite of Shanghai Cooperation Organization protocol.

- [“Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan: border hassles abound”](#), EurasiaNet, 27 Apr. 2009.

NORTH EAST ASIA

➡ **North Korea** NK 5 Apr attempted experimental “satellite” launch in face of strong international condemnation, increased threats to speed up nuclear program. A divided UNSC failed to adopt resolution, but in 13 Apr statement unanimously condemned launch, citing contravention of resolution 1718, and ordering Sanctions Committee to enforce sanctions, arms embargo. Japan 10 Apr renewed unilateral economic sanctions against NK for another year. Pyongyang responded 14 Apr renouncing 6-Party Talks, threatening 2nd test unless UNSC retract criticism and on 15 Apr ordering IAEA and U.S. nuclear inspectors to leave. 25 Apr announced production of weapons-grade plutonium resumed. Govt 24 Apr announced plans to try U.S. journalists arrested mid-March at Chinese border.

- [“Angry N Korea quits nuclear talks”](#), BBC, 14 Apr. 2009.
- [“UN condemns N Korea rocket launch”](#), BBC, 13 Apr. 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°91, [North Korea’s Missile Launch: The Risks of Overreaction](#), 31 March 2009.

➡ **Taiwan Strait** China-Taiwan relations improved further with new set of agreements 26 Apr including opening of financial services industries and cooperation on internal security. Direct flights across Taiwan Strait expanded from 108 to 270 per week.

- [“China and Taiwan sign agreements to open finance sectors”](#),

Financial Times, 26 Apr. 2009.

SOUTH ASIA

- **Afghanistan** 15 killed, including 2 govt officials, in 1 Apr suicide bomb attack on Kandahar provincial council building; 5 police killed in 25 Apr suicide bomb attack on Kandahar governor's compound. NATO 4 Apr pledged deployment of 5,000 additional military and civilian personnel ahead of 20 Aug presidential elections. Govt 19 Apr announced training of 15,000 new police ahead of elections, said will seek to double 82,000-strong force long-term. National Front (NF) opposition coalition 15 Apr announced ex-FM Abdullah Abdullah as presidential candidate. NATO 16 Apr apologised for 11 civilians killed in 2 separate mid-month airstrikes in Kunar, Khost. Govt Minister Brahawi survived 17 Apr suicide attack on home in Nimroz, but 3 others killed, 16 wounded. Following international furore, President Karzai 5 Apr said will review controversial Shia family law critics say oppress women.
- ["Allies ponder how to plan elections in Afghanistan"](#), *New York Times*, 11 Apr. 2009.
 - ["Nato pact to send 5,000 troops for Afghan polls"](#), *Guardian*, 5 Apr. 2009.
 - For background, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°89, ["Afghanistan: New U.S. Administration, New Directions"](#), 13 March 2009.

- **Bangladesh** Head of Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC), installed by army-led caretaker govt (CTG), resigned 2 Apr following Awami League-led govt pressure. Govt 8 Apr offered reward for each captured fugitive from border patrol force Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) that led Feb mutiny; BDR Chief 24 Apr said 16 BDR suspects died in custody from alleged suicide or natural causes.
- ["Bangladesh anti-graft chief quits"](#), BBC, 2 Apr. 2009.
 - For background, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°84, ["Bangladesh: Elections and Beyond"](#), 11 Dec. 2008.

- **India (non-Kashmir)** Month-long general election voting began 16 Apr, marked by widespread Maoist, rebel Assam groups violence. Maoists killed 18 on 16 Apr in string of attacks across centre, east; 10 Apr Maoist Chhattisgarh ambush left 9 police, 3 Maoists dead; 10 security force personnel, 4 Maoists killed in 12 Apr Orissa gun battle. In Assam 8 killed, many injured in 6 Apr multiple blasts, separatist ULFA rebels suspected; 1 dead, 15 injured in 10 Apr attack on train by suspected Dimas tribe separatists; 12 killed in multiple incidents 20 Apr.
- ["Maoist guerrillas kill 18 on first day of India's election"](#), *Guardian*, 16 Apr. 2009.

- **Kashmir** Separatist alliance All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) 23 Apr called for boycott of national elections; police in response 24 Apr arrested APHC leader. 10 killed, including 2 police and 2 unidentified militants, in 20 Apr Doda district clashes; 5 killed in 21 Apr Poonch district blast. Army 25 Apr accused Pakistan of helping militants infiltrate Kashmir ahead of elections. Surviving gunman from Nov 2008 Mumbai terrorist attack 17 Apr retracted confession, said forced under torture.
- ["Arrests over Kashmir boycott call"](#), BBC, 24 Apr. 2009.

- **Nepal** Conflict between govt and Nepal Army (NA) escalated: NA Chief Gen. Katwal 21 Apr denied defying govt authority, escaped immediate sacking due to coalition disagreements, international pressure; but Maoist govt still determined to remove

Katwal. NA strongly denied 26 Apr rumours of planned coup. NA 7 Apr pulled out of most events at National Games, protesting late decision to include Maoist Army. Parliament paralysed for 2 weeks until 15 Apr as opposition accused Maoists of failure to honour past agreements, arrest Maoist-linked criminals. Maoists won 3 out of 6 seats in 10 Apr by-elections. Shutdown across the Tarai by Tharu activists since 22 April.

- ["Couple rumor baseless: NA"](#), Myrepublica.com, 26 Apr. 2009.
- ["Maoist nod to ousting Katawal"](#), Myrepublica.com, 21 Apr. 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°163, ["Nepal's Faltering Peace Process"](#), 19 February 2009.

- **Pakistan** As part of peace agreement with Taliban, President Zardari 13 Apr approved imposition of Sharia law in NWFP's Malakand division, including Swat district; U.S. highly critical, said govt "abdicating" to militants. Despite govt claims Taliban had pledged to disarm in deal, Taliban 15 Apr said "out of the question" to lay down arms: 22 Apr took control of parts of Buner district, but 24 Apr announced withdrawal from region after govt threatened military action. Army 26 Apr launched offensive against Taliban in Lower Dir district, claimed some 70 militants killed and operation successful; Taliban in response suspended talks with govt. Army 28 April launched further offensive against militants in Buner district. U.S. drone attacks killed 12 in Orakzai agency 1 Apr, 13 in N Waziristan 4 Apr. At least 26 killed, 50 wounded in 5 April Chakwal suicide blast on Shiite mosque, Taliban claimed responsibility. At least 8 killed in Balochistan riots after mutilated corpses of 3 Balochistan nationalist leaders found 3 Apr. Ethnic violence in Karachi 29 April left at least 26 dead, mostly Pashtun. Donors 17 Apr pledged over US\$5b in aid to Pakistan over coming 2 years.
- ["Pakistan army pushes Taliban back, urged on by Obama"](#), Reuters, 30 Apr. 2009.
 - ["Taliban reaches beyond Swat Valley in Pakistan"](#), *Guardian*, 25 Apr. 2009.
 - For background, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°164, ["Pakistan: The Militant Jihadi Challenge"](#), 13 March 2009.

- **Sri Lanka** Heavy LTTE-govt fighting continued in north east throughout month with disastrous consequences for trapped civilian population; strong risk of further deterioration as army's final push on the LTTE continues. Govt 21 Apr assault on self-declared "no fire zone" triggered chaotic exodus of 100,000 civilians to govt-controlled territory. Conditions desperate for those who fled: relief agencies denied access to initial military screening centres, military unequipped to offer urgently-needed food, water, medical care; camps for displaced overwhelmed by new influx. At least 50,000 still trapped in war zone and at great risk as fighting continues. UN estimates some 6,500, including 1,000 children, killed since late Jan. Despite govt 27 Apr announcement that troops would no longer use airstrikes or heavy artillery, such attacks continued. Widespread international pressure on govt throughout month. 100,000s of Tamils worldwide demonstrated against govt offensive. Govt 27 Apr denied Sweden FM Carl Bildt entry on humanitarian mission, Sweden recalled ambassador in response.
- Comment by Robert Templer (Crisis Group), ["Day of Reckoning in Sri Lanka"](#), *Foreign Policy*, 21 Apr. 2009.
 - Statement by Crisis Group Board of Trustees, ["Crisis in Sri Lanka"](#), 20 Apr. 2009.
 - ["How will Sri Lanka reconcile after a bitter war?"](#), *Christian Science Monitor*, 24 Apr. 2009.

Crisis Group Asia Report N°165, **Development Assistance and Conflict in Sri Lanka: Lessons from the Eastern Province**, 16 Apr. 2009. Once the current fighting in the northern Vanni region ends, the Sri Lankan government and donors should not repeat mistakes made in the Eastern Province, where violence continues despite development activities.



SOUTH EAST ASIA

➔ **Indonesia** 9 Apr parliamentary elections saw President Yudhoyono 's Democratic Party emerge largest in parliament, tripling vote from 2004 election, placing him in strong position for July presidential elections. Election overshadowed by Central Electoral Commission's poor performance, including outdated voter registry. Free Aceh Movement's Partai Aceh (PA) emerged dominant for Aceh provincial legislative. 6 arrested early Apr for crimes including pre-election killings of PA members. Pre-election violence mostly restricted to Aceh, with 4 Apr murder of PA official. Papua saw string of violent incidents around election day, with at least 7 killed, dozens wounded in suspected rebel attacks; U.S. Sec State Clinton 22 Apr said govt needs to allow "degree of autonomy" in Papua.

- "Indonesia's voters retreat from radical Islam", *New York Times*, 24 Apr. 2009.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°90, *Indonesia: Deep Distrust in Aceh as Elections Approach*, 23 March 2009.

➔ **Myanmar/Burma** EU FMs 27 Apr decided to extend sanctions against Burma, renew calls for release of political prisoners. NLD 29 Apr said will consider taking part in elections if ruling junta meets demands including release of political prisoners, constitutional change, international observers. Vice chairman of ruling junta 11 Apr reportedly told new officers their responsibility to ensure country's transition to democracy.

- "Burma's NLD sets election demands", BBC, 29 Apr. 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Report N°161, *Burma/Myanmar After Nargis: Time to Normalise Aid Relations*, 20 Oct. 2008.

➔ **Philippines** 2 of the 3 ICRC hostages being held by Abu Sayaf in Jolo since Jan freed unharmed; concern increased for 3rd, reportedly unwell. Fighting between govt forces and MILF rebels in Maguindanao province included reports of at least 9 MILF killed, 13 rebel camps captured, and several hundred families displaced. MILF blamed for 20 Apr blast in North Cotabato injuring 4, and 26 Apr bomb at Mindanao beach resort killing 1, injuring 3.

- "Swiss Red Cross worker freed in Philippines", *Washington Post*, 18 Apr. 2009.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°88, *The Philippines: Running in Place in Mindanao*, 16 Feb. 2009.

➔ **Thailand** Political tensions rose after late-March protest by supporters of ousted PM Thaksin turned violent. After calling for resignation of king's advisors and dissolution of parliament, protesters 11 Apr broke into ASEAN summit, forcing its cancellation. PM Abhisit declared state of emergency in Pattaya and next day Bangkok. Demonstrations turned into riots 13 Apr as street battles between soldiers and protesters ended with some 120 injured, 2 Bangkok residents shot dead during

apparent clash with protestors. Protest leaders voluntarily ended rally 14 Apr, citing safety concerns; 3 surrendered to police, but promised more protests soon. People's Alliance for Democracy leader Sondhi Limthongkul shot and injured 17 Apr. Abhisit lifted state of emergency 24 Apr, called for constitutional reforms. In South, suspected insurgents opened fire at train in Narathiwat 10 Apr, killing 1 crew; also blamed for 9 deaths 27 Apr, day before 5th anniversary of Krue Sae mosque incident. Early month border clash between Thai, Cambodian forces saw 2 Thai soldiers killed, 9 injured; both sides blamed other, downplayed incident.

- "Thailand lifts emergency, plans charter reforms", Reuters, 24 Apr. 2009.
- "No winners in Thailand's crisis", BBC, 14 Apr. 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Asia Briefing N°82, *Thailand: Calming the Political Turmoil*, 22 Sept. 2008.

PACIFIC

➔ **Fiji** Overturning 2008 Supreme Court ruling, Court of Appeal 9 Apr ruled PM Frank Bainimarama's military govt, appointed after Dec 2006 military coup, illegal, and said interim PM needed to dissolve parliament, call elections; but President Iloilo next day announced govt takeover, dismissed Appeal Court judges, appointed Bainimarama interim PM, to serve for 5 years before next elections.

- "Democratic future fades for Fiji", BBC, 13 Apr. 2009.



Europe

BALKANS

➔ **Bosnia** Sarajevo Prosecutor 17 Apr announced criminal charges against Federation PM Brankovic for abuse of office over 2000 property deal. Former Federation PM Bicakcic and finance minister Čovic indicted 23 Apr for abuse of office over 1999-2000 use of govt funds for property. High Representative Inzko welcomed Council of Ministers' 9 Apr decision on state property inventory – 1 of 5 objectives set by Peace Implementation Council for OHR closure. Croat HDZ and HDZ1990 parties initiated reunification talks 2 Apr.

- "A tearing sound", *Economist*, 2 Apr. 2009.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°198, *Bosnia's Incomplete Transition: Between Dayton and Europe*, 9 March 2009.

➔ **Kosovo** Preparations for decentralization continued, in accordance with Ahtisaari Plan; 5 new municipalities with Serb majority to be created. EULEX head 6 Apr proclaimed EULEX mission "fully deployed". Hundreds of Serbs protested late-Apr against return of ethnic Albanian refugees in Mitrovica; 2 grenades thrown at EULEX, NATO forces, shots fired; police used tear gas to disperse protesters. Pristina and Belgrade provided submissions to International Court of Justice (ICJ), in case brought by Serbia refuting legality of Feb 2008 independence declaration. Some Kosovo Serb police started returning to jobs after Pristina gave end-June deadline.

- "How the independence 'train' turned into a 'brolly'", *Balkan Insight*, 2 Apr. 2009.

- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Report N°196, *Kosovo's Fragile Transition*, 25 Sept. 2008.

➡ **Macedonia** 5 Apr presidential, municipal run-off poll saw VMRO-DPMNE candidate George Ivanov win with 59%. OSCE said poll met "most international standards", noted widespread pressure, intimidation of voters; Helsinki Committee criticised low turnout – at 42% only 2 percentage points higher than required for valid vote – and low ethnic Albanian participation. President-elect Ivanov said priorities are EU and NATO membership, name dispute with Greece; 15 Apr promised referendum on any name proposal. Govt 16 Apr reacted coldly to 14 Apr statement by Greek Ambassador to U.S. calling UN-proposed "Republic of Northern Macedonia" solution a "good proposal". EU Enlargement Commissioner Rehn 23 Apr said Macedonia performing well politically.

- "Second round of Macedonian elections successful; certain issues remain", SEE Times, 9 Apr. 2009.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°52, *Macedonia's Name: Breaking the Deadlock*, 12 Jan. 2009.

➡ **Serbia** Belgrade 17 Apr submitted motion to ICJ claiming Kosovo's Feb 2008 declaration of independence illegal (see Kosovo). 4 police convicted in Belgrade 23 Apr of killing 48 Kosovo Albanians in Suhareka/Suva Reka, Prizren, 1999.

- "Serbia 'finalises' Kosovo world court case", Balkan Insight, 13 Apr. 2009.

CAUCASUS

➡ **Armenia/Turkey** Progress on Armenia-Turkey rapprochement during month, despite Armenia's Nagorno-Karabakh conflict with Turkey ally Azerbaijan. Swiss-mediated talks culminated in 22 Apr announcement of "roadmap" for normalizing relations, reportedly involving Armenian recognition of 1921 border, opening of border, historical sub-commission. Implementation on hold, possibly in expectation of progress on NK talks.

- "Mountain chess", *Economist*, 30 Apr. 2009.
- "Turkey, Armenia agree on framework to normalize ties", Reuters, 23 Apr. 2009.

Crisis Group Europe Report N°199, *Turkey and Armenia: Opening Minds, Opening Borders*, 14 Apr. 2009. Turkey and Armenia should seize their best opportunity yet to normalise relations, work on a new approach to shared history and open a European border that for nearly a century has been hostage to conflict.



➡ **Armenia** Nationalist Dashnaksutian party 25 Apr quit 4-party coalition govt in protest at perceived concessions to Turkey. Coup attempt charges against opposition activists on trial for March 2008 post-election violence dropped 1 Apr; to be tried for "inciting mass disturbances".

- "Turkey policy prompts government member to join opposition", EurasiaNet, 29 Apr. 2009.

➡ **Azerbaijan** Ethnic Azeri Georgian gunman killed at least 13 after opening fire on State Oil Academy campus 30 Apr, in deadliest attack since 1994; motive unknown. EU Special Envoy for South Caucasus 6 Apr criticised amendment removing presidential term limits, approved in March referendum and signed into constitution by President Aliyev 2 Apr. Govt expressed opposition to Turkish-Armenian

rapprochement without Armenian concessions on NK. 2 pro-opposition journalists released from jail 9 Apr following Aliyev statement that arresting journalists for professional activities not justified.

- "Azerbaijan gunman kills 13 at college", *Guardian*, 30 Apr. 2009.
- "Is Baku ready to cause geopolitical problems over Turkish-Armenian thaw?", EurasiaNet, 14 Apr. 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°50, *Azerbaijan: Defence Sector Management and Reform*, 29 Oct. 2008.

➡ **Chechnya (Russia)** Russia 16 Apr announced end to 10-yr "counter-terrorism" operation against Chechen rebels; move seen as victory for Kadyrov. Marks end of 2nd Chechen war begun 1999, but violence quickly resumed, with 3 Russian soldiers reportedly killed 21 Apr in rebel attack near Grozny, and further incidents resulting in 1 soldier dead, 3 wounded. Russia 24 Apr announced expansion of counterterrorism operations in Chechnya, citing planned rebel attacks, recent discovery of rebel hiding places, weapons caches. Chechen authorities 21 Apr announced launch of operation to locate some 500 fighters in Vedeno region. Dubai police 5 Apr said seeking Chechen member of State Duma, Kadyrov relative and adviser Adam Delimkhanov, in connection with March murder of émigré Yamadayev; Russia said would not hand Delimkhanov over. Interpol released warrants for Delimkhanov and 6 others 28 Apr.

- "Counter-terrorist operation in Chechnya officially ended", North Caucasus Weekly, 17 Apr. 2009.

➡ **North Caucasus (non-Chechnya)** Spate of attacks in Ingushetia including Islamic cleric killed by gunmen 19 Apr, member of "illegal armed gang" shot dead by security services 21 Apr, both in Nazran. Landmine explosion on Dagestan gas pipeline killed local security officer 10 Apr, while 2 killed in 23 Apr car explosion in Nalchik, Kabardino-Balkaria (KB). Nephew of Khasavyurt major shot dead 28 Apr in Dagestan. 3 killed, 1 injured during 28 Apr shoot-out between police and Ingushetia President Yevkurov's security forces. 2 rebel leaders reported killed during month: Zeitun Sultanov 22 Apr by security forces in KB, and Zakir Navruzov 24 Apr by police in Dagestan.

- "Death toll in Ingushetia's violence continues to mount", North Caucasus Weekly, 24 Apr. 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Report N°192, *Russia's Dagestan: Conflict Causes*, 3 June 2008.

➡ **Georgia** Opposition mounted sustained protest campaign against President Saakashvili, while tensions between Georgia and Russia rose as each accused other of provocations, troop build-ups at borders. Opposition protests began 9 Apr with turnout of 30,000-60,000 in Tbilisi, less than hoped-for 150,000; smaller rallies in other cities. Protests continued over month though with lower turnout, and 13 Apr started picketing Saakashvili residence. Organisers vowed to continue until Saakashvili steps down. Opposition reportedly split mid-Apr over possible talks with President. Reports emerged that Russian troops started entering Abkhaz Gali region 7 Apr, and EU monitoring mission (MM) 13 Apr reported extra Russian troops, equipment at South Ossetia (SO), Abkhaz administrative borders; Russia cited "precautionary measures". EUMM 16 Apr reported reinforcements moved back from Abkhaz border. NATO 15 Apr announced exercises near Tbilisi starting 6 May; accused of "provocation" by Russia; Russia 30

Apr signed pacts gaining formal control over its borders with SO, Abkhazia. First ambassadorial level talks with NATO since Aug held 29 Apr. 2 Russian representatives to NATO expelled over alleged spying scandal 30 Apr. 2 OSCE monitors briefly detained by SO forces 12 Apr.

- "The Georgian and Putin: a hate story", *New York Times*, 18 Apr. 2009.
- "Georgian opposition pledges to renew protests, denies reports of disunity", RFE/RL, 17 Apr. 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°51, *Georgia: The Risks of Winter*, 26 Nov. 2008.

➡ **Nagorno-Karabakh (Azerbaijan)** Hopes of progress on resolving NK conflict in coming months following several visits by OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs to region, positive statements, and ahead of anticipated meetings between Armenian, Azerbaijani presidents in sidelines of 7 May Prague EU summit. Both presidents conducted separate Moscow visits during month to discuss conflict with President Medvedev.

- "Nagorno-Karabakh talks set for next week", RFE/RL, 28 Apr. 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Report N°187, *Nagorno-Karabakh: Risking War*, 14 Nov. 2007.

EASTERN EUROPE

➡ **Belarus** President Lukashenko in Rome 27 Apr met with Pope and President Berlusconi in 1st official European visit since 1995. Opposition European Coalition 20 Apr announced planned "Independence March" 14 May. Belarus invited by EU Presidency to Eastern Partnership Summit 7 May in Prague.

- "Fears of EU split as 'last dictator' of Belarus is invited to summit", *Guardian*, 22 Apr. 2009.

➡ **Moldova** Following disputed Communist victory in 5 April parliamentary elections, at least 15,000 protested 6 Apr against alleged rigging; turned violent 7 Apr as protesters stormed presidency, parliament buildings. Authorities regained control next day. Several hundred police and protesters injured, several hundred detained. 3 protesters died, including 2 in police detention; European Parliament mission subsequently reported "acts of horrible violence" by police. President Voronin 7 Apr said Romania involved in initiating protests, expelled ambassador. OSCE gave initial positive election report, but subsequently reported falsification of voter lists. Constitutional Court 13 Apr ordered vote recount; Central Election Commission 22 Apr confirmed results: Communists won 60 out of 101 seats. EU Presidency 22 Apr called for inquiry involving opposition, international groups.

- "The Twitter Revolution that wasn't", *Washington Post*, 21 Apr. 2009.
- "Moldova vote controversy highlights doubts over monitoring", RFE/RL, 21 Apr. 2009.

➡ **Ukraine** Up to 20,000 protested in Kyiv 3 Apr demanding resignation of leadership. Parliament 1 Apr passed resolution for 25 Oct presidential election. Govt 16 Apr extradited 2 Moldovan citizens suspected of organizing Apr protests to Moldova. IMF 17 Apr approved release of 2nd tranche of loan package following 15 Apr parliamentary resolution to reduce budget deficit to 4% of GDP.

- "Thousands join anti-government rally in Ukraine", *New York Times*, 3 Apr. 2009.

WESTERN EUROPE/MEDITERRANEAN

➡ **Basque Country (Spain)** Socialist Party (PSE) 1 May signed informal coalition deal with opposition Popular Party (PP), consolidating creation of 1st non-nationalist govt in 3 decades after March elections; Socialist leader Patxi Lopez to be sworn-in as PM shortly. Suspected ETA military leader Jordan Martitegi arrested 18 Apr in France with 2 other ETA suspects: 3rd leader detained in 5 months. Sweep coincided with Spanish police operation apprehending 6. ETA 12 Apr announced it would target new regional government. Spanish national arrested 22 Apr in Northern Ireland, suspected of ETA links.

- "Spanish rivals secure Basque deal", BBC, 1 May 2009.

➡ **Cyprus** Turkish Cypriot National Unity Party (UBP) won 44% of vote in North Cyprus parliamentary elections, gained 26 seats in 50-seat parliament, defeating Talat's Republican Turkish Party which won 29% (15 seats). Widely seen as blow to peace talks, with UBP favouring 2-state model and closer links with Turkey. UBP leader Eroglu to appoint representative to peace talks, though Talat retains full power over negotiations. Eroglu 19 Apr said he wants peace talks to continue; Turkish PM Erdogan 21 Apr warned UBP not to undermine Talat. Talat 17 Apr stressed importance of agreement before Apr 2010 presidential elections, called for increased UN involvement. Greek Cypriot leader Christofias 22 Apr reported "no progress" in latest round of peace talks. European Court of Justice 28 Apr issued ruling in favour of Greek Cypriot property owner, seen as opening way for more Greek Cypriot property restitution demands.

- "Talat: Northern Cyprus faces 'clash of authority'", *European Voice*, 20 Apr. 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Europe Report N°194, *Reunifying Cyprus: The Best Chance Yet*, 23 June 2008.

➡ **Northern Ireland** In wake of March shootings of security forces, Real IRA 12 Apr warned of possible attacks in Britain. Deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness informed of death threat by dissident republicans 23 Apr. 11 Apr arson attack on Sinn Fein offices in Derry blamed on dissident republicans.

- "Real IRA: We will take campaign to Britain", *Sunday Tribune*, 12 Apr. 2009

➡ **Turkey** Foreign Ministry 22 Apr announced agreement on "roadmap" for normalisation of ties with Armenia following progress in Swiss-mediated talks (see Armenia/Turkey). Around 100 arrested in 14, 17 Apr operations targeting PKK supporters, including several pro-Kurdish Democratic Society Party (DTP) members. 2 pro-PKK protesters killed 4 Apr in clashes with police in South East. 2 soldiers, 7 PKK members reportedly killed 11 Apr in Şirnak region. 9 soldiers killed by roadside bomb in Diyarbakir province, another shot near Şemdinli 29 Apr; attacks blamed on PKK. Air force 29-30 Apr bombed PKK bases in northern Iraq. 8 arrested 13 Apr, including academics, charged in "Ergenekon" coup plot case, sparking opposition criticism; 10 further arrests 22 Apr. Authorities arrested over 60 suspected al-Qaeda members in southern, central areas 9, 21 Apr. 3 killed, tens arrested in 27 Apr operation against far-left group in Istanbul. Far-left bomber arrested in Ankara 29 Apr after failed assassination attempt on former justice minister. At 21 Apr EU Troika meeting Turkey reaffirmed goal of opening 2 accession negotiations chapters on social policy, taxation end June.

- [“Roadside blast kills 9 Turkish troops as rebels shoot dead tenth near Iraq border”](#), AFP, 30 Apr. 2009.



Latin America / Caribbean

➡ **Bolivia** Following 5-day hunger strike by President Morales, Congress 14 Apr approved new electoral law, set general elections for 6 Dec; opposition agreed to support law after govt announced will fund new electoral register, reduce number of designated indigenous seats in Congress from 36 to 7. Police 14 Apr killed 3, including 2 foreigners, accused of plotting to kill Morales and VP García.

- [“Fasting and dealing”](#), *Economist*, 16 Apr. 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Latin America Briefing N°18, [Bolivia: Rescuing the New Constitution and Democratic Stability](#), 19 June 2008.

➡ **Colombia** FARC 16 Apr announced will release army corporal Pablo Moncayo, held captive for 11 years. President Uribe 1 Apr said open to dialogue with FARC if rebels cease all “criminal activities” and agree to verifiable ceasefire for 4 months; latter demand supported by Venezuela President Chávez 14 Apr. FARC late March dropped demand for demilitarised zone as precondition for talks over hostages-for-prisoners swap. 8 soldiers killed by FARC in La Guajira department 29 Apr; Venezuela govt 30 Apr said will assist in capturing rebels who fled across Venezuelan border. Senate 17 Apr approved law on referendum over allowing Uribe possible 3rd re-election in 2010; yet to be approved by Congress, Constitutional Court.

- [“El referendo y sus incertidumbres”](#), Infolatam, 20 Apr. 2009.
- [“Uribe propone cese de hostilidades”](#), BBC, 5 Apr. 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Latin America Report N°30, [Ending Colombia’s FARC Conflict: Dealing the Right Card](#), 26 March 2009.

➡ **Ecuador** President Correa re-elected in 26 Apr presidential poll with 51% of vote, avoiding run-off. Exit polls indicate Correa’s Alianza País party won majority in new National Assembly body: official count ongoing.

- [“Revolution! Please give generously”](#), *Economist*, 23 Apr. 2009.

➡ **Haiti** 19 Apr senate elections marked by low estimated 11.3% turnout, occasional violence: poll suspended in Central dept after 1 poll supervisor shot. No 1st round election victory, 2nd round announced for 7 June; ruling Lespwa party qualified for participation in all 9 constituencies. Donors pledged US\$324m in aid over next 2 years at 14 Apr conference, including US\$41m budget support.

- [“No winners in 1st round of Haiti Senate elections”](#), AP, 29 Apr. 2009.

Crisis Group Latin America/ Caribbean Briefing N°20, [Haiti: Saving the Environment, Preventing Instability and Conflict](#), 28 Apr. 2009, Haiti’s environmental destruction is a time bomb that needs urgent attention if the country is to preserve its social and economic stability.



➡ **Peru** 2 separate suspected Shining Path rebels attacks killed 14 soldiers in Ayacucho department 9 Apr. Army 16

Apr doubled estimated Shining Path size to 600; govt 17 Apr pledged more military spending to boost offensive against rebels in coca-growing VRAE region. Supreme Court 7 April sentenced ex-President Fujimori to 25 years in prison for human rights crimes.

- [“Peru defends offensive after deadly rebel attack”](#), AP, 13 Apr. 2009.
- [“The struggle for memory”](#), openDemocracy, 8 Apr. 2009.

➡ **Venezuela** President Chávez continued using judiciary to harass political opponents: several opposition figures accused of corruption, “secessionism”. Chávez 15 Apr appointed PSUV ally to new “head of govt in Caracas” position, will assume large part of functions of current elected opposition mayor Antonio Ledezma; opposition criticised as “undemocratic”. Following Feb arrest warrant for corruption, opposition leader and Maracaibo mayor Manuel Rosales granted political asylum in Peru 27 Apr; govt 24 Apr asked Interpol to detain him, 27 Apr recalled ambassador from Peru.

- [“Venezuela solicita a Interpol que capture al líder opositor Rosales”](#), *El País*, 23 Apr. 2009.
- [“Chávez nombra jefa de gobierno en Caracas”](#), BBC, 15 Apr. 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Latin America Report N°27, [Venezuela: Political Reform or Regime Demise?](#), 23 July 2008.



Middle East / North Africa

EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

➡ **Israel/Occupied Palestinian Territories** U.S. commitment to Palestinian state alongside Israel reiterated by envoy Mitchell on mid-Apr visit, by President Obama 21 Apr. PM Netanyahu told Mitchell Palestinian recognition of Israel as “Jewish state” needed for peace; later clarified not precondition for talks. FM Lieberman stated opposition to final status negotiations early month. New round of Cairo talks between Fatah and Hamas ended 28 Apr without agreement on unity govt; further talks for May. Palestinian demonstrator killed 17 Apr at protest against West Bank (WB) barrier. 2 Palestinians killed by Israeli settlers 2, 17 Apr after reportedly attacking southern WB settlements, killing teenage settler 2 Apr. Palestinians 7 Apr clashed with Israeli police in East Jerusalem over demolition of house of June 2008 attacker; Palestinian driver killed by police after car hit nearby roadblock. Armed Bedouin girl attacked police station southern Israel 4 Apr, killed by police. Fishing boat exploded off Gaza coast in suspected attempt to attack Israeli navy patrol 13 Apr. 2 gunmen killed by army at northern Gaza border 4 Apr.

- [“Palestinian rivals to try once more for an accord”](#), *New York Times*, 28 Apr. 2009.
- [“A grand bargain?”](#), *Economist*, 23 Apr. 2009.

Crisis Group Middle East Report N°85, [Israel/Occupied Territories: Gaza’s Unfinished Business](#), 23 Apr. 2009. If the underlying factors that precipitated the Gaza war are not addressed, Hamas and Israel could soon find themselves on the edge of another explosion.



➤ **Lebanon** UN tribunal on assassination of former PM Hariri 29 Apr ordered release of 4 high-ranking generals held since 2005, citing lack of evidence. U.S. Sec State Clinton in 26 Apr Beirut visit called for June elections to be fair, free of external influence, stated support for Lebanese sovereignty and “moderates”. 4 soldiers killed 13 Apr in ambush in Bekaa valley blamed on drug gang; tens arrested in army raids over following days. New Lebanese ambassador to Syria officially took up post 20 Apr.

- “Suspects in Hariri’s death released”, *New York Times*, 29 Apr. 2009.
- “Clinton in Beirut ahead of key vote”, AP, 26 Apr. 2009.
- For latest report, see Crisis Group Middle East Report N°84, *Nurturing Instability: Lebanon’s Palestinian Refugee Camps*, 19 Feb. 2009.

➤ **Syria** Israeli FM Lieberman 26 Apr rejected commitment to return Golan as precondition for renewed Israel-Syria peace talks. Syrian Muslim Brotherhood (MB) 4 Apr announced withdrawal from exile opposition alliance with former vice president Khaddam following discord over MB contacts with regime.

- “Israel rejects Syria preconditions for peace talks”, Reuters, 26 Apr. 2009.
- “Syrian opposition group collapses”, *The National*, 22 Apr. 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Middle East Report N°83, *Engaging Syria? U.S. Constraints and Opportunities*, 11 Feb. 2009.

GULF

➤ **Bahrain** King pardoned 178 Shiites detained on security charges 11 Apr, including leading rights activists accused of anti-regime plot; protests against trial caused recurring unrest in preceding weeks.

- “Bahrain king pardons Shiite political prisoners”, *New York Times*, 12 Apr. 2009.

➤ **Iran** UNSC P5 and Germany 8 Apr offered Iran new round of talks on nuclear program; U.S. said would directly participate in talks. Iran 22 Apr welcomed offer, but said nuclear enrichment program would continue. U.S. Sec State Clinton 22 Apr threatened “crippling sanctions” if talks failed. President Ahmadi-Nejad stated support for Kazakh-proposed international nuclear fuel bank on 6 Apr visit. European diplomats walked out of UN racism conference 20 Apr after Ahmadi-Nejad attacked Israel, Zionism. U.S.-Iranian journalist Roxana Saberi given 8-yr sentence for spying 18 Apr; Ahmadi-Nejad called for fair hearing of appeal. Authorities 28 Apr said 7 arrested for planning CIA/Mossad-sponsored terrorism during elections. Former Revolutionary Guards head Mohsen Rezai 29 Apr confirmed candidacy as conservative rival to Ahmadi-Nejad in presidential elections. 11 police, 10 rebels killed in attacks on 2 police stations in west attributed to Kurdish PKK-linked Pejak group 24, 25 Apr.

- “Iranian official, EU’s Solana discuss nuclear meeting”, Reuters, 22 Apr. 2009.
- “Mahmoud Ahmadinejad’s attack on Israel triggers walkout at UN racism conference”, *Guardian*, 21 Apr. 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Middle East Report N°51, *Iran: Is There a Way Out of the Nuclear Impasse?*, 23 Feb. 2006.

➤ **Iraq** Several bombings in April among deadliest in recent months. 6 car bombs in Shiite districts of Baghdad 6 Apr killed at least 40; 7, 8 Apr bombings in Kadhimiya district killed 16. At least 150 killed in 3 suicide bombings 23, 24 Apr: around 30, including several policemen, killed in attack on Baghdad food distribution 23 Apr; 57 dead, mainly Iranian pilgrims, in restaurant bombing, Diyala province, 23 Apr; 71 Shiite pilgrims killed in Kadhimiya shrine 24 Apr. 2 car bombs killed at least 50 in Sadr City 29 Apr. Other attacks targeted Iraqi security forces, Awakening militias, killing 12 militia members in Baghdad 11 Apr; 10 police in Kirkuk 15 Apr; 15 soldiers at base in Anbar 16 Apr. Authorities announced arrest of al-Qaeda (AQ) leader Abu Omar al-Baghdadi 23 Apr; U.S. military said 7 AQ members killed north of Baghdad 25 Apr. 2 killed in U.S. raid on Shiite militia in Kut 26 Apr. Maliki said raid unauthorised, violation of U.S.-Iraq security agreement; 2 senior Iraqi officers arrested for approving operation. Parliament 20 Apr elected Islamic Party member al-Samarrai as speaker after months of deadlock.

- “Clamor in Iraq for justice over deadly U.S. raid”, Reuters, 27 Apr. 2009.
- “Is Iraq sliding back into chaos?”, BBC, 25 Apr. 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Middle East Report N°82, *Iraq’s Provincial Elections: The Stakes*, 27 Jan. 2009.

➤ **Saudi Arabia** 60 leading Shiite figures from Eastern province affirmed loyalty to state 5 Apr, following previous call for secession by Shiite cleric; statement also called for end to sectarian discrimination, release of protesters arrested in previous weeks’ unrest. Authorities 7 Apr announced 11 suspected terrorists arrested near Yemen border.

- “‘Complacent’ statement clouds Saudi Shiite issues”, Middle East Online, 9 Apr. 2009.
- “Saudi authorities crack 11-strong ‘terror cell’”, AFP, 9 Apr. 2009.

➤ **Yemen** Over 50 detained in military operation against suspected jihadists in Abyan province, begun end March and ended early Apr; 16 subsequently released. Government and Houthi rebels traded accusations of truce violations amid ongoing low-level violence in Saada province; clashes reported notably in Ghamir district early month. 2 civilians, 2 security force members killed in mid-, late-month armed clashes in Lahj province, southern Yemen, in protest at new military checkpoints. Riots in Mukalla 27-28 Apr followed opposition rally protesting anti-South discrimination; policeman killed.

- “Protesters attack security in southern governorates”, *Yemen Times*, 30 Apr. 2009.
- “50 militant jihadists captured by Yemeni security authorities”, *Yemen Observer*, 7 Apr. 2009.

NORTH AFRICA

➤ **Algeria** Incumbent Bouteflika re-elected as president for third term 9 Apr, gaining 90% of vote; key opposition parties boycotted poll, denounced official 75% turnout figure as inflated. 1 policeman killed in Tebessa amid election day tension in Kabylie, eastern areas. Armed attacks in areas east of capital throughout month: 3 guards killed in Jijel 8 Apr; 2 in Bejaia area 15 Apr; 1 near Tizi Ouzou 25 Apr. Security forces reportedly arrested 9 al-Qaeda suspects in Khenchla in east 25 Apr.

- “Algeria’s Bouteflika re-elected”, Al Jazeera, 13 Apr. 2009.

➤ **Egypt** Authorities 8 Apr claimed discovery of 49-member Hizbollah cell allegedly planning hostile operations, espionage inside Egypt; 21 suspects arrested in preceding months. Officials, press denounced threat to national security, Iranian interference. Hizbollah leader Nasrallah 10 Apr denied organisation planning attacks in Egypt, stated one of suspects Hizbollah member delivering arms to Palestinians in Gaza. Muslim Brotherhood (MB) leadership announced backing for Hizbollah position 22 Apr, but Brotherhood MPs condemned breach of Egypt's sovereignty. 17 MB members arrested in Fayyum 16 Apr, following clashes between students and police. 25 detained at 4 Apr protest against arrest of anti-govt activists.

- ["Egypt's Brotherhood backs Hizbollah in spat with Cairo"](#), *Daily Star*, 24 Apr. 2009.
- ["Hezbollah alleges Egypt vendetta"](#), BBC, 15 Apr. 2009.
- For background, see Crisis Group Middle East/North Africa Report N°76, [Egypt's Muslim Brothers: Confrontation or Integration?](#), 18 June 2008.

➤ **Mauritania** Head of ruling military council Gen Mohamed Ould Abdelaziz resigned presidency and military commission 15 Apr to run for president in June elections. No candidates registered from main opposition parties maintaining election boycott. Anti-junta demonstrations in capital dispersed by police 2, 19, 29 Apr. EU announced 2-yr suspension of aid 6 Apr.

- ["Mauritania's military ruler steps down to run for president"](#), VOA, 16 Apr. 2009.

➤ **Morocco** FM Taieb Fassi-Fihri 19 Apr reiterated call to normalise relations with Algeria, reopen border closed since 1994. 43 sentenced to up to 20 years prison 17 Apr in al-Qaeda-linked terrorism trial. Anti-Shiite campaign begun March continued with arrests of alleged Shiites in Casablanca slums.

- ["Morocco wants normal ties with Algeria: FM"](#), AFP, 19 Apr. 2009.

➤ **Western Sahara** 1,400 supporters of Polisario Front entered military zone from Algerian camps for pro-independence demonstration 11 Apr. Morocco alleged ceasefire violation, blamed Algeria for allowing border crossing. UNSC 30 Apr renewed UN mission (MINURSO) mandate for 1 yr, endorsed shift to small-scale informal peace talks proposed by envoy Ross

- ["U.N. council favors informal talks on Western Sahara"](#), Reuters, 30 Apr. 2009.

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